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BUSINESS START-UP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

TRAINING REPORT

MYANMAR BUSINESS EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATION



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1. Overview and Background

MBAPF found out that there is a growing demand for business start-up development in term of skill training, access to market and financial resources and crafted Business Start-ups Development Program.

The program aims to recruit 40 MSMEs and they will be learning business management knowledge and skills which are fundamental to grow their businesses.

Myanmar Business Executives Association has been organizing entrepreneurship development and support programs for start-ups and micro to small businesses around the different locations in regions since 2010. With the long and well-known experience in training, mentoring and supporting MSME businesses all over Myanmar, MBE, as a project implementation partner, will take part in conducting Training and Mentoring to the selected 40 candidates to increase the likelihood of business growth and sustainability.

During of the program period, the participants will be able to learn the basic concepts for the following subjects.

- Financial Management
- Small Business Management
- Human Resource Management
- Marketing

2. Program Implementation

2.1 Need Assessment

MBE conducted need assessment survey that helps to gather important information about the trainees' training needs and objectives, enabling to design a customized training program that addresses their specific requirements.

MBE collected required data through the following:

- a. Self-assessment questionnaire
A set of self-assessment questionnaire to be answered by each candidate.
- b. Interview
Face to face Interview to each candidate by MBE members and responsible persons from MBAPF.

A total of 84 participants from different parts of the country have interest and sent their application to join the program. Out of the 84 applicants, 50 applicants were chosen to be the participants of the program.

Based on the Need assessment survey, the following findings were noted.

- Participant MSMEs face several major challenges including a lack of skill labour, poor infrastructure, need for additional investment and unstable economic policy.

- The most pressing needs for Participant MSMEs include access to business and market information, maintaining proper financial records, acquiring new customers, ability to manage the employees, ability to manage the business effectively and understanding compliance regulations.
- 90% of the Participant MSMEs knows their target customer, 5% don't know and the rest are the ones who are yet to establish their business.
- 65% of Participant MSMEs know about their competitor, while the rest have no idea about their competitors.
- 90% of Participant MSMEs believe that they need to learn about Marketing and Financial Management while 80% agrees the need to learn about Small Business Management and Human Resource Management.

Please see **Annex A (A1 & A2)** for: Need Assessment Survey

2.2 Training Design and Development

To develop an effective training program, it is crucial to understand the specific requirements and challenges that Myanmar MSMEs face. This understanding was gained through the aforementioned needs assessment process. The collected data was analysed to identify the gaps and needs of the MSMEs, which were then categorized. Based on these identified needs, the program objectives, and the desired project duration, the MBE core training team developed a curriculum for the training program.

The topics covered were:

- Entrepreneurship Foundation
- Marketing Management
- Smart Selling and Customer Service
- Financial Management
- Operation Management
- HR Management
- Leadership Skill
- Business Ethics
- Communication Skill

As the participants of the training program come from different regions of the country, the decision was made to conduct the training online using the Zoom platform. To ensure effective learning outcomes, the training delivery was designed to incorporate group discussions and peer-to-peer learning strategies. These measures were put in place to enhance the effectiveness of the training program.

Please see **Annex B, C, D** for: The detailed curriculum and teaching hours, Timetable, Attendance Record.

2.3 Mentoring

The mentoring program is designed to be carried out in one-on-one mentoring where each mentee will get a chance to meet and discuss with the mentor for their individual/specific requirements.

The training program is for six months and during the second month of the training program, the mentoring phase commenced with an orientation section conducted by the Mentoring Head of MBE. During the orientation section, the participants were informed about the nature of mentoring, the roles and responsibilities of the mentor, and the obligations of the mentee.

Following the orientation, the mentor-mentee matching process was carried out via an online Zoom platform. The Mentoring Board created ten breakout rooms and assigned each mentee to a respective room. The mentees then rotated through each room to meet and converse with other mentees

After the initial interaction, each mentee was allowed to select up to three preferred mentors. The Mentoring Board then reviewed the selections and made the final mentor-mentee matching decision.

Then, each mentor and mentee proceed for mentoring section through online platform. Individual mentoring schedules were decided according to the mutual agreement between respective mentor and mentee based on their availability. Apart from Yangon, most of the participants faced challenges with unstable internet connections and in some cases, phone calls were made instead.

Mentoring is a good way for inexperienced micro and small businesses to learn from the experienced business owners who had gone through similar challenges. Individual mentoring are more intimate for the participants as they really get to open up about their fears, challenges, worries, problems they had/ are facing, etc. Listening to the participants, mentors using their experience as well as the program's target will guide the participants and their businesses to pivot towards positive direction.

Please see **Annex E** for: Mentoring Record

2.4 Review and Assessment

To ensure that the participants fully comprehended the topics covered in the training program, a recap session was conducted. During this session, the participants were taught how to develop a business plan based on the concepts they had learned. They were also given the opportunity to discuss any challenges they had encountered while implementing what they had learned. Trainers and mentors were present at the session to offer guidance and support.

As a final assessment, all participants are required to write a business plan because the goal of the program is to improve the ability of participants by enhancing their skills in planning, coordinating, and managing their business operations.

Out of the total number of participants, 19 individuals completed and submitted their business plans. These participants then had the opportunity to present their plans individually to a panel of judges, and a total of four days were allocated for these presentation sessions. All other participants were also invited to attend these sessions in order to learn from their peers' knowledge and experiences. Feedback and suggestions were provided by teachers, the MBAPF project manager, and MBE judges.

2.5 Success Case Studies

Hnin Hnin Wint (Myeik) : MSME from Myeik, Tanintharyi owner of Shwe Sin Natural Product. Despite running her business for approximately two years, she has not registered it legally, and as a result, she is unable to market her products effectively. With the help of her mentor, she was able to connect

with the relevant MSME authority. Consequently, she submitted her product samples to the laboratory for testing and successfully passed the test, which resulted in her being granted a registration. She also attended product trainings organized by MSME Department and up to now, she has produced 3 types of new product, Hair Serum, Lip Balm and Shampoo. Her Lip Balm product was selected for the third-place award in the National MSME product competition. At present, her products are being displayed at supermarkets and stores in Myeik City, and she is also making efforts to distribute them to other areas of the country.

Ko Win @ Nan Win Ko : The owner of a small family Store, and product roasted peanuts and also runs a small family-owned mushroom farm. Prior to participating in the training program, he lacked knowledge of how to set prices for his products and did not know how to obtain market information or to build a network of contacts. After the program, he decided to discontinue his mushroom farm and instead focus on food production. He tried to improve the packaging of his products and established Win Food Production as a legally registered firm and began producing additional food products.

Amy Maung Maung Nge is the owner of Pyit Tine Htaung Store, located in Yangon. Although her business has been established for about three years, she faces a major challenge in the lack of skilled labor. As a result, she is involved in every aspect of the store's operations, which limits her ability to expand the business. With the help of her mentor, Amy Maung Maung Nge was able to prepare Standard Operating Procedures for her staff and implement them day to day operations of her store. This would not only help in improving the efficiency of her staff but also allow her to delegate tasks and focus on expanding the business. As a result, she has been able to add more product lines and increase the size of her store. This will help to attract more customers and increase revenue, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of her business.

Nan Zarchi Tun : She is from southern Shan state and sells Avocado.. Attending the training program has provided her with motivation, not only through classroom training but also through the mentorship program. She was able to establish a network and understand the values of networking, which has helped her in both her social and business life. The program has also sparked new business ideas for her. She started selling fertilizer to farmers near her hometown and also seasonal fruits, like avocado.

She attended training on how to make fertilizer. She also practices continuous learning to grow herself and share her knowledge back with the community.

3. Challenges

During the implementation phase, various challenges were encountered, and some of the key challenges includes:

- The participants in the training program have a diverse range of characteristics, including differences in age, work experience, education background, role in their respective organizations, and the type of business they operate present a challenge to the effectiveness of the training
- Participants encounter technical difficulties such as internet connectivity problems, hardware or software issues, which disrupt the training session.
- As the training is designed for 6 Months, and set on pre-determined weekends, many participants found it challenging to balance their family and business responsibilities while attending every session.
- Online training programs may lack the personal interaction and engagement that is present in face-to-face training, making it difficult to maintain participants' attention and engagement.
- Participants face with distractions from their environment and/or other responsibilities, which affect their focus and attention during the training session
- Although participants have access to digital training materials, they find it challenging to fully engage with the program as it is difficult for them to convert the digital resources into physical materials that they are more familiar with for reference and further study.
- Difficulty in setting meeting time with Mentees. Mentors faced a difficulty in setting meeting mentoring time with mentees due to a variety of reasons mostly because mentee is too busy with their work or occupied with both family and work matters or has to travel for her business or internet connection.

4. Recommendations

The recommendations for future programs are as follows:

- Setting clear selection criteria to ensure that participants have similar levels of experience and backgrounds, which can facilitate better engagement and understanding during the training program.
- Selecting candidates from a few specific geographic areas for the training program can help in better targeting and tailoring the program to the specific needs and challenges of those areas. It can also help in reducing logistical and administrative challenges associated with training.
- To enhance participant engagement and interaction, it may be beneficial to conduct hybrid training that includes both in-person and online components. This way, participants can interact with each other and the trainer in person, while also having the convenience of online resources and materials for further study and reference. This approach can also accommodate participants who may face challenges attending in-person sessions due to distance, time constraints, or other factors.
- Develop and provide physical training materials: To cater to the diverse learning styles of the participants, it would be useful to develop and provide physical training materials in addition to digital resources.
- Conducting follow-up sessions after the training program is completed can help to assess the impact of the program and identify areas for improvement. This could involve conducting surveys, focus group discussions, or one-on-one interviews with the participants to gather feedback and insights.