

December 2024

CARA
Children At Risk In Asia



CARA is a UK-based charity no. 1165824 that supports children in Asia by providing financial and in-kind support directly to local organisations in the field.

We are:

- Non-political
- Strongly committed to the best interests of the child and the UNCRC.

Christmas Newsletter

A big thank you to all our supporters

As we approach Christmas and the end of another year, we would like to thank all our generous supporters. Your donations are giving hundreds of children opportunities that will change their lives. Working through our partner charity One Sky based in Thailand, your donations enable children to complete their education and obtain qualifications which open job opportunities they would not otherwise have. However, the active fighting across the border in Myanmar is creating increased demand for One Sky's services. Thanks to your generous support, the CARA Trustees have been able to agree support for projects run by One Sky that had funding cut in 2024.

Education support programme

The education support programme continues to achieve our objective of changing children's lives through education. Many students from poor migrant families are completing their high school education and going on the higher education or better paid jobs than their parents. In the school year to March 2024, a total of 219 students were supported.

Child protection and Foster Programme

One Sky has set up the first district level child protection committee in Thailand. Although described in the 2003 child protection act, this has never been implemented before. The committee takes a multidisciplinary and child centered approach to all cases of abuse of children. It combines the resources of the multiple partners in a unified response in the best interest of each child.

In short, it means perpetrators get caught and punished and victims get the support they need. They hope to spread this model to other areas of Thailand, especially those with disadvantaged and marginalised populations of children.

Alongside this One Sky has developed a foster care programme. Foster care is very much in its infancy in Thailand with only around 150 children in foster care compared to 70,000 in the UK which has a similar child population. Thailand relies on the outdated model of large scale institutional care, much of it provided by unregulated private children's homes. Many doubted that One Sky could establish a foster care program in a remote area with high migration. Showing that this goal can be achieved and demonstrating the benefits to the children of this family based approach to providing care is an important part of One Sky's strategy for 2025 and one that CARA is keen to support.

Funding for this essential project was reduced from January 2024 by major donors, leaving CARA to fill the gap with a donation of £7,500. CARA is now striving to raise further funds for 2025, to enable One Sky to place children with caring grandparents or foster parents where they can maintain links to their village, school, and friends ensuring that children's best interests are always prioritised.



Scholarship and Buddy programmes

CARA supports the Scholarship and Buddy programmes. The migrant families coming across the border from Myanmar mostly speak Mon, Karen or Burmese. This can put children under a severe disadvantage when they start the free government schools where they are taught in Thai. One Sky recruited six grade 12 students from among the high school scholarship group and arranged teaching training for them. They then connected them with primary school children in their village who had been identified by their teachers as struggling with the Thai language. The buddies meet with their groups two times a week for 16 weeks for one and half hours each time. The sessions are fun and friendly and focused on improving Thai language skills. Each Buddy

teaches three younger children. The buddies are paid (\$4.25) for each session so that they could support their families or save up for university.



The feedback from the buddies and their young students has been positive. The primary teachers who referred their struggling students have reported huge improvements in their student's ability to speak and understand Thai

The Bigger picture

In 2024 One Sky has increased its efforts to help people be more independent through working with professionals and parents to build resilience in children. Activities in 2024 included:

- 321 professionals given 2 days training about the UN Guidelines in 13 locations across Chiang Mai province
- 614 parents attended the early childhood development workshops once a week for 12 weeks.
- 27 mothers attending the parenting for lifelong health programme
- 2030 children attended child protection workshops (at school)
- 696 parents attended child protection workshops (at school)
- 894 children supported through case work
- 219 students receiving scholarship support in the first semester of the 2024 academic year made up of monthly scholarships for 180 students and one-time scholarships (Tuition fees and school uniforms) for 39 students, allocated to 63 boys and 156 girls.

In addition One Sky runs an emergency relief programme ensuring the most at risk and vulnerable families have adequate food, shelter and medical care. Despite the efforts to increase resilience in families and the community, the pressure on the emergency relief programme continues to grow due to the influx of people fleeing conflict in Myanmar.

One Sky's long term objective

One Sky's long term objective is to persuade the Thai government to introduce legislation to regulate all children's homes in Thailand through the Alternative

Care Thailand (ACT) project. One Sky is leading the group of NGOs involved in the project by putting forward the child protection committee in Sangkhlaburi as a model for the rest of the country.

Looking forward to 2025

Going forward into 2025, One Sky faces a significant funding shortfall due to some of its major donors reducing their support. This is not due to any failure or lack of performance by One Sky but is simply these large organisations following their long-term policies to reduce funding by 25% per year after a certain time.

The intensifying conflict across the border in Myanmar (which we hear very little about) is leading to further uncertainty. One Sky has just completed a report for UNICEF which identified several thousand unaccompanied and separated children in institutional care facilities in three provinces of Thailand. The scale of the problem is beyond the resources of One Sky alone, but we can play our part.

Reflections on 2024

Due to your generosity CARA raised a record amount during 2024, but there is always more to do. CARA and the One Sky team remain committed to helping as many disadvantaged children as possible.



Disadvantaged children in Thailand making their own toys and games from waste materials

If you would like to help, please contact Colin Lillicrap, Chairman of CARA Trustees on 01442 873439 or email colin.lillicrap@btinternet.com. Alternatively, you can make a bank transfer to:

Children At Risk in Asia (CARA)

Account number; 22075849; Sort code: 40-08-39

Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2025