



# \*VIKES

## Yangon Film School's Advanced Filmmaking Course Project

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION



PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY  
**Yangon Film School & Finnish Foundation  
for Media and Development (VIKES)**

WITH SUPPORT FROM  
**Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland**

EVALUATOR  
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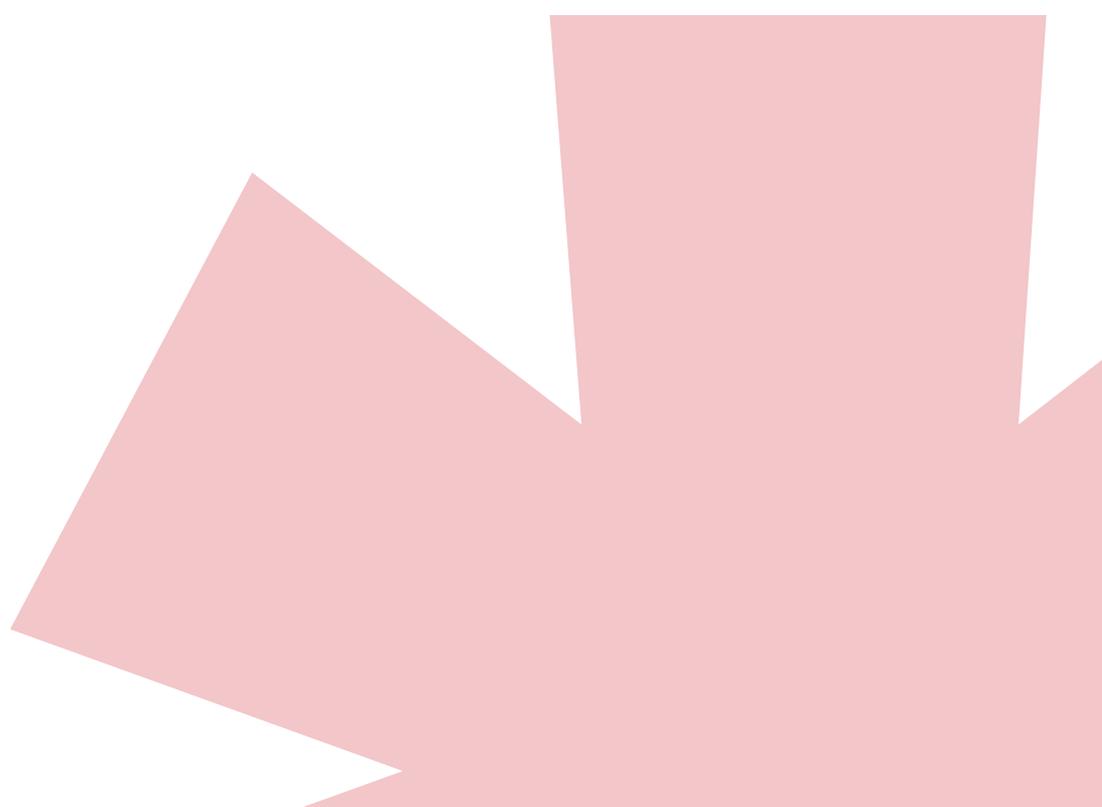




Photo: Still from the movie "Seeds of Sadness"  
by Thae Zar Chi Khaing

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## Abbreviations

AFC	Advanced Filmmaking Course
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FDC	Film Development Centre
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
Logframe	Logical framework
MRTV	Myanmar Radio and Television
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MFA	The Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Information, Myanmar
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PV	Participatory Video
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
TC	Traveling Cinema
TOR	Terms of Reference
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VIKES	The Finnish Foundation for Media and Development
YFF	Yangon Film Foundation
YFS	Yangon Film School

# Executive Summary



Overview of the Advanced Filmmaking Course (AFC) project

**Objective:** the project aims to contribute to a diverse, informed media culture and strengthened civil society in Myanmar.

Expected outcomes:

- Increased capacity among multi-ethnic Myanmar filmmakers and media workers, trainers, producers to create engaging, authentic films of quality promoting peace, democracy and human rights.
- Greater engagement with social/human rights/development issues through films on migration, ethnic identity, livelihood, gender, women's and children's rights, the environment, peace and justice.
- Support the transition process by helping government and NGOs to disseminate positive messages about peace, reconciliation and human rights.
- Increased capacity of Myanmar media professionals to network, lobby for better conditions of practice, secure funding, manage trainings and other activities.
- Consolidate YFS as 'centre of excellence' in permanent building as part of a strong local and international network and establish sufficient capacity to hand over to Myanmar administration.

Project beneficiaries:

Proposed number of immediate beneficiaries is 65 existing students plus 12 new students in 2 years aged between 22 and 38 from different backgrounds and 5 local staff (3 men and 2 women).

**The project duration:** 2 years (2017-2018)

**Total fund:** 365,000 EUR by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Finland via VIKES

The evaluation

This evaluation draws on both qualitative and quantitative methodology. The data were collected from different sources, analyzed, and triangulated so that evaluation findings can be as objective as possible. 45 people participated in the evaluation.

Myanmar context

Myanmar is the largest country in mainland South East Asia, with a population of 53.90 million in 2017. Myanmar ranks 148 out of 189 countries and territories in the human development index. 89.5% of people over 15 years of age are literate. Education, health, living conditions, and economic freedom are considerably different between urban and rural areas and among different geographic locations. Girls and women experience gender inequality in all socio-political and economic aspects due to entrenched social and gender norms in Myanmar society. Armed conflicts have affected the country for decades.

Myanmar was one of the world's most restrictive media regimes during the five decades of military rule. Even though official censorship was terminated in 2012, the state retained significant legal measures to control the media, fostering a culture of self-censorship. Myanmar film industry including documentaries was blocked from outside world until recently. Myanmar media still lacks in-depth stories or voices from the grass-roots, ethnic minorities and women.

## Key findings and recommendations

### 1. Relevance

- YFS is highly relevant to the context and the needs of people in Myanmar.

### 2. Effectiveness

- Recruitment is among the most effective activities by YFS.
- Overall, training activities at YFS were done effectively.
- YFS also did very well in supporting students by providing scholarships especially for those from other regions and states rather than Yangon and creating student organizations for peer support and handling students' feedback on the school.
- YFS has been excellent in gender mainstreaming.
- Graduate students were able to find jobs and most of them are working in filmmaking/media sector or for NGOs as a direct result of YFS training.
- Besides good quality films including international award winning ones, YFS has also produced documentaries and short films that support the agenda of and are highly appreciated by NGOs and international agencies. Whereas, a number of YFS current students and graduates as well as professional filmmakers wish to see more creative, art house films and fiction films.
- YFS has made a positive achievement in reaching an increased number of viewers in Myanmar. However, YFS still faces major barriers from both popular TV channels and government censorship and were unable to broadcast many films on social and development issues.
- YFS' current monitoring documents are quite basic and not effective in generating data ready for reporting & decision making.
- YFS has made efforts to respond to recommendations from the previous evaluation and audit.

### Recommendations

- YFS should maintain its student diversity, with a target proportion of ethnic minority students every year.
- YFS could set a reasonable quota for students whose families are living in ethnic states or other divisions for new intakes.
- YFS international tutors were recommended by students to show more techniques (equipment use, shooting, etc.).
- The MFA project aimed to contribute to a more informed Myanmar society. YFS needs a long time to do it. YFS also needs to screen its films frequently for a larger audience.
- Besides core courses on documentary filmmaking, YFS could introduce additional courses related to other genres including arthouse films, edutainment, or true fiction in order to reach a larger number of viewers of popular TV channels.
- YFS could develop a framework to outline the logical relationship between outputs, results and impact with specific indicators at each level at the beginning of a new project. Project results should be more specific and measurable.
- A consolidated M&E database could provide consistent data, save time and strengthen the quality of reports. YFS could also hire a short-term consultant or a volunteer to improve its M&E.

### 3. Efficiency

- Training costs accounted for 32% of total MFA expenses. A good measure to reduce training costs was the recruitment of local tutors to train students.

- Berlin-based personnel accounted for the biggest portion of the total MFA project – 32%. YFS closed its Berlin office and handed over most of the finance and accounting to YFS Yangon in January 2019, which showed a strategic move regarding cost-effectiveness and sustainability.
- Equipment covered a very small portion of the budget; students complained that some of the equipment was slow with technical errors and needed updating.

#### **Recommendations**

- Donors including the MFA and YFS itself consider more investment in equipment purchase and maintenance in future projects.
- More training and coaching needed for national staff especially the Project Officer in addition to leadership and management training and coaching for board members of Student Sub-Committee and Yangon Film Foundation (YFF).

## **4. Impact**

### **Impact on students as direct beneficiaries:**

- The MFA project clearly has a positive impact on students from different backgrounds.
- YFS's training helped students find jobs in filmmaking and other media.
- YFS also helped students broaden their network in filmmaking and media sector.

### **Impact on communities involved in YFS activities (Participatory Video (PV) and Traveling Cinema(TC):**

- YFS created some immediate, positive effects on the target community after PV courses. However, no long-term effects of the PV courses on communities were found in two locations where the evaluator visited and collected data.
- For TC activities, YFS students mainly showed films to the community audience rather than generated participatory and meaningful discussions about the films.

### **Broader impact on Myanmar people and society**

- YFS has contributed to a more diverse culture in Myanmar media sector generally.
- It is impossible to claim an impact at a large scale including enhanced freedom of speech and democracy considering Myanmar's vast geographical area and population as well as the control and oppression of the state and the military over media. Nevertheless, YFS has made changes at a smaller scale including educating young people to think critically, enabling access to information for communities in remote areas, building capacity and work ethics of filmmakers, all of which are necessary and conducive to bigger social and political changes.

#### **Recommendations**

- Both PV and TC activities are innovative measures to bring video making skills and documentaries to marginalized communities and should be carried on in the future. For PV, YFS needs to consider choosing a community with the presence of a CSO or a CBO for collaboration to sustain the impact of the activity. For TC, YFS could equip them with some practical facilitation skills to generate real discussions with the audience.
- For future project design, YFS could aim for more realistic outcomes.
- YFS should strengthen its current collaboration with the Film Development Centre (FDC) and other government entities as well as popular TV channels to implement more activities that familiarize Myanmar audience with and increase their understanding and appreciation of documentaries.

## **5. Sustainability and partnership**

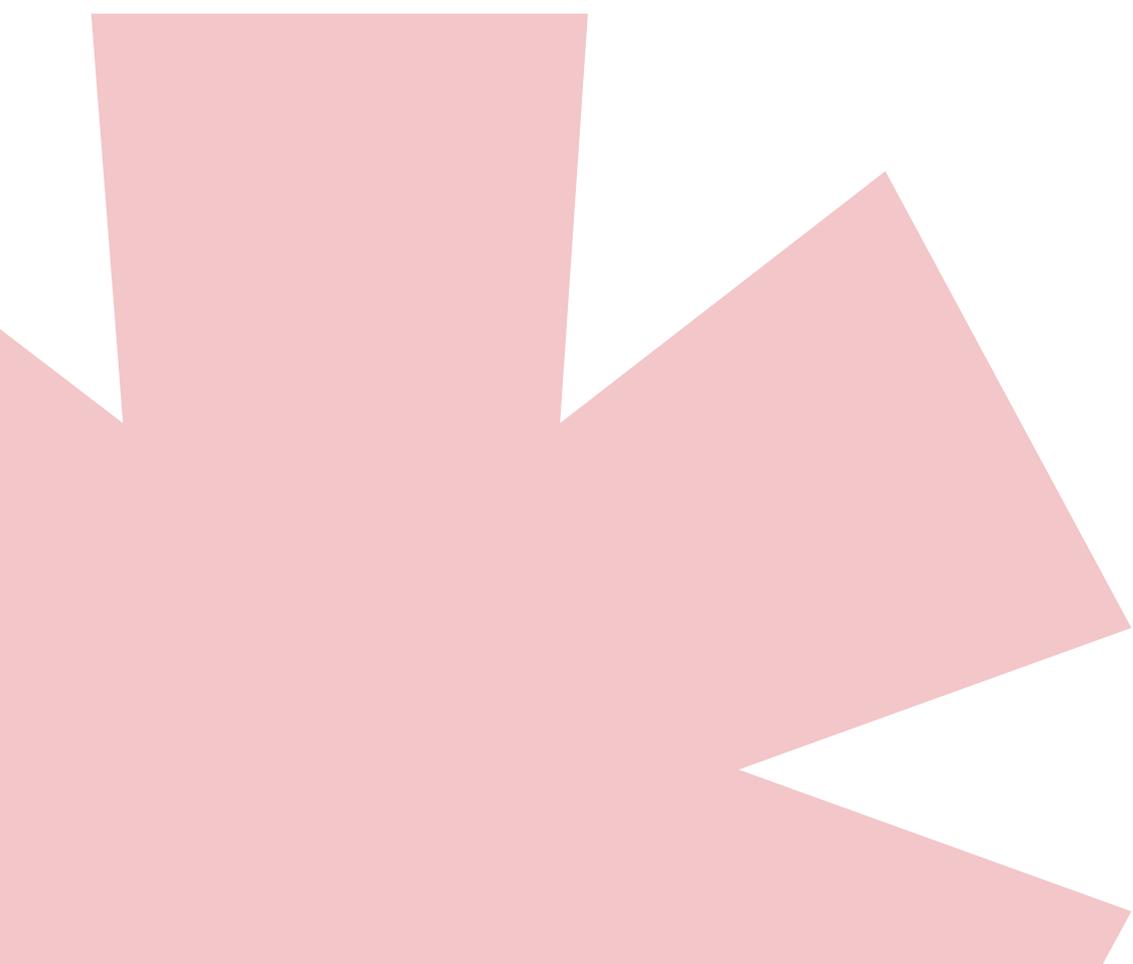
- YFS has also been effective in developing local capacity in filmmaking.
- YFS has strategic and effective mechanisms to involve current and former students.
- YFS has some positive improvements in government relation but is yet to obtain the MOU with the government or validation of YFS courses. It is not realistic to

expect the government to provide a permanent building or in-kind support.

- YFS and VIKES have enjoyed a good partnership. Yet, VIKES did not provide any capacity building for YFS staff apart from sending some volunteers from Finland to train YFS students during the MFA project period.

### **Recommendations**

- YFS could consider the operational model in which Myanmar nationals hold management roles while an expats serve as fundraiser or advisors as the first stage of nationalization process.
- In the long run when funding opportunities become scarce, YFS needs to consider charging tuition fees for its own financial viability.
- VIKES should discuss with YFS a specific exit strategy and some realistic and specific supports to sustain the project results and transfer to local administration in the next phase of the MFA project.



# Overview of YFS and the AFC/MFA project<sup>1</sup>

**Objective:** the project aims to contribute to a diverse, informed media culture and strengthened civil society in Myanmar.

**Expected outcomes** (as outlined in the Evaluation TOR):

- Increased capacity among multi-ethnic Myanmar filmmakers and media workers, trainers, producers to create engaging, authentic films of quality promoting peace, democracy and human rights.
- Greater engagement with social/human rights/development issues through films on migration, ethnic identity, livelihood, gender, women's and children's rights, the environment, peace and justice.
- Support the transition process by helping government and NGOs to disseminate positive messages about peace, reconciliation and human rights.
- Increased capacity of Myanmar media professionals to network, lobby for better conditions of practice, secure funding, manage trainings and other activities.
- Consolidate YFS as 'centre of excellence' in permanent building as part of a strong local and international network and establish sufficient capacity to hand over to Myanmar administration.

**Project beneficiaries:**

Proposed number immediate beneficiaries is 65 existing students plus 12 new students<sup>2</sup> in 2 years aged between 22 and 38 from different backgrounds (from rice farmers and shopkeepers, to bloggers, development workers and performance artists). Other direct beneficiaries include 5 local staff (3 men and 2 women) from 4 religious denominations: Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Hindu.

**The project duration:** 2 years (2017-2018)

**Total funding:** 365,000 EUR<sup>3</sup>

**Donor:** the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Finland via VIKES (The Finnish Foundation for Media and Development)

*Notes: At the time of the evaluation, the next phase of the project which will be implemented for three years was confirmed by the MFA.*

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The project aims to contribute to a diverse, informed media culture and strengthened civil society in Myanmar.

Photo: Auli Starck



# Introduction

## I. Evaluation audience

- Primary audience: YFS and VIKES (on behalf of the donor, the MFA)

## II. The scope of the evaluation

As outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR), the purpose of the evaluation is to mainly appraise the effectiveness of the AFC Project (whether it delivered what it promised to), its relevance and efficiency, its impact to the status of the target documentarists and students (with special focus on women and ethnic minorities), to the communities and people involved in the films produced by YFS students as well as any evidence of contribution to the democratic development and/or human rights situation in Myanmar, including freedom of expression. Additionally, the evaluation will appraise the project's sustainability.

Even though the main focus of the evaluation is on the project implementation period between 2017 and 2018, the evaluator will still acknowledge changes executed by YFS to improve their organizational structure and performance at the real time of the evaluation. The MFA fund contributed to half of the overall income of YFS in the 2017-2018 period. The rest of YFS's income came from other donors. To evaluate the AFC Project comprehensively, the evaluator will cover some of the activities outside the scope of the MFA fund such as Participatory Video activities. Since a three year grant as the continuity of the appraised project was confirmed by the MFA, the evaluation will offer some recommendations in relation to the next phase of the project.

## III. The evaluation design and methodology

This evaluation draws on both qualitative and quantitative methodology. The evaluator gathered primary data mainly using qualitative methods including focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Quantitative methodology was also adopted via a survey with YFS current and former students using a free online platform. Additional quantitative and qualitative data from YFS reports and project documents were utilized where relevant. The data were collected from different sources, analyzed, and triangulated so that evaluation findings can be as objective as possible.

45 people participated in the evaluation (14 in the online survey and 31 in KIIs and FGDs). The detailed evaluation design is in Appendix 1. The list of evaluation participants is in Appendix 2.

## IV. Project logical framework

A logical framework (see the details in Appendix 3) was created by the evaluator with the support from YFS leaders based on the information from the project proposal and annual reports by YFS in 2017 and 2018 as part of the evaluation tools to measure the project results<sup>4</sup> at different levels. A three hour workshop was carried out with YFS project staff and country director to go through the logical framework. It was then reviewed by YFS and VIKES for further feedback. Both evaluator and YFS filled in the framework with actual results in 2017 and 2018. The logframe was used to provide supporting evidence of YFS's successes as well as unachieved targets.

## **V. The evaluation team**

The evaluation was conducted by one independent consultant. An independent translator/interpreter was hired to translate the online survey and its results from English into Burmese and vice versa. She also interpreted the interviews with participants who could not speak English. VIKES Executive Director helped arrange an interview with the Finnish Ambassador to Myanmar. Both YFS Director and Country Director helped arrange interviews with tutors and representatives from NGO/international institution partners. The YFS Project Officer helped coordinate the interview with a junior government officer and interviews and FGDs with students, CSO partner and community members involved in PV training.

## **Limitations**

Due to limited time and human resources, the evaluator could only select representatives for KIIs and FGDs from tutors, current and former students, community members, CSO/NGO/institutional partners, and independent filmmakers. The data collected from those interviews and FGDs, hence, could reflect partially the information and the opinion of different project stakeholder groups.

The evaluator attempted to collect quantitative data via an online survey; however, only 14 out of 45 contacted students responded. Some of the questions in the online survey were not filled out by all 14 respondents. Therefore, the online survey was just indicative rather than rigorously reflected the information and the opinion of all YFS students under the AFC project. The evaluator was unable to obtain an interview with a government representative with decision making power but a junior officer at the FDC, thus, gained insufficient information about the perspective and the viewpoint of the government on YFS as a film school and a partner.

A logical framework was created by the evaluator based on YFS proposal and annual reports using program logic combined with logical framework approach in order to answer the question whether YFS delivered what it promised to do in the project proposal. The evaluator's judgement of YFS' achievements against this logframe, nonetheless, is relative because the baseline information and the data of some targets and actual results are absent and the logframe was not developed as part of the original project design.

## **VI. Ethics**

The evaluation was conducted following basic ethnical principles. All KII and FGD participants were informed clearly about the purpose of the evaluation and were free to share their opinion and stop the interview or discussion at any point. Except for a few facts mentioned by YFS leadership, all other opinions and quotes were kept anonymous throughout the evaluation report. The notes of all interviews and discussions were kept confidential and only accessible to the evaluator.

# Literature review

## **Overview of Myanmar socio-political context**

Myanmar, the largest country in mainland South East Asia, has a population of 53.90 million people (as of 2017). It is a lower-middle income economy with a gross national income (GNI) per capita of \$1,455 in 2017. Strong economic growth translated into a reduction in poverty from 48 to 32 percent between 2005 and 2015 (World Bank, 2018). Myanmar ranks 148 out of 189 countries and territories in the human development index (UNDP, 2018). It is among the three most vulnerable countries to extreme weather events. 89.5% of people over 15 years of age are literate based on the last housing and population census (Ministry of Immigration and Population, 2014).

Myanmar's maternal mortality rates and under-5 mortality rates are more than double the ASEAN average, while the infant mortality rates is 2.6 times the ASEAN average. Education, health, living conditions and economic freedoms are considerably different between urban and rural areas as well as different geographic locations (HARP-F and MIMU, 2018). Girls and women experience gender inequality in all socio-political and economic aspects due to entrenched social and gender norms in Myanmar society (The Gender Equality Network, 2015).

Myanmar is a diverse and divided country with many different ethnic groups that have different cultures, languages, and traditions (Kramer, 2011). Armed conflicts have affected the country for decades (Burke, Williams, Barron, Jolliffe, & Karr, 2017). In August 2017, an attack by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), a militant group in Myanmar's Rakhine state was followed by brutal and indiscriminate military responses, at least 655,000 Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Fighting between the Tatmadaw (Myanmar military) and various ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) has intensified in northern Kachin and Shan States resulting in over 100,000 civilians being displaced (UNESCO, 2017). Eight years after Myanmar's political opening, the ethnic states continue to fight a slate of historic injustices, including suppression of minority rights, socio-economic exclusion, land and resource seizure and exploitation, widespread poverty, fragile social cohesion exacerbated by anti-Muslim sentiment and Buddhist nationalism, statelessness, and military, rather than political, solutions (UNESCO, 2017).

## **Roles and the operational context of media in Myanmar**

During the five decades of military rule, Myanmar was one of the world's most restrictive media regimes (OHCHR, 2018). Since April 2016, the Myanmar government has been led by the National League for Democracy (NLD) following a landslide victory in the election in late 2015 (Rieffel, 2012; Pedersen, 2016).

While the country has made some improvements regarding freedom of the press, the optimism of the early years of the democratic transition has recently started to fade (OHCHR, 2018). The civilian NLD government has fallen back on repressive practices of previous military governments, putting human rights defenders, civil society members and journalists in a risky position (OHCHR, 2018). Even though official censorship was terminated in 2012, the state retained significant legal measures to control the media, fostering a culture of self-censorship. Travel restrictions limited access to trouble spots by national and international journalists (Burette, 2017).

Sensitive topics for the media include peace talks and ceasefires, human rights abuses, border conflicts, refugees, returnees, and internally displaced peoples, child soldiers, human trafficking, environmental degradation and resource extraction, drugs, and corruption (UNESCO, 2017).

Myanmar's media has been on the center stage in the country's transition process (Burette, 2017). However, Myanmar media still lacks in-depth stories or voices from the grass-roots including diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities. Although private media have more pluralistic and balanced coverage than state media, critical and analytical reporting is still rare (UNESCO, 2017). Whereas, local and ethnic media that report on issues that mainstream does not struggle with distribution, journalist training, how to interest local readers and listeners in addition to limited revenue sources (Cunningham, 2016).

Generally, Myanmar media repeats a victimized, objectified and sexualized view of women through the topics it covers and via the way it represents women and men. Women are less visible in print media as sources, spokespersons and experts. Women's magazines are reinforcing the view of women as primarily reproductive beings, with norms of modesty taking centre stage (The Gender Equality Network, 2015).

On the bright side, civil society organizations (CSOs) have been working with media to push for changes and government transparency (Well & Aung, 2014). The telecommunications and IT sectors have also expanded rapidly (Cunningham, 2016). In 2017, nearly 40 million people lived in households that owned a phone, and, of these, 36 million possessing smartphones (World Bank, 2018). Facebook is a major player with many young users. The media benefits from social media as a source of information and as a means to deliver news to remote areas. However, many Facebook users believe in gossip and false reports, and Facebook has made many readers less interested in buying print publications with genuine news (Cunningham, 2016).

Burma News International (BNI) highlighted the need to build strong lines of communication and mechanisms for information sharing among and between media, government officials, parliamentarians, community leaders, and civil society. They also pointed to the importance of professional, independent journalism, access to information, the inclusion of minority and women's voices, and media literacy (UNESCO, 2017).

### **Myanmar filmmaking industry**

Myanmar's filmmaking industry was at its height in early years of the 20th century. There were many Burmese-owned companies and several famous directors. Since the beginning of the Socialist era in 1962, Myanmar's film industry had faced strict censorship and control of film scripts. The period following the political events of 1988 witnessed increased control over the film industry by the government. Working conditions within the Myanmar film industry have been improved, with censors becoming less strict under political reforms since 2011<sup>5</sup>.

Myanmar documentary filmmaking began in 1920, with a short about the funeral of U Tun Shein, a leader of the independence movement. Myanmar was then blocked from the outside world after General Ne Win took over the government in 1962. All documentaries became means of propaganda for Ne Win's Socialist doctrine.

New opportunities for Myanmar's documentaries sprang up when a Bangkok-based curator Kaeko Sei led a discussion about international art house classics at Café Blue in downtown Yangon in 2003, and Lindsey Merrison started organizing workshops on documentary filmmaking in 2005. In 2006, Michal Bregant and Vit Janecek from the Film and Television School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU) facilitated filmmaking and documentary workshops at the Alliance Française, Yangon<sup>6</sup>.



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**In 2017, nearly 40 million people in Myanmar lived in households that owned a phone, 36 million possessing smartphones.**

Photo: Andrea Pepoli

# Key findings

## Relevance

YFS started from three workshops organized by its founder and current Director, an Anglo-Burmese filmmaker, Lindsey Merrison in 2005 when Myanmar was still under the military dictatorship. As per Ms Merrison's account, "I didn't have a vision for YFS at the beginning. Myanmar was still under the dictatorship. It was limited what you could do. We were the first people to do film workshops for 3 weeks (in Myanmar). And then we were not sure if we could do it again. It just grew organically from the first workshops." However, Merrison and YFS leadership later grow the school as a development organization with a clear mission and vision towards a more democratic, informed society in Myanmar.

YFS is still the only structured, specialized film school in Myanmar up to now. There are other private-run and expensive film training courses in addition to some courses provided at the University of Arts and Culture, which seem to have lower quality training according to interviewed students, trainer and a YFS partner.

"YFS is unique. In other countries in South and South-East Asia, filmmakers don't get chance to learn to make films in a protected environment like in YFS. In Bangladesh where I do my research on woman filmmakers, people go to a national university to learn, but the training is not good. To learn how to make films, they have to pay a lot of money to go overseas or to India. Only elite people can afford it. Same with Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian countries."  
(a filmmaking trainer)

"(There is) no film schools in Myanmar. Other private trainings are expensive but not good quality."  
(YFS student)

YFS responds to the needs and the aspiration of young Myanmar people who wish to learn how to make films but have no financial capacity to take courses in the country or overseas. YFS gives opportunities for people who are interested in filmmaking including female students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds or ethnic minority groups. YFS also accommodates and provides financial support so that students from other states and regions than Yangon can attend training courses.

"YFS is very good for poor students like me, those who couldn't afford to pay. It offered scholarships."  
(YFS student)

YFS is highly relevant to the context and the needs of people in Myanmar

“There are other private film training courses but very expensive and also just short courses. YFS provides free, long-term courses and gives us career opportunities.”  
(YFS student)

“This school is great for young filmmakers who want to make fiction films, documentaries, whatever it is...It’s a good start for me.” (YFS student)  
“It’s very good for Myanmar people, especially those from other states because they have limited access to media and the internet.”  
(YFS student)

“In independent film area in Myanmar, there are more males than females, but at YFS, we see more female filmmakers coming out (than male ones).”  
(a male student)

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Targets	Actual results in 2017	Actual results in 2018	Evaluator’s judgement
Objective	the project aims to contribute to a diverse, informed media culture in Myanmar and strengthened civil society.					See the impact section of the evaluation report
Result 1	Increased capacity among multi-ethnic Myanmar filmmakers and media workers, trainers, producers to create engaging, authentic films of quality promoting peace, democracy and human rights.	# of films produced by YFS students at the end of the advanced course # of students graduating in 2017 and 2018 working in media & development sector # students becoming qualified local tutors at YFS	15+ films of quality exploring contemporary issues and/or promoting development goals; 60+ alumni working in Myanmar’s media and development sectors	8 documentaries were made on social changes; 1 film on Vikes-funded AFC trainings completed, 5 in production; 2 evaluation films completed around 107 YFS alumni (since the beginning of YFS) working in film/ media in 2017. 1 student became qualified tutor	07 short documentaries produced on socially relevant topics in Myanmar; 6 films on trainings are being produced; Alumni’s jobs: not yet finishing data collection but trend may be similar to 2017 (L.M) 2 students became qualified local tutors in 2018;	Achieved
Output 1.1	Multi-ethnic students have increased knowledge and skills in filmmaking from basic to advanced levels	# of students trained and passed YFS performance appraisal at basic & advanced levels; % of ethnic minority students (i.e not Bamar) against total number of students	40+ students trained	22 existing students and 7 new students 32% of the trained students were non-Bamar	10 existing students and 25 new students 42%+ trained students were non-Bamar	Achieved
Output 1.2	Increased number of alumni with skills to coach/mentor new students in different aspects of filmmaking	# of alumni/existing students capable completed “train to teach” initiative	8+ trained local tutors as part of the ‘train-to-teach’ programme; 10 editors/peer trainers	3 peer trainers; 6 student editors/peer trainers	8 peer trainers; 4 editors;	Achieved
Output 1.3	Multi-ethnic YFS students have increased awareness of social/development issues	# events/workshops/ activities conducted to increase students’ knowledge of social/ development issues		Students learned about social issues via making 8 engaging documentaries on topic of ‘women & peace’, researching before making films & editing; screening and feedback sessions, etc.	students learned about social issues via 3 documentary exercises in which they sensitively observe the working poor and 4 short documentaries exploring social topics such as migration, youth culture, gender relations, marginalization of rural communities.	Achieved

Result 2	Increased capacity of Myanmar media professionals to network, lobby for better conditions of practice, secure funding, manage trainings and other activities	% of graduates/ students won grants to produce films in 2017 and 2018; # successful lobbying activities by YFS students (resulting in better conditions for media work)	3+ grants awarded per year	a pitching competition NOT held in either 2017 or 2018 due to lack of funds and accepted by the Finnish MFA; however, students and alumni are making their own films outside YFS that are sometimes screened at Wathann Film Festival and elsewhere.	a pitching competition NOT held (lack of funds)	NOT achieved regarding lobbying since no students joined any organized activities directly for lobbying purposes; Modestly achieved for students' capacity in getting/managing fund for films due to cancelled pitching competitions
Output 2.1	YFS students increased other skills in making film budget, proposal writing for a small grant, and pitching etc.	# students completed pitching competitions # of students assisted to apply for funding opportunities in 2017 and 2018 # of lobbying activities for better conditions of practices organized by YFS students	8 screenwriters receive training, also in pitching; 8 short scripts written	screenwriting pitch was not held at YFS in 2017 or 2018, but 6 female YFS screenwriters worked with the School's int'l Screenwriting Tutor to create the scripts for the 10-part TV education series 'The Sun, the Moon & the Truth'; 8 students in the Documentary Competition and Advanced Editing Course learned how to manage their filming budgets of approx. 1,500 USD each, independently researched and production managed their own short documentaries	12 students on the beginners' course learned how to manage a small filming budget and crew as they researched and filmed their four final films in different locations in MMR.	Modestly achieved because no pitching competitions (the planned activities for this output) were cancelled due to lack of funds
Output 2.2	Increased involvement of YFS students in government advocacy activities	# students joined lobbying activities for better conditions of practice in media sector in Myanmar		no lobbying activities by YFS students but 5 alumni took part in panel discussions e.g. on censorship during Memory Heritage Film Festival;	no lobbying activities by students	NOT achieved no students joined any organized activities directly for lobbying purposes
Result 3	Support the transition process by helping government and NGOs to disseminate positive messages about peace, reconciliation and human rights and greater engagement with social/ development issues through films;	# of films/videos produced with the participation of individuals and villages # of media products made in collaboration with NGOs/ CSOs produced by YFS students # films on social development issues screened publicly # of people reached in all screening events	8+ participatory videos made by marginalised/ disadvantaged (2+ films made by community in 2017, giving a voice to 500+ people; 2 participatory video films facilitated in communities in peri-urban Yangon; 4+ films made in 2018 by communities giving a voice to 600+); 50+ short 'local testimonies'	4 participatory videos produced abt. environmental/ cultural issues; 3 docu-animations broadcast on national TV (no viewing data available for TV, potential reach = 30m; 750,000+ online views; 25,000 shares)	2 participatory videos on safe migration and waste recycling produced by peri-urban communities in 2018; 75,000+ views of 4 short docuanimations on private TV station and social media platforms; 250+ audience joining YFS annual screening; 2,000+ people attended film screenings as part of Traveling Cinema activities	Partially achieved

Output 3.1	Increased in number of students and community members and communities trained and participate in film production about social issues	# of students trained on PV courses # local community members trained and participate in video/film production;	8 students to be trained in 2018; 2 peri-urban communities/CSOs given a voice via PV facilitation	8 students trained; 24 community people in Shan state/Mandalay regions trained in PV	8 students trained; 10+ members of CSOs in peri-urban Yangon participated in making 2 videos	Achieved
Output 3.2	Increased opportunities for a diverse range of audience in different areas to watch films on social/development issues by YFS	# of screening events successfully organized under Traveling Cinema activities # of screening events successfully organized apart from Traveling Cinema activities (particularly for documentaries about social/development issues)	1+ community visited in 2017; 3 communities visited in 2018	1 village (Yae Oo, Inle Lake, Naung Shwe, Shan state) visited as part of Traveling Cinema; 3 short docu-animations broadcast on national TV;	4 short docu-animations broadcast on private TV station and social media platforms ; 1 Annual Screening (of 4 films) in 2018 in Yangon; 6 Traveling Cinema screenings in 4 states and Mae Sot-Thailand	Partially achieved (since YFS still faced challenges to screen documentaries under MFA fund addressing social/development issues nationally due to censorship and unwillingness from national TV channels)
Output 3.3	Increased collaboration with NGOs and CSOs in producing & disseminating media products on social/development issues	# of NGOs/CSOs were active partners of YFS # of campaigns/ screenings done in collaboration with NGOs/CSOs		9 NGO/CSOs/CBOs (YFS had its films screened or donated to these organizations for screening)	8 NGOs/CSOs/CBOs	Achieved
Result 4	Consolidate YFS as 'centre of excellence' (i.e having internationally qualified expertise in MMR, training courses based on international standards of filmmaking; being a role model of women's empowerment and human rights)	# of international awards gained by YFS and its students in 2017 & 2018; # films produced by female directors		8 awards 6 out of 8 directors of 8 documentaries were female; 3 out of 4 local awards won by female students/graduates	4 awards gained by YFS students	Achieved
Output 4.1	YFS students increase knowledge, skills through training courses delivered by international experts	# students received on-site mentorship by international experts; # of students completed training courses by international trainers	8 students ; 2 mentorships in 2018 (don't have had individual targets for each year): the Advanced Editing, Postproduction coaching was targeted at 8 directors and 8 editors and the Sound Design course targeted 10 students.	26 students received training in 2017	36 students received training in 2018	Achieved
Output 4.2	Increased number of female students has improved knowledge and skills in film-making	# female students completed the advanced filmmaking course		55% of trained students were female; 50% of Traveling Cinema and PV facilitators were female;	53% of students trained were female	Well achieved

Output 4.3	Increased number of films screened nationally and internationally	# of films screened nationally and internationally		36 films screened nationally & internationally (13 films screened in 8 Southeast Asian countries outside of Myanmar)	61 YFS films screened at 33 national and international festival screenings in 22 countries 2018;	Achieved
Result 5	Increased government support and sufficient local capacity is established to hand over YFS to Myanmar administration	Identification of permanent school building and other (in-kind) support by the government; validation of YFS' curriculum by the government; % of YFS management personnel is local	Identification of permanent school building and other in-kind support by government's validation of YFS' curriculum by the government;	no in-kind or permanent building supported by the government government does not recognize YFS graduates 1 finance manager & 1 Yangon Film Service Coordinator are local	no in-kind or permanent building supported by the government (a nomination of YFS film by govt. film department (MMPDD) to represent Myanmar at ASEAN Film Festival, Fordham University, New York, USA.) government does not recognize YFS graduates 1 finance manager, and 1 Yangon Film Services Coordinator are local	NOT achieved concerning government's support (in-kind & a permanent building); ACHIEVED concerning initial steps to build management/ leadership capacity of students and local staff
Output 5.1	Local staff and students have improved management skills	# of students in annual Student Sub-Committee and Yangon Film Foundation board # local staff were provided management trainings	4-5 full-time staff members trained;	4 staff were trained in management skills 5 students in YFS Student Committee; 3 in Yangon Film Foundation (YFF);	3+ local staff were trained in management skills; 5 students in YFS Student Committee; 3 in YFF;	Achieved
Output 5.2	Government has dialogues with YFS and increased engagement with YFS activities	# of government officials at Ministry level attended meetings/events organized by YFS # of meetings/ events/ lobbying activities organized with the government		2 meetings between YFS leadership and the government	2 meetings btw YFS leadership & the government; YFS alumni teaching at government Myanmar Film Development Centre; Master Classes by YFS tutors 1 ministerial visit to the School 2 visits per month by YFS Project Officer for film permission	Partially achieved concerning meetings with the government; but MOU with the line ministry has NOT been signed

Different stakeholders including students, trainers, NGO/cultural institution partners, and independent filmmaker highly appreciated YFS' operation in Myanmar. It can also be seen in the literature review that Myanmar's filmmaking industry declined and was out of touch with the rest of the world due to a long period of being controlled and oppressed by the military dictatorship. With a more relaxing operational context brought about by recent political changes, Myanmar media generally and filmmaking particularly are in an urgent need for more trained professionals, especially female, and those from minor ethnic groups for a more diversified media culture. YFS' existence, therefore, is highly relevant to the context and the needs of people in Myanmar.

## Effectiveness

### YFS achievements based on a logical framework (logframe) created by the evaluator

The logframe was created by the evaluator based on YFS proposal and annual reports using program logic combined with a logical framework approach in order to answer the question whether YFS delivered what it promised to do to in the project proposal. YFS leadership also reviewed the logframe and filled in additional data. To see the full version of the logframe, please refer to annex 3. It is noted that except for result 1 from training activities which are fully under the MFA fund, all other results are contributed by both MFA fund and other donors' support.

The evaluator's judgement of YFS' achievements against this logframe is relative since baseline data and the data of some targets and actual results are absent. To further appraise YFS's effectiveness, the evaluator uses information from YFS document reviews, the online survey, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders, all of which will be presented in the narrative part following this logframe.

### YFS effectiveness based on data from YFS document reviews, FGDs and KIIs with stakeholders

#### Recruitment

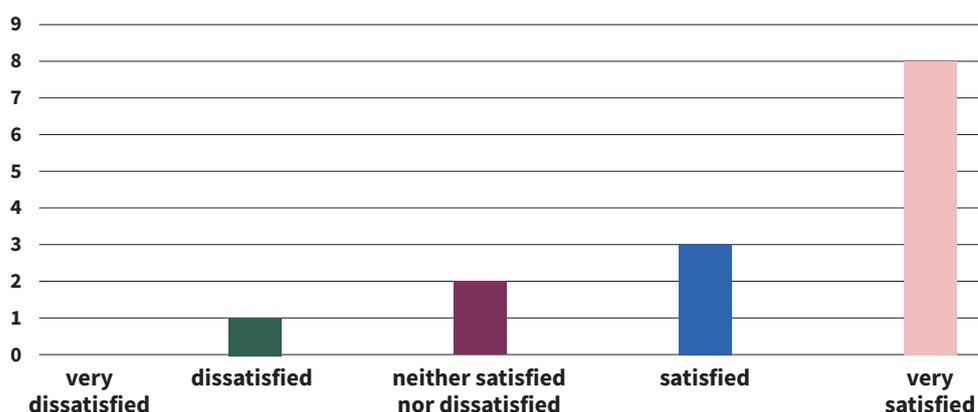
Recruitment is among the most effective activities implemented by YFS. According to YFS Director, around 70 applications were received on average during recruitment of a new intake. The FGDs with current and former students showed several accessible sources of recruitment information including word-of-mouth (from alumni or those who know YFS), search engines, YFS Facebook, Traveling Cinema and Participatory Video activities, and so forth.

Recruitment process is also done thoroughly from screening to face-to-face interviews, with a panel of three members including student committee members and the YFS Director. Candidates who were selected for YFS courses either had some initial experience in arts and some filmmaking skills or showed interest in filmmaking. However, YFS also admitted a number of alumni for their advanced courses. YFS has separate application forms for different training courses.

Students from other ethnicities than Bamar accounted for 32% and 42% in 2017 and 2018<sup>7</sup> respectively, which is a compliment for YFS regarding its effort to recruit students from various ethnic backgrounds. 8 out of the 12 students (67%) from the new intake in 2016 (most of whom continued taking courses at YFS in 2017 and 2018) were from Yangon region. However, of 12 students from the new intake in 2018, only 3 (25%) were from Yangon.

In Myanmar, ethnic states and remote divisions often lack facilities and have higher poverty rates and lower opportunities to study and earn income, more conflicts, and

Chart 1: Students' level of satisfaction



weaker social cohesion. It is more likely that ethnic minority students who later become filmmakers will make films and voice issues that are closer to perspectives of ethnic states and remote regions than those from Yangon. Therefore, YFS should continue to maintain the diversity of its students, with a target proportion of ethnic minority students every year. YFS could also set a reasonable quota in its annual plan (and/or include it in the next MFA project proposal if relevant) for students whose families are living in ethnic states or other divisions rather than Yangon for new intakes in the future.

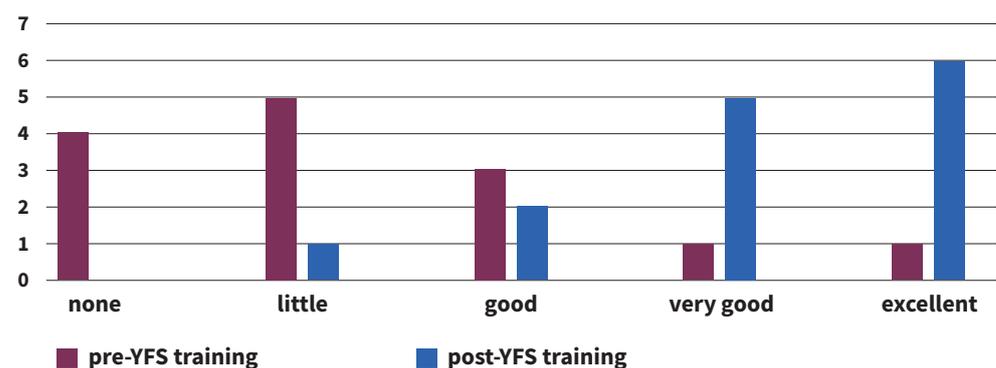
**Training activities**

**Overall, training activities at YFS were done effectively.** There were no dropouts between 2017 and 2018 according to YFS Director. The document review, in-depth interviews and FGDs with different stakeholders helped give insights of different aspects of YFS training activities as follow.

✦ Most of the students in the FGDs were satisfied with YFS training courses. The online survey also showed the high level of satisfaction among respondents (chart 1).

✦ YFS beginner students had limited or no experience in filmmaking prior to their study at YFS. Students received some theoretical knowledge and spent more time on practices (except for film analysis course) in addition to feedback and mentoring. According to an international trainer who has been working with YFS almost since the beginning, most beginner students were shy and overwhelmed with the new knowledge and skills after the first seven weeks of training. However, they became more confident and think more critically with more training and after graduation. Chart 2 below demonstrates the improvement of YFS students based on the self-assessment before and after YFS training of 14 existing and former students who responded to the online survey. **To sum up, YFS courses provided students with a substantial basis of filmmaking skills, improved their independent and critical thinking and self-confidence significantly.**

Chart 2: Students’ self-assessment of skills



✦ **Apart from technical training, knowledge of social issues including gender, conflicts and peace, and so forth were integrated in PV course as well as via sharing workshops by NGO partners.** Among seven students responding to the question about their social knowledge after joining YFS, four (57%) said it increased a little more and three (43%) increased considerably. It is important that YFS continues to integrate knowledge of different social issues (relevant to Myanmar context) in its training courses. YFS aims to contribute to a more informed media culture and



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**Going to the field required students to work in a team, create rapport with target communities and improve their problem-solving skills.**

Htein Kan lake, Kyaukpadaung township where YFS students conducted a Participatory Video course.

Photo: Myo Min Tun

strengthened society in Myanmar; hence, its students need to be equipped with relevant social knowledge in order to reflect those issues in their future films or media products after graduation. YFS should continue to request some NGOs' partners specializing on specific social issues in Myanmar (social cohesion, education, and politics, etc.) to send their staff and share their knowledge and experience on a voluntary basis.

 **TC and PV projects<sup>8</sup> are innovative initiatives to bring documentary, filmmaking skills, and information to remote community outside of Yangon city.** They also created good impact on both students and community members involved in those activities. TC and PV activities exposed students to communities outside of Yangon and provide them with good opportunities to immerse into communities for real life experience and share their skills and knowledge in filmmaking as well as screen their films to more people who otherwise did not have no access to such films. Going to the field required students to work in a team, create rapport with target communities and improve their problem-solving skills and ability to think on their feet. They also came back with more real life experience, understanding, and sympathy for other people, all of which are necessary for their future filmmaking career which requires both high skills and feelings. However, an interviewed community member suggested YFS student facilitators improve their understanding of local culture and how things work when they are in the field. On the community side, TC and PV activities also left some positive effects on communities as well as the members that were involved directly. Detailed effects of YFS on communities as part of TC and PV projects will be discussed in the Impact section.

 **Another successful element of YFS training is the thoughtful combination of international and local tutors in teaching and support for students.** International trainers, with seasoned expertise and broad exposure to international filmmaking, often teach the students to critical thinking and conceptual knowledge. Whereas, local trainers, with the advantage of sharing the same language and culture, help explain specific techniques<sup>9</sup> to the students when they have difficulties and inspire them with their own experience as senior fellows. However, students recommended YFS trainers to show them more techniques besides conceptual knowledge.

”The tutors come from different countries with different backgrounds - Germany, India, Finland, and America. Most tutors are also filmmakers or teaching at university or school in their countries... We can't learn from different people from different countries in local courses. It's a strong point for YFS.”  
(YFS student)

“We (international tutors) teach them to learn and think in a cinematic way. That's the main purpose of arts. I don't focus on techniques but help students use their thinking and develop their own ideas. They are good in techniques.”  
(YFS trainer)

“Most tutors give conceptual thinking. When facing technical difficulties, most students have to learn from alumni, local tutors and from Youtube. Technical stuff can be learned from the internet too. We learned much about emotions and feelings during making films. Local tutors/alumni taught us little things about techniques. International tutors only cared about the concepts. Most students didn't know about the equipment. We expected the international tutors to share with us more techniques”.  
(YFS students)

 **Train to Teach activity can be considered both strategic and successful activity done by YFS.** By mobilizing mainly YFS alumni to initially assist and later independently tutor and coach students alongside experienced trainers, YFS does not only build the capacity to share knowledge of local tutors/mentors and the bond between them and their students. Students value local tutors as much as international ones. This activity also helps YFS sustain its project outcomes (further discussion of Train to Teach activity will be presented in Sustainability session.)

”We shared with our seniors and local tutors if we have difficulties. They shared with us their experience.”  
(YFS student)

“During film analysis course, our tutor was the local tutor, but we loved him. He was very good.”  
(YFS student)

 **YFS also did very well in supporting students.** YFS provides accommodation and travel bursaries for students who are not from Yangon during regular courses, and study grant is given to all students regardless of where they come from during the first year. YFS have mechanisms to receive students’ feedback including an evaluation form filled by students at the end of each course and Student Sub-Committee. The creation of Student Sub Committee is not only useful in giving voice to the students but also an excellent way for students to improve their leadership, organization, and negotiation skills. The Student Sub Committee, with its leadership being elected annually, is also a good way to increase students’ responsibility and ownership of YFS work, thus, contributes to the transition of YFS towards a school managed by Myanmar people in the future (more on students’ involvement in YFS work will be discussed in Sustainability session).

**YFS has been excellent in gender mainstreaming.** YFS leadership, experienced tutors, mentors, and many staff are female, which is inspiring for female students who joined YFS courses. This is very important to media sector and particularly filmmaking industry which are considered the sector for men not women in Myanmar context<sup>10</sup>. 55% and 45% of YFS students in 2017 and 2018 respectively were female<sup>11</sup>. Both existing and former female students have confidence in their skills and capacity to work in filmmaking. Some of YFS female students also received reputable international awards for filmmakers in different countries.

#### **Students’ filmmaking career pathway after graduation**

Based on YFS reports, FGDs, and the online survey, it seemed that the majority of YFS alumni are working in filmmaking/media sector or for NGOs. The FGDs with former students showed that they either work as freelance or full-time filmmakers or video journalist, and YFS training courses directly helped them find jobs. All 14 online survey respondents found the skills learned from YFS useful for their current profession. All five current students who answered the online survey want to become filmmaking professionals after graduating from YFS.

#### **YFS films (media products)**

This evaluation is to evaluate the Advanced Filmmaking Course project funded by the MFA as a development initiative. The evaluator is not specialized in filmmaking, therefore, will not appraise YFS films and media products. However, this part will briefly present different opinions of a number of interviewees including YFS partners, students, trainers, and some independent filmmakers about YFS films.



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**Development actors  
highly appreciate the  
quality and content of  
YFS films.**

**Photo: Still from the movie "Far From Yangon",  
Directed by Thida Swe.**

“Malteser made a film (“More Than a Tree”), with YFS in 2012 which was awarded several times. Thus, it made sense to approach them again for (another) collaboration...I am very satisfied with the end product (the film made in partnership with YFS).”  
(YFS NGO partner)

“I was very happy with the quality of the (YFS) film. Also the multi-stakeholder group, the government and CSOs, they were all happy with it.”  
(YFS partner)

“I’m very impressed. I’ve seen many of the films which are very good.”  
(YFS partner)

“I’ve seen a few films done by YFS students. I was impressed. They made an impact on you. Powerful films.”  
(a KII respondent)

“I’ve watched some of their (YFS) films and they have good quality.”  
(a filmmaking trainer)

“The main challenge is film-makers are not connected with local people. They come from Rakhine and make films about Rakhine but (are) not connected with Rakhine people. We make Rakhine films for Yangon audience not for Rakhine audience. We know about YFS films and we have screened many times in Yangon and worldwide, but when I asked Rakhine people “Do you know (any) films about Rakhine?” and they say “I don’t know”.”  
(a KII respondent)

“...If you watch 2-3 films of YFS, you guess their quality is good, but if you watch 20 of their films, you will see similar style and you get overwhelmed. It could get boring. It’s like a formula.”  
(an international filmmaker)

“Generally, YFS films are good. Other people see they have the same pattern in their films, but I’ve only seen some of them. Their films are predictable.”  
(a KII respondent)

“(There was the time when) YFS made very creative films. After that, due to money problem, they make NGOs films. It is very difficult to show problems of ethnicity and wars for any film groups in Myanmar. Other western countries want to know about Myanmar, but the way they want to know is very cliché: the army is not good; democracy is good; ethnic people are very poor. I think (YFS) students follow a formula. They make films not to explain about the country but (based on) the viewpoint of NGOs. NGO films are very limited. Students are creative within a limit.”  
(a KII respondent)

The information collected from respondents and YFS documents shows that besides good quality films including international award winning ones, YFS has also produced documentaries and short films that support the agenda of NGOs and international agencies. Development actors highly appreciate the quality and content of YFS films.

A number of YFS current students and graduates as well as professional filmmakers wish to see more creative, art house films and fiction films rather than just documentaries. Funding constraints and donors’ expectations may limit choices for YFS

in this aspect. However, it is recommended for both YFS and donors to consider adopting a more balanced approach to filmmaking training and production. Even though it is necessary to produce documentaries directly addressing social and development issues of Myanmar, it is important not to forget the pervasive influence and dominance of commercial and entertainment media on the society and the stringent government censorship on films on “sensitive topics”. Documentaries on Myanmar’s problems may find it challenging to reach the majority of audience, but fiction and edutainment ones could do the job<sup>12</sup>.

### **YFS film screenings**

YFS films have been screened at different international festivals in different countries. In Myanmar, between 2017 and 2018, YFS was able to screen several short documentaries or videos made by PV participants on some social topics for small-scale audiences under TC program and two annual screening events in 2017 and 2018 respectively. YFS was also able to screen seven docu-animations on a private TV channel, Youtube, and a national TV channel in the project period.

“Myanmar Radio and Television (MRTV) has recently expressed willingness to sign a contract with YFS for curated screenings of YFS awarded documentaries. This is an important step forward for YFS to have its new documentaries on Youth & Peace broadcast on MRTV later this year. MRTV would like to have a list of YFS’ awarded documentaries with recommendations and which films should be broadcasted as priority”

(YFS leadership)

It is acknowledged that it has been a positive achievement concerning YFS’ effort to reach a wider range of audience via popular TV channels. However, the MFA project aimed to contribute to a more informed Myanmar society. YFS needs a long time in to do it. YFS also needs to screen its films frequently for a larger scale of audience (Myanmar has over 50 million people from over 130 ethnic groups).

During the MFA project period, YFS faced considerable barriers from both popular TV channels and government censorship and were unable to broadcast documentaries that directly address social and development issues of Myanmar such as wars, conflicts, and human rights. As mentioned in the earlier section, YFS could find an additional way via true fiction and edutainment films to reach a much larger number of viewers of popular TV channels.

### **Other factors that are conducive to the work of YFS:**

- Lindsey Merrison’s vast professional network and extensive experience in filmmaking as well as her understanding of context and culture of Myanmar is a driving factor for YFS’ growth.
- YFS has a good relationship with a range of NGOs and UN agencies in both commissioned work and voluntary collaborations which are beneficial for those organizations themselves, YFS, and their students (for income generation and improved professional experience).
- YFS Facebook site has more than 20,000 followers which is beneficial for information sharing and visibility.
- Donors’ flexibility for project adjustment because they understand the Myanmar context.

### **Hindering factors for YFS effectiveness including:**

- Funding constraints.
- Obtaining transparent information on policies and practices from the line agencies (Ministry of Information for the MoU and the Myanmar Motion Picture

Development Department for film censorship)

- Obtaining the MoU as well as partnership with the government.
- Obtaining permission for broadcasting YFS films
- Getting YFS films screened on national TV channels: from the TV channel side - not wanting to broadcast or not willing to pay money for YFS films; from students as co-holders of film copyright - not wanting to broadcast their films before screening them in international festivals. At YFS there are also different views on screening matter: trying to charge TV channels for broadcasting YFS films leading to fewer large-scaled screening opportunities nationally or letting national TV channels broadcast films without fee.

### **Recommendations and feedback from existing and former students collected during FGDs and from the online survey:**

- Equipment needs to be upgraded.
- Recent interpretation in classes is not fully correct; therefore, a better interpreter is needed.
- More events should be organized to link current students with alumni.
- YFS should only select those who have real passion for filmmaking and who are “crazy about arts” when recruiting new students.
- Some YFS students are more interested in making fiction films. YFS focuses on only documentary filmmaking. It would be great if YFS invites fiction directors and camera tutors to train young filmmakers to make good fiction films and improve film industry in Myanmar.
- Most of the topics covered in YFS documentaries are sensitive issues. YFS should produce some art house films that make audience feel something.
- YFS should support film grants to students who desire to make their own projects. YFS now has only competition for film grants every two years. To give motivation for students, YFS and possible donors should provide at least two small film grants a year.
- It would be better to have more public screenings of films produced with modern technology<sup>13</sup>.

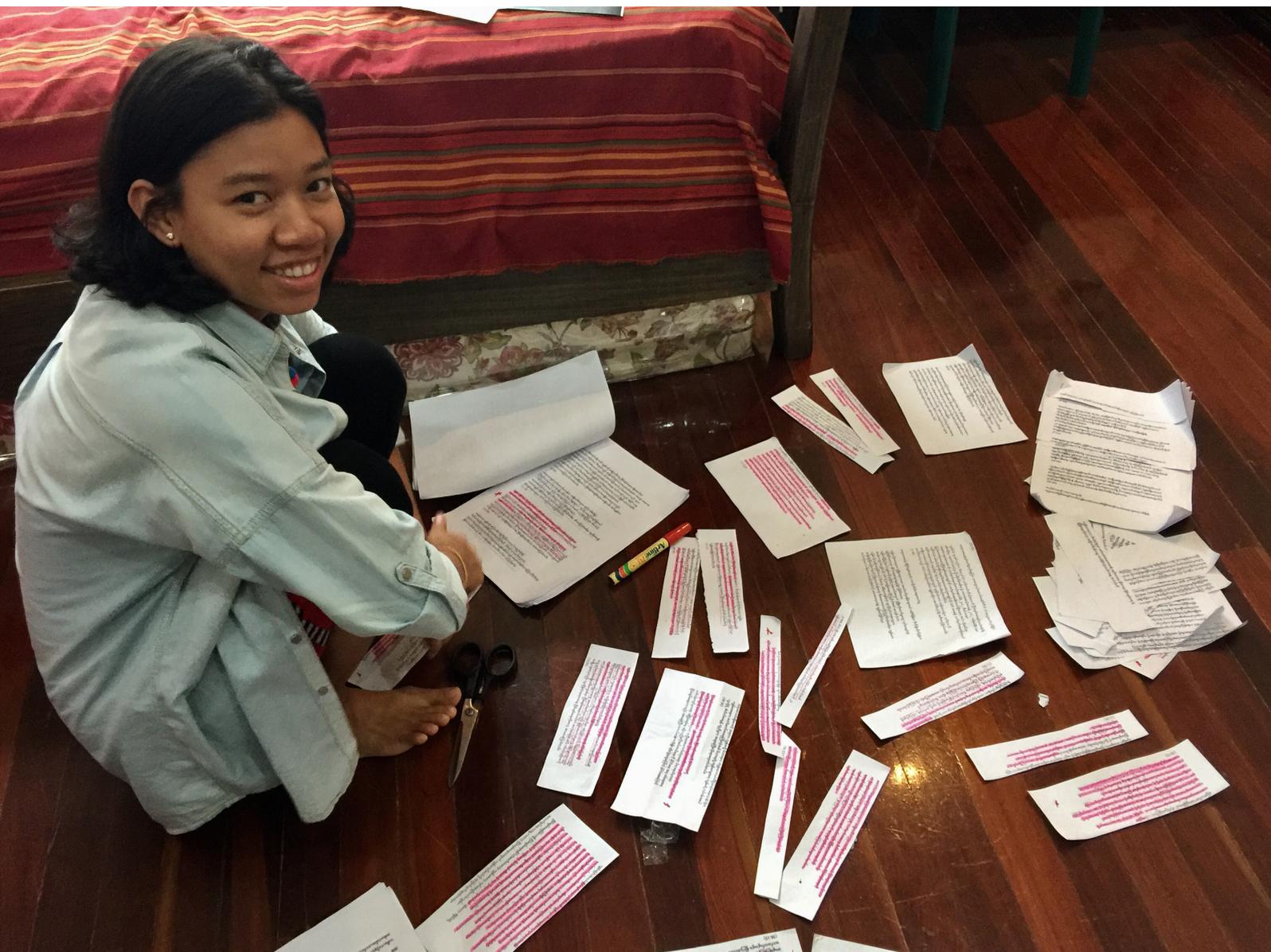
### **Monitoring and evaluation**

YFS made some evaluation films of several training courses in a year, which is an elaborate task to show the school training and student journey visually. However, creating several evaluation films in a year is time consuming and not necessary because YFS has also other measures to monitor students’ progress and collect feedback from students and teachers such as evaluation form for students and trainer report at the end of each subject.

YFS could also consider producing one evaluation film for a chosen course in a given year that will showcase the school training program. The rest of the fund usually used to pay for a crew to make evaluation films could be used for providing existing students with small grants to create their own films if the school is under financial constraint. This will also allow YFS personnel to spend time on other productive tasks.

Monitoring templates currently used by YFS include student profile Excel sheet and information of graduate student destination collected on an annual basis. These two documents are quite basic and not effective in generating data ready for reporting and decision making. Additionally, there are occasional inconsistencies in number of students trained in 2017 and 2018 as well as the students’ films that are direct result of MFA fund (there were also films that were produced with support from other donors).

YFS could develop a project result tracking template that comprises a number of trained students of different categories (repetitive versus non-repetitive; brand-new students versus previous students joining a specific training course) at output level and quantitative data (number of films produced, students’ jobs after graduation, etc.) at outcome level. This template will help YFS to track their project achievements and provide clear data for the future evaluation.



**YFS should only select those who have real passion for filmmaking and who are “crazy about arts” when recruiting new students.**

Photo: Tuula Mehtonen

Concerning students' destination after completing YFS trainings, YFS Project Officer is still collecting job information of students from the early years. This takes so much time to finish, yet YFS is still unable to provide a concrete, disaggregated job data of alumni only in 2017 or 2018 for the MFA project. Two years is a good period of time for YFS to follow up and collect its graduate students' job information for M&E purpose.

An annual report together with a Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) template were sent to the donor – the MFA via VIKES annually. Generally, the narrative of YFS annual reports to the MFA is good with examples and explanation of its activities, achievements, challenges, and lessons-learned. Nonetheless, there were some repetitions of one indicator of achievements (i.e number of students trained or number of films/videos made) for different levels of achievements (i.e outputs – the direct results of activities, and outcomes- the direct results of the outputs). This is because YFS did not have a suitable logical framework developed at the beginning of the MFA project.

YFS could use an approach to project design and management (program logic, Logframe, and so forth) to outline the logical relationship between outputs, results/ outcomes and goal/impact with specific indicators at each level. This framework will be useful to collect relevant data for achievements, areas of improvement, and lessons learned accordingly. When creating long-term project outcomes, YFS should write them in more specific and measurable language rather than being general or too ambitious drawing on the lessons learned from this MFA project. For example, for instead of setting the outcome “being centre of excellence”, YFS could make it more specific and measurable outcome related to its training expertise, its curriculum based on international or international awards given to students' films etc.

Even though YFS cannot collect baseline data available for Myanmar media/ filmmaking, it is advised that YFS uses its own data of the year prior to the project to fill out baseline information for the next phase of the MFA project. YFS should also set project targets for all activities, outputs and outcomes in each project year to measure annual achievement of its project.

Since YFS does not have a person specialized in M&E, the school could hire a short-term consultant or a volunteer to help improve its M&E system. YFS could advertise for an M&E volunteer on websites such as Themimu.info or LinkedIn.com or contact organizations for volunteers - CUSO or VSO.

### **Implementation of previous recommendations**

Prior to this evaluation, a Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise was done by an independent consultant in 2016 and a finance audit by UNFPA in 2018. Both assignments provided YFS with recommendations for improvement. Overall, YFS has made efforts to respond to those recommendations where relevant. Please refer to Appendix 4 for recommendations and YFS' responses in details.

## Efficiency

### **Financial resource allocation and management**

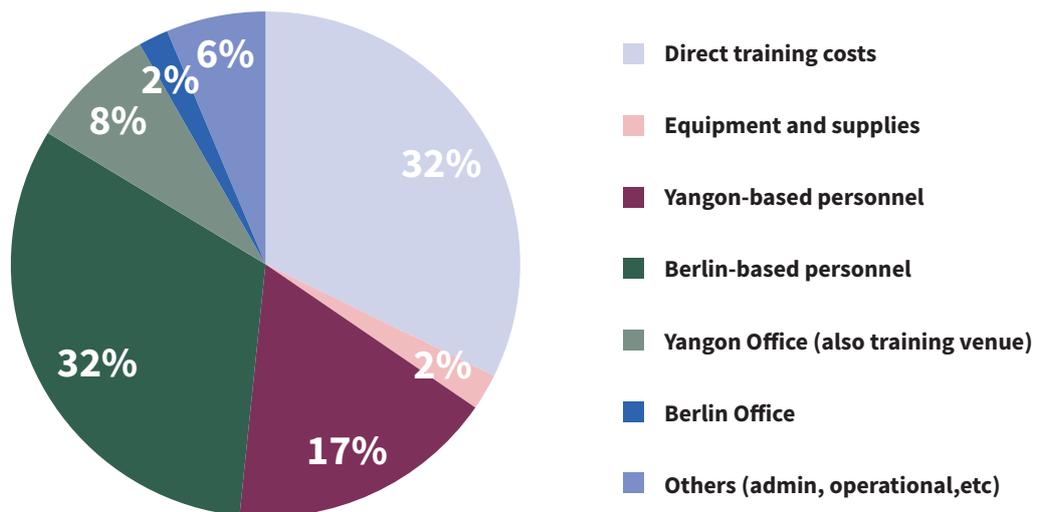
According to YFS financial statistic, total expenditures in 2017 and 2018 were 394.834 EUR and 365.249 EUR respectively. The MFA fund covered 51% of YFS spending in 2017 and 49.5% in 2018. Based on YFS annual financial reports in 2017 and 2018, a pie chart (chart 3) was created to show the cost-breakdown of the MFA budget (Appendix 5 for more details). 32% (114,264 euros) of the total MFA fund in two years was used for 9 basic and advanced training courses on filmmaking, Traveling Cinema initiative, and the development of students' films in addition to other direct support to help students improve their filmmaking skills.

Because of the financial difficulty in 2017 and 2018, YFS, with the MFA's agreement, had to cut three training courses and pitching competitions from the planned curriculum and only maintained the core subjects. Consequently, YFS was unable to achieve some of the project targets as indicated in the result assessment at the beginning of the Effectiveness section. The recruitment of local tutors to train students also helped to reduce some of the training expenses.

It can be seen from the cost breakdown in chart 3 that Berlin office and personnel accounted for the biggest chunk of the total MFA project – 32%. During the MFA project period, the Berlin office undertook all finance management and reporting. All the accounting data in Yangon were manually entered into Excel files by the Yangon based finance manager and processed by the Berlin-based accountant.

It is noted that as a member of Berlin-based personnel, YFS director, Lindsey Merrison, spent significant amount of time providing technical support for YFS student training and film production. At the time of the evaluation, YFS had just closed the Berlin office and handed over financial management and reports to Yangon office. A new accounting software – Quickbook was also installed making financial reporting easier according to the national finance manager. This move is appropriate with regards to cost-effectiveness; it also reflects YFS' first step as part of its long-term strategy to develop local capacity and fully transfer the school to Myanmar people.

Chart 3: the MFA project cost breakdown



Equipment covered a very small portion of the total budget. YFS upgrades the school's hardware (camera and sound) equipment every five years. In the FGDs with the evaluator, existing and former students complained that some of YFS equipment had technical errors and was slow, causing them more time and efforts on their exercises, thus needed upgrading.

As filmmaking courses that require intensive usage of equipment to support students' practices and film production, modern equipment with regular maintenance is necessary for the effectiveness and efficiency of training activities. Therefore, it is recommended that donors including the MFA and YFS itself consider more investment in equipment purchase and maintenance.

**Human resource allocation and management**

During the MFA project period, YFS was managed by two teams. The international team based in Berlin was in charge of financial management and reporting, fundraising, communications, and technical support for YFS training activities. Yangon office took

care of project implementation and relationships with in-country donors and the government.

Funding constraints caused YFS personnel to work longer hours, with delayed salary payment at the beginning of the MFA project. In addition to understaffing, YFS also faced another challenge of staff turnover when the Logistic staff left in July 2017 and the experienced Project Coordinator resigned in January 2018 after 6 years working at the school.

At the time of the evaluation, the key in-country project personnel include the Country Director (expat) and several national staff members: the Project Officer, the Finance Manager, the Equipment Manager, and the recently recruited Admin Officer. While the national Finance Manager seems to have good experience in finance and accounting, the Project Officer, a young potential staff, still needs much more professional training, coaching and support in project management and government relation. Similarly, board members from YFF who are involved in supporting the school activities should also be trained and coached more in management and leadership because they could be potential human resources for the process of handing over the school to local administration.

## Impact

### Impact on students – the project direct beneficiaries

The MFA project clearly has a positive impact on its direct beneficiaries – students from different backgrounds (ethnics, religions, original places, economic situation, and education). YFS laid a very important foundation for young, aspiring Myanmar filmmakers who were admitted to the school with limited or no skills and experience in filmmaking.

The students participating in two FDGs demonstrated passion and a high level of self-confidence in filmmaking. YFS developed students' capacity which enabled them to find jobs in filmmaking and other media. YFS alumni data show the majority of YFS alumni are working in filmmaking, media companies, or for NGOs. The online survey also confirms the direct contribution of YFS skills to the respondents' career.

Question: In what way are the skills you learned in YFS courses useful in your current profession?	13 answers (out of 14 respondents of the survey)
a) It helped me get jobs, and I have skills to work in media/film sector	12 (92%)
b) It helped me get a job in NGO/UN organizations	1 (7%)
c) It gave me general skills and indirectly helped me find a job in other sectors (not media/films and NGO/UN)	0
d) It did not help me get a job/I don't use those skills in my current job	0

The two FDGs indicated YFS students' various professions in media including international news and broadcasting services and filmmaking. Some of YFS alumni' jobs are film editor, video journalist, film director, producer, camera person, scriptwriter, and so on. Current students also aspire to pursue a career in filmmaking and media and producing their own films in the future.

”I want to direct my own fiction films. First, I will start with short films. Then, I will apply for some international programs. To apply for those programs, we have to show our own film...I want to create my film independently. I am interested in fiction. It can be any topics. YFS knowledge and skills will help me a lot.”  
(a current student)

”One of our old students is now doing his second long film. Many of them (YFS students) get fund for their films from international funds. Getting funding is probably the biggest challenge if I think about Burmese film industry.”  
(YFS tutor)

YFS also helped students broaden their network in filmmaking and media sector. Graduate students benefit from the relationship with YFS for more advanced courses to improve their technical skills as well as income generation opportunities via Yangon Film Services. Alumni maintain their connection with YFS tutors who will continue giving them advice for their new films. Career support and networking are also seen among YFS alumni.

”Those who graduated from YFS also recruit YFS alumni for their projects. Or, sometimes they introduce us to other projects. YFS also gives jobs via Yangon Film Services company.”  
(YFS alumnus)

“Probably 10 students still keep in touch with me every now and then... If their films go to festivals, they share with me. If they plan for their next projects, they also contact us.”  
(YFS tutor)

In addition to improved filmmaking skills and career opportunities, YFS students also benefit from exposure activities such as Participatory Video (PV) and Traveling Cinema (TC). Going to different communities in various regions and states helped students practice facilitation and coordination skills and gain real life experience. They also change their perspectives and become more empathetic with community people whose lives are more disadvantaged than theirs. Feelings are an important element in filmmaking as per the interview with the international tutor mentioned in Effectiveness section.

”After PV, I got to the learn true stories of villagers in some places. Dawei is very far from Yangon. When we traveled there, we learned true stories. It will help us in our next projects.”  
(YFS alumnus)

“...When working as a PV facilitator, I learned to share as a leader and my confidence increased. Also, I learned about new cultures. I realized different struggles of the youth from different states...”  
(YFS alumnus)

“For my experience in traveling to Thai border area, when I showed migrants’ children the docu-animations and peace documentaries, my perspective changed after that.”  
(YFS alumnus)

### **Impact on communities as part of TC and PV activities**

The KIs and FGDs with participants of two PV courses by YFS students (one in Dala community outside of Yangon city and the other in Kyaukpadaung township) indicated some immediate, positive effects on the target community after PV courses were complete. For instance, the PV participants could shoot images around their community using the basic knowledge and skills learned from YFS students in a very short time. In

Kyaukpadaung, community members demonstrated a practical change: cleaning the lake featured in the video made by PV students. Videos about issues faced by concerning communities could be used for advocacy purposes or to raise public awareness according to YFS students.

However, it is noted that in two locations where the evaluator visited and collected data, no long term effects of the PV courses were found on both communities. As explained by YFS leadership, PV is not film training per se, and participants are not expected to continue to make films. However, the PV facilitators often encourage communities to rally around a common aim or goal; they also inspire participants to apply to enroll for YFS' future courses.

Likewise, TC activity offered YFS students opportunities to screen documentaries and short videos in communities in remote areas who often lack access to information as well as films particularly. To examine the impact of TC activities, the evaluator uses both primary data from FGDs and KIIs in addition to secondary information from students' TC reports. The quality of TC reports by YFS students varies. Of five TC/screening reports reviewed by the evaluator, three reports consist of qualitative information of post-screening interactions between YFS students and audience. Based on TC report review, KIIs, and FGDs with different people about PV and TC activities, it seems that YFS students mainly showed films to the community audience rather than generated participatory and meaningful discussions about the films:

”TC is for a very small number of audience. They (communities) are not interested about the films. When they heard there were people from Yangon coming and showing films, they attended... When people came to their screening, they just watched but had no discussion or understanding. TC is very good but if YFS students could generate critical dialogues with local people, it would be better. YFS students screened their films but only reached superficial discussions...”

(a KII participant)

The TC report review showed one exception of the screening event in Loikaw, which around 250 people attended. They did not only show interest by asking questions for and giving comments on all the screened films but also suggested ideas for YFS future films. As per the Loikaw report, the audience had such deep engagement because they are somehow related to the Kayinni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF); the films screened were about peace, a topic of interest of local people; and in one of the screened films, the female protagonist was born in Loikaw.

In summary, both PV and TC activities are innovative measures by YFS to bring documentaries and filmmaking skills to marginalized communities and should be carried on in the future. However, for PV, YFS needs to consider choosing a community with the presence of a CSO or a CBO (community-based organization) for collaboration to sustain the longer impact of the activity. Since CSOs/CBO often work on common issues in their community, they are more likely to continue using skills learned from PV workshop to create videos for their awareness raising or advocacy activities. YFS could also keep in touch with the partner CBOs/CSOs to encourage them to make use of the video-making skills and provide them with some technical advice in case they need. Concerning TC activity, it is suggested that YFS explain to students the importance of organizing meaningful and engaging screening events and equip them with some practical facilitation skills to generate real discussions with the audience. YFS has created a template for students to report on TC activity. This report template should have a section on the engagement with audience (including how Q&A can be done) to track the qualitative outcome of the screening event. YFS students should research more carefully the



**YFS has contributed to a more diverse culture in Myanmar filmmaking.**

Photo: Yangon Film School

information about the community prior to their TC trip in order to select films and videos that are close to their interest to stimulate their curiosity and post-screening discussions.

### **Broader impact on Myanmar people and society**

YFS has contributed to a more diverse culture in Myanmar filmmaking particularly and media sector generally. Myanmar media, as mentioned in the literature review, needs to include the voice of ethnic minorities and women. YFS built capacity for young people from different ethnic groups, regions, and states in Myanmar so that they could enter filmmaking/media sector as professionals. YFS especially did a very good job in training young, female filmmakers who became competent in filmmaking, self-confident, and inspiring in a sector that is still dominated by men.

”As a female camera person, I have to communicate with men and they usually look down on female camera person...After seeing my film, they satisfied with my work. I have full confidence after graduating from YFS.”

(YFS female alumnus)

“Culturally, it’s believed that boys are more suitable for technical jobs. We think girls are for only accounting or clerk jobs. I have to prove I can do that so I have to work hard. I am happy with that.”

(YFS female alumnus)

“For me, I have full confidence to work in this field (filmmaking). Sometimes, I face challenges. For example, there are guys who don’t want to work under me in the crew, and I have to fight with that.”

(YFS female alumnus)

YFS leadership has a clear vision of growing the school as a development organization using films to reflect social and development issues of Myanmar society. In this way, YFS clearly influenced its students. Despite a number of YFS graduates seeking jobs for commercial media, many YFS alumni are now working for independent media and NGOs or involved in making documentaries and independent films on various social and development issues in Myanmar. Five out of seven current students aspired to create films on social and environmental issues in the future.

”In 2018, I worked the editor of films on a Burmese rapper and construction workers. In 2017, I participated in a film competition about women and peace as the editor of a film called “The Peacekeeper”“

(YFS alumnus)

“Most of the films I worked on are about social issues such as politics, conflicts between people, social cohesion, and education”

(YFS alumnus)

“The topics of my films include women and peace; villagers stepping on landmines and becoming disabled due to fights between Myanmar military and ethnic armed organizations... Another film is about IDP camps in Rakhine and women development...”

(YFS alumnus)

So, now the biggest question is to what extent, has YFS contributed to democratic development and/or human rights situation in Myanmar, including freedom of expression?

Different viewpoints were found among KII participants of this independent evaluation regarding this aspect. One opinion is that it is impossible to claim an impact at a large scale because Myanmar is so big and YFS has only reached a small portion of audience. Furthermore, most Myanmar people do not feel connected with the topic of the documentaries or are not interested in documentaries. Therefore, in addition to creating films, film broadcasting and educating people about films are also crucial:

”The main challenge is film-makers are not connected with local people. They come from Rakhine and make films about Rakhine but (are) not connected with Rakhine people. We make Rakhine films for Yangon audience. We know about YFS films, and we screened many times in Yangon and worldwide, but when I asked Rakhine people “Do you know any films about Rakhine?” and they say “I don’t know”...You ask me about (YFS impact on) Myanmar. It’s a big question, and you expect a lot.”

“YFS is very good in Yangon, but Myanmar has so many areas... Many Myanmar people don’t know anything about YFS. Most Myanmar people are not interested in filmmaking...If you ask 10 people outside Yangon whether they know about documentaries, I think only one person would say “I know”. To impact Myanmar, we need a lot of work on filmmaking, film broadcasting, and film education.”  
(a KII participant)

Other KII participants believe that social and political changes need a long process. Also, because in Myanmar the state and the military often control and oppress media, it is even harder to obtain freedom of speech and democracy. However, it is important to make small changes including educating young people to think critically, enabling access to information for Myanmar people, and building capacity and work ethics of filmmakers.

“Anytime you take a small group of young people who have passion and give them opportunities, when they come out with skills, confidence and courage, and how to realize their vision and create what they want to create, then you make an impact on them”  
(an international filmmaker)

“...There was no bottom up communication in Myanmar for 40-50 years. People were trained to be quiet and not to say anything and keep low profile. Their history makes it difficult to understand how you can use communication for social change. Western countries want to change things fast. You (i.e the evaluator) are from Vietnam, so you know how things change. Some fast. Some slow. You need local capacity and local awareness of what you want. A film school is a place you train people to think critically.”  
(YFS partner)

“They empower creative Myanmar adolescents, women and men to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings creatively in films. They provide professional training and show their works to international community. Having a professional Myanmar crew also helps with trust building, especially when you do a project-related film in rural areas of Myanmar. Furthermore, they deal with sensitive and very important topics.”  
(YFS partner)

Examining different viewpoints on YFS' social impact, it is acknowledged that YFS has created positive changes on young filmmakers it has trained. Those filmmakers subsequently contribute to more diverse media culture in Myanmar using their critical thinking and creativity. On another good note, YFS has also reached hundreds of thousands of viewers after several of its docu-animations were broadcast on a national and a private TV channels and YFS social media in addition to a smaller number of audience via TC activities, annual screening events in Yangon. Myanmar, however, has over 50 million people, and, as in other countries, most Myanmar people are less interested in independent films and documentaries.

Meanwhile, YFS also faces government censorship as the ultimate hurdle in disseminating its films that address vital issues in Myanmar including wars and conflicts, human rights, and so forth. Therefore, it is not sensible to expect YFS as a small-scaled film school to drive a drastic social change in the context of Myanmar. Instead, YFS and VIKES on behalf of the MFA could aim for more realistic outcomes concerning its direct beneficiaries – the trained students, the communities involved in students' PV and TC activities, and its CSO/NGO/cultural institution partners. Those small, specific changes are necessary and conducive to a more open and informed society in Myanmar.

Furthermore, it is not possible for YFS alone is to bring about Myanmar people's understanding and appreciation of independent films and documentaries. YFS should strengthen its current collaboration with the FDC and other government entities as well as popular TV channels to implement more activities that familiarize Myanmar audience with and increase their understanding and appreciation of independent films and documentaries.

## Sustainability

YFS' operation is in line with the Myanmar government's current strategy to develop filmmaking in Myanmar. Recently, the government has opened a film development centre, the FDC to support the development of film industry in Myanmar. The purpose of the FDC, according to the interview with a junior government officer, is to provide trainings, discussions, and library to support Myanmar filmmakers to produce films with modern knowledge and experience. YFS has built a good relationship with the FDC by having its trainers and former students come and deliver master classes on filmmaking at this centre.

YFS's efforts to create good relationship with the line government agency, the Ministry of Information (MoI) has also shown a positive sign, with a visit by the MoI Minister to YFS in 2018. YFS also aimed for government's in-kind support as well as a contribution of a permanent building for the school in the appraised MFA project proposal. However, this target was not achieved at the end of the MFA project. In fact, this target is not realistic based on the evaluator's knowledge and experience in how the Myanmar government works in relation to NGOs.

Furthermore, the government has not signed the MOU with YFS even though it is not too worrying because many INGOs operate in Myanmar with a MOU submitted but not approved by the government for a long period. On the other hand, YFS also aimed to advocate for the government to grant official graduate certification for YFS students on completion of the filmmaking training program. This goal was not obtained within this project lifetime, yet it is recommended that YFS continue working on it in the future.

YFS has also been effective in developing local capacity in filmmaking. YFS has not only trained students to become filmmakers but also local tutors and mentors who continue passing their experience, skills, and knowledge to students of next generations. Having a pool of local trainers and mentors will help YFS overcome some barriers including lack of funding, differences in language and cultural understanding between

students and trainers. Despite the significant role of local tutors and mentors in the delivery of YFS courses, it is necessary to continue having international tutors to deliver some workshops or training courses at times to provide students with international filmmaking knowledge and experience.

YFS has three mechanisms to involve current and former students in strategic and sustainable ways: Student Sub-Committee, Yangon Film Foundation (YFF), and Yangon Film Services. The Student Sub Committee is a good platform to give a voice to students but also an excellent way for students to develop leadership in addition to organization and negotiation skills. Student Sub Committee helps increase students' responsibility and ownership of YFS work. Similarly, YFF is a good mechanism to mobilize current and former students in supporting YFS activities including the organization of annual screening events and the contribution of ideas and expertise to YFS' strategic development.

Yangon Film Services is a social enterprise run by local people that recruits and gives opportunities for YFS former students to improve their filmmaking experience and generate income. Yangon Film Services also plays an important role in maintaining the connectedness and loyalty of YFS alumni to the school. In summary, all of these three organizations will potentially contribute to the transition of YFS towards a school managed by Myanmar people in the future.

YFS local staff and representatives of YFF also received training in management as part of the strategy to transfer the school to local administration. However, interviews with YFS leadership and local staff as well as a YFF representative indicated that local capacity is not sufficient to take over the school at present. Three to five years was predicted by the interviewees for local people to be ready to lead the school. The biggest challenge for local people is fundraising and donor relations. What YFS could do is considering the operational model of some INGOs which is Myanmar nationals take over senior management roles while expats hold advisory or fundraising positions as the first step of nationalization process.

Funding constraint can hamper YFS sustainability. YFS has made efforts to get private funds and was successful in securing two European private grants within the timeframe of this project. Apart from the MFA, YFS also have also received smaller grants from other NGOs/UN agencies. Additionally, part of the margins from Yangon Film Services is also mobilized for the school activities. There is a recommendation that YFS recruits fee-paying students for its beginner courses. This idea seems not feasible at present because it causes the division and complication between students who study on scholarship and those who pay tuition fee according to YFS leadership.

Another idea is when recruiting alumni for advanced courses, YFS could pilot to charge them with some fee since they graduated and are able to generate some income. However, this idea needs careful examination because Myanmar independent filmmakers face difficulty in getting funding for their own films and many YFS alumni may not have high income to afford expensive advanced training courses. Also, for the time being, YFS, as a development organization, still receives donors' grants making it inappropriate to apply fees to its students. Nonetheless, in the long run when funding opportunities become scarce, YFS needs to consider charging tuition fees for its own financial viability.



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**YFS has grown stronger  
and become more  
independent.**

Photo: Yangon Film School

## YFS-VIKES partnership

The partnership with VIKES was established at the beginning of YFS. Both parties have enjoyed a good partnership with mutual support since then. For the AFC project, YFS received funding from the MFA via VIKES. The MFA fund covered around 50% of the whole annual budget of YFS. Over 15%<sup>14</sup> of the MFA fund was the share for VIKES including some communications and M&E activities implemented by VIKES in addition to VIKES' administrative costs based on MFA standard funding model.

Besides MFA fund, it was also agreed that VIKES provide YFS with capacity building and support for securing other private funding sources. Yet, VIKES did not provide any capacity building for YFS staff apart from sending some volunteers from Finland to train YFS students during the MFA project period.

VIKES also started to develop its fundraising from private sources by hiring a part-time consultant. One of the first activities was building up a tool for sponsoring documentarists in YFS and journalists in Tanzania. For this, YFS provided short videos introducing the school and its students. The production of these videos was compensated separately as it was not directly an activity within the MFA project but rather supported the communications and fundraising of VIKES. However, experience and lessons learned on such fundraising activities could be shared between VIKES and YFS. VIKES' changes in personnel, especially the position of Executive Director for several times may have as well affected its ability to support to YFS during the MFA project period.

YFS and VIKES have had good collaboration for a long time. YFS has grown stronger and become more independent. It is likely that VIKES will need to wrap up the partnership with YFS in order to support new partners who need it more. Therefore, it is suggested that in the next round of the MFA project, VIKES discuss with YFS a specific exit strategy and some realistic and specific supports it could provide to help YFS sustain the project results and move towards transferring the school to local administration. Some of the ideas for exit strategy and support for YFS from VIKES which could be discussed further between two parties could be:

- **Creating a roadmap of transferring YFS to local management that includes strategy, milestones and timeline.**
- **Supporting YFS to raise private funds to match the current three-year MFA grant.**
- **Assisting YFS to seek new, possible sources of Finnish funding beyond the next MFA grant.**
- **Helping YFS to improve its communications (possibly graphics, layout and distribution).**
- **Continue to assist YFS to place its films at Finnish film festivals.**
- **Helping YFS to obtain validation for its courses from a trusted international organization or body.**
- **Helping YFS improve its capacity to lobby and advocate the Myanmar government to validate its courses and/or for better work conditions for the media.**

## Conclusion and recommendations

### 1. Relevance

YFS is highly relevant to the context and the needs of people in Myanmar.

### 2. Effectiveness

- Recruitment is among the most effective activities by YFS.
- Overall, training activities at YFS were done effectively.
  - Most of the students showed the high level of satisfaction of YFS training.
  - YFS courses provided students with a substantial basis of filmmaking skills.
  - Knowledge of social issues were integrated in PV courses as well as via sharing workshops by NGO partners.
  - TC and PV activities are innovative initiatives to bring documentary, filmmaking skills, and information to remote community outside Yangon city.
  - Another successful element of YFS training is the thoughtful combination of international and local tutors in teaching and support for students.
  - “Train to Teach” were done strategically and successfully: local tutors and mentors were useful too and much appreciated by students; increased the participation of local tutors/mentors helped reduce training costs and strengthened local capacity for the project sustainability.
- YFS also did very well in supporting students by providing scholarships especially for those from other regions and states rather than Yangon and creating student organizations for peer support and handling students’ feedback and complaints.
- YFS has been excellent in gender mainstreaming.
- Graduate students were able to find jobs and most of them are working in filmmaking/media sector or for NGOs as a direct result of YFS training.
- Besides good quality films including international award winning ones, YFS has also produced documentaries and short films that support the agenda of NGOs and international agencies who highly appreciate the quality and content of YFS films. However, a number of YFS current students and graduates as well as professional filmmakers wish to see more creative, art house films and fiction films rather than just documentaries. Funding constraints and donors’ expectations may limit choices for YFS in this aspect.
- YFS has made effort to reach a wider range of audience via popular TV channels. However, during the MFA project period, YFS faced considerable barriers from both popular TV channels and government censorship, thus, were unable to broadcast documentaries that directly address major social issues of Myanmar such as wars, conflicts, and human rights.
- YFS’ current monitoring documents are quite basic and not effective in generating data for reporting & decision making.
- Overall, YFS has made efforts to respond to recommendations from the previous evaluation and audit where relevant.

#### Other factors that are conducive to the work of YFS:

-  Lindsey Merrison’s vast professional network and extensive experience in filmmaking as well as her understanding of context and culture of Myanmar is a driving factor for YFS’ growth.
-  YFS has a good relationship with a range of NGOs and UN agencies in both commissioned work and voluntary collaborations which are beneficial for those organizations themselves, YFS and their students (for income generation and improved professional experience).
-  YFS’ Facebook site has more than 20,000 followers which is beneficial for information sharing and visibility.
-  Donors’ flexibility for project adjustment because they understand Myanmar context.

**Hindering factors for YFS effectiveness including:**

- Funding constraints.
- Obtaining transparent information on policies and practices from the line government agencies.
- Obtaining the MoU as well as partnership with the government.
- Getting permission for publicly screening YFS films.
- Getting YFS films screened on national TV channels.

**Recommendations**

- YFS maintains student diversity, with a target proportion of ethnic minority students every year.
- YFS could set a reasonable quota for students whose families are living in ethnic states or other divisions rather than Yangon for new intakes.
- YFS student facilitators could improve their understanding of local culture and how things work when they travel to the field.
- YFS international tutors were recommended by students to show more techniques (besides conceptual knowledge).
- The MFA project aimed to contribute to a more informed Myanmar society. YFS needs a long time to do it. YFS also needs to screen its films frequently for a larger audience.
- A more balanced approach to filmmaking training and production should be considered. Besides core courses on documentary filmmaking, YFS could introduce additional courses related to other genres including arthouse films, edutainment, or true fictions. Documentaries on Myanmar’s problems may find it challenging to reach the majority of audience under strict government censorship, but fiction and edutainment ones could do the job. True fiction and edutainment films could also be produced in addition to documentaries to reach a much larger number of viewers of popular TV channels.
- For monitoring and evaluation:
  - YFS could use an approach to project design and management to outline the logical relationship between outputs, results/outcomes and goal/impact with specific indicators at each level at the beginning of a new project.
  - Project outcomes should be more specific and measurable.
  - YFS could use its own data of the year prior to the project to fill out baseline information
  - A consolidated M&E database (by improving some current template and based on indicators from project logframe and key evaluation questions) could provide consistent data, save time and strengthen the quality of reports.
  - YFS could also hire a short-term consultant or a volunteer to improve its M&E.

**3. Efficiency**

- Training costs accounted for 32% of total MFA expenses. A good measure to reduce training costs was the recruitment of local tutors to train students.
- Berlin-based personnel accounted for the biggest portion of the total MFA project – 32%. The fact that YFS closed Berlin office and handed over finance and accounting to YFS Yangon in January 2019 showed a strategic move regarding cost-effectiveness and the first step of the long-term strategy to develop local capacity and fully transfer the school to Myanmar people.
- Equipment covered a very small portion of the budget; students complained that YFS equipment was slow with technical errors and needed updating.

### Recommendations

- Donors including the MFA and YFS itself consider more investment in equipment purchase and maintenance in future projects.
- More training and coaching needed for national staff especially the Project Officer in addition to leadership and management training and coaching for YFF board members because they could be potential human resources for the process of handing over the school to local administration.

## 4. Impact

### Impact on students as direct beneficiaries:

- The MFA project clearly has a positive impact on its direct beneficiaries – students from different backgrounds (ethnics, religions, original places, economic situation and education).
- YFS developed students' capacity which enabled them to find jobs in filmmaking and other media companies.
- YFS also helped students broaden their network in filmmaking and media sector.

### Impact on communities involved in YFS activities (PV and Traveling Cinema):

- YFS created some immediate, positive effects on the target community after PV courses.
- No long term effects of the PV courses were found in both communities where the evaluator visited and collected data.
- Traveling Cinema offers opportunities to screen documentaries and short videos in communities in remote areas who often lack access to information. However, YFS students mainly showed films to the community audience rather than generated participatory and meaningful discussions about the films

### Broader impact on Myanmar people and society

- YFS contributes to a more diverse culture in Myanmar filmmaking and media sector generally.
- It is impossible to claim an impact at a large scale considering Myanmar's geographical area and population while YFS has only reached a small portion of audience. Also, socio-political changes need a long process. Moreover, the state and the military often control and oppress media making it even harder to obtain freedom of speech and democracy in Myanmar. Nevertheless, it is important to make small changes including educating young people to think critically, enabling access to information for Myanmar people, and building capacity and work ethics for filmmakers, all of which are necessary and conducive to bigger social and political changes.
- YFS has also reached hundreds of thousands of people after several broadcastings on a national and a private TV channels and via YFS social media in addition to a smaller number of audience via TC activities, annual screening events in Yangon. However, Myanmar, with over 50 million people who, similar to those in other countries, are largely uninterested in independent films and documentaries. Meanwhile, YFS also faces government censorship as the ultimate hurdle in disseminating its films that address vital issues in Myanmar including wars and conflicts, human rights, and so forth. Therefore, it is not sensible to expect YFS as a small-scaled film school to drive a drastic social change in the context of Myanmar.

### Recommendations

- Both PV and TC activities are innovative measures by YFS to bring documentaries and filmmaking skills to marginalized communities and should be carried on in the future.
- For PV, YFS needs to consider choosing a community with the presence of a CSO or a CBO for collaboration to sustain the longer impact of the activity. YFS could also keep in touch with the partner CBOs/CSOs to encourage them to make use of the video-making skills and provide them with some technical advice in case they need.
- For TC, YFS could explain to students why it is important to carry out meaningful and engaging screening events and equip them with some practical facilitation skills to generate real discussions with the audience. YFS students should research

more carefully the information about the community prior to their TC trip in order to select films and videos that are close to their interest to stimulate their curiosity and post-screening discussions.

- For future project design, YFS could aim for more realistic outcomes concerning its direct beneficiaries – the trained students, the communities involved in students’ PV and TC activities, and its CSO/NGO/cultural institutions. Small changes will ultimately contribute to a more opened and informed society in Myanmar.
- YFS alone cannot improve Myanmar people’s understanding and appreciation of independent films and documentaries. YFS should strengthen its current collaboration with the FDC and other government entities as well as popular TV channels to implement more activities that familiarize Myanmar audience with and increase their understanding and appreciation of independent films and documentaries.

## **5. Sustainability and partnership**

- YFS has also been effective in developing local capacity in filmmaking.
- YFS has three mechanisms to involve current and former students in strategic and sustainable ways: Student Sub-Committee, Yangon Film Foundation (YFF), and Yangon Film Service.
- YFS has different funding sources currently: bigger donor (MFA), private funding; margin from Yangon Film Services.
- YFS has some positive improvements in government relations but a lot of work needs to be done for obtaining MOU and government’s recognition of YFS graduates. It’s not realistic to expect the government to provide a permanent building or in-kind support.
- YFS and VIKES have enjoyed good partnership. Yet, VIKES did not provide any capacity building for YFS staff apart from sending volunteers from Finland to provide some training activities for YFS students during the MFA project period.

### **Recommendations**

- 3 to 5 years is predicted for local people to lead the school. The biggest challenge for local people is fundraising and donor relation. What YFS could do is consider the operational model of some INGOs which is Myanmar nationals take over senior management roles while expats hold advisory or fundraising positions as the first step of nationalization process.
- In the long run when funding opportunities become scarce, YFS needs to consider charging tuition fees for its own financial viability.
- VIKES discuss with YFS a specific exit strategy and some realistic and specific supports it could provide to help YFS sustain the project results and move towards transferring the school to local administration in the next phase of the MFA project.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Evaluation design

Indicators	Sources of information	Methods and tools of data collection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent to which the objective of the project respond to with the pressing issue of the Myanmar society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents related to current socio- political context of Myanmar &amp; and the roles of media</li> <li>Program documents</li> <li>Interview with the YFS/VIKES leadership</li> <li>Interview with students</li> <li>Interview with other stakeholders (project participants, independent media professionals, government)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>FGDs, KIIs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance to the needs of the project beneficiaries (trainees, government stakeholders...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>In-depth interview/Focus group with selected former program participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>FGDs, KIIs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent to which the designed interventions adjusted to fit to the needs of the targeted groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>In-depth interview/Focus group with selected former program participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>FGDs, KIIs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were all the planned activities delivered?</li> <li>Did the project reach the intended number of participants and achieve other intended outputs?</li> <li>To what extent did the project achieve the expected results?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>desk review of YFS project documents including baseline, M&amp;E documents</li> <li>Completed project logical framework agreed upon between evaluator &amp; YFS/VIKES to demonstrate results at different levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Project logical framework created &amp; agreed upon</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How participant (students/trainers/tutors) recruitment was done?</li> <li>How were the trainings done (methodology, implementation)?</li> <li>How were the students' knowledge and skills measured (before, during, and after training)?</li> <li>The performance of AFC trainers/tutors</li> <li>Factors that have helped achieve the objectives of the AFC project</li> <li>Factors that have hindered the AFC project to achieve its expected results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>desk review of YFS project documents</li> <li>In-depth interview with managers &amp; staff of the program</li> <li>Interview with selected trainers/tutors</li> <li>Focus group with selected former students</li> <li>interview with drop-out cases (if any)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>FGDs, KIIs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of the students enrolled completed the course</li> <li>% of dropouts</li> <li>% of the graduates were satisfied with the training activities they went through</li> <li>What components of the program or activities were not satisfied by the participants</li> <li>The extent to which AFM project adjusted or became flexible based on the feedback of the students/trainers/tutors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project docs including monthly &amp; annual reports/M&amp;E docs</li> <li>interview with trainers/tutors/ project staff</li> <li>interview/focus group with selected former students</li> <li>survey with former students<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project doc review</li> <li>In-depth interview</li> <li>Focus groups</li> <li>Email survey</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidences of the recommendations of the previous evaluation were taken into consideration and implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous evaluation</li> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Interview with project staff</li> <li>interview/focus group with selected former students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>FGDs, KIIs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fund disbursement progress</li> <li>Timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the outputs</li> <li>Sufficiency of the activities and outputs designed to achieve the intended outcomes</li> <li>Sufficiency of human resources (number of staff and their capacity) to carry out the project</li> <li>YFS' measures and initiatives to utilize the financial resource and maximize benefits for project participants</li> <li>Evidence of an M&amp;E, and accounting/finance system to support the operation and efficiency of the organization as a whole and the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project document reviews</li> <li>Interviews with YFS senior management staff including finance/accounting and leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project document review</li> <li>In-depth interview with management and leadership</li> </ul>

<p>Differences between the capacity and professional career of project participants before and after graduating from AFC project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The technical skills before and after joining YFS courses</li> <li>• The quality of the films/ media products they have produced?</li> <li>• The range of issues their products have covered?</li> <li>• Their capacity to network, lobby for better conditions of practice, secure funding, manage trainings and other activities?</li> <li>• Their career/professions (aspirations) before and after joining the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M&amp;E documents, annual/months report</li> <li>• focus group &amp; interview with graduates</li> <li>• Interview with the trainers and tutors</li> <li>• email survey with former students</li> <li>• independent recognitions of AFC project graduates' film/ media products (types and numbers of awards received)?</li> <li>• independent reviews of AFC products if any</li> </ul>	<p>Document review FGDs, KIIs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the project increased the outreach of YFS outside Yangon?</li> <li>• What was the level of participation of individual and communities in YFS students' film production?</li> <li>• How did the knowledge and attitude of the individual and communities involved in YFS students' films differ regarding the subject matter of the films?</li> <li>• Were there any behaviour changes in the community after the films by YFS students were produced and screened?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program's impact stories/documentaries, or reports</li> <li>• Interview with YFS management, project staff, former participants</li> <li>• FGDs/interviews with members of selected communities</li> </ul>	<p>Document review FGDs, KIIs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many students out of the graduates in 2017 and 2018 are working in media/development sectors?</li> <li>• Did their products address social/human rights/development issues through films?</li> <li>• Did their YFS students' films/media products disseminate positive messages about peace, reconciliation and human rights?</li> <li>• What changes did the partnership with YFS create in the work of some NGO/CSO partners?</li> <li>• What positive/negative changes of YFS/AFC project have been seen by independent media and NGOs?</li> <li>• How have the government received YFS/AFC project?</li> <li>• What efforts have been made by YFS regarding freedom of expression in media sector in Myanmar?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• document/film reviews</li> <li>• Interview with YFS founder, leadership &amp; senior management</li> <li>• interview/FGDs with former students; members of target communities</li> <li>• Interview with government, independent media, NGOs/ CSOs,</li> </ul>	<p>Document review FGDs, KIIs</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the partnership between YFS and Vikes work?</li> <li>• What could be learned from the project, especially regarding the planned final phase with Vikes?</li> <li>• Has the partnership with Vikes helped improve the capacity building of YFS, including income generation and independence?</li> <li>• What have been done by YFS (and VIKES) to increase local capacity and financial viability and enable the process of handing over to Myanmar administration?</li> <li>• Was the project is consistent with and supported by the government sectoral policies</li> <li>• Extent to which the local stakeholders support the project/YFS activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• document/film reviews</li> <li>• Interview with YFS founder, leadership &amp; senior management</li> <li>• Interview with VIKES' representative</li> <li>• interview/FGDs with former students</li> <li>• Interview with government; YFS' local partner (YFF committee)</li> </ul>	<p>Document review FGDs, KIIs</p>

## Appendix 2: List of evaluation informants

Informants	Number of people	Data collection methods
Director of VIKES	1	KII
Representative of the Finnish Embassy in Yangon	1	KII
YFS Director	1	KII
Country Director	1	KII
YFS Project Officer	1	KII
YFS Finance Manager	1	KII
YFF board member	1	KII
Existing and former students of 2017, 2018	14	Email survey
Existing students	3	FGD
Former students and existing students in 2017 and 2018	4	FGD
Local trainer	1	KII
International trainer	1	KII
A trainer of the master class at Film Development Centre	1	KII
Representatives of a CSO in Dala, Yangon involved in PV activity	4	1 KII; 1 FGD
Members of a community in Kyaukpadaung (the dry zone) involved in PV	4	KII
1 junior government officer, Film Development Centre	1	KII
Goethe Institute Director	1	KII
Representatives of 2 INGO partners in film production	2	KII
Independent filmmakers	2	KII
Total number of informants	45	

## Appendix 3: MFA project logical framework created by the Evaluator (on a separate Excel sheet)

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions	Baseline (YFS fills in specific number. YFS data of 2016 could be used as baseline where relevant)	Targets (YFS fills in with specific number if possible)	Actual results in 2017 (only at Outputs and Results levels needed)	“Actual results in 2018 (only at Outputs and Results levels needed)”	Source of data for actual result in 2017	Source of data for actual result in 2018	Evaluator’s judgement
Objective	“the project aims to contribute to a diverse, informed media culture in Myanmar and strengthened civil society.		End of the project evaluation								The evaluation report will present to what extent YFS contributed to a diverse, informed media culture in Myanmar and strengthened civil society.
Result 1	Increased capacity among multi-ethnic Myanmar filmmakers and media workers, trainers, producers to create engaging, authentic films of quality promoting peace, democracy and human rights.	# of films produced by YFS students at the end of the advanced course # of students graduating in 2017 and 2018 working in media & development sector # students becoming qualified local tutors at YFS”	Project report	“Students graduated from YFS courses will work in media & development sectors & they will convey messages on social/development issues via their work		“15+ films of quality exploring contemporary issues and/or promoting development goals; 60+ alumni working in Myanmar’s media and development sectors	“ 8 documentaries were made on social changes; 1 film on Vikes-funded AFC trainings completed, 5 in production; 2 evaluation films completed  We don’t have formal graduation but after three years students are deemed alumni. around 107 YFS alumni (since the beginning of YFS) working in film/media in 2017. 1 student became qualified tutor “	“07 short documentaries produced on socially relevant topics in Myanmar; 6 films on trainings are being produced  the Project Officer (Lucy) is still collecting alumni destinations for 2018; her data for 2017 was actually completed in June 2018 so may well provide indication of trends of graduate students’ jobs in 2018. 2 students became qualified local tutors in 2018; “	2017 report	Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Achieved
Output 1.1	Muti-ethnic students have increased knowledge and skills in filmmaking from basic to advanced levels	“ # of students trained and passed YFS performance appraisal at basic & advanced levels; % of ethnic minority students (i.e not Bamar) against total number of students “	Students’ completion of exercises and practices requested by trainers; project report	Students will retain and complete all the courses they enrolled	baseline was not provided because there were not many statistics available about media diversity in MMR as a whole at the time. YFS trained students from 14 different ethnicities in 2016 (Lindsey Merrison:)	“40+ students trained ;	“22 existing students and 7 new students 32% of the trained students were non-Bamar”	“10 existing students and 25 new students 42%+ trained students were non-Bamar “	2017 report	Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Achieved
Activity 1.1.1	Advanced Editing Course & Documentary Competition for Second-Year students					“8+ editors and/or 8+ directors trained	6 students trained as directors, 2 students as director-editors, 6 students as editors, one student trained as an editing mentor.		2017 report		
Activity 1.1.2	The Art of Documentary Filmmaking for Beginners - includes the 10-day camera and sound module ‘All in a Day’s Work’					“12 students trained;		12 new students (beginners) trained; 5 local trainers/mentors in train-to-teach programme			
Activity 1.1.3	Mentored Editing of Beginners’ Films					4 editing students trained; 12 beginners introduced briefly to editing		4 editing students trained; 12 beginners introduced briefly to editing in two-day ‘taster’			
Activity 1.1.4	Post-production coaching (2017: Second Year Advanced Editing course/competition films)					“4-8 students trained;	12 students trained (9 women, 3 men)				
“											
Activity 1.1.5	Documentary: Directing & Development - This course was not implemented and was deleted in the Request for Change approved by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs					“8 students trained per course	Course not held/deleted from project plan	Course not held/deleted from project plan			
Activity 1.1.6	The Art of Documentary Editing – An Introduction					“12 students trained;		12 students and 1 staff member trained (7 men, 6 women)			
Activity 1.1.7	Ways of Seeing: The History of Film Form					12 members of new YFS intake trained;		13 students trained (6 men, 6 women)			
Activity 1.1.8	How Films Work: Film Analysis					12 members of new YFS intake trained;		14 students trained (6 men, 6 women)			

Activity 1.1.9	The Art of Screenwriting – An Introduction -This course was not implemented and was deleted in the Request for Change approved by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs					“8 screenwriters receive training;	Course not held/deleted from project plan	Course not held/deleted from project plan			
Activity 1.1.10	The Art of Sound Design (two courses were held, one in 2017 and one in 2018)					8+ students trained	Total number of students trained in two courses held in 2017 and 2018: 18 (6 women, 12 men)				
Activity 1.1.11	The Art of Postproduction (compulsory course for beginners in 2018)					12 members of new YFS intake receive introduction to postproduction		12 beginner students, 1 returning student (alumnus) and 1 staff member trained.			
Activity 1.1.12	True Fictions I This course was not implemented and was deleted in the Request for Change approved by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs					10+ students trained	Course not held/deleted from project plan	Course not held/deleted from project plan			
Output 1.2	Increased number of alumni who with skills to coach/mentor new students in different aspects of filmmaking	# of alumni/existing students capable completed “train to teach” initiative	Project report	Existing students and alumni are interested in coaching/ training other students		8+ trained local tutors as part of the ‘train-to-teach’ programme; 10 editors/peer trainers	3 peer trainers; 6 student editors/ peer trainers	“8 peer trainers; 4 editors;	2017 report	Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Achieved
Activity 1.2.1	“Train to teach” activity										
Output 1.3	Multi ethnic YFS students have increased awareness of social/ development issues	# events/workshops/activities conducted to increase students’ knowledge of social/development issues					“Student learned about social issues via making 8 engaging documentaries on topic of ‘women & peace’; students reflect on topics as they research, film and edit short documentaries; screening and feedback sessions also help to increase students’ understanding of social issues in MMR, also in relation to similar issues in other countries i.e. migration in Last Train Home.”	students learned about social issues via 3 documentary exercises in which they sensitively observe the working poor and 4 short documentaries exploring social topics such as migration, youth culture, gender relations, marginalisation of rural communities.			Achieved
Activity 1.3.1	Provide knowledge of social/ development issues (in Myanmar) via researching, filming and editing short documentaries										
Result 2	Increased capacity of Myanmar media professionals to network, lobby for better conditions of practice, secure funding, manage trainings and other activities	“% of graduates/students won grants to produce films in 2017 and 2018; # successful lobbying activities by YFS students (resulting in better conditions for media work)”	Project report; Student tracking/follow-up data	“Students are interested in lobbying activities; funding opportunities for Myanmar independent films are available “		3+ grants awarded per year	no pitching competitions were not held in either 2017 or 2018 due to lack of funds, this was explained in the Request for Change and accepted by the Finnish MFA; however, students and alumni are making their own films outside YFS that are sometimes screened at Wathann Film Festival and elsewhere.	See cell left.			NOT achieved regarding lobbying since no students joined any organized activities directly for lobbying purposes; modestly achieved for students’ capacity in getting/ managing fund for films due to cancelled pitching competitions
Output 2.1	YFS students increased other skills in making film budget, proposal writing for a small grant, and pitching etc	“# students completed pitching competition # of students completed screen-writing pitching competition # of students assisted to apply for funding opportunities in 2017 and 2018 # of lobbying activities for better conditions of practices organized by YFS students “	Project report; pre/post training tests if any	Fund is available for organizing pitching competitions		“8 screenwriters receive training, also in pitching; 8 short scripts written”	screenwriting pitch was not held at YFS in either 2017 or 2018, however, 6 female YFS screenwriters worked with the School’s int’l Screenwriting Tutor to create the scripts for the 10-part TV edu-tainment series ‘The Sun, the Moon & the Truth’. 8 students in the Documentary Competition and Advanced Editing Course learned how to manage their filming budgets of approx. 1,500 USD each, independently research and production manage their own short documentaries with 2-3 fellow students as crew members.	12 students on the beginners’ course learned how to manage a small filming budget and crew as they researched and filmed their four final films in different locations in MMR.			Modestly achieved because no pitching competitions (the planned activities for this output) were cancelled due to lack of funds

Activity 2.1.1	YFS Pitching Competition						Not held	Not held			
Activity 2.1.2	Screenwriting Pitching Competition						not held, included in project proposal but not part of the project plan	not held, included in project proposal but not part of the project plan			
Activity 2.1.3	Assisting students to prepare for applications for funding opportunities						3 student were assisted to prepare for applications for funding (and other) opportunities in 2017	3 student assisted to prepare for applications for funding opportunities in 2018			
Output 2.2	Increased involvement of YFS students in government advocacy activities	# students joined lobbying activities for better conditions of practice in media sector in Myanmar		Students are interested in advocacy/lobbying activities			no lobbying activities by YFS students but 5 alumni took part in panel discussions e.g. on censorship during Memory Heritage Film Festival;	no lobbying activities by students			NOT achieved no students joined any organized activities directly for lobbying purposes
Activity 2.2.1	YFS students initiate/participate in advocacy activities						no students initiated any lobbying activities but 10 students/alumni took part in YFS promo film	no students initiated any lobbying activities but 5 students took part in making student/alumni profiles			
Result 3	Support the transition process by helping government and NGOs to disseminate positive messages about peace, reconciliation and human rights and greater engagement with social/development issues through films;	<p>“# of films/videos produced with the participation of individuals and villages</p> <p># of media products made in collaboration with NGOs/CSOs produced by YFS students</p> <p># films on social development issues screened publicly</p> <p># of people reached in all screening events</p>	Project report; monitoring data (students' evaluation films)	Audience will be interested in watching YFS films			<p>“8+ participatory videos made by marginalised/disadvantaged (2+ films made by community in 2017, giving a voice to 500+ people; 2 participatory video films facilitated in communities in peri-urban Yangon;</p> <p>4+ films made in 2018 by communities giving a voice to 600+);</p> <p>50+ short 'local testimonies' “</p>	<p>“4 participatory videos produced abt environmental/cultural issues;</p> <p>3 docu-animations broadcast on national TV (no viewing data available for TV, potential reach = 30m; 750,000+ online views; 25,000 shares)”</p>	<p>“2 participatory videos on safe migration and waste recycling produced by peri-urban communities in 2018;</p> <p>75,000+ views of 4 short docuanimations on private TV station and social media platforms;</p> <p>250+ audience joining YFS annual screening;</p> <p>2,000+ people attended film screenings under Traveling Cinema activities”</p>	Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Partially achieved
Output 3.1	Increased in number of students and community members and communities trained and participate in film production about social issues	<p>“# of students trained on participatory video</p> <p># local community members trained and participate in video/film production;</p> <p># of people reached out (attendees) in film screening events</p>	Project report; monitoring data (students' evaluation films)	Community members will be interested and spend time joining training done by YFS students			8 students to be trained in 2018; 2 peri-urban communities/CSOs given a voice via PV facilitation	8 students trained; 24 community people in Shan state/Mandalay regions trained in PV	<p>“8 students trained;</p> <p>10+ members of CSOs in peri-urban Yangon participated in making 2 videos”</p>		Achieved
Activity 3.1.1	Conduct Participatory Video course										
Output 3.2	Increased opportunities for a diverse range of audience in different areas to watch films on social/development issues by YFS	<p>“# of screening events successfully organized under Traveling Cinema activities</p> <p># of screening events successfully organized APART FROM Traveling Cinema activities”</p>	Project report; monitoring data (students' evaluation films)	Government will allow YFS to organize screening events and give permissions to YFS films			1+ community visited in 2017; 3 communities visited in 2018”	<p>“1 village (Yae Oo, Inle Lake, Naung Shwe, Shan state) visited as part of Traveling Cinema;</p> <p>3 short docu-animations broadcast on national TV; “</p>	<p>“4 short docuanimations broadcast on private TV station and social media platforms ;</p> <p>1 Annual Screening (of 4 films) in 2018 in Yangon;</p> <p>6 Traveling Cinema screenings in 4 states and Mae Sot-Thailand”</p>	Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Partially achieved (since YFS still faced challenges to screen documentaries under MFA fund addressing social/development issues nationally due to censorship and unwillingness from national TV channels)
Activity 3.2.1	Implement Travelling Cinema activities in 2017 and 2018										
Activity 3.2.2	Organize other screening events (if not part of Traveling Cinema)										

Output 3.3	Increased collaboration with NGOs and CSOs in producing & disseminating media products on social/development issues	"# of NGOs/CSOs were active partners of YFS # of campaigns/screenings done in collaboration with NGOs/CSOs"	Project report, monitoring data	NGOs will use YFS films to support their work			"9 NGO/CSOs: Kachin National Museum, Lisu Literature and Cultural Organisation, Lisu Civil Society Network and Lisu Youth Camp; Green Thumb Culture and Knowledge Center in Kyaupadaung; Maing Tauk Charity, Inle Lake Conservation Centre, Kyauk Phyu Rural Development Association, Ann Pipeline Integrity Services Group and the Ethnic People Development Partnership (EPDP) (YFS had its films screened or donated to these organizations for screening)"	8 NGOs/CSOs/CBOs: (UNFPA, People in Need, the Kayinni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF), the Joint Monitoring Committee and Joint Peace Fund, Women for Women Foundation, Grassroots Empowerment and Ecosystem Nurturing group in Chin State, and the Rakhine Youth Circle)	2017 report	2018 report	Achieved
Activity 3.3.1	Collaborating with NGOs/CSOs in producing & disseminating media products on social/development issues										
Result 4	Consolidate YFS as 'centre of excellence' (i.e having internationally qualified expertise in MMR, training courses based on international standards of filmmaking; being a role model of women empowerment and human rights )	"# of international awards gained by YFS and its students in 2017 & 2018; # films produced by female directors"	Project report; monitoring data	Socio-political conditions in Myanmar will be favourable for YFS to continue its operation and expansion.			8 awards 6 out of 8 directors of 8 documentaries were female; 3 out of 4 local awards won by female students/graduates"	4 awards gained by YFS students		Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Achieved
Output 4.1	YFS students increase knowledge, skills through training courses delivered by international experts	"# students received on-site mentorship by international experts; # of students completed training courses by international trainers	Project report; monitoring data	Fund will be enough to bring international experts to Myanmar to train students		"8 students ; 2 mentorships in 2018 (don't have had individual targets for each year): the Advanced Editing, Postproduction coaching was targeted at 8 directors and 8 editors and the Sound Design course targeted 10 students."	26 students received training in 2017	36 students received training in 2018	Achieved		
Activity 4.1.1	YFS Fellowship, graduation grant students and students with works-in-progress receive on-site mentorship at the School from an international tutor in directing and/or editing										
Output 4.2	A increased number of female students has improved knowledge and skills in film-making	# female students completed the advanced filmmaking course	Project report; monitoring data	Girls and women are interested in attending courses provided YFS			55% of trained students were female; 50% of Traveling Cinema Participatory Video facilitators were female;	45% of students trained were female		Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Well achieved
Activity 4.2.1	Target and select female students for filmmaking courses from basic to advanced level										
Output 4.3	Increased number of films screened nationally and internationally	# of films screened nationally and internationally		National/international opportunities will be available for YFS to screen its students' films			36 films screened nationally & internationally (13 films screened in 8 Southeast Asian countries outside of Myanmar)	61 YFS films screened at 33 national and international festival screenings in 22 countries 2018;		Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Achieved
Activity 4.3.1	Bring films produced by YFS to internationally festival										
Result 5	Increased government support and sufficient local capacity is established to hand over YFS to Myanmar administration	" Identification of permanent school building and other (in-kind) support by the government; validation of YFS' curriculum by the government; % of YFS management personnel is local	Project report; project documents	The government is interested in the work of YFS and the capacity development of Myanmar's film makers and media professionals		" Identification of permanent school building and other in-kind support by government's validation of YFS' curriculum by the government;	" no in-kind or permanent building supported by the government government does not recognize YFS graduates 4 people (1 finance manager, 1 Project Coordinator, and 1 Yangon Film Service Coordinator & 1 Equipment Manager) are local	"no in-kind or permanent building supported by the government (a nomination of YFS film by govt. film department (MMPDD) to represent Myanmar at ASEAN Film Festival, Fordham University, New York, USA) government does not recognize YFS graduates 1 finance manager, 1 Project Coordinator, and 1 Yangon Film Service Coordinator are local		Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	NOT achieved concerning government's support (in-kind & a permanent building); ACHIEVED concerning initial steps to build management/ leadership capacity of students and local staff

Output 5.1	Local staff and students have improved management skills	# of students in annual Student Sub-Committee and Yangon Film Foundation board # local staff were provided management trainings	Project report; pre/post training tests if any	Local staff will continue working with YFS when their capacity improves		4-5 full-time staff members trained;	"4 staff were trained in management skills 5 students in YFS Student Committee; 3 in Yangon Film Foundation (YFF);"	"3+ local staff were trained in management skills; 5 students in YFS Student Committee; 3 in YFF; "		Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Achieved
Activity 5.1.1	Management training: on site, on-the-job training and e-mentorship of local staff to include project and fund management, grant-writing, contracts, acquisition										
Activity 5.1.2	Promoting students' leadership										
Output 5.2	Government has dialogues with YFS and increased engagement with YFS activities	"# of government officials at Ministry level attended meetings/ events organized by YFS # of meetings/events/ lobbying activities organized with the government "	Project report/meeting minutes	Government will be available to participate in meetings and dialogues with YFS				"2+ meetings with govt. representatives (Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department); YFS alumni teaching at government Myanmar Film Development Centre; Master Classes by YFS tutors 1 ministerial visit to the School 2 visits per month by YFS Project Officer for film permission"		Results Assessment Framework (RAF) 2018	Partially achieved as in 2018 a minister visited and 2 meetings per year with the government representative but MOU with line ministry has NOT been signed
Activity 5.2.1	"Facilitate meetings/dialogues with the government to get more support YFS activities										

## Appendix 4: Previous recommendations and YFS' responses

Recommendations	Source	YFS' responses
Efforts should be intensified to capitalise upon YFS' recent registration as a formal non-profit organisation.	ROM	Yangon Film Foundation (YFF), a local NGO, with students selected as board members established in 2017 and still in registration process. Representatives of YFF Board are taking part in YFS trainings, meetings and consultations regularly. One YFF board member is employed part-time at the YFS to get "on site management training".
Efforts should be intensified to increase government ownership through in-kind or direct financial support of the School.	ROM	Meetings and discussions were initiated with National University of Arts and Culture, MoI in NPT and MRTV. Collaborations with Myanmar Motion Picture Organization (MMPO)/ Myanmar Motion Picture Development Department (MMPDD) to provide master classes at the recently founded Film Development Center. An official visit from the MoI Minister to YFS in November 2018.  However, to expect the government to provide in-kind support and/or a permanent building is not realistic.
Increase YFS' interactions and exchanges of information with donors as well as engage more with local and international civil society in disseminating YFS films	ROM	YFS has collaborated with a growing number of CSOs, NGOs in Myanmar and over the border in Thailand to screen our 'women & peace' films at special curated screenings with Q&A.  YFS regularly contact and participates in events by the Finnish Embassy and other embassies in Yangon.
Greater visibility inviting local media representatives as well as local authorities and cultural decision-makers.	ROM	YFS invites media and local authorities to all events organized by the school. YFS conduct Master Classes at the Film Development Center and broadcast some docu-animations on MRTV. YFS invited Su Chay from Frontier Magazine to facilitate a debate on women in conflict held at the French Institute in March 2019.
Project indicators should be significantly tightened, or even redefined, in order to support monitoring and reporting activities. Stronger quantitative and qualitative data collection and follow up of project results.  Baselines should be developed for all outstanding Project activities.	ROM	Improvement was made by YFS in setting indicators for the appraised MFA project. However, YFS should create more specific, measurable and realistic indicators in the next phase of the MFA project. Even though YFS cannot collect baseline data available for Myanmar, it still could put its own data in the year prior to the newly developed project to support future evaluations.
Existing budgetary lines may need to be significantly increased for monitoring processes, or a final evaluation.	ROM	YFS and VIKES did have a budget for independent evaluation at the end of the MFA project.
Project expenditure should be monitored closely relative to any unspent budget lines.	ROM	There were no underspent budget lines but overspent items and budget adjustments found in the MFA annual financial reports.
Providing supplementary training to students, via civil society partners on key human rights and social issues. Specific training on ethical issues, in particular the principle of "do no harm", would also be beneficial.	ROM	Students received trainings on gender based violence and conflict sensitivity prior to the Docu-animations workshops in 2017 and 2018.  A meeting with an NGO - RAFT was held early 2018 to discuss potential cooperation such as the inclusion of "do no harm" and conflict sensitivity in YFS' compulsory curriculum for new intakes. Yet, due to lack of funding this concept has not been implemented yet. YFS planned to include it in the new project proposal to the Paung Sie Facility.
YFS should provide more sustained support to students in fund-raising and related production matters, or engage partners with specialisation in such issues to improve the sustainability of their overall training in the longer term.	ROM	Due to lack of funding no pitching competitions & small grants by YFS provided to students in 2017-2018 period. However, students received some coaching from YFS when they applied for external grants.
YFS should intensify its efforts to increase private sector support and governmental commitment to the sector, and direct financial support	ROM	Efforts were made but not yet any private national funding in Myanmar; YFS received two private European grants during the MFA project period.
Detailing the necessary steps employees should they suspect fraud; also including a whistle-blowing mechanism that advises, encourages and protects employees who want to report on those issues.	UNFPA	YFS has a guideline on purchasing and frauds

YFS should implement training policies for accounting / finance staff and ensure these are undertaken as planned. YFS should document an internal control framework in line with international standards. An effective framework document includes the following elements: Control Environment; Risk Assessment; Control Activities; Information and communication; Monitoring.	UNFPA	All the elements mentioned in recommendation, like Control Environment, Risk Assessment, Control Activities, Information and Communication as well as Monitoring are integral part of project implementation at the YFS. They are described at the stage of the proposal writing and in the reports to the donors. Finance Officer as well as newly recruited Office Administrator are now undergoing a training in the new accounting software QuickBooks purchased in January 2019. They also take part in all training provided by the donors which are related to their field.
Management should ensure there is segregation of duties between the preparer of the bank reconciliation and the individual responsible for preparing payments.	UNFPA	For the segregation of duties, an Office Administrator was recruited in January 2019.
YFS should prepare annual financial statements which are audited by an independent auditor, in accordance with the terms established in the contractual agreement.	UNFPA	This depends on the funding available as well as if donors' requirements and support. The Yangon Film School e.V registered in Berlin is audited every year by an independent auditor and this included all the funding received either by YFS in Berlin or YFS in Yangon.

## Appendix 5: YFS cost breakdown based on 2017 and 2018 financial reports

Types of expenses	Amount in 2017	Amount in 2018	Whole MFA project expenses	MFA expenses by %	Remarks
Direct training costs	53,304	60,960	114,264	32%	any expenses related to student training and "train to teach" activities and training outputs: tutor cost, student related costs, students' film production cost
Equipment and supplies	2,964	5,252	8,216	2%	
YFS personnel	80,786	93,828	174,614	49%	Berlin & Yangon staff
Yangon Office	17,147	11,491	28,638	8%	also student training venue
Berlin Office	4,363	2,379	6,742	2%	
Others	15,287	7,061	22,348	6%	Staff traveling, admin/ operations & the like
Total	173,850	180,971	354,821	100%	

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The two terms “MFA project” and “AFC project” are used interchangeably in this evaluation report
- <sup>2</sup> In the proposal, it was 24 new students, but according to YFS Director - Lindsey Merrison, it should have been reduced to 12 new students because the original proposal was scaled down from 4 years to 2 years.
- <sup>3</sup> Based on the TOR
- <sup>4</sup> The original outcomes of the project were rephrased and relocated in the logframe to indicate a clearer logic between outcomes, outputs and activities. The essence of YFS original outcomes, however, remains the same.
- <sup>5</sup> [http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Myanmar/sub5\\_5e/entry-3094.html](http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Myanmar/sub5_5e/entry-3094.html)
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/map/the-story-of-myanmar-documentary-film>
- <sup>7</sup> YFS annual reports to MFA
- <sup>8</sup> These two activities are not directly funded by the MFA but are important to the overall design of the AFC project, therefore, will be included in this evaluation report for a comprehensive analysis of YFS effectiveness and impact.
- <sup>9</sup> The students possibly referred to specific techniques related to the equipment, shooting, etc. YFS is suggested having some more discussions with current or past students to get their insights in this aspect.
- <sup>10</sup> The Gender Equality Network’s research – “Raising the Curtain: Cultural Norms, Social Practices and Gender Equality in Myanmar” dedicated a section about gender biases and gender inequality in the media sector in Myanmar.
- <sup>11</sup> YFS reports to the MFA
- <sup>12</sup> The television series about rule of law entitled *The Sun, The Moon and the Truth* edited and post-produced by the School’s production arm Yangon Film Services were broadcast on national television
- <sup>13</sup> It was unclear where the student referred to films produced by YFS or any films produced with modern technology
- <sup>14</sup> equal to 12.75% of the total annual budget
- <sup>15</sup> This can be done if YFS former students are using emails and YFS have their emails in the database

  
**VIKES**