Press Release - The Voice of the Youth in Myanmar

An exclusive cooperation between Turning Tables, The Danish Embassy in Myanmar and the Danish band Dûné focuses on how music can mobilise the youth to raise their voices and engage in democracy and social change in Myanmar, a country which until recently was one of the world’s most tough military dictatorships.

On occasion of the coming election in Myanmar in the fall, the Danish NGO, Turning Tables, has founded a comprehensive national dialog initiative for the youth of Myanmar. The goal with "The Voice of the Youth" is to give marginalized youth from different ethnic groups the possibility to meet and express their hopes and visions for the future through music and filmmaking.

Turning Tables launched a national song writing contest in December with the purpose of collecting material to record an album with songs about human rights, conflict solving and dialog, which will broadly represent the voices of the youth.

Martin Fernando Jakobsen, one of the people behind Turning Tables and one of the founders of the Danish DJ collective "Den Sorte Skole" states that:

"Turnings Tables works to give voice to marginalized youths of the world via music and film making. The Voice of the Youth has been a major success, because of the young peoples’ huge engagement with creative tools expressing how they want the future of Myanmar to be. Thereby they seize the newly established freedom of speech and use the music as a youth-to-youth communication and thereby build bridges between segregated groups all over the country."

The Danish Embassy in Myanmar, that made the project possible through its funding, has huge expectations to the cooperation and Danish ambassador Peter Lysholt Hansen declares that:

“Giving voice to the youth is the best way of celebrating the 60 year anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic connections between Denmark and Myanmar. Myanmar finds itself in the middle of a peace-, democratization- and reform process unprecedented in the history of the country, and it is crucial to build bridges between different ethnic and religious groups. This is exactly what the project does by letting the youth be heard."

The project reaches its peak in a two day "Voice of the Youth" music festival on 13 – 14 of June, where the participants of the tour and the winners of the song writing contest will perform. As 2015 is also the year where Denmark and Myanmar celebrate its 60 year anniversary, the Danish rock band Dûné has been invited to perform at the festival. Dûné will, in connection to the festival, support the young bands from the all over the country in the production and recording of a "Voice of the Youth" album about the young people hopes and dreams for the future of Myanmar.
"When we make music and write lyrics, we can write just about anything we want and about anybody we want. This is a freedom that we take for granted. There is no doubt about the freedom of speech being a lot on the agenda in Denmark the last couple of years, but we forget that saying what you want can have horrible consequences in some countries. As a band, we now have the possibility to use our talent and musical skills to do a difference in the world. We very much look forward to that experience" says the head singer of Dûné, Mattias Kolstrup.

The project is documented by Turning Tables and the first couple of videos from the preparation are already available here: https://youtu.be/HDsv9SXSqtY

For further more information visit www.turningtables.org or contact info@turningtables.org.