



Figure 1. Two videos, based the MuEuCAP student internships, were posted to Youtube. The first looked aspects of the internships at the four participating NGOs.



10th 'Quarterly' Newsletter (WP7.3): (1 May 2020 – 30 October 2020)
comprising 10th Quarterly Progress Report (WP6.3)
Finalised in BOKU

Summary of Activities of the MuEuCAP Project (1 May 2020 – 31 October 2020): This period covered two waves of the Covid-19 global pandemic in Europe and Myanmar, which led to ongoing lockdowns. Consequently, there were relatively very few activities and this 'quarterly newsletter' has been expanded to include two quarters (six months).

During this period, the Timeline for Year 3 was modified (see - https://c4525083-3d40-44b8-bfcb-7a0253eb317e.filesusr.com/ugd/cec980_751ceec66b5747ebb668d0480869f532.pdf on the Timeline webpage <https://www.myanmar-edu.org/mueucap-timeline>) and an extension of the project to October 2021 was approved by the EU officer.

The highlights of the 10th Quarter include:

- Two videos on aspects of the MuEuCAP student internships were published on Youtube (WP7.2)
- A Steering Committee Meeting, which took place to plan the future of MuEuCAP in a Covid/post-Covid world (WP8.1)
- An online training programme, which was initiated to push forward the practical testing (WP3) and realisation (WP4) of the curriculum.

Internship videos: Two videos were written and illustrated by MuEuCAP staff. They were produced and published by Mandalay Design Solutions. They featured aspects of the internship programme that included 17 students from Mandalay and Myeik Universities. They are available on the homepage of the MuEuCAP website <https://www.myanmar-edu.org/>.

The first video highlights some of the activities undertaken during the internships by the students at the four NGOs that participated in the programme: FFI (Fauna and Flora International), MBNS (Myanmar Bird and Nature Society), FoW (Friends of Wildlife) and 'Destination Ayeyarwady'.

The second video focuses particularly on the internship programme at 'Destination Ayeyarwady'. As part of this internship, the students were introduced to the theoretical and practical aspects of ecotourism.



Figure 2. The second video focused on the internship at Destination Ayeyarwady with particular reference to learning about the theoretical and practical aspects of ecotourism.

Steering Committee meeting: On 23 September 2020, a steering committee meeting was called to discuss the ongoing situation in respect of Covid-19 and the need to resume activities for the MuEuCAP project. At the meeting, the project coordinator, Dr Marcela Suarez-Rubio (BOKU) informed the Committee that because of the Covid situation, the EU had granted a 12 month extension. Therefore, the MuEuCAP project, which was originally scheduled to complete by 14th October 2020, is extended until 14th October 2021. Dr Marcela pointed out that currently it was difficult to determine the programme for the next twelve months given the travel restrictions.

Resumption of activities in Myanmar – Dr Marcela (BOKU) asked each university representative the status of their universities and countries in respect of Covid. The answers were as follows:

- Dr Marcela (BOKU) – noted that Austria is currently undergoing a second wave of infections; university staff need permission from the university Rectorate to travel; need a covid test to travel (even to Germany); Myanmar is currently listed as a 'yellow' colour in terms of risk destinations for Covid infection.

- Dr Lutz (UGOE) suggested that the system in Germany was similar to Austria and it would be very difficult currently to travel to Myanmar
- Dr Alfonso (UEX) explained that the system in Spain was the same as Austria and Germany with a sharp spike in cases recently during a second wave
- Dr Paul (BOKU) informed the Committee that currently a special visa is needed to visit Myanmar and this can only be issued at the Myanmar's Ambassador's discretion
- Prof Dr Ni Ni Oo (Myeik) noted that there has been a recent rapid rise in infection cases in Myanmar and that university staff are not allowed to travel. It is not possible for foreigners to travel to Myanmar. Currently, Myeik University is closed, with no taught courses since March. There are no students at the university, and staff attendance is carefully regulated. Dr Ni Ni Oo suggested that it may be possible to restart the universities next year, at the earliest.

A short discussion about online learning was initiated. Dr Lutz (UGOE) noted that online courses were working well in Germany. Daw Saw Myat Ohnmar (Myeik) noted that lack of access to computers and good wifi was a problem for some Myanmar students and some staff. Dr Sai Sein Lin Oo (In-country Coordinator) explained that the Ministry of Education was requesting help with this matter from the EU. Prof Dr Mie Mie Sein (Mawlamyine) confirmed that Mawlamyine University is closed and that Mawlamyine is a high-risk area for Covid. Prof Dr Kay Thi Thin and Prof Dr Thant Zin (Mandalay) confirmed that the University of Mandalay is closed, but that they are trying to prepare for online learning.

Online tutorials: It was noted that Myanmar staff who visited Europe for training in February 2020 as part of WP3 (the Practical Testing of the Curriculum), need to write, present, and be evaluated on their teaching skills. Zoom would provide a valuable tool to facilitate this.

Dissemination event – It was understood that originally the dissemination event had been scheduled to last two days and was designed like a conference, with one key-note speaker and with staff and students to present their work. As a Plan B, the committee considered the feasibility of undertaking these activities online. The online version could include presentations by all staff who went to an EU university for training and an opportunity for those NGOs that hosted internships to present about their work.

General ideas – It was suggested that the Covid-19 situation is a big opportunity to embrace the future and switch to online teaching and learn online methods. It was agreed that although access to technology was difficult for undergraduates in Myanmar, it was quite feasible for staff and postgraduate students. It was noted that 70-80% of Myanmar staff were familiar with online teaching.

In addition to the dissemination event, it was considered that it would be good idea to prepare one or two units of the curriculum and make a call for students and staff to participate in these online workshops. This would be part of the practical testing/realisation of the curriculum. The Myanmar in-country coordinator noted that Myanmar staff and students might need support from their universities to purchase data packages for their mobile phones.

Purchase of Equipment – The status of equipment purchases was discussed.

- Myeik University noted that they had bought most the items but that many were more expensive than the original budget (e.g. books) and that others were not available.

- Mawlamyine University had so far bought 35% of equipment but that some, such as the trinocular microscope with camera attached, were very expensive. It was noted that the Covid situation had made it difficult to buy some of the items.
- Mandalay University informed that they had bought around 20% of equipment.



Figure 3. Some of the 21 attendees who took part in the second Zoom meeting (29 October 2020) which focused on preparing online presentations (tutorials) relating to their training and to the new BioCEP curriculum

Online tutorials: Two online meetings took place during the quarter, on:

- 22 October (attended by 5 European and 8 Myanmar staff)
- 29 October (attended by 5 European and 16 Myanmar staff)

They were the first in a series of online meetings that are planned for 2020-2021.

Dr Marcela (Project Coordinator) introduced the meetings and pointed out that although online teaching was not in the original MuEuCAP proposal, knowledge of online learning will be important not only for now but also for the future. In the immediate term, it will prevent the MuEuCAP project from falling further behind schedule by allowing those MUP staff trained in Europe to fulfil their commitments to WP3 (Practical Testing of the Curriculum) and WP4 (Realisation of the curriculum).

It was apparent that Myanmar university staff had already been involved in some online training programmes, which have been initiated by Myanmar's Ministry of Education. It was suggested that university staff were in a good position to take part in online teaching/learning since it was low cost, flexible, and access to the internet was mainly good in the universities. Staff could teach from home. It was also considered that postgraduate students would also have access to laptops, as well as smart phones. The importance of 'blended learning' and 'synchronous learning' was noted.

At the 22 October meeting, Dr Marcela invited four Myanmar university staff members who had been trained on their respective MuEuCAP exchange visits to Europe to prepare for the 29 October

Zoom meeting a short 'online' presentation related to their training and to the new BioCEP curriculum. The topics were as follows:

- Dr Aung Aung Aye, Myeik University on 'Ecological monitoring of coral'
- Dr Zine Lin Khine, Myeik University on 'Introduction to statistics'
- Dr Aung Myo Hsan, Mawlamyine University on 'Survey methodology of coral reef'
- Prof. Dr Aye Aye Myint on 'Why scientific writing is important: the importance of a good introduction'.

On 29 October, the presentations were made and discussions took place between all the 21 attendees of the Zoom meeting concerning aspects of the content and presentation. The following discussion items are highlighted.

Content – based on the successful strategies of the four presentations, it was noted that it is important to:

- target the talk to a specific topic to allow time to develop the idea and provide more explanation
- reduce to the slides to the main message (online talks are different to lectures)
- use questions to focus students' attention on the topic and test understanding and prepare them for their homework and exams
- keep the length of the presentation to between 10 and 15 minutes – to capture students' attention
- keep a nice steady speed in the presentation and voice-overs – provide a 'calm' lecture which is not too fast
- use examples of appropriate length to illustrate ideas
- ensure that the commentary and the slides match.

Design – it was noted that it is important to:

- use a mixture of media (diagrams and photos) to capture the attention of the audience
- include captions, in case of problems with audio.

Problems – it was suggested that:

- there is an issue with hearing OBS audio when playing talks in Zoom
- the preparation of a video lecture takes a long time, especially in recording the voice-overs.

After the success of the two online meetings in October, the Myanmar staff were invited to prepare further online presentations/tutorials for ongoing discussions at regular meetings, which would begin in November and complete in December with a mini online-conference. The subjects chosen were:

- Dr Khin Swe Oo on 'Introduction to R – the visualisation of data'
- Prof Dr Soe Soe Aung on 'Importance and value of ecological monitoring techniques'
- Dr Nay Myo Hlaing on 'Descriptive Statistics - describing and summarizing data in R'
- Dr Sabae Oo on 'Economic importance of birds'.