

An email from one of the charities that BWG support - the Thailand Hilltribe Education Projects (THEP)

If anyone is interested in sponsoring a student please contact Susan Race at [thep.organisation@gmail.com](mailto:thep.organisation@gmail.com)

From: Susan Race <[thep.organisation@gmail.com](mailto:thep.organisation@gmail.com)>

Sent: 03 April 2024 11:41 PM

To: susan race

Subject: Together we are breaking the poverty cycle

Dear Sponsors,

I am writing to thank you for your continued sponsorship of our hilltribe students. In some cases this means an increase in your scholarship donation if your student is graduating to Senior High School, University, Technical or Vocational College in the coming year - beginning May 2024

Thanks to your support, THEP (Thailand Hilltribe Education Projects) Scholarship programme is now in its 15th year. We are proud to say that over 60 of our students have completed their high school and college education and graduated as teachers or nurses, physiotherapists, nursing aides, engineers, mechanics, agriculturalists, and so on. The majority have returned to Mae Hong Son to practice, but every graduate sets a wonderful example to their community.

You know from the students' letters that most hilltribe families do little more than survive from farming their land. They are lucky if they can harvest enough rice, fruit and vegetables for their own needs, with maybe a little left over to sell. Finding the money to feed themselves and buy basic necessities can be a major problem and they invariably end up in debt. This desperate shortage of disposable income

means that they cannot pay for uniforms and shoes, bus fares, daily lunch or any other expenses associated with schooling.

For most hilltribe children, the biggest problem comes at the end of Junior High when the student wants to finish high school. Although education is free, to attend Senior High he or she must become a 'boarder' because high schools are in towns, far from their villages. The student now has the added cost of supporting him/herself. In some cases, the parents donate rice or other produce to the school in lieu of boarding fees. To continue further to tertiary education, which is not free, higher study fees and extra living expenses must be paid. Many students are capable of continuing their studies and may be desperate to do so, but a lack of funds makes further education impossible.

Without the means these students are left with the only options of working in the fields, seeking unskilled work in the towns and cities, or in the girl's case, marriage.

Most of our vocational and university students must travel hundreds of kilometres to attend college; not only are they a long way from home but they have to adjust to a totally new environment. College fees vary between 12,000–24,000 Baht per year and then there are the extra expenses of board, food, transport, uniforms, as well as the added fees of compulsory college activities. The students apply for a Government loan to survive. A loan for a university student amounts to approximately 24,600 Baht per year, which has to be repaid when the student starts working.

Ouretr students survive on their THEP scholarship of 15-25,000 Baht. Some of the lucky ones get part time jobs such as washing dishes or gardening, but in the big

university towns, the competition is fierce. Most of the students can't even afford to buy a bottle of water a day. They live on Mama Noodles and share dormitory rooms where they have the additional cost of electricity and water. When we interview them they NEVER complain. The Dean of one university told me that hilltribe students are never any trouble; they are polite, self-sufficient, helpful and hard working. The students say that they are just grateful to be there!

Thanks to your generosity, nearly all our THEP students have been able to graduate from high school and continue to tertiary education, while some are still in the process. The scholarship we offer ensures that they attend classes and we provide a bi-annual report to demonstrate this. We thank you for your support, your sponsorship has given your student, and even his or her family, a chance to escape the subsistence poverty cycle of hilltribe people.

Kind regards,

Susan Race (Co-ordinator: Thailand Hilltribe Education Projects)

Please find attached profiles of new students in need. If you wish to continue supporting a hilltribe student or know of anyone who would like to help, please let us know.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-H6eM75dXvjTg-y\\_3hUJx9pcxRc...](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-H6eM75dXvjTg-y_3hUJx9pcxRc...)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a1oMwF9BOsTnJS5TKFRRY6aw4zC...>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YI6l96PieOgjAXhHsPKFKm4Vhut...>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dovNJXXAgbfsIxtbiC8JE-pg9l1...>