

## Artist Relief Fund



### Why is the Artist Fund important?

Art has shown to have the ability to inspire, persuade, console, communicate, educate and record. The Artist Fund would like to provide artists with the opportunity to partake in their community in a time of turbulence, in the inimitable way they know how.

Artists are underestimated development actors who will at last have the chance to play a role in their environment by keeping up their own morale to continue creating art. Motivated artists can mobilize to take care of one another and those around them when prospects look bleak.

### Objective of the Artist Fund project

The objective of the project is to enable the space for artists to express their cultural identity and contribute to social development and in so doing:

- Continue creating and producing artwork in difficult times
- Contribute to their own households and with what remains of their community
- Create a solid local network that can come together to help one another, not just during periods of strife but when things get better too

### What does the Artist Fund want to achieve?

The overall goal of the Artist Fund is to contribute to the livelihoods of artists by empowering them with the financial tools to continue making their art in unpredictable times.

This will be achieved by:

- i. A fund is established with a long-term institutional and financial plan.

- ii. A sub-grants scheme is put in place where 1000 USD per grantee is awarded to 160 artists in two cycles.
- iii. An arts ecosystem is created, constituting artists from various demographics and backgrounds which enables them to continue working on their art in difficult times.

### For whom is the Artist Fund?

The primary stakeholders are artists of all demographics from 6 target regions (Yangon, Dawei, Magway, Hpa An, Patheingyi and Meiktila), not limited to any artistic background. It includes artists from a variety of artistic disciplines who find themselves facing difficulty to get on with their craft, but with the desire to be active in creating and proactive in playing a part in their community and local art scene. Women as well as artists from minority religious, and ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientations and artists with disabilities will be given special consideration. The project will culminate in a final event that will exhibit what the artists have achieved during the granting period, for the public and for peer-to-peer appreciation and inspiration.



*It has been said that "Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time" This cleverly explains art's power. If the other humanitarian sectors that receive support in crises are the body, art is the mind. It plays the quiet role of keeping everyone in good and hopeful spirits; reminding people of their collective strength; sharing topics for contemplation; and keeping an account of the times in song, on paper or whatever other medium artists come to master with intrinsic motivation.*

## How did the Artist Fund come to be?

When the unprecedented events of the pandemic took place and a drop in public and private productivity ensued, Aung Soe Min, called himself to action. He conceived the Artist Fund with the livelihoods of his most respected counterparts and contemporaries in mind: artists.

Knowing that artists are easily forgotten and often not considered despite their invaluable role in society, he planned a way to support them so that they can support themselves and others.

Aung Soe Min is the creator of the Open History Project, now running for three years, acknowledges and celebrates public memory in order to facilitate social cohesion.

The Artist Fund seeks to be replenishable and therefore sustainable, to uplift artists to help themselves in the future in bad and good times.

## Main partner

HELVETAS' main partner, the Pansodan Gallery, is a local arts organization which provides possibilities, to Myanmar artists, to present their works both to the local and international scene. Pansodan Gallery is an important actor in the local art scene. Pansodan also hosts various events such as art exhibitions, poetry recitals, talks and concerts. Aung Soe Min, the spearhead of Pansodan, is full of ideas and keeps creating new art spaces and supporting others in doing the same. He is considered a "father" for many of his younger artist colleagues.



*A visual artist paints onto a shirt which can be sold as merchandise. Artists have the capacity to create products which they can sell but in this great economic lull caused by covid, opportunities to sell have all but disappeared. A financial stimulus will give artists the chance to carry on creating and come up with ideas to make ends meet not just for themselves but for their art peers and the extended community.*



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