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SUCCESS STORY:

UK aid Supports Job Creation for People Living with Disabilities



Lwin Moe Aung at work in his barber shop

Lwin Moe Aung has been battling adversity for most of his life. He was just 7 years old when he lost part of his right leg to cancer. A few years later, his father passed away, forcing him to move in with his sister and her family in Thahtone Township, Mon State. Life dealt him another blow when he lost his left leg to cancer in 2017. He was 22 years old.

Although his disability meant that he had little prospect of finding work, Lwin Moe Aung was determined to support himself. Creating job opportunities for People with Disabilities (PwDs) can unlock their potential and provide them with opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic growth.

Lwin Moe Aung met Daw Nge Nge Win, a Job Placement Coach at the Leprosy Mission Myanmar (TLMM), in 2017. After she encouraged him to participate in vocational training, he decided to join a 3-month hairdressing course organised by the Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), a Japanese non-governmental organisation.

After the course, he decided to open his own barber shop. The TLMM project, with financial support from the DaNa Facility and UK aid, provided 200,000 MMK (£100) as seed capital to start the business, which he opened on available space in front of a neighbour's house.

In 2019, Daw Nge Nge Win helped to organise a better location for Lwin Moe Aung's barber shop at an Early Childhood Care and Development centre in Hlaing

“I am happy because now I have my own regular income from the barber shop. I don't want to rely on others for my living.”

Tharyar Township, Yangon. The TLMM project, with support from the DaNa Facility and UK aid, renovated and equipped the new shop.

Lwin Moe Aung is now doing good business, earning around 3,500 MMK (£1.75) per day, enough to support himself and to cover his ongoing medical expenses. But for Lwin Moe Aung, it is not just about him; he plans to give back to the community.

“I am happy because now I have my own regular income from the barber shop. I don't want to rely on others for my living. I want to share what I know with other PwDs like me. I want to accept PwDs as on-the-job trainees in my shop,” he said.

Lwin Moe Aung still faces challenges in his work, but instead of seeing them as problems to overcome, he considers them opportunities: “Now I am accepting mostly male customers as I have no confidence to give women's haircuts. However, I have a plan to learn at my friend's beauty salon,” he said.

As Myanmar's economy continues to grow, creating jobs for disadvantaged groups is vital. Decent jobs provide vulnerable people, such as women, PwDs, and the poor with opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic growth, ensuring that development benefits everyone.

The DaNa Facility is a five-year innovative private sector development programme funded by the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID). The programme works with the Government of Myanmar to support inclusive economic growth.

The TLMM project provides inclusive employment opportunities for PwDs in Yangon, Bago and Mandalay. By 2020 the project aims to support over 1,000 PwDs to benefit from access to employment and improved incomes.