

OKP Newsletter

July 2020



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Turning challenges into opportunities

July 2020, Delft

Dear partners,

This is the second edition of our monthly OKP newsletter. As the end of the academic year has arrived, we are still in the midst of a pandemic. However, university staff have more time to focus on professional development and capacity building activities during these summer months. In Vietnam, student recruitment is a crucial summer objective. In Myanmar, staff are brainstorming about how to continue education during the Covid-19 partial lockdown. In any case, OKP partners want to assist you as best as possible. As always, do not hesitate to contact us for support. Let's turn challenges into opportunities, together!

In this issue, besides the news, upcoming activities, 'Get to know us' section and the opportunities for professional development, we feature some special interviews. For OKP Vietnam we interviewed Laurent Umans, First Secretary Water and Climate Change for the Netherlands Embassy in Hanoi. We spoke to him about about challenges and opportunities in the Vietnamese water sector. We also interviewed Tanya Huizer, senior project leader at Arcadis, and her Myanmar colleague Phuu Thit Kyaw, Junior Engineer Water & Environment at Arcadis, about the impact of the OKP program on careers in the (international and Myanmar) water sector. Enjoy the read!



OKP Vietnam: News and planned activities

Check out [this article](#) on Institutional Collaboration during Covid-19 in Vietnam by Delft Global Initiative

The faculty of Water Resources of HUNRE has been realizing a promotional campaign for the last couple of months. They created a video, new flyers and executed an online campaign on Facebook. In July they organized a live Q&A session on Facebook to promote the IWRM programme. They are pleased that a tentative 20 students have applied for the academic year 2020-2021.



Đỗ Thị Thùy Dung and Ninh Kiều Anh successfully defended their theses in English, receiving a 9.3/10 and 10/10, respectively, from the external assessment committee. They will now proceed to try to get their research published in the Journal of Natural Resources and Environment Sciences in Vietnam.



Mid July, Hoàng Thị Thanh Hiền and Phan Thúy Hằng defended their student scientific research on soda bottle science and soil moisture measurements. They used OKP equipment and techniques introduced by Ass. Prof. Thom Bogaard, which were previously used by Dutch exchange students in the OKP program. Earlier this year, lecturer Tran Thuy Chi also was inspired to use water bottles for filtration experiments in her water treatment class. Practical aspects are becoming an important part of the curriculum!

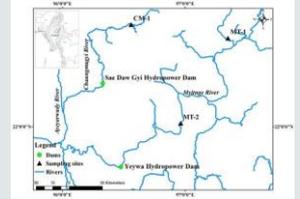


You can find more information about collaboration on the TU Delft-Vietnam website: <https://www.tudelft.nl/citg/vietnam/>

At the beginning of the new academic year, Thuyloi University management staff will visit other Vietnamese universities in Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh City to exchange ideas on strategy development, KPIs, and accreditation procedures.

OKP Myanmar: News and planned activities

In May of 2020, Nyein Thandar Ko, TU Delft PhD student of YTU, published an open access article in the *Water* journal, named: *'The Urgent Need for River Health Biomonitoring Tools for Large Tropical Rivers in Developing Countries: Preliminary Development of a River Health Monitoring Tool for Myanmar Rivers.'* Her co-authors are Phil Suter, John Conallin, Martine Rutten and Thom Bogaard. You can download the publication [here](#).



At the beginning of July, representatives from MMU and YTU had an online meeting to discuss opportunities for online training with ITC Twente and TU Delft. The current plan is to design and organize a longer term publication support track for young staff. Stay tuned!



We are pleased to announce that from both MMU and YTU there will be staff attending the online MDF course **'Writing Winning Proposals'** in mid-August. The staff will learn to match unique proposal ideas and added value with funders' needs. They will learn how to make sound go/ no go decisions on opportunities; how to bring logic and structure to their proposal and improve the writing process. The MDF trainers will furthermore help participants understand the appraisal procedures and criteria that will be used to evaluate their proposals. There will also be participants from HUNRE and Thuyloi attending this online course. We hope all participants deem it useful and fun!

TU Delft and partners from MMU have been awarded the Nuffic funded tailor made training for DWIR: **'Keeping the flow: capacity building for river engineers in Myanmar'**. Other partners include Arcadis, Deltares, Royal HaskoningDHV and Water Bridge Myanmar. We're excited to kick off this project soon!

You can find more information about collaboration on the TU Delft-Myanmar website: <https://www.tudelft.nl/myanmar/>

Challenges and opportunities in the Vietnamese water sector

Interview with Laurent Umans



Laurent Umans

First Secretary Water
and Climate Change

Netherlands
Embassy in Hanoi

What developments do you expect in the Vietnamese water sector in the near future?

I expect a risk-based approach to water safety, better coordination within the Vietnamese government (both vertically and horizontally), an increase in public budget allocations for water security (drinking water is getting salty in many areas, COVID requires good hand-washing facilities), the start of many PPP projects in the water sector and an increase in climate financing.

“Dutch engineers have a system perspective to water which is preventing that a solution in one place is causing problems in another place or sector. They have a rich technical background but also know that it is impossible to copy and paste Dutch solutions to Vietnam so they always search for the best ‘fit’ instead of the best practice.”

What do you think are the biggest future water challenges and opportunities in Vietnam?

In the short term drought, floods (especially urban), land subsidence due to groundwater extraction and erosion. In all of these areas there are technical as well as governance challenges. In the long term water contamination and recycling water are challenges.

Why do you think it is important to have skilled engineers in the Vietnamese water sector?

It is common knowledge among professionals that Vietnam needs many water experts in the near future to cope with urbanization and climate change. Yet, among students that need to choose their career, these job opportunities do not seem to be known or motivate them to choose for a water university. Even the very good curriculum is not tilting their choice to study natural resources management. I hereby express the hope that the OKP project will allow pupils to make informed decisions on their future, hopefully joining the water professionals.

Arcadis and the benefits of OKP



Tanya Huizer
Senior Project Leader
Water & Environment /
Myanmar Country
Representative

Arcadis

You have been in Myanmar for quite a long time, did you notice improvements at the universities and the skills level of young graduates/interns?

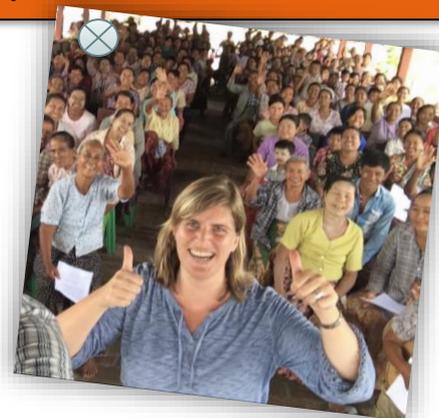
It seems that the students and fresh graduates are more open and dare to share their views on technical matters in projects, which was not the case 5 years ago. I think the collaboration of the universities with international universities like TU Delft and IHE Delft, but also companies like Arcadis, help them to transform the theoretical approach into an approach supported by practical examples in Myanmar including field visits and case studies. Thesis research focusing on ongoing projects and actual problems made a large change in understanding and being able to 'apply' what students learned during their classes at university.

What qualities do you find most important when looking for a new engineer for Arcadis Myanmar?

We looked for someone who is eager to learn, but with relevant (basic) understanding and skills in river and coastal engineering or ports and harbour engineering. Another requirement are computer skills, and English writing and speaking. We provide opportunities to improve computer skills and English writing and speaking but willingness and commitment to work on that is required. And finally, it is important that someone fits our 'team' in terms of expertise but also other interests and skills like communication and project management. Team members with different expertise and skills have much added value to each other and can learn from each other, a win-win.

Where do you see the added value of capacity building programs such as OKP/Niche for a company like Arcadis?

A change in the education programs on water took place from a very technical theoretical way of teaching to a more integrated approach in the addressed topics and by including more practical examples and field visits. Collaboration with Dutch organisations, universities and companies, helped the universities in Myanmar (lectures and the students) to be more open and make use of opportunities like internship positions at our office in Yangon but also international guest speakers showing relevant examples of projects from all over the world.



MMU graduate Phuu Thit Kyaw on her work at Arcadis, Yangon



Phuu Thit Kyaw
Junior Engineer Water
& Environment

Arcadis

B.E. River and Coastal
Engineering from MMU

How has your bachelor at MMU prepared you for your current work?

I have gained a decent knowledge about river engineering, coastal engineering and, other engineering subjects related with civil & maritime as well. In my bachelor study, I mainly focused on river engineering and my thesis was about river bank erosion and river morphology. What I studied at MMU for the bachelor degree is exactly the same field of my current profession. I can efficiently utilize my knowledge and backgrounds at work.



“Stick to your own interests and don’t give up on that. Yours may be different from others – that doesn’t matter because it is your pure authenticity!”

How have you benefitted from the OKP programme at MMU?

More field work and practical things, not only theory and learning from books but also going to the field, looking at case studies, and using models.

What do you enjoy most about working for a Dutch firm in Yangon?

After 2 years at Arcadis, I am still enjoying my work mainly due to the flexible working environment and no-power-distance colleagues.

What has been the most exciting project you have worked on since you’ve started at Arcadis?

If I may choose one of my most exciting projects at Arcadis, it would be “*Bank and Bed Protection of the Ayeyarwady River, Nyaungdon*”. It was the direct river engineering project and my motivated interest, which is why I even chose it as my bachelor thesis. The working period had been remarkably mind-blowing since it was my very first working experience and research which I will not forget for lifetime.

Get to know us!

In each newsletter, we will introduce three of the Dutch OKP partners. In July we introduce Chris, Nick and Sören!



Name: Chris Mannaerts
Current position: Associate Professor and Head of Department Water Resources, ITC Twente
Main expertise: Environmental Satellite Hydrology, Water & Climate
Passionate about: Travelling, small islands
Contact: c.m.mannaerts@utwente.nl

Role in OKP projects:
Academic advice, knowledge exchange

Favourite thing about South-East Asia:
Bustling cities combined with splendid nature



Name: Nick van de Giesen
Current position: Van Kuffeler Chair of Water Resources Management of the Faculty of CEG, TU Delft
Main expertise: Hydrology and Water Management
Passionate about: New measurement methods for water and other environmental processes
Contact: n.c.vandegiesen@tudelft.nl

Role in OKP projects:
Back-stopping, academic advice

Favourite thing about South-East Asia:
The culture is really beautiful and pleasing



Name: Sören Johnson
Current position: English Coordinator, Centre for Language and Academic Skills, TU Delft
Main expertise: Academic writing in English, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Effective pedagogy
Passionate about: Teaching, Travelling, Poetry
Contact: J.L.F.Eulderink@tudelft.nl

Role in OKP projects:
Help researchers/ lecturers write articles in English; help teachers become better teachers

Favourite thing about South-East Asia:
The energy, the food, and the friends I have made



Opportunities

OKP scholarships for IHE short-courses 2021 – SECOND ROUND

The Orange Knowledge Programme also promotes capacity building within organizations by providing training and education through scholarships for professionals. Many water-related short-courses (2-4 weeks spent in Delft) will be given in 2021 at IHE Delft. You can apply for a scholarship to follow such a shortcourse. For the upcoming courses, please visit <https://www.un-ihe.org/short-courses>.

Interested and require assistance applying? Contact Juliette at J.L.F.Eulderink@tudelft.nl

Online Course Grant for Library Professionals from Developing Countries

The aim of the program is helping library professionals from developing countries stay current with the latest trends and developments in technical services areas and enhance their professional knowledge and skills in librarianship and information science.

To apply for grant:

[Click here](#)

TU Delft (free) selected EdX MOOCs:

Free online courses on a range of topics, available at any time:

Geoscience: the Earth and its Resources

Click [here](#)

Co-Creating Sustainable Cities

Click [here](#)

Beyond Engineering: Building with Nature

Click [here](#)

Urban Sewage Treatment

Click [here](#)