

**2011 Annual Report**  
**We women foundation**



## Preface

Dear reader,

Chiang Mai, 18 March 2012

This report finds you in very turbulent times. *We women* is growing, Burma is changing and the 2012 Scholarship Grant selection is coming up, so students find themselves wondering if they will be able to study this academic year. If I can say anything about 2011, it is that I am very proud of the students at *We women*. I feel privileged to work with such inspiring and motivated young women, who come to me to talk about their lives, their dreams and their worries. On average, I see every student twice a week when they come in for classes. In addition to that, I have about four coaching sessions a year with each woman to help them formulate and realize their dreams. Some students come even more often to get practical help with their university preparation. Every single one of them has a character that touches me right to the heart. I hope that by reading this you can see, like I do every day, how powerful these women are and how they all deserve to have their dreams come true.

Let me give the example of Nang Noon, a bright woman, 30 years old. When she walks into the office, faces light up and everyone greets and starts talking to her. No one can see that behind her bright appearance a sad and difficult history is hidden. She had to flee Burma for political reasons, and had to start all over in a foreign country that felt hostile to her. She had no network to fall back on and had to find her way through various obstacles and insecurities. She is a very skilled coordinator, organizer and teacher, but had to work as an assistant in an office where she had no opportunity to voice her own ideas and use her skills. During that time she helped others who worked in even lower positions through being a volunteer teacher and radio DJ who encouraged and assisted the people around her. She understands the problems of others from the same background and feels a deep sympathy. She wants to change the education system in Burma and help decrease illiteracy by teaching for free. She dreams of setting up a language center where anyone, regardless of difference in background, can come and study as much as they need to. Nang Noon is a very dedicated student; she studies even more than all the rest, she has huge willpower and never gives up. I can see that her strength also comes from the difficulties she has been through in life. She told me stories that you and I cannot even imagine going through, and yet still here she is, positive and with a smile on her face, a person who inspires others around her, a person people seek out and go to when they are in need.

If I had the power to do even more than I am doing today, I would do it immediately. Working with these women makes my belief in possibilities stronger. You can do a lot more than you think. When you start really doing the things that you think are needed, you will see that doors open up. The *We women foundation* can grow and assist the women from Burma more and that is what we are going to do this coming year and in the years following. We are going to continue to fill the gaps and address the needs within the community. I have seen with my own eyes and experienced first-hand that together we can do a lot. One person does not make the difference but together we can do it; with staff, volunteers, partner organizations and donors working together, we can make the changes that are so needed. Together we can make sure that we do not have to tell talented women that there is not enough funding for them to study or for practical support.

If you are in or travel to Thailand, please come and join us for a wonderful lunch at the office. If you are in other parts of the world, please join our network by signing up for the newsletter, by following us on Facebook and Twitter and through becoming a donor.

*Together* we can realize social change!  
Ursula Cats, Founder & Executive Director

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## Introduction

### **A year of “development and expansion”**

In 2011, several aspects of the *We women foundation* have undergone major developments. If we look back at the situation at the end of 2010, we can only conclude that significant growth has been realised. We have not only been able to allow more participants into our programs, but our office has also expanded, which increases our capacity to support participants. More participants lead to more work for our staff, which means that we are happy with the time and effort that our volunteers and new employees provide. *We women* is growing, which makes us immensely happy.

As in 2010, we have invested considerable time and energy in the continued development and implementation of the *We women from Burma project*. We have made efforts to strengthen and expand the pre-university program, which we intend to make available to a larger group of women. In the past year, we were able to award the first scholarships, and the first women have begun their university educations. This was a major moment for the *We women foundation*. It is with pride that we can say that the results of our students have been a successful combined effort—certainly cause for celebration. In 2012, we expect to be able to assist the first *We women* alumni in developing their leadership qualities even further and in assisting them to find suitable jobs.

*We women* considers field research as a way of providing more depth to our projects and to strengthen the foundations that our projects rest on. We believe that it is of fundamental importance to consider the cultural values of our target group while developing and realising programs. Over the past year, we have therefore been very involved in research into the situation of migrants from Burma in Chiang Mai and its surroundings. *We women* ensures that the research explicitly focuses on gender-related issues within the context of the study. The results of the study are expected to become available in the first quarter of 2012, and they will be used to optimise the impact of our programs.

### **Growth in times of crisis**

We cannot ignore the fact that Europe and the rest of the world are currently experiencing a serious economic crisis. As we depend on the donations of individuals, corporations and institutional funds, this crisis is having a negative impact on our work. If our donors can give less, it automatically becomes more difficult for us to gather sufficient funds for our work. We have spent considerable efforts to find new donors in 2011, and have attempted to assemble a healthy mix of private, institutional and corporate donors. This took more time and energy than we had intended, but we can proudly state that we have managed to cover all costs we incurred in 2011 with the donations gathered in that year. We would like to express our gratitude to our corporate sponsor Pure & Co. for their generous contribution, as well as to all other donors that have made this possible. Our work would not be possible without you.

Another key area of development in the past year has been providing information about *We women* to the (Dutch) public. In order to sustain our growth, it is important that more people become familiar with our work. We were involved in the organisation of two large benefit events for the Dutch public. During these events we generated donations and worked on generating brand awareness for *We women*. We also launched our first social media campaign in late 2011. Due to the generous contributions of donors and sponsors and the efforts of a number of committed volunteers, the campaign not only led to more followers on Facebook and Twitter, but also to a substantial amount of money.

### **Developments in Burma – the future**

It will come as no surprise that the *We women foundation* is very interested in the developments that have taken place in Burma in the past year. After the elections in November 2010, the military regime announced a number of far-reaching reforms. Measures are being taken to increase press liberty, promote liberal democracy and improve the legal position of the work force as well as the general economic situation of the country and its people. These measures are a welcome change from the former and in various areas still continuing human rights violations. Prominent refugees in exile and also the United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, expressed their interests by visiting the country.

In spite of the first careful steps that are being taken in the reform process, it is too early to say Burma has really changed. At any given moment, the army may feel too great a threat to the status quo and act upon this as they see fit. The army and the new government are still operating independently. Violence is still taking place on a daily basis in Burma's ethnic areas and people that are involved in politically sensitive matters are still being arrested throughout the country. Changes that were visible during the past months took place because of the goodwill of the new government. However, as long as reforms are not backed by the changing of laws, the government can be very selective in whether or not they actually enforce them in specific situations. Lots of uncertainties remain; these uncertainties are also felt in the environment *We women* operates in. The community in which we do our work has years of experience with psychological and physical repression. Many questions arise for women. Questions that don't have straight answers. What is the impact of these reforms on my personal situation? Is this the right time to move back to Burma and start fighting for the freedom of my people, or would that just jeopardise the process of reform? Our organisation needs to find a way to deal with these insecurities and make sure we keep track of all the changes being implemented. No one is sure what the future will look like, but it seems clear that there will be an impact on our work.

## **Our organisation**

### **Our vision and mission**

*We women* is a Dutch foundation that strives to achieve equality for various groups of people in the world. The Foundation assists women, refugees, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups with their questions, struggles and needs, as they are formulated in their own terms. Academic research is the first step in this process because it helps to gain insight into local beliefs, practices and ambitions. The key areas of *We women's* engagement include personal growth, social inclusion, (mental) health, education, and the encouragement of creative initiatives, with the ultimate goal of achieving equality for all.

### **Our method**

As we describe in our mission statement, our work is based on research. Research is conducted not only during the start-up phase of projects and activities, but continuously. *We women* is convinced that (potential) participants themselves are best able to describe their own needs. In practice, these needs are too often described by outsiders, but we work to assist women to identify and pursue solutions to the problems *they* want to solve. Another domain that we consider important in research is the services that other organisations currently provide, in achieving similar aims. This ensures that our projects address needs that are not addressed by other parties. Because the context in which we perform our work is very changeable, research is a permanent part of our work.

All our activities contribute to the realisation of well-built projects that provide the needs of our target group. We formulate objectives based on our research, and develop programs to realise these objectives. The *We women from Burma project* is the first project that was developed and implemented by the organisation. The various programs that make up this project each address a specific need of our target group. In the end, they all contribute to the ultimate objective: assisting women in developing their leadership qualities.

In order to create the required conditions for the realisation of our objectives, much of our focus lies in creating a voice for the women we represent. It is essential to advocate on the basis of their needs and inform outsiders of their stories and experiences. We have been highly successful in our outreach over the past year, but have a long way to go in educating both the local and international community of our cause. Therefore, we need to raise more awareness of the urgency of our work. The research described above is the primary input for the formulation of our message and requests for support.

### **Our organisational structure**

All activities of our organisation are supervised by the management of the foundation. The management has remained the same since the foundation was established. The management consists of:

1. Ms Ursula Cats (chairman)
2. Ms Caroline Seagle (vice-chairman)
3. Ms Nadia Moussaïd (secretary)
4. Ms Kieja Janssen (treasurer)

All of the organisation's activities are managed by the executive director: Ms Ursula Cats.

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In managing the *We women from Burma project*, the executive director is advised by an advisory board. This advisory board consists of four renowned women from Burma. As these women are active in a climate that is highly politically sensitive, their names are not published in this public document.

The organisation's activities are realised by a team of employees and volunteers, supervised by the executive director. For the first time since the *We women foundation* was established, there are paid positions for certain employees: the executive director, the administrative employee and the program coordinator. The positions of executive director and administrative employee have been salaried since the beginning of the year. The program coordinator position has been salaried since the end of the year.

The organisation was largely dependent on the work of volunteers in 2011. The number of volunteers active for the organisation is continuously changing. The activities they perform are, among other things, giving English lessons, performing preliminary research for program development and realisation, organising benefit events and realising tasks in the field of communications and fund-raising. Our volunteers are from various parts of the world, and mostly perform their tasks in the Netherlands and/or Chiang Mai. In 2011, the number of volunteers more than doubled as compared to 2010.

### **Our partner organisations**

Since 2010, the *We women foundation* works together with two other organisations that provide migrants and refugees from Burma with opportunities for higher education. For reasons of security, one of these organisations does not wish to be named here. The other organisation is called BEAM (*Bridging Educational Access to Migrants*). The cooperation with these organisations is aimed primarily at joining forces and expertise, with the goal of optimising the impact of our work. In 2011, this cooperation consisted mainly of exchanging expertise and jointly providing English lessons to our students. In addition, *We women* and BEAM cooperated in a study of the needs of our target group and its community, and the current programs from local organisations that address these needs.

In addition to strengthening the contacts with our existing partner organisations, we took steps in 2011 to further extend our network in Chiang Mai. Firstly, we organised discussions with several Burma-focused women's and youth organisations. All these discussions were gender-related. We identified eight organisations with whom we will develop and implement a gender program in 2012. The aim of this program will be to address gender issues in the refugee community in Chiang Mai and stimulate dialogue and awareness surrounding this topic.

At the invitation of the existing members, the *We women foundation* has become part of the steering committee of the CBO Resource Centre for Burma organisations in Chiang Mai. This initiative was previously managed by the International Rescue Committee, which had to pull out due to financial cutbacks. Within this network organisation, more than 40 local CBOs (community based organisations) and grassroots organisations share their resources, knowledge and ideas. Members also organise workshops and trainings, with the objective of stimulating professional growth and increasing their capacities. All organisations that are a member of the CBO Resource Centre have a special focus on Burma and the related refugee issues in Northern Thailand. The role of the *We women foundation* within the network is providing support in the field of fund-raising and taking the lead in strategic discussions.

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Developments at the organisation level in 2011

	2010	2011
Number of changes to the management	–	–
Number of changes to the advisory board	–	–
Number of salaried positions	–	3
Number of active volunteers	25	55
Number of partner organisations	2	3
Number of potential partner organisations identified 1		8

## The results

### Research

Our research activities in 2011 consisted primarily of a study that we performed in partnership with BEAM. Jointly, we worked on a research paper addressing: *“The situational description of education for migrants from Burma in Chiang Mai from the student's perspectives and those of the organization's leaders”*. With this research, we are attempting to gain insight into the gaps in educational resources available to migrants from Burma. We have done this by comparing the ambitions of our target group with the educational opportunities currently available to them.

The results of this study, which are expected in the first quarter of 2012, will enable us to improve the match between our programs and the needs of our target group. The research results are also of importance as input for the activities we perform to increase awareness of the issues we address as an organisation. This study began in 2010 and the executive director worked on it for one day per week during 2011.

In addition to the study with BEAM, *We women* performs continuous research into the topics that are related to our work. Gender issues form the main focus of this research and results have an immediate influence on the development and execution of our projects. Throughout 2011, we were in contact with eight organisations to discuss the role of gender in Burmese society and in the migrant community in Chiang Mai. As a result of this, we will cooperate with these organisations to develop a gender program addressing the gender issues in the Burmese community in Chiang Mai. This program will also be a valuable input for gender research that we will undertake in the future.

### Research results

	2010	2011
Number of active studies	2	2
– Number of hours – research with BEAM	136	432
– Number of hours – <i>gender</i> research	132	106

### **The We women from Burma project**

The long-term objective of the *We women from Burma project* is to support unrecognised female refugees from Burma in acquiring key positions within policy-making and influential organisations, so that they can empower other women and their community in their own way. Currently, these positions are often filled by outsiders. Research has shown that women primarily identify acquiring academic qualifications as an opportunity to realise this objective. As women traditionally have a subservient role, they are not given this opportunity enough.

In order to realise our long-term objective, the *We women foundation* intends to make higher education accessible for the future female leaders of Burma. In addition, we assist them where possible in the process of professional development. To this end we have developed a number of programs that jointly make up the *We women from Burma project*:

#### *Pre-university program*

Based on our experiences of 2010, we have focused a great deal on the continued development and broadening of our Pre-university program. Research shows that women are considerably behind in their academic development, due to the lack of quality education in Burma. Many people from Burma are faced with this kind of setback, but women from ethnic areas are especially challenged. The reason for this is that women in ethnic areas are only allowed to study at the least qualified universities in Burma and can only study subjects like Zoology and History. They are not allowed to choose their own subjects. Additionally, women need much higher scores than men to be able to access better universities and certain subjects of study. The strengthening of our Pre-university program was necessary to sufficiently prepare our women for university. Because we are planning on sending more women to university in 2012, we also needed to make the program accessible to a larger group of women.

The Pre-university program is aimed at supporting the women in gaining the required qualifications to be admitted to the university of their choice. A core component of this program is providing English preparation to our students. In order to remove the language barrier as much as possible, they need to read, speak and write English at an advanced academic level. This knowledge of the English language is measured with the TOEFL test (test for English as a second language). Many universities use this test to determine if students will have a sufficient level of English to complete their curriculum successfully and require a base score for admission to their school. English lessons are given in a classroom context and in smaller groups with a tutor, totalling eighteen hours a week; six hours in class, four hours with a tutor and eight hours of independent study.

All participants attend personal coaching sessions in addition to English lessons. These sessions offer practical and emotional support in working on their aspirations and identifying personal goals. The women then choose a university and a course that match their goals and plans. The coaching sessions also deal with personal limitations and challenges, so that possible obstacles are recognised and dealt with in a timely manner and have as little impact on the development process of the participants as possible. In 2011, all participants in the Pre-university program participated in coaching sessions, and received an average of six hours of coaching per person.

As the education system in Burma is severely underdeveloped, many of our participants have insufficiently developed critical thinking capacities. Since critical thinking is essential in higher education, the Pre-university program also comprises workshops and discussion groups. Throughout the year, *We women* organises discussion groups about various topics and workshops focusing on issues such as debating, leadership responsibilities and academic writing. All these training sessions and workshops are aimed at preparing the participants for their lives as academic students. In 2011,

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six different workshops and training sessions were organised. For 2012, a minimum of one workshop or training session per month is planned.

In order to ensure that the participants can focus entirely on their preparation for university, *We women* supports the women that do not have a stable income by introducing them to ethical and responsible employers. The working schedules of these employers enable our participants to focus on their academic obligations. This service is relatively new, so few participants have been placed in jobs yet. In 2011, the total number of participants that found jobs through our mediation was five.

At the start of 2011, the Pre-university program had ten participants. Seven of them have successfully completed the program. They have already been awarded a scholarship. The three remaining participants are still active within the program and are further preparing for their admission to university. Seventeen new participants joined the program in 2011, which means that the group currently consists of twenty women. This was our goal for 2011 and is also the maximum number of participants we can currently accommodate.

### *Scholarship Grant program*

The Scholarship Grant program is aimed at giving our best participants a scholarship for a university program. Together with the advisory board, we assess the candidates that submit an application. During the assessment process we consider the background and capacities of the women, but also their ambitions to take an active role in improving the lives of people from and in Burma. The costs that are covered by the scholarship are tuition fees, travelling and visa costs, and lodging expenses in the city that the university is located in. This allows our students to focus completely on their education. Despite the preparation offered by the Pre-university program, our students need their full focus to be able to keep up with the pace and level of education in international universities.

Our first participants started their university courses in 2011. Our objective was to have five participants enter a university course. To our great satisfaction, we realised this goal. These students are attending various universities in Southeast Asia: one in the Philippines, one in Chiang Mai and three in Bangkok. They are enrolled in the following programs: Public Health, Social Work, Psychology and Educational Administration (two students). We have also been able to grant scholarships to three other students in 2011. They have not yet started their courses, as the education programs have not yet started or have experienced delays for other reasons. All these students will begin their courses in the year 2012.

### *In-university program*

*We women* supports students that attend university by means of coaching, study training and access to online academic resources. We consciously opted to provide these activities on a small scale so that we can support all our students personally and in a manner befitting their situation. Our support ranges from practical and academic support to emotional support during the transition process. In 2011, all coaching and support related to the university courses was conducted by the executive director of the organisation.

All students that attended university in 2011 used one or more types of the support we offer. The total number of support hours provided in 2011 was thirty hours. This means that on average, each student received six hours of coaching and other support related to their academic course.

*Internship program*

We began to develop a new program within the *We women from Burma project* in 2011: the Internship program. This program offers students the possibility to translate their theoretical knowledge into practical work experience. *We women* believes that an academic title alone is not enough to have the women immediately acquire positions as future leaders of Burma. It is therefore important that they can further develop their theoretical expertise and learn how to apply it effectively. In addition, the program offers the opportunity to create a professional network that will help them find their way in their relevant field.

The Internship program is connected to the In-university program. As there are currently no students that have completed their academic course, there are no women active in the program. So far, our focus has been on the development of the program and making preparations for the fund-raising that will have to take place. We expect the first students to actively participate in the internship program in 2012.

*Alumni program*

The Alumni program has not progressed to the implementation phase either. This program will be aimed at the women that have completed the *We women from Burma project*. It has not yet been determined what the program will look like exactly, but it will definitely include an annual student conference. It will also serve as a networking platform that our women can use to interact with one another, other leaders from their communities and prospective students that need suitable role models. As more women complete their education, we will gain greater insight into how we can continue to support them in becoming the leaders they are meant to be. The development of this program will have our full attention in 2012.

Project results

	2010	2011
<b>Pre-university program</b>		
Number of pre-university participants	10	24
– Number of participants: intake	10	17
– Number of participants granted a scholarship	–	7
Number of workshops and training sessions	-	6
Number of hours of coaching	60	120
Number of job placements	-	5
<b>Scholarship Grant program</b>		
Number of appointed scholarships	–	8 <sup>1</sup>
– Number of granted scholarships	–	5
– Number of scholarships on waiting list	–	3
<b>In-university program</b>		
Number of students in-university	–	5
– Number of hours of in-university coaching	–	30

<sup>1</sup> One of these students did not participate in the pre-university program, but entered the program via lateral entry.

## Communication & fund-raising

The most direct form of communication with our supporters is our newsletter, which is distributed each quarter and contains news items about the developments that have taken place over the past months. In addition, this provides the background to our work, and our followers are informed about the situation of our target group. The newsletter is distributed to all those that have registered to receive it. The number of people on the newsletter distribution list has more than doubled since 2010.

In addition to the newsletter, our website is another important communication channel for *We women*. The website can be considered a reference guide about *We women* and contains comprehensive information about the organisation and our work. Information about new programs and activities are added to the website as soon as it becomes available. The website also has weblog news items, in which we publish in-depth articles and news items. These items are written by employees of the organisation and by guest bloggers. News items are added to the website immediately. We aim to publish a new blog every two weeks. The number of unique visitors of our website has tripled since 2010.

*We women* established a presence on Facebook and Twitter this year. The advantage of social media is that it is fairly easy to maintain, while enabling us to contact a large group of people at once. Our activity with these social media has steadily increased since the creation of our accounts. We currently aim to publish a short message via social media twice per day. These can be news items, an uploaded image or a portrait of a participant, volunteer or employee. In the coming year we will continue to invest in strengthening our presence in social media. For instance, we will create accounts with other platforms (like LinkedIn).

By increasing the scope of our media outlets, we have been able to bring a spotlight on the refugee community in Chiang Mai and better advocate for their rights. We believe it is important for our supporters to understand the circumstances of refugee women in the region and why there is a pressing need for change. In sharing personal stories about the women as well as regular updates on political and social changes inside of Burma, we are able to communicate the context in which we work and the weight of our activities.

### Communication results

	2010	2011
Number of unique visitors of the website	1110	3789
Number of blogs published	7	29
Number of addresses on newsletter distribution list	154	372
Number of newsletters distributed	2	4
Number of followers on Facebook	–	335
Number of followers on Twitter	–	129

*We women* does more than provide information to our existing supporters and donors. We also work to increase their number. In 2011, we organised several activities to gain more attention for our work and related issues. The objective of these activities was usually twofold: on the one hand they were aimed at generating familiarity with the name of our organisation, and on the other hand at raising funds. Some activities also have a third aim of providing our network with extensive information about the main topics of our work. The activities were organised in the Netherlands and

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in Thailand, and online on Facebook and Twitter. The success of these activities can be measured by the number of persons that actively looked for information about our foundation and the number of donors that supports *We women* financially.

The first activity was the Valentine event in Amsterdam. Ten *We women* volunteers sold roses to travellers and office workers at the WTC on the railway station Amsterdam Zuid on Valentine's Day. Unpredictable factors such as bad weather and a strike of the Amsterdam public transport led to us not selling all roses. We were happy to conclude that we had only suffered a minor financial setback. However, more than four-hundred people heard about the *We women foundation* for the first time on that day. The reactions during the day were positive, and all volunteers involved had the feeling that they had achieved part of their objective in spite of the financial setback. *We women* learned from this experience that it is important to carefully consider the risks of investing in an event.

A large-scale event took place in the Netherlands in April 2011. During the night before the Queen's Birthday and on the Queen's Birthday itself, the Utrecht co-op WWG organised a musical stage in the centre of Utrecht. Approximately twenty *We women* volunteers worked with the residents of the co-op and other volunteers to make it a successful event. During the activities, we distributed promotional material, sold *We women* products, organised activities for children and helped the organisation of the co-op with construction tasks and staffing the bars and toilet facilities. The excellent location of the activities, the fine weather and the fact that the Queen's birthday was on a Saturday, helped to make the event a huge success. Hundreds of people heard about our organisation. The proceeds of the event, which were donated in full to *We women*, constituted a fantastic amount. We would like to take this opportunity to once again express our gratitude to the residents and volunteers of the WWG co-op in Utrecht for their efforts and this wonderful opportunity for the *We women foundation*.

Founder Ursula Cats went on her yearly visit to the Netherlands in May 2011. Naturally, we used the opportunity to strengthen contact with our Dutch donors. This year we organised a benefit event to realise this goal. The event had two components: the first part of the evening was a panel discussion featuring prominent Dutch personalities and guests from Burma. Chaired by our executive director, the panel discussed a number of issues related to the recent changes in Burma. The aim of this part of the evening was primarily advocacy focused. We provided in-depth background information about the issues we work on. The second, more relaxing part of the event consisted of music, good food and an open atmosphere for discussion. During this portion of the evening we focused primarily on fund-raising and networking. Naturally, several *We women* volunteers were present to talk about our work with interested visitors. The fund-raising activities generated a considerable sum, but more importantly, we strengthened and expanded the commitment of our rank-and-file. We would like to thank the panel members Dr. Ellen Bal, Ir. Diederik Samson, Ms. Saskia Kunst and two guests from Burma; for security reasons they will not be mentioned by name.

In addition to the activities in the Netherlands, we have also been active in Thailand to increase awareness of the issues we work on. In November 2011, the *We women foundation* attended the BABSEA (*Bridging Across Border Southeast Asia*) event in Chiang Mai. The event's goal was to create an environment in which local NGOs, CBOs and grassroots organisations could present their work, sell products, strengthen their networks and meet potential volunteers. *We women* was present at the public interest fair with a stand and joined the running event that followed the fair. This type of event is important for us, as it allows us to share the problems that women from Burma experience within their local Thai community. It stimulates tolerance in the society in which our women live their daily lives.

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In late 2011 we launched our first online campaign. The objective of the campaign was to increase awareness of our work via social media platforms. By creating publicity on Facebook and Twitter, we raised awareness for the launch of an informative video about our work in Chiang Mai and its urgency. This was the first time that many people got to know the women that we work with. Using the attention that our video enjoyed, we asked our followers to make a donation to our charity. The campaign resulted in a substantial amount of money, which was also due to our sponsor Cleaner Climate ([www.cleanerclimate.com](http://www.cleanerclimate.com)) doubling a large part of the donations. The campaign has also led to a sharp increase in followers on social media platforms. Based on the success of this campaign, we have decided to organise an online campaign in 2012.

In addition to the benefit and networking events that *We women* attended in the past year, we have also taken many steps to attract new donors. We can roughly subdivide these donors into three categories: institutional, corporate and private donors. Each of these groups requires its own approach, so we spent considerable time and effort to create a good mix of donors from these three groups. We will provide a more in-depth analysis of the financial state of *We women* in the next chapter.

### Fund-raising results in 2011

	2010	2011
Number of benefit events	4	4
Number of online campaigns	–	1
Number of active monthly (private) donors	13	14
Number of one-off (private) donors	16	24
Number of active institutional donors	1	10
Number of active corporate donors	2	6

## The finances

The total expenditure of 2011 was 6,5% higher than originally budgeted. To our great joy, we managed to cover all costs with the donations we received during the year. Below is a list of all revenue and expenditure.

### Revenue and expenditure in 2011 (in €)

	2010	2011
<b>Revenue</b>		
Private donations	2.750,23	6.611,34
Corporate donations	780,00	40.846,70
Institutional donations	200,00	39.778,69
Benefit events	1,470,8	76.874,04
Other	6.236,26	531,94
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>11.437,36</b>	<b>94.642,71</b>
	2010	2011
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Program costs (76% of total expenditure)		
– Research	-	1.679,43
– Projects	1.906,82	32.388,84
– Advocacy	1.507,16	1.731,68
Communications & fund-raising (11% of total expenditure)		
– Outsourced fund-raising	-	3.665,20
– Benefit events	1.507,17	891,96
– Promotional materials	975,52	787,55
Management & operational costs (12% of total expenditure)		
– Salaries	-	1.940,95
– Office & utilities	1.184,20	1.808,44
– Office supplies	455,20	1.120,78
– Travel costs	-	125,24
– Telephone costs	-	267,40
– Backing charges	-	278,39
Other (1% of total expenditure)	15,00	408,66
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>7.551,07</b>	<b>47.094,52</b>

The biggest unexpected expense on this list is 'outsourced fund-raising'. At the end of 2010, we had no plans on outsourcing fund-raising yet, so these costs were not included in the budget for 2011. During 2011, we teamed up with a no cure – no pay fund-raising agency. This measure was taken because fund-raising activities were taking up too much of the organisation's time and energy. As compensation for the work executed by the agency, 14% of the raised amount was paid to them. All donors approached through this agency were aware of the additional costs. No money coming from private or corporate donors was put towards this payment. By adding the costs of 'outsourced

## *We women realize social change together*

fund-raising' to the 'communications & fund-raising' expenditure, its proportion significantly increased in the distribution of funds. Unfortunately, the aim of spending at least 80% of all expenditure on program costs was not met; instead it became 76%. Because the revenue brought in by the fund-raising agency prevented major liquidity problems from arising, however, the organisation can be at peace even without reaching this goal. For 2012, however, *We women* has again set the goal of spending at least 80% of our budget on program costs.

In addition to fully covering the costs incurred, the organisation has endeavoured to build a continuity reserve for 2012. This will function to prevent liquidity problems from arising at the beginning of the year. After processing the financial records of 2011, the balance is as follows:

### Balance 2011

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#### Balance 1-1-2011

Cash & bank accounts	3.886,29	Continuity reserve	3.886,29
	<b>3.886,29</b>		<b>3.886,29</b>

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#### Balance 31-12-2011

Cash & bank accounts	51.434,48	Allocated reserves*	18.703,87
		Continuity reserve	32.730,62
	<b>51.434,48</b>		<b>51.434,48</b>

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\* All allocated reserves go towards scholarships for the academic year 2012 – 2013

The budget for 2012 amounts to €98.452,42, so in the coming year we will have to spend a good deal of time on fund-raising again. Staff and volunteers are fully committed to ensure that the annual report of 2012 will again show a good balance in finances.

## The future

At *We women*, we don't assume that the entire community of unrecognised refugees from Burma will move back in a short period of time. For now, we can continue with our work in Chiang Mai as we have been doing over the past years. However, we are confronted with questions of whether or not we should move parts of our current program or new programs to Burma. Reforms are obviously a good thing, but the rebuilding of the country will be an unpredictable process with serious consequences for those living both inside of Burma and abroad. We cannot say with certainty that the future development of Burma will go smoothly. When we ask our students or other migrants for their opinions, the most common reaction is: "It looks positive and we have much hope this is going in the right direction, but there are many uncertainties. Many years we have lived in fear and unpredictability, and currently we do not know whether the changes will stay positive. Nor do we know whether the army will interfere again with national interests. The army is separate from state and law, and may at any time decide that national security is at risk."

The goal *We women* is working towards, creating more women leaders, is a goal that is also very relevant to Burma's present development. Since we hold all people from Burma very dear, our foundation is looking at options with which we can play a part in the reconstruction of the country. Within Burma, women leaders do not get a lot of space to share their opinions and contribute towards development, so we will continue to assist them in their growth process. Also, the reconstruction of higher education institutions will take a very long time, so most academic studies will continue to take place outside of Burma.

Thinking about the future, we are faced with many questions. Is it a good idea to open our current program to women from the ethnic areas that live inside Burma? There are several ethnic groups who remain severely oppressed within Burma; how will we be able to reach these groups effectively? Are ethnic areas now more accessible, or is the impact of the reforms currently only visible in cities? Is it a good idea to open a field office in Yangon, or would this only take away valuable resources from our current program? And what practical problems are there to overcome before we can actually open a field office in Yangon?

There are yet many questions about the future of *We women*, questions that currently have no simple answers. We will have to wait and see how the reforms in Burma unfold in the coming months. At the beginning of April, by-elections will be held, and will probably shed new light on the situation. However, we deliberately choose to share our thoughts on possible roles *We women* can play in the future. We will be looking for opportunities to start researching the future endeavours of our foundation. Much research is still needed to map the needs of different ethnic groups in Burma. Whether or not *We women* will be actively setting up programs to address these needs, only the future can tell.

## Acknowledgments

We want to thank everyone for this years' support for *We women foundation*.

- First of all, our students. Your motivation and efforts have been inspiring to us all.
- Our partner organizations. With special thanks to BEAM, with whom our cooperation grows and strengthens, and to the CBO Resource Centre. We also want to thank all parties within the CBO Resource Centre. Thanks to all the new organizations with whom we will be focusing on gender-issues in the near future.
- Members of our board of advisors, thank you for your advice and for your contributions to our work.
- Pure & Co: our largest corporate sponsor. We are incredibly thankful for the generous support and open attitude to also explore new sponsor opportunities.
- Cleaner Climate, thank you for your contribution to our first online campaign. Thanks to your efforts our campaign was a tremendous success.
- Our other corporate sponsors: with special thanks to Lush BV, Redwood Software Nederland and Siamese Traders Fine Products.
- AtDta: our biggest institutional donor.
- Our other institutional donors: ASN Foundation, Stichting IJsselvielt Gevaertsfonds, Stichting Non Olet, Stichting Benie, Dr Hofstee Stichting, Stichting Emmaus Bilthoven en Johannes Stichting.
- All our volunteers, with special thanks to Ronit Schein. Much of the progress we made in 2011 was possible because of your energy and efforts.
- Our voluntary English tutors, who've been working throughout the year with our students.
- Our staff, for their ongoing efforts and commitment to our mission throughout the year.
- The inhabitants and volunteers of WWG commune for their huge efforts during the benefit event on Queen's Day 2011. With special thanks to Nine Greetman.
- Every donor that has supported us over the last year. With special thanks to Pien de Lange – Lunenburg.
- Every donor that has supported us on a monthly basis over the last year. With special thanks to Mr. Toorman.

With all my heart I thank everyone that has supported us in any way. Without your help and support we could not have realised all that we achieved this year.

We look forward to a new year filled with energetic cooperation!

Ursula Cats, Founder and Executive Director

