

Report for GlobalGiving:

University Scholarships for Students from Burma

Thabyay Education Network, Arohana Scholarship Fund
3rd December 2010

Introduction

To begin with, we at Thabyay Education Network would like to extend our deep gratitude to everyone (136 of you) who helped us to raise US\$23,457 for the Arohana Scholarship Fund during GlobalGiving's Global Open Challenge between the 1st and 30th September 2010. At the outset of the Open Challenge we never imagined that we would receive such generous support.

We received a total of **US\$22,061.85** from GlobalGiving in early November, after the deduction approximately US\$1,396 in GlobalGiving fees. This represents only 6% of the total funds raised during the Open Challenge period, considerably less than GlobalGiving's standard 15% administrative fee. This was due to the fact that the project received a US\$1,000 bonus for coming third in the Open Challenge, and we also received many donations during the 'Fee Waiver' day in the middle of the Challenge.

Selection and awards

Further to receipt of these funds, the Arohana Scholarship Fund Committee met in early November to select the students that would receive awards, and confirm the amounts. A total of US\$22,051 in awards has now been disbursed.

We are delighted to announce that these funds have enabled 15 Burmese students to start or continue their Bachelor's or Master's studies at universities across Asia. In many cases, these funds provided students with vital top-up funds to their existing scholarships, without which they would be forced to drop out of university. In one case, a full scholarship was awarded to a student to begin a course of study.

The recipients of these 15 awards comprise nine women and six men, ranging in age from 19 to 51, representing nine ethnic groups, studying 14 different majors at nine different universities in four countries across Asia.

The table on the next page provides detailed information about all of the awards made.

Quote

"I feel so lucky and blessed to be given the opportunity to study, among the millions of young people in Burma who hunger for education. I will use this education to serve and develop my community and country."

Su Su Hlaing, Scholarship Award Recipient



Table of scholarship awards

Name	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Subject	University	Level	Type	Award (US\$)
Aye Aye	F	31	Kachin/ Burman	Education	Miriam College, Philippines	BA	Top-up	234
Htet Aung	M	26	Shan	Southeast Asian Studies	City University, Hong Kong	BA	Top-up	525
Khin Zaw	M	28	Karen	Law	City University, Hong Kong	BA	Top-up	155
Khine Shwe Wah	F	23	Karen	Social Work	Miriam College, Philippines	BA	Top-up	234
Kyaw Thet	M	34	Kachin	Communication Arts	Bangkok Uni, Thailand	BA	Top-up	461
Maung Swe	M	30	Rakhine	Development	Los Banos Uni, Philippines	MA	Full scholarship	7,000
May Than	F	19	Burman	Education	Miriam College, Philippines	BA	Top-up	257
Myint Su	F	29	Kachin/ Burman	Policy & Administration	Uni of Malaya, Malaysia	MA	Top-up	1,622
Myo Tun	M	22	Mon	Asian Studies	Uni of Santo Tomas, Philippines	BA	Top-up	175
Pwint Phyu	F	51	Intha	Environmental Management	Miriam College, Philippines	MA	Top-up	1,400
San San	F	24	Karen	International Studies	Miriam College, Philippines	BA	Top-up	311
Su Su Hlaing	F	21	Shan	Politics, Philosophy & Economics	Rangsit University, Thailand	BA	Top-up	1,000
Thandar Lwin	F	33	Kayaw	Gender & Development	Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand	MA	Partial scholarship	6,677
Thiri Aung	F	26	Burman	Public Health	Mahidol University, Thailand	MA	Top-up	1,000
Win Naing	M	31	Rakhine	Politics, Philosophy & Economics	Rangsit Uni, Thailand	BA	Top-up	1,000
							TOTAL	22,051

The following pages provide profiles of each individual receiving an award. Please note that the names of all beneficiaries have been changed to protect their identities and ensure their security.



Award Recipient Profiles



Name: Aye Aye
Age: 31
Ethnicity: Kachin/Burman
Subject of Study: Education
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Miriam College, Philippines
Award amount: US\$234

Brief overview of candidate

Aye Aye was born into a family of six children, so her parents struggled to provide for their children on her father's meagre salary. However, they managed to send all of their children to school. Aye Aye was a successful student, graduating among the top five. After secondary school, Aye Aye started a Physics degree in Burma, studying by distance. She graduated in 2004. Soon after graduation she walked for two days across the mountains to Thailand, searching for better education opportunities. After working as a maid for two years, she applied to join a teacher training course for Burmese migrants. The course confirmed in her mind the importance and potential of education in Burma, and so she resolved to further her studies in Education. She successfully applied for a scholarship to study for a Bachelor's in Education in 2008, and is scheduled to graduate in March 2011.

In her own words:

"It makes me so sad to think about the lack of opportunities for young people in Burma. By working in education, I can help to improve the situation. Education is the key to development."



Name: Htet Aung
Age: 26
Ethnicity: Shan
Subject of Study: Southeast Asian Studies
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: City University, Hong Kong
Award amount: US\$525

Brief overview of candidate

Htet Aung grew up in a region of Shan State that was plagued by regular fighting between the Burmese Army and ethnic rebel groups. As a child, he dug trenches where the family would hide when shooting broke out in the area. He managed to complete high school. Working as a motorcycle mechanic after graduation, he saved enough money to start a Physics degree in Burma. After a couple of years, he left to work in the mines in Malaysia in order to earn money for his family. He found the work so exploitative that he left after one year, and returned to Thailand to look to continue his education. He successfully applied to two post-secondary schools for Burmese migrants, and after graduation from the second course he was awarded a scholarship to study at university in Hong Kong.

In his own words:

"When I think back about my past, it is almost unbelievable that I have come so far from the difficulties of my childhood. When I return to Burma, I want to work to make sure that other young people do not have to face the same difficulties that I did."





Name: Khin Zaw
Age: 28
Ethnicity: Karenni
Subject of Study: Law
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: City University, Hong Kong
Award amount: US\$155

Brief overview of candidate

When Khin Zaw was five years old, his village was burned down by the Burmese Army during operations against ethnic insurgents operating in the region. The family fled to the border with Thailand and became refugees. Khin Zaw continued his education in the refugee camp, working in surrounding farms during vacations to earn extra money for his family. He graduated from high-school in 2000 and, as a top student, was awarded a place to study at a camp-based post-secondary school. On completion of the course, he successfully applied to join a university preparation program in northern Thailand. When he graduated from the course he tried to pursue higher education opportunities, but his refugee status put many obstacles in his way. He returned to his community and worked in various community roles including teaching. In 2008, he successfully applied for a scholarship to study Law in Hong Kong.

In his own words:

"I have always been interested in contributing to the rule of law in my community. When I graduate, I want to return to my community and help them to improve the judicial system so that it can become fully independent, fair, impartial and professional. By contributing to solving some of the problems of my community, I can also contribute to solving the problems of Burma."



Name: Khine Shwe Wah
Age: 23
Ethnicity: Karen
Subject of Study: Social Work
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Miriam College, Philippines
Award amount: US\$234

Brief overview of candidate

Khine Shwe Wah grew up in an area of Karen State plagued by the conflict between the Burmese army and ethnic rebels. She faced many difficulties during her childhood. Her family had to move villages to escape persecution and her brother died due to the lack of available medical care. Her village only had a primary school so, as a good student, she was sent to a larger town to attend secondary school. She was the first person from her village ever to successfully graduate from secondary school. Soon after graduating, the situation in her region began to deteriorate as fighting escalated. Khine Shwe Wah fled to Thailand where she attended various schools set up for people from Burma. On graduation in 2009, she successfully applied for a scholarship to study Social Work at university in the Philippines.

In his own words:

"There are no professional social workers in Burma. After I graduate, I will return to Burma to apply my skills for the benefit of the poorest people, to help them escape from poverty. I can't solve all the problems my country faces, but I can at least make a difference in the lives of these people."





Name: Kyaw Thet
Age: 34
Ethnicity: Kachin
Subject of Study: Communication Arts
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Bangkok University, Thailand
Award amount: US\$461

Brief overview of candidate

Kyaw Thet was raised in an area of Kachin State that saw regular skirmishes between the Burmese Army and ethnic insurgent groups. He was not able to start school until he was nine because of fears over the safety of schoolchildren. However, once he did start school he was consistently among the best-performing students at school and township level. When he finished high school, his parents, who were farmers, could not afford to send him to university in Burma. So, for three years, he worked as a volunteer teacher and youth leader in his local area. Seeking to further his education, he then left for Thailand, and studied for at various post-secondary education programs along the border. In 2010, he successfully applied for a scholarship to study for a Bachelor's degree in Communication Arts.

In his own words:

"After my graduation, I will go back to Burma and work for educational development in my community. In Burma, especially in rural areas, the children do not receive proper education. Therefore, I am going to help set up supplementary teaching centers to strengthen education and improve access. The analytical and creative skills that I am gaining at university will help me to achieve this goal."



Name: Maung Swe
Age: 23
Ethnicity: Rakhine
Subject of Study: Development
Level of Study: Master's
Institution of Study: Los Banos University, Philippines
Award amount: US\$7,000

Brief overview of candidate

Maung Swe was born in Yangon in 1980. When he was six, his father died, leaving his mother to raise five children alone. To earn enough money, she sold goods on the street during the day, and worked in a factory at night. As the youngest child, the family pinned their hopes on Maung Swe. He graduated high school with distinction in 1997. However, the universities had just been closed due to a student uprising, and would remain closed for the next three years. He worked as a teacher until the universities reopened in 2000 when he applied to study Foreign Languages. On graduation he started work as a journalist and four year later joined an international relief and development agency. This was just before Cyclone Nargis struck the Ayeyarwady Delta, killing an estimated 140,000 people. He witnessed first hand the destruction of lives and livelihoods, and the critical role of education in transforming Burmese society.

In his own words:

"When I graduate, I would like to participate in making a change in education. Such change requires a deep understanding of the socioeconomic conditions of Burma, and the skills to develop and implement appropriate solutions. My current studies will help me to gain those skills"





Name: May Than
Age: 19
Ethnicity: Burman
Subject of Study: Education
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Miriam College, Philippines
Award amount: US\$257

Brief overview of candidate

May Than was born in Ayeyarwady Division in 1991. When she was seven, her father sold the family small holding in order to pay traffickers to take him to Malaysia to work, having been told that he would make good money. He returned one year later with nothing. The family had to move to Mandalay where May Than's uncle, a monk, gave them food and shelter in his monastery. May Than and her sister continued their studies at the monastery, despite the fact that the monastery school had no chairs, tables, blackboard, or even a roof to begin with. She graduated high school in 2007 and immediately started to work as a volunteer teacher at the monastery, and as a translator for letters written by students to overseas sponsors. In 2009 she left Burma to attend a university preparation course in Thailand, and on completion successfully applied for a scholarship to study Education in the Philippines.

In her own words:

"After I graduate, I will return to my monastery school as head administrator in the Education Department. I will share everything that I have learned with my colleagues and do everything I can to support poor students to further their education."



Name: Myint Su
Age: 23
Ethnicity: Rakhine
Subject of Study: Policy & Administration
Level of Study: Master's
Institution of Study: University of Malaya, Malaysia
Award amount: US\$1,620

Brief overview of candidate

Myint Su was raised in a small village in Kachin State. As they were poor, her parents were unable to support her through high school, so she worked as a study guide in the evenings while attending class during the day. Having earned two distinctions in her high school exams, Myint Su came to Yangon and enrolled in two concurrent degree courses. She attended one course during the day, and the other in the evening. In 2008, in order to support her family, she went to work in Singapore. She was struck by the effective governance and advanced infrastructure of a country so geographically close to her own. In 2010, she successfully applied for a scholarship to study Policy and Administration in the Philippines.

In her own words:

"I would like to study how to balance interests in a country, to solve political conflict, overcome barriers to change and improvement and effectively manage the public sector, particularly through comparing approaches in different countries around the world. This course of study will help me to upgrade and broaden my analytical ability and perspectives so that I can contribute to the development of Burma."





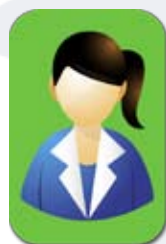
Name: Myo Tun
Age: 22
Ethnicity: Mon
Subject of Study: Asian Studies
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: University of Santo Tomas, Philippines
Award amount: US\$175

Brief overview of candidate

Myo Tun was born Mon State in 1988. When he was three years old his father died, leaving his mother, a vegetable seller, to bring up the three children on her own. When Myo Tun was 13, his mother went to Thailand to work, and left him in the care of his aunt. He graduated high school and enrolled in university in Mawlamyine in 2004. In 2006, however, he had to drop out as his family could no longer support him to study. He then came to Thailand to work with a Mon community organization and, while there, attended two further education programs for people from Burma. Graduating in 2009, he successfully applied for a scholarship to study Asian Studies in the Philippines.

In his own words:

"In my community many people earn only US\$1-2 per day. With this income they struggle to provide their children with proper food, medicine and schooling. When I graduate, I want to work alongside them to improve their livelihoods. I want to help them increase their income by introducing simple technologies, such as treadle pumps and innovative water storage, so that they can grow crops in the dry season."



Name: Pwint Phyu
Age: 51
Ethnicity: Intha
Subject of Study: Environmental Management
Level of Study: Master's
Institution of Study: Miriam College, Philippines
Award amount: US\$1,400

Brief overview of candidate

Graduating in 1980, Pwint Phyu spent the next 14 years working for the Agricultural Services department of the Burmese government. She was involved in the research and introduction of new crop varieties for farmers. She then worked for various international and local organizations as an agronomist working to help farmers develop their skills, introduce new crops and improve the income generation. These experiences helped her to understand the importance of community development work in improving livelihoods in Burma. Almost 30 years after completing her Bachelor's degree, Pwint Phyu successfully applied for a scholarship to study for a Master's in Environmental Management in the Philippines.

In her own words:

"When I graduate, I want to return to Burma to work on environmental conservation as I see it as directly linked to community development. I want to encourage farmers to limit the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and switch to environmentally friendly alternatives. I also want to help them develop proper growing techniques and improve their livelihoods. "





Name: San San
Age: 24
Ethnicity: Karenni
Subject of Study: International Studies
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Miriam College, Philippines
Award amount: US\$311

Brief overview of candidate

San San was born in Karenni State in 1985 in a region that suffered from heavy fighting between the Burmese Army and ethnic insurgents. When she was only one year old, her village was attacked and burned down and the family had to flee. They spent eight years living as internally displaced people in the jungles along the border with Thailand. During this time her education was sporadic - grabbed in moments of calm. In 1994, she crossed the border and settled in a refugee camp where she could continue her education in a more stable environment. She graduated high school in 2002 and went on to study at two post-secondary education programs. Graduating among the top students, San San spent a year working as a volunteer teacher in her community, and interning various community based organizations. In 2007, she successfully applied for a scholarship to study International Studies in the Philippines, and is scheduled to graduate in 2011.

In her own words:

"As I come from an ethnic minority, I am interested to work with other ethnic women to promote for rights for women and children caught up in armed conflict. I am also very interested to work with organizations that are advocating for reconciliation, social justice and human development in Burma."



Name: Su Su Hlaing
Age: 21
Ethnicity: Shan
Subject of Study: Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Rangsit University, Thailand
Award amount: US\$1,000

Brief overview of candidate

Su Su Hlaing was born in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State. When she was seven, her mother remarried and left for Thailand, leaving her in the care of an aunt. The family was poor and so Su Su Hlaing could not attend the paid extra tuition classes through which low-paid state school teachers supplement their income. Students who do not attend these classes have a much smaller chance of passing the exams. She asked friends attending the extra classes to give her the information, and studied by herself. She managed to graduate high school, even ranking in the top ten in her year. In 2005, she came to Thailand to further her education and won scholarships to attend two foundation programs. In 2008, she successfully applied for a scholarship to study a Bachelor's degree in PPE in Thailand.

In her own words:

"My studies have given me an understanding of human society which we cannot learn in Burma. I have gained much valuable experience and my confidence has also grown. This will not only benefit me but also will serve as tools for me to use in serving and developing my own community and country."





Name: Thandar Lwin
Age: 33
Ethnicity: Kayaw
Subject of Study: Gender and Development
Level of Study: Master's
Institution of Study: Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand
Award amount: US\$6,677

Brief overview of candidate

Thandar Lwin was born in Kayah State. When she was eleven, her father died, leaving the family very poor. Her mother could only just afford to feed the family, and was often unable to pay for schooling costs. On completion of high school, she studied for a BA in History by distance, as she could not afford to attend full-time education. From 2001, Thandar Lwin has worked for a number of local and international development organizations in Kayah State. These experiences helped her to understand the range of political, economic, and social issues affecting marginalized people in her community, and the potential of development work to begin to address some of these problems.

In her own words:

"When I return to Burma after graduation, I will be able to work more effectively in community development. I can raise awareness about gender issues in my community at the grass roots. I will train people and encourage the development of community groups focused on promoting gender equality"



Name: Thiri Aung
Age: 26
Ethnicity: Burman
Subject of Study: Public Health
Level of Study: Master's
Institution of Study: Mahidol University, Thailand
Award amount: US\$1,000

Brief overview of candidate

Thiri Aung was born in Bago Division. In 1993, her father, a soldier in the Burmese Army, was forced to resign after one of her family members married a member of the political opposition. After this, the family moved to Yangon and struggled financially. Thiri Aung graduated from high school in 2000 with two distinctions and then studied Dentistry at university in Yangon. On graduation, she worked part time in a private clinic, but spent much of her time volunteering with various community organizations and international development agencies providing free oral health services to marginalized communities. When Cyclone Nargis struck the Ayeyarwady Delta in 2008, she joined emergency response teams as a volunteer. In 2009, she successfully applied to study for a Master's in Public Health in Thailand.

In her own words:

"After I complete my Master's, I would like to study for a PhD in dental public health. When I have obtained my PhD. I intend to return to Burma and work to develop dental services for the poorest people, and work to improve general public health."





Name:
Age:
Ethnicity:
Subject of Study:
Level of Study:
Institution of Study:
Award amount:

Win Naing
31
Rakhine
Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Bachelor's
Rangsit University, Thailand
US\$1,000

Brief overview of candidate

Win Naing was born in Rakhine State, one of the most isolated areas of Burma, in 1979. On graduating high school, he could not continue to on to higher education as his family needed him to earn money to support them. He started working for a local welfare association in his community, before joining an international development agency for five years working on community development projects. In 2008, he started working for an organization focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. After working in the development sector for 10 years, he decided that he needed to develop his skills and capacity by returning to education. In 2009, he successfully applied to study for a Bachelor's degree in PPE in Thailand.

In his own words:

"My experience to date has been focused on grassroots development. My studies will help me to develop a better theoretical understanding that I can apply to my work. After I graduate, I intend to return to Burma to strengthen community organizations so that they can plan strategically, and work more effectively and accountably."



Future Plans

As of the 1st December 2010, the 'University Scholarships for Students From Burma' project has raised US\$29,127. On receipt of the next tranche of funds from GlobalGiving, the Arohana Scholarship Fund Committee will meet again in December to decide on the next round of awards. The remaining US\$10 from the first disbursement of funds will be combined with new funds received.

Closing Statement

We hope that this report shows clearly the potential of these scholarship recipients to become catalysts for incremental social change in Burma, and that the reader can see the direct link between quality higher education and grassroots development in communities in Burma.

We also hope that it demonstrates that even the smallest contribution of US\$10 through GlobalGiving can make a difference in terms of keeping a Burmese scholarship student in university education. Many of the awards made through this tranche of funds were small, as little as US\$155. However, this means the difference between a student continuing to study and completing their degree, or having to drop out altogether.

We would like to reiterate our gratitude to all of you who have helped raise funds for this project by making donations and spreading the word. We hope that this report will inspire you to continue to support us in the future.

The beneficiaries of these awards, the students, have individually expressed their gratitude to us for the support they have received. We would like to pass on their thanks to you.

If you have any questions about this report, or about our work, please do get in touch.

With our best wishes,



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www.arohanascholarships.org



How you can help

The Arohana Scholarship Fund urgently needs your help to raise funds to support scholarships.

1. Donate



The Arohana Scholarship Program is a registered project submitted by Thabyay Education Network on the GlobalGiving.org website. Donations via GlobalGiving can qualify for tax relief for US and, in some cases, Canadian taxpayers (see the GlobalGiving website for details).

Please visit the following link to make a donation:

<http://globalgiving.org/projects/university-scholarships-for-students-from-burma>

All donations are VERY welcome, small or large. Funds received via GlobalGiving will be wholly used to support scholarship awards for students from Burma, excepting an administrative fee levied by GlobalGiving when funds are transferred to Thabyay. GlobalGiving accepts major credit cards, Paypal and cheques.

Thank you for your support! If you have any questions, please contact us at development@thabyay.org.

Quote

"The chance to study at university was a turning point in my life. It has given me the skills and confidence to stand up and make a difference. I will work to alleviate the suffering of my fellow citizens, and build a better future for Myanmar."

Soe Lay, Scholarship Alumni



2. Fundraise

We are keen to hear from anyone who would be interested to support us in our fundraising efforts. We need local advocates to spread the word and organize fundraising events on our behalf. If you would be interested to support us in this way, please contact us:

Email: development@thabyay.org

Websites: www.arohanascholarships.org
www.thabyay.org

Thabyay Education Network is a registered non-profit foundation in Thailand.

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THAILAND





**a single
flame
can light
a thousand
candles**