

# International Research Seminar



## 'INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS' From Myanmar Perspective

Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15 November 2018  
9:00 - 17:00

Yangon Technological University  
*Insein Road, Yangon*

## Programme



## PRESENTATION

The purpose of this seminar is to present and discuss current researches on informal settlements in Myanmar.

Major changes happened in Myanmar cities, especially in Yangon, since the new political regime and opening up of economy in 2012. Along with new construction projects, new laws, urban plans, and large foreign investments, cities are expanding and urban population is growing fast, especially through migration. Land and housing markets are changing fast. Skyrocketing land prices are leading to the decrease of number of affordable housing. The access to formal housing is more and more difficult for the poor. Precarious settlements are growing, which are called in Myanmar by different terms such as : informal settlements, kyu kyaw, slums, squatters settlements, vulnerable communities, precarious settlements, periurban neighbourhoods, untapped communities, etc.

Research and knowledge on these neighbourhoods, their inhabitants and their role in the main cities in Myanmar are diverse. This seminar is to bring together researchers from various disciplines (geography, architecture, urban planning, anthropology, history, international relations etc.) reflecting the interdisciplinarity of the urban studies approaches on these spaces, and professionals (administrations, experts, international institutions, NGOs) with diverse professional cultures, to analyse the different ways informal settlements are viewed in Myanmar, and to contribute to co-produce the knowledge on these urban settlements.

Informal neighborhoods can be approached through several themes, linked to spatial, social, legal, economic, political, urban/rural, or city making process. The presentation will address informal settlements through some of the following themes: Dynamics of growth, peripheries and margins; Residential trajectories and migrations; Access to the city, to

housing and to workplace; Infrastructure, services and environment; Land and real estate markets; Land tenure; Renting; Unplanned urban production; Standards issues; History and trends of policies towards precarious settlements; Upgrading and relocation schemes; Current programs and projects; Poverty; Vulnerability, risk and security; The making of the city; Social networks and economic environments; Construction and sustainability; Resilience; Urban competencies of inhabitants; Community action; Flood adaptation strategies; Coping with climate change; etc.

More specifically, the seminar aims to shed light on the following questions concerning informal settlements : a- What kinds of research have been done in Myanmar, and through which program ? b- What are the different approaches? c- What are the definitions and methods adopted ? d- What is informal settlement in Myanmar, and what results and knowledge do we have on these neighborhoods? And e- How the issue of informal settlements is viewed from Myanmar perspective ?

The purpose of this event is to develop evidence-based knowledge through cross-analysis and co-construction concerning informal neighborhoods. The seminar will discuss how these researches and knowledge contribute to the elaboration of the definitions of the precarious neighborhoods in Myanmar, to shape the discourses on these urban spaces, and to articulate with the design and development of public policies that concern them.

The seminar will contribute to show the role of urban research today in Myanmar and seek to identify opportunities for future research in the field of precarious settlements.

*Organisation : Yangon Technological University, University of Yangon, French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), Centre for Social Sciences Studies on Africa, America and Asia (Cessma), with the collaboraton and support of Gret and French Embassy .*

## PROGRAMME

### 14 NOVEMBER 2018

8:45—9:15

#### Registration of participants

9:15—10:00

#### Inauguration

10:00—10:45

#### Presentation and Introduction

Dr **Pwint** (Yangon Technological University) and Dr **Valérie Clerc** (IRD – Cessma)

*Coffee break*

11:00—12:15 : Panel 1

#### Informal Settlements in Yangon and Policies: a Common History ?

**U Ko Ko Klaing** (Former Chief Political Advisor to President U Thein Sein)  
*Informal Settlement in Myanmar from Political Point of View; Underlying Causes and Attempts by Successive Governments to Tackle the Problem.*

**U Myint Naing** (Ministry of Construction, DUHD)  
*Previous Countermeasures for Squatter Formation in Yangon.*

*Discussants* : **U Htin Myaing** (Independent Planning Expert) and Dr **Valérie Clerc** (IRD Cessma)

*Lunch break*

13:15—15:00 : Panel 2

#### What access to the city for low-income households ?

Dr **Mya Mya Khin** (University of Yangon, Department of Anthropology).

*The concept of informal settlement from emic perspective.*

Dr **Hélène Kyed** (Danish Institute for international studies, senior researcher), **Lue Htar** (Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation) and **Nan Tinilar Win** (Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation).  
*Informal settlements and migrant challenges in Hlaing Thayar.*

Dr **Myint Thida** (Hinthada University, Department of Geography), Dr **Nilar Aung** (East Yangon University and University of Yangon, Department of geography), **Ye Ye Cho** (University of Yangon, Department of Geography) and **Win Thanda Oo** (University of Yangon, Department of Geography).  
*Informal Settlements in Shwepyithar Township, Yangon Region.*

*Discussants* : Dr **Khin Khin Han** (West Yangon University) and Dr **Mickael Slingsby** (Independent Researcher).

*Coffee break*

15:15—17:00 : Panel 3

#### The informal city in the making : residential strategies and real estate markets

Dr **Khin Mar Yee**, Dagon University, Department of Geography), Dr **Mu Mu Than** (Dagon University, Department of Geography), Dr **Kyi Lint** (Dagon University, Department of Geography), Dr **Mar Lar Han** (Dagon University, Department of Geography), Dr **Kyaw Zin Htwe** (Dagon University, Department of Geography)  
*The Investigation on the Renters and Squatters of Yangon Area, Myanmar.*

**Eben Forbes**, Independent researcher  
*Migration, Informal Settlement, and Government Response: Four Townships in Yangon, Myanmar.*

**Khin Pyae Sone**, Gret  
*Alternative ways to answer squatters' needs?*

*Discussant* : Dr **Nilar Aung** (East Yangon University and University of Yangon, Department of Geography) and Dr **Gabriel Fauveaud** (University of Montréal, Department of Geography)

**15 NOVEMBER 2018**

9:00—10:30 : Panel 4

### **The housing and employment nexus : what forms of spatial and economic distribution of informal settlements?**

Dr. **Mu Mu Than** (Dagon University, Department of Geography, Associate Professor), Dr. **Khin Mar Yee** (Dagon University, Department of Geography, Associate Professor), Dr. **Kyi Lint** (Dagon University, Department of Geography, Associate Professor), Dr. **Chun Tong Wu** (University of New South Wales), Daw **Nwe Nwe Tun** (Dagon University, Department of Geography, Lecturer), Daw **Su Su Khine** (Dagon University, Department of Geography, Assistant Lecturer) and U **Ye Lin Aung** (Dagon University, Department of Geography, Tutor).

*Urban Poor Living in Slum Dwellers : A Case Study of Dagon Myothit (South) Township in Yangon*

**Zin Mar Phyo** (East Yangon University, Department of Geography)  
*Causes and Consequences of the Informal Settlements in Payar Gone Village Tract, Thanlyin Township.*

**Ye Yint** (University of Yangon, Department of Geography)  
*Squatter Problem of Yangon City: Can we really solve?*

*Discussants* : Dr **Mya Mya Khin** (University of Yangon, Department of Anthropology) and **Céline Allaverdian** (Gret)

*Coffee break*

10:40—12:25 : Panel 5

### **Current programs and policies perspectives, what co-construction in public action ?**

**Bijay Karmacharya** (UN-Habitat)

*Types and location of Identified Informal Settlement in Yangon, alternative approaches to improving informal settlements and issues associated with Resettlement of informal settlements.*

**Jean Marc Brûlé** (Green Lotus)

*The FISONG project, Aiming at the empowerment of an informal settlement of Yangon*

**Hsu Lay Yee** (Yangon Technological University)

*Informal Settlements in Yangon: Experience through Co-Creation Workshops for City-wide Upgrading.*

*Discussants*: Dr **San San Moe** (Yangon Technological University) and Dr **Maxime Boutry** (Gret).

*Lunch break*

13:15—15:00 : Panel 6

### **The role of incremental urbanism practices in urban production**

**Antoine Chamberland** (University of Montréal, Department of Geography)

*The effects of the real estate and land markets commodification in Yangon: a conceptual framework and research agenda.*

**Win Myanmar Lay** (Linklusion) and **Ein Dray Pyone Han** (University of Yangon, Department of International Relations)

*Informal settlement in Yangon: Mitigating it with affirmative policy making. The case study of South Dagon Township.*

**Shoko Sakuma** (Women for the World) and **Saptarshi Mitra**, (Women for the World, The Appropriate Alternative)

*Community-led housing projects in Yangon, Myanmar, Right to the City in practice.*

*Discussant* : Dr **Pwint** and Dr **Karine Peyronnie** (IRD Prodig)

*Coffee break*

15:15—17:00 : Round Table

### **Scientific conclusions, discussion and perspective for further research**

Dr **Maxime Boutry** (Gret)

Dr **Gabriel Fauveaud** (University of Montréal, Department of Geography)

U **Htin Myaing** (Independant Planning Expert)

Mr **Bijay Karmacharya** (UN-Habitat)

Dr **Mya Mya Khin** (University of Yangon, Department of Anthropology)

Dr **Nilar Aung** (East Yangon University and University of Yangon, Department of Geography)

Dr **Karine Peyronnie** (IRD Prodig)

Dr **François Tainturier** (Inya institute)

Daw **Vanlizar Aung** (Women for the World)

**Yangon City Development Committee** (TBC)

*Discussants* : Dr **Pwint** (Yangon Technological University) and Dr **Valérie Clerc** (IRD Cessma)

### **16 NOVEMBER 2018**

09:30—13:00 **Field visits** (upon registration)

### ABSTRACTS

**Jean-Marc Brûlé**

#### ***The FISONG project : Aiming at the empowerment of an informal settlement of Yangon***

Based in the Ward 67 of Dagon Seikkan township in Yangon, the FISONG (name of the call for proposals by French aid agency AFD) project objective is to empower the community of this slum, and make them the owners of their future. This innovative project, first scaled for 3 years, is differing from other traditional projects, in letting the community people be the leaders of their own empowerment with a genuine bottom-up strategy, and a participatory approach. To enhance their capacities, several actions are implemented within the project, developed with the three civil society actors (INGOs & CSOs) in charge of the project. Aiming at social & green business development with a focus on waste treatment; climate change resilience ; women empowerment and youth leadership; informal urban rehabilitation, as well as lobby and dialogue with local and national authorities. FISONG project main challenge is to show that the strength and the values of the people living in these informal settlements, can contribute fiercely to a sustainable development of Yangon. Instead of seeing their settlements as a problem, let these people show themselves as a solution for a common brighter future.

*Jean-Marc Brûlé is Delegate General of the French NGO Green Lotus. Active in Myanmar since 2012, Green Lotus' goal and actions are to empower Myanmar people on green issues (climate change, chaotic urbanization...) and green solutions (from green business and technologies, to sustainable policies). Very well known by local and national authorities (YCDC, YRG, Construction Ministry (MOC, etc.), the French&Myanmar NGO is playing a role in the Yangon political debate, in being among the firsts to talk about Green Cities, and to make a bet on the power of the civil society. Believing in the potential of "making Myanmar one of the*

*greenest countries in Asia”, is the moto of the organization. Indeed, since its democratic transition, Myanmar is taking many diverse paths for its development, but many are very dangerous for the country and the people. On the other hand, there are many activities that should be developed, by all the counterparts of Myanmar society: politicians, administrations, civil society, business, medias... Eco-Tourism, Renewable Energies, Green Construction, Sustainable cities, Organic Agriculture, Natural products... these are the fields for a fair and prosperous future for Myanmar people.*

### **Antoine Chamberland**

#### ***The effects of the real estate and land markets commodification in Yangon: a conceptual framework and research agenda***

In this paper, I propose to present an ongoing research project carried out as part of my master’s degree in geography. By conducting this project, I want to shed the light on the socio-economical effects of the commodification of the real estate and land markets in Yangon. The objectives of this research are twofold: 1) investigate the impact of the current “real estate turn” (Shatkin, 2016) in the emergence of new forms of socio-spatial exclusion; 2) understand in what extent informal urbanism practices participate in such processes. In this paper, I propose to present the hypothesis, the main arguments and the methodology of my research developed after analyzing preliminary data obtained during an exploratory field trip in Yangon last summer. My theoretical framework relies on recent scholars work analyzing the effects of land commodification in Asia on the exclusion of subaltern socio-economic groups (Fauveaud 2016, Hall, Hirsh and Li 2011 , Shatkin 2017) and on the work of post-colonial geographers and planners such as Ananya Roy (2011), Jennifer Robinson (2013), Oren Yiftachel (2009), and Solomon Benjamin (2008) who highlight the horizontal nature and diversity of urbanism. The objective of my presentation is to feed a discussion on the ins and outs of the study of informal urban planning practices in a context of real estate turn, and to question the relevance of using the previously

cited research for the study of urban dynamics in Yangon.

*Antoine Chamberland is a Master’s student in geography directed by Gabriel Fauveaud at the University of Montreal. He is primarily interested in real estate and land markets dynamics and in the strategic urban planning in Yangon since the beginning of the political transition.*

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### **Eben Forbes**

#### ***Migration, Informal Settlement, and Government Response: Four Townships in Yangon, Myanmar***

The 2008 Constitution set forth that « Every citizen shall have the right to settle and reside in any place within the Republic of the Union of Myanmar according to law ». Since the political and economic reforms that began in 2010 started to gather steam, more and more people have been exercising this right by migrating to cities with Yangon being the most popular destination. Yangon is beyond doubt the driving engine of growth for this country in its new era of induction into the global economy. But Yangon is struggling to support so many new residents so quickly, and government authorities are far from granting any legitimacy to informal settlements- which are receiving the largest numbers of migrants, and the city’s original residents are not keen to accept them either. This paper examines two informal settlement locations –the periphery of the city and the other located in the area between the

Central Business District and the periphery. These two locations are compared in terms of employment opportunities, commuting time, supply of basic urban services, access to health care, social cohesion and problems of debt and crime. The paper examines a central conundrum facing Yangon today: can orderly, controlled urban growth be achieved while also assimilating the many newcomers in ways that respect their right to mobility and need for basic services? This paper relies upon the author's own household surveys and field research in addition to recent scholarship on the subject to elucidate this question in light of the vital role these newcomers play in the overall economy and functioning of this burgeoning city.

*Mr. Eben Forbes is a consultant and independent researcher on urban poverty and land issues, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has been affiliated with the Cambridge-based International Institute for Urban Development since September 2016. He began his career working for the City of New York as a housing specialist for homeless adults in 1997. Years later he earned his master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University and moved overseas to work with the urban poor in India, Nicaragua and then Myanmar where he was Program Officer of UN Habitat's Land Administration and Management Program from 2010-2014. He was a research fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School from 2014-15 during which time he conducted research inside informal settlement areas. In addition to his current affiliation with the International Institute for Urban Development, he is consultant to a service-enriched drop-in center for the homeless in Waltham, Massachusetts.*

### **Bijay Karmacharya**

***Types and location of Identified Informal Settlement in Yangon, alternative approaches to improving informal settlements and issues associated with Resettlement of informal settlements.***

In Yangon, informal settlements have developed in all parts of the city. Most of the growth however is spatially concentrated in and around the 'resettlement areas' and along the western and eastern bank of the Hlaing/Pan Hlaing Rivers and the Nga Moe Yeik Creek. UN-Habitat Myanmar has mapped out all informal settlements in Yangon. In this comprehensive exercise 423 locations of informal settlements were identified and recorded. Yangon Regional Government (YRG), under the leadership of the Chief Minister has prioritized the need to find a durable solution for households living in informal settlements – particularly in the 'resettlement areas' in Yangon's northwest. The YRGs priority has been on relocation/resettlement of the informal settlements in a new area. In 2017, the government enumerated residents of informal settlements and issued 'smart-cards'. YRG planned to move people in 2017 following this exercise. UN-Habitat advised the government against forced resettlement and actively promoted in situ upgrading as a solution for improving conditions within the resettlements areas – recognizing that some households will need to be resettled as part of this process. UN-Habitat has urged the government to work with partners in the international community to ensure any resettlement is conducted according to international standards. Over the last years, UN-Habitat has had numerous discussions with YRG on solutions and ways forward. UN-Habitat's mapping project confirmed that approximately 130 of the existing settlements are potentially suitable for in-situ incremental upgrading, while the remainder are located in hazardous areas that are potentially unsuitable for the development of human settlements. As part of a larger plan to expand city boundaries, YRG intends to relocate households from the existing resettlement areas to new resettlement areas and planning for this is soon to get underway. There are a number of challenges and risks that need to be identified and mitigated. These must be assessed prior to the decision to relocate households. UN-Habitat initiated an inception phase discussion under the leadership of YRG in order to facilitate data collection, assessments, planning, costing and

consultation for communities prior to the launch of the resettlement phase.

In the symposium, UN-Habitat Myanmar would like to bring into the discussion, key issues related to resettlement which needs to be carefully assessed and managed prior to the actual resettlement of the informal settlement. UN-Habitat will discuss “informal settlement Upgrading” vs “resettlement” and will shed light on the preparedness and importance of finding answers to key questions prior to any resettlement action.

*Bijay Karmacharya has 26 Years of experience in the field of Development in various capacities. Prolonged Experience in large National programs aimed at community infrastructure development, employment generation, improving livelihoods of rural and urban poor, food security, poverty alleviation, resettlement and rehabilitation planning; urban, rural and regional planning. Extensive experiences in program conceptualization, program development and management. Experienced in working with government (3.5 Years), international organization (9 years) and United Nations (13.5 years). Head of Agency of UN-Habitat in Myanmar for last 6 years. CTA in UN-Habitat, Pakistan, HoA in UN-Habitat, Mongolia and Deputy Country Programme Manager in Afghanistan during earlier posting. Chief Coordinator, GTZ/RPN Nepal last post Feb. 2005. Various positions, GTZ, Nepal since 1997-2005. Government Officer in Nepal 1991-1994.*

**Dr Khin Mar Yee, Dr Mu Mu Than, Dr Kyi Lint, Dr Mar Lar Han, Ms Kyaw Zin Htwe**

### ***The Investigation on the Renters and Squatters of Yangon Area, Myanmar***

Yangon area is Myanmar’s commercial hub and its magnetism intensifies as political and economic of the central government reform process gathers steam. The upsurge in new construction in Yangon’s center and proliferation of industrial zones on its periphery have been a big draw for

unskilled in-migrants from rural areas. The purpose of this study investigated on the mobile settlement of Yangon area. The main data was got from 57 in-depth interviews who included informal settlements, renters and authority persons of administration offices. The largely qualitative approach and correlation methods lead for the spatial distribution and variation between renters and informal settlements of study area. The results showed that the highest informal settlements took place in the Hlaing Thar Yar Township at the periphery area of Yangon area because of job opportunities, low price of living cost, not far from working place with highway terminal and industrial zones and the highest renters occupied in Pabetan, Latha, Kyauktada and Lanmadaw Townships because of the biggest commercial place. This paper found out the opposite directions of correlation between squatters and renters from the downtown to the periphery areas.

*Dr Khin Mar Yee is an Associate Professor at the Geospatial Technology Centre of Geography Department, Dagon University, Yangon. She holds a Ph D in Geography from Yangon University (2008), dissertation on “Quality of Life at Yuzana Garden City in Yangon City Area” and a Ph D in Spatial Information Engineering from Pukyong National University, Korea (2017), about “The Impact of Land Use and Land Cover Changes on Land Surface Temperature in Yangon City, Myanmar”. She specialises on social science and geoinformatic technology (Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System) research works including urban studies, slum and urban settlements, land use and land cover changes, land surface temperature changes. She is participating at ACRS (Myanmar, Philippine), ASPRS (USA), IGU (India, Russia), KARS (Korea), JASTIP (Malaysia) and projects on UB and TIDE.*

*Dr. Mu Mu Than is an Associate Professor at Department of Geography of Dagon University. Dr. Kyi Lint is Associate Professor at Dagon University, Department of Geography. Dr. Mar Lar Han is Associate Professor at Geography Department, Dagon University, Ms. Kyaw Zin Htwe is*



*Broadcasting Journalist in DVB and News Watch Media Group, PGDGIS' Candidate, Dagon University.*

**Khin Pyae Sone**

### ***Alternative ways to answer squatters' needs?***

Although every government, from the post-colonial to the democratic era, tried to deal with informal settlements, those remain a contemporary issue deemed “unsolvable”. Various methods have been chosen for dealing with informal settlements – from forced relocation and allocation of housing plots in the towns’ peripheries in the past to budget apartment schemes under the current government – but none of these could curb their perpetual creation. While the root causes of becoming squatter are generally understood in terms of poverty and lack of access to affordable housing, their often-strategic location, notably for accessing the job market, are never considered. This paper, based on a study carried out in Yangon and Mandalay, departs from the classic study of push and pull factors for becoming squatter to explore the strategies underlying the development of urban and peri-urban informal settlements (access to employment, access to legal land tenure, etc.). Understanding these strategies may enable to find alternative ways to answer squatters’ needs as well as constructively integrating informal settlements into urban development.

*Khin Pyae Sone - With two diploma in Anthropology and development studies, she has 6 years working experience in Myanmar in different survey works in sectors such as land and livelihoods, health, policy. She worked for almost five years full time in Gret (French Development NGO) and currently still continue doing study as a part-time researcher in there, on the Land research project, informal settlement study in both rural and peri-urban areas.*

**U Ko Ko Hlaing**

### ***Informal settlements in Myanmar from Political Point of View ; Underlying Causes and Attempts by Successive Governements to Tackle the Problem.***

The theme of this paper is to find out the underlying causes of informal settlement in Myanmar including lack of security, instability and poverty. People from rural and remote areas had faced severe hardship to sustain their livelihood due to those causes and fled to cities where they hoped for safety and better lives.

Since the end of World War II, such an exodus commenced due to lack of law and order in the uncertain political situation. Soon after independence in 1948, the nationwide insurrections by numerous insurgent groups effectively destroyed the already-unstable country into total chaos. The government was dubbed "Rangoon Government" by foreign media since it had no ability to rule outside Rangoon (Yangon) Metropolitan. A number of internally displaced people entered en mass into large cities especially to Yangon to find safty havens. Those IDPs had to settle in unused or deserted places creating squatters and slum quarters. Some had found their dwelling places in monestries and public rest houses near religious buildings.

The Anti-Facist and People's Freedom League (AFPFL) Government tried to handle such informal settlement problem. It formed a new ministry of Public Welfare and Resettlement and the Public Housing Board under Ministry of Construction. Low-cost housings such as Pa Sa Pa La (a Myanmar acronym for AFPFL) Housing in Yangon and Pyi Daw Thar Housing (especially for public servents) in other cities of destrict and devision level. Nevertheless, the burden was too huge for the government to tackle and more people were still coming into urban areas for better job opportunity and social development. During the time of caretaker government from 1958 to 1960, the government took serious actions on the informal settlement problem which was the main source of unruly situation in Yangon. It had built three new towns in the out-skirt area

within three years and slum-dwellers were forced to move to those new towns. Some innovations in public transport had been established like circular trains around the city during that period. After the military coup in 1962, the military government, the Revolutionary Council, had again built low cost public housings and rental housing for government servants in Yangon area. Some of the projects were implemented with socialist mentality of "Sweat for House" program, in which people had to contribute their labour in construction projects to be entitled for allotment. During the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) rule from 1974 to 1988, it was slow in public housing due to budget constraint while rural people infiltrated gradually into urban areas due to poverty. After the popular uprising in 1988, the military government ( State Law and Order Restoration Council) tried to handle the chaotic situation in urban management by building new towns and some slum dwellers were sent to frontier areas in Northern Rakhine State to resettle as farmers with government provision. However, in 2008, a super cyclone hit the Ayerwaddy delta area killing hundreds of thousand of people and a million lost their home. Many fled to Yangon to find a new life in urban area. As the consequence, Yangon city is still facing with informal settlement problem.

How to improve the current situation of informal and unruly urban development will be one of the greatest challenges for every government. It cannot be solved by focussing the Yangon Metropolitan area alone and urban planning alone too would not be the effective solution. It needs socio-eco-political consideration at macro level and it would surely take time for planning and implementation. The problem is that the five-year election cycle will hamper this process as successive governments have to pay more attention on short term success or quick win projects to woo the votes.

*U Ko Ko Hlaing is the former chief political advisor to President U Thein Sein of previous government (2011-2016). He was graduated from the Defence Services Academy in 1976 and served as a military officer in*

*Myanmar Army till 2004. He was assigned to the Research Department in the Office of Commander-in-Chief (Army) for most of the time in his military career. After military service, he entered media field and became an advisor to the Ministry of Information till 2011. He is a well known media person in both printed and broadcasting sectors. He wrote several articles and books on politics and international affairs and has been running occasional TV and radio talkshows. In education, he attained B.Sc (DSA) and M.A (English Language) degrees.*

**Dr Helene Maria Kyed, Lue Htar and Nan Tinilar Win**

### ***Informal settlements and migrant challenges in Hlaing Thayar***

Yangon is a rapidly growing city, and around 80 percent of this growth is caused by migration from the rural areas. Despite the generation of new jobs, many migrants are struggling to find formal jobs, tenure security and many do not have official access to public services. Property values have skyrocketed and the supply of affordable housing is inadequate to meet the demands of internal migration. Consequently, informal settlements are growing, especially on the fringes of the city. Around 400,000 people are defined as squatters by the city authorities. This situation is creating new dynamics of insecurity. The city government has no coherent plan to address the situation. Instead, evictions constitute the main political tool to deal with informal settlers. A predominantly negative attitude towards poor informal settlers, which conveys them as criminals, strangers and as obstacles to urban development continues, despite the change to a democratically elected government in 2016.

This paper explores the challenges and survival strategies of poor informal migrants in Hlaing Thayar township, which has the largest concentration of informal settlements in Yangon. Based on interviews with informal settlers, local leaders, and city authorities in early 2017, I show that the informal settlers rely on loose networks of relatives and on local ward and religious leaders to cope with the challenges they face. However, this

does not lead to any stable form of self-organization. Constant threats of evictions and securitization by city authorities are creating high levels of mobility and feelings of insecurity, which also cause social disputes and lack of social cohesion. Simultaneously, the informal settlements sustain an informal economy and informal forms of governance by local 'big people' (Lue Kyi), including some government officials, who benefit from illegal land sales and legal documentation to the informal migrants. A core argument of the article is that the securitization of newcomers and informal settlers, is perpetuating, rather than curbing insecurity in Yangon's informal settlements, which could, if not reversed, lead to instability.

*Helene Maria Kyed is a senior researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies. She has done research on policing, justice provision and post-conflict state formation in Mozambique (since 2002) and in Myanmar (since 2014). Kyed coordinates a 4-year collaborative research project on 'Everyday Justice and Security in the Myanmar Transition', which also includes a focus on urban informal settlements. Her latest edited book is: Policing and the Politics of Order-Making (Routledge, 2015).*

*Lue Htar involved in more than 20 research projects through the Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation which is an independent research organization in Myanmar. Currently, she is working as a research manager on Everyday Justice and Security in Myanmar Transition which has been conducting in partnership with Danish Institute of International Studies (DIIS). Her research paper on the Everyday Justice and Plural Authorities; about Land Disputes and Plural Authorities in Karen State was presented at "2017 Myanmar Update Conference" at Australia National University as well as at "9<sup>th</sup> European Association for Southeast Asian Studies Conference" at University of Oxford in 2017. The paper has been accepted for publication in the newly established in the Independent Journal of Burmese Scholarship in 2018.*

*Nan Tinilar Win is a researcher at Enlightened Myanmar Research foundation, in Myanmar, which is an independent local research organization working with many international organization. She graduated Bachelor of Science, Mathematics from Hpa-An University and she was involved in Myanmar's Political Aspiration & Perception 2015 Asia Barometer Survey Report led by Asia Barometer Survey (ABS based on Taiwan Organization). She is involved in research collaboration with Danish Institute of International study (DIIS) "everyday justice and security provision project".*

**Hsu Lay Yee**

### ***Informal Settlements in Yangon: Experience through Co-Creation Workshops for City-wide Upgrading***

For this seminar of informal settlements in Myanmar, I would like to express my experiences of what I have learnt, what I have helped and how we worked together with the vulnerable communities to improve for their neighborhoods and lives as well. Through these workshop experiences, I want to present in three parts: (1) The existing conditions of slum areas in Yangon and this will include the current problems such as water, electricity, road network, etc. (2) The co-creation process together with local architects, architectural students, local NGO and professionals from foreign network working and helping for the people who needs help. In this part, participatory actions such as community mapping, finding the possible strategies and solutions for better future with the community people and lesson learned from the foreign experts in which way they use to solve for the poor people and strategies they upgrade for the city. (3) My own thoughts and learning from the those informal people such as how I realize the life of people from slum areas, what are the problems they are facing and what conditions they want for better future.

*Hsu Lay Yee : I am an architectural designer with more than one and half years of experience in architectural practice. I am currently doing my*

*master's thesis in architecture at Yangon Technological University. In addition, I worked with Women for the World (WFW) in community-based housing for the poor and co-found a non-profit organization called Community Bithukar Platform (CBP-CAN Myanmar) with fellow activist designers. The workshops I participated are Co-create for City-wide upgrading Workshop, Yangon, Myanmar (A 5-day workshop in an informal settlement in 67 Ward in Dagon Seikkan Township. I was a member of the design group that helped residents imagine the design of their dream house.) and Yangon, Transformation in a time of transformation: City wide strategies for upgrading (A 10-day workshop with YTU and UCL-DPU. In collaboration with master students from UCL, we worked with residents in informal settlements to find possible strategies for city-wide upgrading. During the workshop.) Bachelor of Architecture (2015) West Yangon Technological University, Master of Architecture (Thesis), Yangon Technological University (June 2016 –present)*

**Dr Mu Mu Than, Dr Khin Mar Yee, Dr Kyi Lint, Dr Chung-Tong Wu, Daw Nwe Nwe Tun, Daw Su Su Khine and U Ye Lin Aung**

### ***Urban Poor Living in Slum Dwellers: A Case Study of Dagon Myothit (South) Townships in Yangon***

Cities are a part of socio-economic development. Cities provide good health care centre, good education and training and various occupations such as commercial and industrial activities and services. Cities stand as central point for job opportunities. Squatter areas are generally the only type of settlement affordable and accessible to the poor in cities. Squatter areas are mostly found in extended new wards, around industrial zones, along the river and creek, and main roads between two wards in Yangon City.

This study of squatter areas in Dagon Myothit (South) Township include slum areas that have developed near new industrial zones to accommodate migrants from rural areas and other urban areas wishing to

stay near job opportunities. In Dagon Myothit (South) Township slums are developing along the main road between two new townships and around industrial zone. Government cannot provide the basic living facilities necessary for slum dwellers. Due to high rent, these individuals and families usually stay in locations furthest from the wards of the townships and along the creek. As a result the size of slum dwellers spread and increased within a decade. The objectives of this Study are to examine the demographic characteristics of slum dwellers, to identify the living conditions and infrastructural facilities available in slum areas, to examine the extent of slums and factors responsible for growth of slum and to identify the problems and constraints of slum development. Quantitative and qualitative questionnaires are utilized in this study.

*Dr. Mu Mu Than has been working as an Associate Professor. She has 21 years experiences in teaching. Now she works in Department of Geography, Dagon University. Her experiences and responsibilities are teaching Master students, conducting research and servicing to the staff and the students. She has got a Ph D degree in Human Geography from Yangon University. For her Ph D dissertation she got the Academy award of MAAS (Myanmar Academy of Arts and Sciences) in 2009. She is interested in doing research. One of her attempts, research for studying retail structure in Thanlyin Town, has got the best paper award of Department of Higher Education in Lower Myanmar in 2012. She published 8 research papers. Then, she had oversea training to Australia in 2015 for Research Methodology in demography, to Philippines in 2017 for training for trainer's course concerning WPEA, and to India in Feb 2018 to attend IGU conference in and to Russia in 2018 to 100 years IGU conference to present research papers.*

*Dr. Khin Mar Yee is Associate Professor at Dagon University, Department of Geography. Dr. Kyi Lint is Associate Professor at Dagon University, Department of Geography. Dr. Chun Tong Wu is Professor Emeritus at University of New South Wales, Australia. Daw Nwe Nwe Tun is Lecturer at Dagon University, Department of Geography. Daw Su Su Khine is*

*Assistant Lecturer at Dagon University, Department of Geography. U Ye Lin Aung is Tutor at Dagon University, Department of Geography.*

**Dr Mya Mya Khin**

### ***The concept of informal settlement from emic perspective***

This paper intends to explore the concept of informal settlement from Myanmar perspective. Especially, why people chose informal settlement, what are the characteristics of informal settlement, and how they construct their society and interpret by themselves are main highlights in this paper. When the relevant data were collected, key informant interviews were used to understand their background history, how they built their society, how they struggle to become formal settlement and their feeling and how to express their emotional strategies for survival in Myanmar. Transact walk and observation were applied to describe their real situations. Participant observation was useful to collect the data, which were their valuable and meaningful social network, and strategies for raising their social standard were seen vividly. These data were the reflection of the dwellers that chose the informal settlements existing along the Maykha Street and Maharmingyiminkhaung Street, Hlaingtharyar Township, Yangon Region. When the research findings were described, descriptive and narrative research designs were applied. As the research outcomes, their emic perspectives on informal settlement were explored. And the comparative study between emic and etic perspectives on informal settlement could be conducted.

*Dr Mya Mya Khin is professor, Head of the Department of Anthropology, University of Yangon, Myanmar. I finished my BA (Honours) (1987) and MA degrees (1994) in Anthropology from University of Yangon and PhD degree in Cultural Anthropology from Kobe University, Japan in 2004. I have over 28 years' experience in teaching and research. I have been conducting the group researches as the Departmental researches supported by Ministry of Education since 1996. I also participated in the*

*international collaborative research with Hang Yang University and Reshaping Development Institute from the Republic of Korea in 2013-2014 Academic year. We focused on "Capacity building development research including Myanmar". As the research outcomes, we could set up Myanmar-Korea Local Knowledge Center in University of Yangon and a community Center in Zawtigone Village, Wanetchaung Village Tract, Hmawbi Township, Yangon Region, Myanmar. I also conducted another collaborative research with Prof. Dr. Khin Saw Nwe, Department of History, University of Yangon in 2013-2014 Academic year. "The Impacts of Development Programs on the Native People's Life Expectation, Falam Township, Chin State" and "Socio-economic Situations of Chin National living in Falam Township, Chin State, Myanmar" which was published in ARC Journal, Vol.5, 2017. And then, I also participated in the international collaborative research "Everyday Justice Project" with DIIS, and EMReF. Research paper named "The Villagers' Perception on Ceasefire" was presented at "2017 Myanmar Update Conference" at ANU and "Legal Pluralism and the power of the State laws" was presented in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Burma Review and Challenges International Forum 2018, Nagoya, Japan. Legal Pluralism and the power of State Law, The 2<sup>nd</sup> BURMA REVIEW AND CHALLENGES INTERNATIONAL FORUM 2018, 7-9 JULY 2018, NAGOYA, JAPAN, Anthropological Perspective on Myanmar (Forum on Kaleidoscopic Myanmar, 24<sup>TH</sup> 15<sup>TH</sup> July 2018, Semeo Regional Center for History and Traditions, Ministry of Education (in English, International) and Community Development Based on Multi Religions, Joint Seminar on Anthropological Research of SOUTH-EAST ASIAN Countries Including Myanmar, 24, 25-8-2018), Myanmar were conducted. This joint seminar was celebrated by Myanmar and Japanese scholars in Myanmar – Korea Local Knowledge Center, University of Yangon, Myanmar.*

**U Myint Naing**

### ***Previous Countermeasures for Squatter Formation in Yangon***

The inevitable phenomenon of the squatter formation can be seen as the symptom of urbanization. Root cause is solving the residential issues by urban poor, and that's fueled by adverse effect between economic and urban growths. Definition of slum is based on five indicators such as inadequate access to safe water, and sanitation and other infrastructure, poor structural quality, overcrowding and insecure tenure. Cities need the urban poor as cheap labor forces which promote and accelerate the prosperity. Notwithstanding, slums are preys of natural and manmade disasters, and social and economic losses can be circling in slum generation. Countermeasures of slum are negligence, remove or eviction, self-help an in situ upgrading, enabling policies, resettlement and participatory slum improvement. First formation was under British in 1870s with Indian imported labors. That could be found in east part of Yangon by Indian squatter and Burmese poor lived in western area. British solved the issues of registered squatters by collecting squatter-fee. Second formation was based on impact of wars during 1950s. There were 56 squatter wards and Government built three new-towns for resettlements. Population growth and industrialization were causes of Third formation. The migrated urban poor were increased, and 259,237 of squatter dwellers (66,162 households) were counted in 1980s. Military government erected six satellite towns and they applied two practical instruments as site and services, and hut to apartment schemes. Yangon Region Government has recognized current Fourth formation. They have registered squatter as 475,031 populations and 155,594 households now.

*U Myint Naing is Deputy Director General from Department of Urban and Housing Development. He served in military as Lieutenant Colonel for 25 years and was transferred to Ministry of Construction in 2007. He had been assigned as director for DUHD in 2009 and promoted to Deputy Director General in 2016. He attended General Staff College in 2005 and has got MBA from Yangon University of Economics in 2013. He was a delegate for around 20 oversea trips mainly to Asian countries (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, China, Japan and Korea) for training programs, seminars and conferences related to housing sector. He is one of the*

*founding members of Urban Research and Development Institute (URDI) in collaboration with UN Habitat and Myanmar-German Research Center with Cologne University. Now, he is a PhD candidate for Urban Environmental Management from Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand since 2015.*

**Dr Myint Thida, Dr Nilar Aung, Ye Ye Cho, Win Thanda Oo.**

### ***Informal Settlements in Shwepyithar Township, Yangon Region***

Sweptithar is one of the new towns of Yangon Region and it is located in North Yangon District. It has an area of 55.9 sq.km and population density was high with 4681 person per sq.km in 2015. Although it is a new town, population density is high due to diverse job opportunity, easy accessibility, etc. These factors attract the migrants from other areas and informal settlements occurred in Shwepyithar Township. Job opportunity is one of the major factors affecting informal settlement and informal settlements are found near the industrial zones. But, when number of migrant exceeds the number of job supported by existing economic activities, unemployment problem appeared. It also leads to formation of informal settlements in the study area. In 2015, 36 percent of the total labour forces were casual labours and 4 percent underemployment. People lived in informal settlements mainly earn as daily wage earners. The objectives of the paper are to find out major factor supporting establishment of informal settlements, to study livelihood of people lived in informal settlements and to explore the problems relating to informal settlements. To present the paper, primary data collected by field observation and semi-structured interviews will be mainly used and quantitative-qualitative mixed method will be applied in presenting the research paper.

*Dr Myint Thida is Professor at the Department of Geography of Hinthada University, Ayeyarwady Region since 2017. She was an associate Professor at Yangon University. She has got a PhD from Yangon University in 2006.*

*She is specialized in Human geography (agriculture, demography). She has been involved in research programmes concerning urban social network, land use, process of urban extension, including on agriculture land, agriculture and poverty and rural urban migration in delta region. She has done more than 30 researches on these fields.*

*Dr Nilar Aung is Pro-rector at East Yangon University and Professor at University of Yangon, Department of Geography. Ye Ye Cho is Lecturer at University of Yangon, Department of Geography. Win Thandar Oo is Tutor at University of Yangon, Department of Geography.*

### **Shoko Sakuma and Saptarshi Mitra**

***Community-led housing projects in Yangon, Myanmar. Right to the City in practice***

The presentation bases itself in Informal Settlements in Myanmar and examines intersections of housing, informality and community engagement. This is done through an elaboration and analysis of selected community-led housing projects carried out by the Myanmar based CBO Women for the World (WfW) in the fringe townships of Yangon. These projects are based on a methodology that aggregates groups of urban poor families in Yangon to create a strong socially linked community through mobilisation of self-help saving groups, united in their desire for securing their own housing. This group is presently incapable of accessing or affording the formal housing stock provided by the Myanmar government.

This necessitates an alternative approach, one rooted in the concepts of co-production and collective action. WfW's methodology for these housing projects revolve around building 'communities' through a framework of financial stability and social cohesion, and then following an incrementally stepped process of securing land, finances, technical capacity that ultimately culminates in the building, maintenance and operation of a housing project. Through an investigation into the nuances

of the projects, the presentation draws links to strategies for upgradation, issues of collective land tenure and the impacts of strong social networks and collective action in shaping resilience.

The presentation argues that the process and methodology of these community-led housing projects are an example of a collective assertion of the Right to the City (RTC). The assertion of this right is made even more significant as it originates through the on-ground action of a section of the city who are otherwise thought to be powerless, in need of 'aid' and incapable of leading processes of positive change. The presentation also argues for the relevance of WfW's methodology to address the gap between policy and action in the realm of housing for urban poor in Myanmar.

*Shoko Sakuma is an Urban Planner and Development Practitioner (University College London), with a background as a consultant for space making around Asian cities for five years. Her strategic approach, with a focus on interdisciplinary knowledges and synthetic analysis has contributed to multiple types of projects from public spaces to regional development, involving public/private sectors and communities. Currently, she is engaged in developing systems for scaling-up community-based practices in Yangon, through WfW. She has a strong passion for bettering the coexistence of informality in current/future cities. She can be reached at [shokosakuma8@gmail.com](mailto:shokosakuma8@gmail.com).*

*Saptarshi Mitra, with a background in Architecture (CEPT Ahmedabad) and Urban Planning (UCL London), has lived and worked in India, Spain, United Kingdom and Myanmar. He is engaged in working with development projects in Myanmar, leads his own NGO, and is part of an interdisciplinary practice called The Appropriate Alternative in Kolkata, India. A strong believer in the necessity and capacity of people to lead the change they want to see, he is engaged in unpacking dimensions of equity, inclusivity and social justice through his work and his research. He can be reached at [saptarshi2103@gmail.com](mailto:saptarshi2103@gmail.com).*

## Win Myanmar Lay

### ***Informal settlement in Yangon: Mitigating it with affirmative policy making (Case study: South Dagon Township)***

Yangon city has been the crucial hub for development of Myanmar, experiencing rapid urbanization along with economic liberalization since 2012. The rapid growth of the city has seen its limits expand into nearby villages and led to the creation of new townships (UCL,2017). The reasons why rural people are migrating to Yangon range from economic, social, environmental problems to natural disasters experienced in their previous home town. Informal settlement occurs when the migrants come to urbanized place in search for better opportunities, yet they face numerous challenges such as high house renting prices and scarce job opportunities to cope with the living conditions. Most importantly, diverging interests between government and informal settlers, which stimulate the impact of intra-township migration, becomes stumbling block to solve the issue. Much of this issues are reflected in the case of South Dagon township. Therefore, the collective action and cooperation from government, private sectors, non-governmental organizations, and informal settlers, nonetheless, requires to prevent the new occurrence of slums and squatting and to adapt to upgrade the existing slums by affirmative policy making. To approach this, the paper will explore the nature and process of informal settlement in South Dagon Township as single case study. Because the majority of researches related to informal settlement topics in Yangon have been done in Hlaing Thar Yar and Thaketa. And this research will observe and identity the differences with these previous researches.

*Win Myanmar Lay is Research Assistant at Linklusion. She is graduated from University of Yangon with Bachelor of Art in International Relations in December 2017. During her academic years, she jointly conducted the research with Australian National University (ANU) students which focused on land-use and land rights issues for urban development sector in*

*Yangon. Recently, Win has carried out the preliminary consumer market research and logistic management in Kawhmu, Thongwa, Twantay township. She also surveyed about transparency and public awareness upon election campaigns as People's Alliance for Credible Elections' volunteer. Win is driven by researches upon development sectors in Myanmar and her future prospect of research is to focus specifically on sustainable cities. Win has also involved in various extra-curricular research activities and awarded as winner in elevator pitch upon the research about 'giving new learning approach to higher education in Myanmar' in February 2018.*

## Ye Yint

### ***Squatter Problem of Yangon City: Can we really solve?***

From the urban geography perspective, squatter problem is one of the issues in most of the developing countries. It through into Yangon City and becoming inescapable now. This squatting problem is a key issue in current Yangon City. Many economic and social problem are faced in squatter areas. This squatting problem is very difficult to solve. From the administrative point of view, these squatters are root of many problems. So, we need to solve it urgently. We also need to care these people. This project examines the current squatter areas in Hlaingtharyar Township. It is a planned new town of Yangon city established in late 1980 and has a large industrial zone. The current total population in Hlaingtharyar township is 7,04,800 (GAD, 2015). And current total squatter population in Hlaingtharyar township is 96,149 (GAD, 2015) and this amount is 13.64% of total population. The questions we focus on are "Why squatting occurred in Hlaingtharyar Township?", "How they have squatted in Hlaingtharyar Township?", and "How can we solve this problem?". The objectives in this project are "to examine spatial distribution pattern of squatter area within Hlaingtharyar Township", "to understand the controlling factors", and "to examine the current difficulties. The aim is to deeply understand the current situation of



squatting problems in Hlaingtharyar Township to be able to give proper suggestions.

*Ye Yint is a MA, (Qualifying) Student at the Department of Geography, University of Yangon. I have specialization in human geography and urban studies. I have participated as a project leader in a project of "Squatter Problem in Yangon City: Can we really solve?" by holding Science Fair Exhibition at University of Yangon. In my fourth year, I had a field research with the topic "Opportunities and challenges of Tourism Development" in Dawei, Tanintharyi Region last April 2017. I have also participated in some of conferences and workshops which are "50 for 50. ASEAN – Germany workshop" for DAAD Alumni and students from ASEAN in Jakarta, Indonesia in October 2017, "University and National Development" and "Cultural Development between SEA countries by UOB" conferences at Art hall, university of Yangon.*

### **Zin Mar Phyto**

#### ***Causes and Consequences of the Informal Settlements in Payar Gone Village Tract, Thanlyin Township***

Informal settlement are densely populated and lack basic property rights and access to critical infrastructure, such as clean water and sanitation. Payar Gone village tract is located at the east of Thanlyin Town and it is far from 4.5 mile. The total area of Payar Gone Village tract is 8.75 sq miles. The objectives of the study area to explore the cause of informal settlement study and to establish the pattern of spatial expansion of informal settlement in Payar Gone village tract through the use of remotely sensed satellite imageries. To give recommendations as to how the challenges caused by informal settlers on the environment. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data were collected and used. In this study, qualitative data have been collected by using interviewing methods with key persons regarding to various sectors in study area.

Zinmar Phyto is Tutor in East Yangon University, Department of Geography. She has an experience of three years and is destined for a teaching career. She holds a Master of Research in Geography and is currently doing a PhD in Geography. Her dissertation title is "A Geographical Analysis of Trends and Patterns of Urban Growth in Thanlyin Townships". She is also currently studying English.