



**Bettina-Kattermann-Stiftung**

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## **Bewerbungsschreiben der Stipendiatin Moe (2023/24)**

Dear KAAD, dear Bettina-Kattermann-Stiftung

My name is Moe, I graduated with a B.A Psychology and hold a Diploma in Applied Psychology. I am a mental health practitioner and an activist from Myanmar. I am thrilled to be studying for a graduate program in mental health at Chiang Mai University. For this purpose, I will briefly summarize my current situation, educational background, and motivation for the Mental Health Program.

I've started to apply my background in Psychology to the field of activism and have been providing psychological counseling to defectors, activists, and peace educators under the supervision

of Steffen Schoedwell, a psychotherapist based in Berlin, Germany. I graduated with a B.A in Psychology at the University of East Yangon in 2007 and I completed my Diploma in Applied Psychology in 2009 in Myanmar. In 2019, I collaborated with Steffen Schoedwell in the evaluation research of training in Basic Psychosomatic Care organized by Freiburg University in the role of translator and research assistant.

The state of education in the field of psychology is very precarious and remains very basic in Myanmar as it has been neglected by the government over the last few decades. Even though there has been a rising demand for mental health care and psychological aid in Myanmar even prior to the coup, job opportunities for psychologists have been very severely limited due to the lack of acknowledgment of the importance of mental health and the difficult financing models for this profession. Therefore, I have taken all educational opportunities in the field of clinical psychology and mental health studies available in Myanmar.

In addition, I attended several workshops training in well-being training, trauma informed training, and Psychological First Aid training. Moreover, the coup has had an undeniable impact on every level of society in Myanmar. The education sector has been no different. There are internet outages as well as the constant threat of danger for teachers and students if they go back to schools. There is also no guarantee that students will not be arrested or shot, or that female students will not be sexually harassed by soldiers. and no one knows how far this cruelty will extend with this junta as they have even arrested a four-year-old child from a day care center when they could not arrest the child's parent. In addition, there have been increased incidents of explosive materials found by children, even in school compounds.

I arrived in Thailand in April 2021 after having fled Myanmar due to the political and security situation. I felt at risk in Myanmar as I was actively involved in the CDM movement and worked translating human rights reports that were unfavorable to the military government. I've been volunteering for the revolution as part of a team working on encouraging soldiers

to defect with an underground digital group. Currently, I am working as a mental health practitioner, freelance consultant, translator, interpreter, and tutor in Burmese language. Having actively supported the CDM movement in Myanmar I want to contribute my knowledge and experience of the current situation in Myanmar after having relocated to a safe place while my people continue to fight for freedom and justice. I have been investing my time helping activists by evacuating them to safer places, providing safe houses, liaising with potential donors and people on the ground to coordinate humanitarian support for IDPs, and applying for grants and funding to scale up efforts to encourage soldiers to defect, and help increase demoralization and desertion while providing support in advocacy for defectors within the international community.

However, I feel like it would be more beneficial for my clients if I can firm up my knowledge and build on my experience with the skills and tools I would learn in Mental Health Program. Myanmar needs more professionals in the field of Psychology. I am convinced that the knowledge and experience gained from this program will allow me to further expand my academic skills in order to become a competent psychologist as well as provide enhanced psychosocial care and thus positively contribute towards ending the political crisis and creating a peaceful and livable society for all people in Myanmar.

Sincerely, Moe  
Autumn 2022