

CARA

Children At Risk In Asia



January 2023

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

Newsletter

Children in Sangkhlaburi share their experiences with us

In December CARA Trustees Colin and Jan visited the One Sky team in Sangkhlaburi for the first time in three years. The team arranged for us to meet some of the children your donations support. It was a humbling experience as you will see from their stories below.

Thailand is currently experiencing high inflation rates similar to the rest of the world. Food costs have increased substantially, while many workers have lost their jobs leaving some families with no income. One Sky continues to support poor families with food. Schools are open again with over 250 children receiving support to continue their education. CARA believes giving children an opportunity to complete their education is the best way to achieve long term improvements in the communities from which they come. In our meetings with children we were struck by their commitment to supporting their families.

Our 2023 appeal

We need your ongoing support to help children and their families living in poverty through 2023 which will be another difficult year for them.

To donate go to

<https://www.carauk.org/donate>

You can donate for FREE while shopping online using the link below

www.easyfundraising.org.uk



Meeting the One Sky team over dinner

Regular supporters make a massive difference

Monthly bank transfers provide a degree of certainty to our fund-raising activities.

CARA bank details:

Bank: HSBC

Account: 22075849

Sort code: 40-08-39

Add 25% by using GiftAid

Download GiftAid form [here](#) and email to

Colin.lillicrap@btinternet.com

What did we learn from meeting these children

Not one of the children we met complained about their circumstances. They all appreciated the support they had received from teachers and donors including One Sky and CARA. All have ambitions and dreams. They have the resilience to overcome all the barriers they face to completing their education. A major benefit of studying to grade 12 in the government schools is that they are taught in Thai which means they are fluent in spoken and written Thai. This greatly increase their employment opportunities compared to their parents who are mainly Mon or Karen speaking. We now understand why Andy was inspired to complete his 50x50x50 challenge to support children like these. We hope you too will be inspired to continue supporting these remarkable young people through donating to CARA.

We met five students in secondary school who shared their experiences with us about what it has been like to grow up in a poor migrant family in Thailand. Their parents are Mon or Karen and few speak Thai. They are employed in the rubber plantations or factories and earn around £2 per day, but often there is no work and the family has no income. From an early age children can be put under pressure to give up their studies and work to support the family. The five young people we met have all found ways to continue their education while helping to support their families. We have their permission to print their photographs. We would like to share with you what we learnt from our meetings

We met two of the students in their homes. These are basic bamboo structures often reached by a track or rough path through the forest. As you can see from the photographs they are open to the atmosphere and are mainly to provide protection from the rain. While the climate is mostly warm there are periods when it is cool at night. Water will often be supplied through a hose laid over the ground to some source higher up and toilet facilities will be basic latrine pit. Some are connected to an electricity supply but one we visited relied on charging a car battery from solar panels, enough to light a few low wattage lights. From our many visits to Sangkhlaburi we know these homes are typical of those occupied by the thousands of migrant families living in Thailand. Having seen where these students live we found it remarkable how neat and tidy they always look in their clean school uniforms.



There are only two secondary schools in the Sangkhlaburi District an area stretching over 70 km. The first problem the students must overcome to attend school is how to pay for the transport in the back of a truck at a cost of around £10 per month. No luxury coaches for these students. Other students live too far from the school to

The students we met told us what they had done to raise money and continue their education. One confident young girl said her father, who was often out of work, had told her if there was no money she could not study. She took control of the family finances and fed them on less than £1 per day while raising money by making sandwiches to sell at school and filling water bottles at the temple. She is now in grade 11 and will graduate next year. Her ambition is to become a maths teacher.

One student we met came from an NGO funded refugee camp on the border with Myanmar. He said there is nothing to do in the camp and he had the opportunity to come to Sangkhlaburi to study in primary school and live in the dormitory for free. His mother and brother are still in the camp. He is receiving support from One Sky which he says is enough to buy two meals a day. He helps people in the community to take care of children to earn money. During primary school he participated in art and craft competitions. He is now a member of the student council and leads a team organising activities for the children. His greatest pride is being chosen to represent the school at the royal cremation ceremony of King Rama 1X of Thailand. He has been elected as the student vice president with responsibility of helping the teachers take care of the children and organise school activities.

His ambition is to be a teacher in a remote area. He wants to help poor and disadvantaged children as he feels his experiences of coming from a very deprived background gives him a sense of how these children feel they have no chance in life. He is a shining example of what disadvantaged children can achieve with a minimum of support and encouragement.

When another young girl we met graduated from grade 9 she was on the point of giving up her education because the family would have had to borrow money at high interest rates. Fortunately she knew about One Sky's scholarships from the team's public relations work at the school. She now receives money for her school lunch and transport costs, about £200 for the whole school year. She likes to learn languages, especially Chinese. Her first choice of career is nursing assistant because the training is short and she would be able to work as soon as possible to support her family while using her knowledge to care for them. Hopefully with continued support through CARA and One Sky she will be able to complete her high school education and then fulfil her ambition to be a nurse.

travel every day and must live in the school dormitory. One student we met lives in a dormitory with thirteen other students sleeping in bunk beds. School meals are not free in secondary school and there are additional costs for the obligatory school uniforms and other one-off costs.



We met another young boy at his remote home. His parents are general labourers but the father is unable to work now meaning there is not enough income for him and his siblings to study. Since February 2022 he has received a scholarship from One Sky to cover transport and school lunches, about £200 per year. He is very happy that this lightens the burden on his family. He is achieving relatively good grades at school and he represents the school in Karen dance performances. He has performed at various events including a performance to welcome the Ambassador of Japan when he presented a pickup truck to One Sky. He was very proud to have performed at the funeral of the Abbot of Wat Kong Tha, a Buddhist monk respected by the Karen people. He volunteers to teach Karen dance to elderly people in the municipal activity centre. He is also the main character in the school dance performances. We also learnt that his younger siblings walk 2 hour each way over the mountain to attend their primary school.

Another student we met comes from a farming family living in a remote area. To attend school from grade 7 to 9 he had to leave his parents and live in the dormitory of his school. He received a scholarship and his teachers let him help with schoolwork to earn money for daily living expenses. When he graduated from grade 9 the teachers helped him to apply to One Sky for a scholarship. He receives a monthly lunch allowance and his tuition fees. He washes teachers' cars to earn extra money. The teachers have made him responsible for leading the exercises for the 140 students living in the dormitory. He knows everyone there and is very

popular. In the school holidays he works in the dormitory garden.



This year he was given a permit to visit his family in Myanmar. He wants to be a mechanical engineer which means he must complete grade 12 by which time he will be 20. He would then need to obtain a scholarship to attend university. One Sky will advise him on where to apply for a scholarship but there is intense competition for university scholarships. He faces a very big challenge to achieve his ambition.

We hope you all enjoyed Christmas and will find time during the holiday to learn more about the remarkable young people your donations support.

Best Wishes for 2023 from

Colin, Jan and Kevin

CARA Trustees