

Daw khin lay mon

Mentor

Tontay, Yangon



As a mentor I deliver and lead discussions. Part of my work is to draw participation from our participants as well as help support their business ideas and micro enterprise. I've almost been with EDNamm for nearly two years.

I saw the application form the night before the deadline. I really didn't think it was for work. I applied because of family encouragement. I had been teaching as volunteer in Monastic Education Schools. I thought this was a good way to build my capacity. I really thought it was just an NGO helping build capacity of people in the community. I never imagined after training us we would be handed this opportunity to lead and play a role in helping build our community. After several tests, screenings and trainings, I was given the opportunity to be a mentor. I was very pleased with this as it allowed me to help many people, gave me the opportunity to learn, and a decent income to support myself while doing all this. What EDNamm did for me was it made me realize I must change: I must learn to work with other people and that I cannot be disconnected from my community and other people. Ma Nyein and Ma Wut yee were my role models during my transformation. When I taught in MES I knew 1

plus 1 is definitely 2, and 2 plus 3 is sure to be 5. But here when we work with our entrepreneur we can't assume 1 plus 1 is two. All their discussions are valid. We can't always predict the outcome of the group discussion. The entrepreneurial ideas and insights arising out of any discussion may not always be the same from one class to class or be the output we expect. It differs and that in itself is an opportunity for me to learn. When I was teaching children I had little opportunity to learn. Here I can learn and grow. The people in my class most of the time much older than me or of same age. I get to observe how they communicate, how they think and the rich experience they have in business. And when I mentor in remote and rural area I get to learn the different business opportunities of the region, and how they capture that opportunity. It is a great learning experience. My greatest joy and encouragement is in listening to the discussions of the participants and delivering the program and learning with them.

My greatest challenge in past was travelling to one remote village in dedaye called taw ka mae. As I am from Tontay it took me several hours travelling time to reach that village. Now I've got used to the travels. I very much enjoy working in remote villages. One experience I remember from recruiting villagers in remote village was when I was organizing a class for this village last year. Everyone wanted the class except a former administrator (at village level). He didn't want his village people to leave the village and attend the EDD event in Yangon and claims the villagers are not suitable even be in class and therefor he cannot permit. He was the only one standing in the way. I got so disappointed that I abruptly said to him " In this day and age how can you still keep your young in house? How can you deny people the opportunity to improve their own life when you know firsthand how much they need it to grow? If I can come to deliver the course, the participants are willing and everyone else is supportive of the activity, what right have you to deprive people of that?" After I said the things (thinking I went a bit too far) I realized I must also manage the situation better so we can open a class there. In past I would not know how. Now I did alright and that was how this particular class had its difficult birth".

This work helps us understand risks and challenges and cope better. We can't always be afraid of challenges, risks or rejection. The people there need this education. Even in Dhala (technically a city) still have little business knowledge. When we learn through stories they say ... So this is what I have been doing? So this is where I am going wrong? This is what I should be doing? They reflect and tell us. they didn't know it in business terms or business concept in past like segmenting, targeting etc....Now as they know as they do.

As the only mentor in Tontay I go to the field to recruit on my own. Now this year when i approach communities I reflect on prior experience. I identify the people I should work with. In past I was terrified. Now I am better at it. I like for EDNamm to help me learn more and grow and develop my capacity. I also enjoy learning from experiences of other mentors.

I have a duck breeding farm with 100 ducks. My parents had been in this business for many years. After I got married I decided to do this because my capability and experience lies in this area. I have two daughters my eldest is 13 and in school the young one is five.

Anyone wanting to start this duck farm will need relevant resources like land, materials to build the hut for the ducks and money to run business. Each year I start with 100 for the past few years. In 4 months the duck begins to lay eggs. They need care and proper food. Of the 100 ducks I had, only 5 died. So of the 95 left I sold off the 50 which gets me about 200,000 mmk to pay off the money I borrowed. The 45 ducks left is my profit. I do this and every year and start each cycle for the last 6 years I have been in business. This year I plan to increase to 150 or even 200. I am still reviewing how many it should be. I can think this way because I gain so much knowledge from entrepreneurship education program. The Ask Try DO Reflect helps. I would ask family friends and knowledgeable people for information, I then try and test in my duck farm and only when I think I am ready I consider scaling up and DO. That is why I said earlier I want to have more ducks this time. But I haven't decided on the final number yet.

Before the training I wasn't that hardworking, I would be walking around the village talking. I lived off my husband's income. After attending the course and EDD I realized I must work more. I was inspired by Zero to zero? If the lady in the story can bring back her business from reaching almost zero... I tell myself I can too. This year I will start 150 and if all goes well I will increase to 250 the year after. Even during the EDD events I sell the duck eggs. In addition to the Zero to Zero I also like the financial knowledge part. If we can manage our finance it helps. I also liked the leadership component. I also realized I must know my business and craft well enough before I give people instructions and lead. I have been working for 6 years. And this program came 5 years too late.

I learnt about this training through the. I received the form in my village I thought I would not be selected because I have little education. I like to request another class for the people who have completed the program. I like to continue learning. It did not disturb my work. The homework I can do at night. In past when I don't study I would be reading novel and stuff now it is time well spent. I can do my homework and I can also manage my duck farm.

My daughter receives government stipend. The 3000 mmk of the 8000 stipend I use for my daughter monthly tuition fees and the balance 5000 I use for her school related necessities.



Daw Aye Sandar
Participant
Bogalay, Ayerawaddy Division
Mentor - Daw Su Myat Naing

I want my daughter to succeed in education, I had little education so I want my daughter to be better than me.

I am confident what I get from the duck farm will support greatly for her future education expense. She will be ninth standard soon and the income my husband and I make is adequate for the 1 student we have in the family. In addition to the duck farm when I work in the field I get 2500 MMK per day. I earn 25,000 MMK in ten days. 10000 MMK goes to kitchen expense so I can save up 15000 mmk every 10 days. In past I would have my husband work non stop as he was the main income earner. Now that I'm doing better at my own business I don't bother him as much. In past we would fight a lot he would say I am too busy with the children doing nothing, now we are better. He does his thing.. I do mine now. He is very grateful that I attended this course. Now we work in harmony carrying financial responsibility together. Even today when I came for the interview he sends me off to the main road so I can get on the bus.

But I don't think I will want him attending. This program. We can't both be bosses..... so I will not let him.

As an Education officer i enjoy teaching and learning alot. Especially learning from experience of participants. Although we are mentors and deliver the course we are in fact learning so much at the same time.. This I believe is only possible because of the training design, the teaching and learning design of EDNAmm. It encourage learning to all involved.

The best part of my work and I find most rewarding is to be able to help, encourage and inspire participants. Some participants may have existing business or even planning to expend and start another.. some who are thinking of putting their first business ideas to action. I feel satisfied when I can assist them and help them implement their ideas. I think this work and the leanings also helps me think differently, gives me new perspective especially in managing my own business.

Of course this work is not with out its challenges. When I was teaching in the field the main challenges I face was trying to bring the participants to participate. And when we mentor those with rich experience (be it more accomplished entrepreneurs or academics or Ministry officers) it is most challenging. During these times I find myself seeking advice from Daw Kyi Kyi Nyein as well as fellow colleagues. At times my colleagues and I would sleep very few hours just to master the different techniques and tools we must use for us to facilitate their learning and get it right.

Daw Thandar Kyi
Education Officer



I think the challenges and the stress is all worth it when we hear someone is starting a business as a result of the course, or an academic telling us we will use the way EDNA mm teach or when a government staff tells us that he or she wants to do business in future. I am also very pleased when I hear similar stories from the field from my other colleagues.

I would like this year we are better able to manage information and communication with the field team. As we are far away sometimes there are information gaps between us and our colleagues in field. I like to find better ways so I can better support their work. Listen more to their input.

I first learned about EDNAmm through Myanmar Independent Living Initiative, a DPO I have close relations with.

When I came to EDNA I had started on my own sewing business on the side (just started a bit). As a full time staff I was reluctant to really start. I ended up talking a lot with my mentor. As you know the nature of our program we discuss a lot. And ended up really engaging in the business and employed a staff. I think this program makes me think a lot, when we go back home with homework the whole week I think about it.

I was in a dilemma in the past whether I should start business but EDD helped me to realize I can start and DO. In past I read books about successful entrepreneurs but I had not really tried. One reason why I joined EDNA was because we were told we will have a chance to meet entrepreneurs and learn also from them. In EDD events we learn how these entrepreneurs build their own business, we are inspired we can start and we also learn how they grow.

My business now is still young. But because of EDNA I have learnt to reflect on my business. What part of my business I should focus or put emphasis or what part of my business I need to wait and see etc.. My business is now slightly slow these days. As you know this is the rainy season and due to the nationwide flood people's focus is on storing food supply for family and clothing is not a primary necessity to spend. To verify I also checked with the name brands that outsource us. They also tell me sales have dropped a bit. Because of the training I can see the situation; in past I would not know why and would just sit there disappointed. Now I tell me self-wait before I push and invest more. For now I will wait after the rainy season before I invest more.



Daw Zin Mar OO
Participant
Yangon, MILI class
Mentor, Daw Thandar Kyi

As my business is in initial stages I accept orders I am sure I can manage. I accept special order for individuals, I also do sewing for known brands (I get already cut pieces) sew and check quality for those brands. I also do uniform for business clients. As I am also a sewing teacher and have that technical skill I decided to open the shop. I had wanted to give jobs to my trainees and this business allows me to do that. I will also continue to learn my craft. As a full time staff I am trying to adjust how much time I can give to my business and my work. Hopefully in 2016 I can open a shop in Hmawbi market and expand my business. Now I have a small workshop area at home and it would be nice to have a shop.

I talk about this program a lot in my work. I tell them this is not a strenuous program and is mostly discussion base. And that anyone wanting to start own business should attend. And that the program offers different insight to different people. I also tell them EDD events inspires and help with business ideas. I just want to request EDNA that although we/ i completed I would like to hope I can also continue learning in some way and still keep in touch with EDNA.