

2nd Report for GlobalGiving:

University Scholarships for Students from Burma

Thabyay Education Network, Arohana Scholarship Fund
7th March 2011

Overview

We at Thabyay Education Network would like to extend our deep gratitude to everyone (172 of you) who has helped us to raise US\$29,929 for the University Scholarships for Students from Burma project since the 1st September 2010. Thanks to your generosity, 19 change makers from Burma have been able to start, or continue, their university education in Asia.

In our previous report, dated 3rd December 2010, we allocated US\$22,051 in scholarship awards to 15 individuals, leaving US\$10 remaining from funds received by that date. Since then, we have received a further US\$5,340. Therefore, the funds available for disbursement since 3rd December 2010 total US\$5,350.

Selection and awards

Since December, the Arohana Scholarship Fund Committee has made six further awards totalling US\$5,268. Four of these awards were to new applicants, while two applicants who had previously applied for top-up grants received a second grant to cover their needs.

The total funds now raised by the ‘University Scholarships for Students from Burma’ project have therefore enabled 19 Burmese students to start or continue their Bachelor’s, Master’s or PhD studies at universities across Asia.

The recipients of these 19 awards comprise 11 women and eight men, ranging in age from 19 to 51 (average age of approximately 31), representing nine ethnic groups, studying 16 different majors at 10 different universities in five countries across Asia.

The table below provides detailed information about the new awards made.

Name	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Subject	University	Level	Type	Award (US\$)
Aung Khine	M	21	Rakhine	International Studies	Mahidol University, Thailand	BA	Top-up	2,128
Htet Aung*	M	26	Shan	Southeast Asian Studies	City University, Hong Kong	BA	Top-up	1,840
May Ohnmar	F	21	Burman	Social Science	Asian University for Women, Bangladesh	BA	Top-up	150
Myo Tun*	M	22	Mon	Asian Studies	Uni of Santo Tomas, Philippines	BA	Top-up	500
Yin Htwe	F	27	Karen	Social Science	Asian University for Women, Bangladesh	BA	Top-up	150
Zaw Latt	M	30	Burman	Physical Therapy	Mahidol University, Thailand	PhD	Top-up	500
							TOTAL	5,268

*Also received awards in the previous round.

N.B. Names of award recipients have been changed to protect their identities.



Award Recipient Profiles



Name: Aung Khine
Age: 21
Ethnicity: Rakhine
Subject of Study: International Studies
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Mahidol University, Thailand
Award amount: US\$2,128

Brief overview of candidate

Aung Khine was born in an area of Rakhine State. Burma marked by deep poverty and often plagued with food scarcity and malnutrition. Despite hardships, Aung Khine completed high school and then moved to Yangon in search of better educational opportunities. He completed a computer course and later a conversational English course, graduating at the top of the class in both. He joined a youth education and networking group where he learned about issues relevant to contemporary Burma including environmental protection, civic participation and HIV/AIDS. Inspired by this experience, Aung Khine applied for a scholarship to study International Studies in Thailand. Through his studies, he is seeking to learn more about the different ways in which countries achieve fair, transparent and representative government. His ambition is to use what he learns to contribute to incremental positive change in Burma.

In his own words:

“I have often asked myself ‘What can I do for my people?’ Now I know. I can use my education to drive positive change in my homeland. Burma needs skilled and active people to introduce new ideas to improve governance at every level of society. When I graduate, I can be one of those people.”



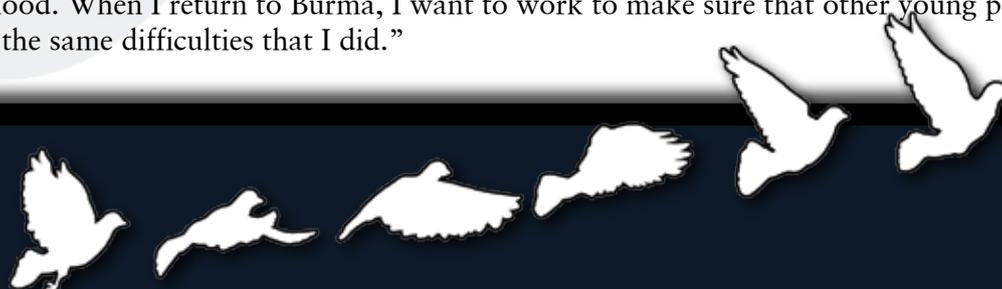
Name: Htet Aung
Age: 26
Ethnicity: Shan
Subject of Study: Southeast Asian Studies
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: City University, Hong Kong
Award amount: US\$1,840

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: May Ohnmar
Age: 21
Ethnicity: Burman
Subject of Study: Social science
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Asian University for Women, Bangladesh
Award amount: US\$150

Brief overview of candidate

May Ohnmar was born in the Inle Lake area of Shan State. Lack of opportunity and rural poverty forced her to move to Yangon at an early age to live with her great aunt. In Yangon, she studied hard, working in low paid jobs in her spare time to support herself. She managed to graduate high school, and received a scholarship to study at one of the best university preparation programs in the country. During her studies, May Ohnmar completed an internship with an international development organization, where she visited the areas devastated by Cyclone Nargis. She helped design hygiene promotion training programs and learned about the many obstacles hampering social and economic development in the region. This experience inspired her to want to improve her understanding of social issues and so she applied for a scholarship to study Social Science in Thailand.

In her own words:

“Education can provide the bridge to a better future for Burma. Through my studies, I want to learn about social, economic and civic structures of other countries so that I can bring this knowledge home and educate others.”



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\$500

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: Yin Htwe
Age: 27
Ethnicity: Karen
Subject of Study: Social Science
Level of Study: Bachelor's
Institution of Study: Asian University for Women, Bangladesh
Award amount: US\$150

Brief overview of candidate

Yin Htwe was her parents' first child. Her father wanted a son, and she felt that she had defied his wishes simply by being born. On graduating from high school, she felt obliged to consent to her parents' wishes that she study engineering at university in Burma, even though it was not her choice. However, on graduating in 2007, Yin Htwe resisted pressure to become an engineer and instead applied for a job with a newspaper as a trainee reporter. She was surprised to be offered a job. After a couple of years learning the ropes she was promoted to deputy editor of one of the newspaper's sections. Then, in 2009 she was promoted again to section editor. During her career, Yin Htwe has become aware of the fundamental need for good journalism in Myanmar as part of the development of civil society, but also the shortcomings of the present journalistic environment. She sees her current studies as a way to improve the situation.

In her own words:

"In Myanmar, journalists often become frustrated because of censorship and leave the profession. Also, newspapers often fail to cover the information that the public need. As a result, journalism has lost much of its reputation. I would like to help to change this situation by encouraging and training young journalists to do their jobs well."



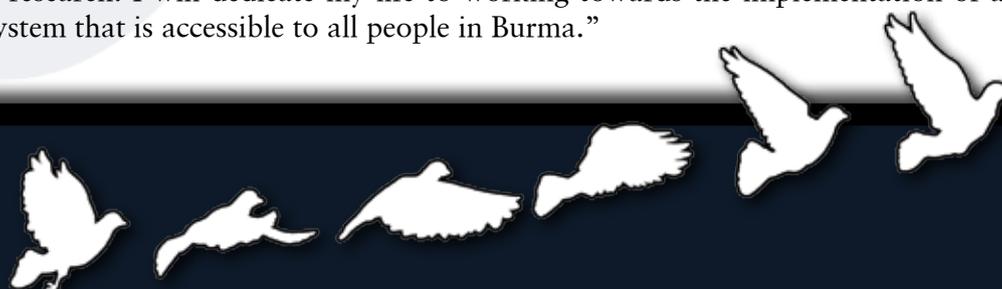
Name: Zaw Latt
Age: 30
Ethnicity: Burman
Subject of Study: Physical Therapy
Level of Study: PhD
Institution of Study: Mahidol University, Thailand
Award amount: US\$500

Brief overview of candidate

Zaw Latt was raised by his grandfather, a traditional healer, in a village near Mandalay. From an early age he was surrounded by his grandfather's patients and the harsh realities of their illness and suffering. Witnessing his grandfather's work, he was inspired to follow his path. He began to learn about physical therapy, a little known discipline in Burma. He decided to study it at university, despite being told by friends and family that it was a useless subject. On completing his Bachelor's degree, he won a scholarship to study on a community development program in Thailand and then a young leaders program in New Zealand. He was astounded by the wide availability of healthcare in these countries, in comparison to Burma, and was inspired to devote his career to the development of Physical Therapy in Burma.

In his own words:

"Studying Physical Therapy has given me a unique chance to bring a positive and lasting change to my country's people. I want to contribute to the improvement of the field of Physical Therapy through my doctoral research. I will dedicate my life to working towards the implementation of a functioning healthcare system that is accessible to all people in Burma."



Future Plans

As of 7th March 2011, remaining funds from the 'University Scholarships for Students from Burma' project total US\$82. On receipt of the next tranche of funds from GlobalGiving, the Arohana Scholarship Fund Committee will meet again to decide on the next round of awards.

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 you can appreciate 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.

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,



Quentin Hewitt
Development Director
Thabyay Education Network

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www.arohanascholarships.org

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



How you can help

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

1. Donate



You can donate to Arohana's 'University Scholarships for Students from Burma' project through GlobalGiving and JustGiving.

GlobalGiving US site (offers tax relief to US taxpayers):
www.globalgiving.org/projects/university-scholarships-for-students-from-burma

GlobalGiving UK site (offers Gift Aid to UK taxpayers):
www.globalgiving.co.uk/pr/6200/proj6188a.html

JustGiving UK site (offers Gift Aid to UK taxpayers):
www.justgiving.com/project/1777763

Residents of other countries can donate through these sites, but cannot benefit from tax relief or Gift Aid. GlobalGiving accepts credit cards, Paypal and cheques. JustGiving accepts credit cards and Paypal.

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.

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 volunteers around the world 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:

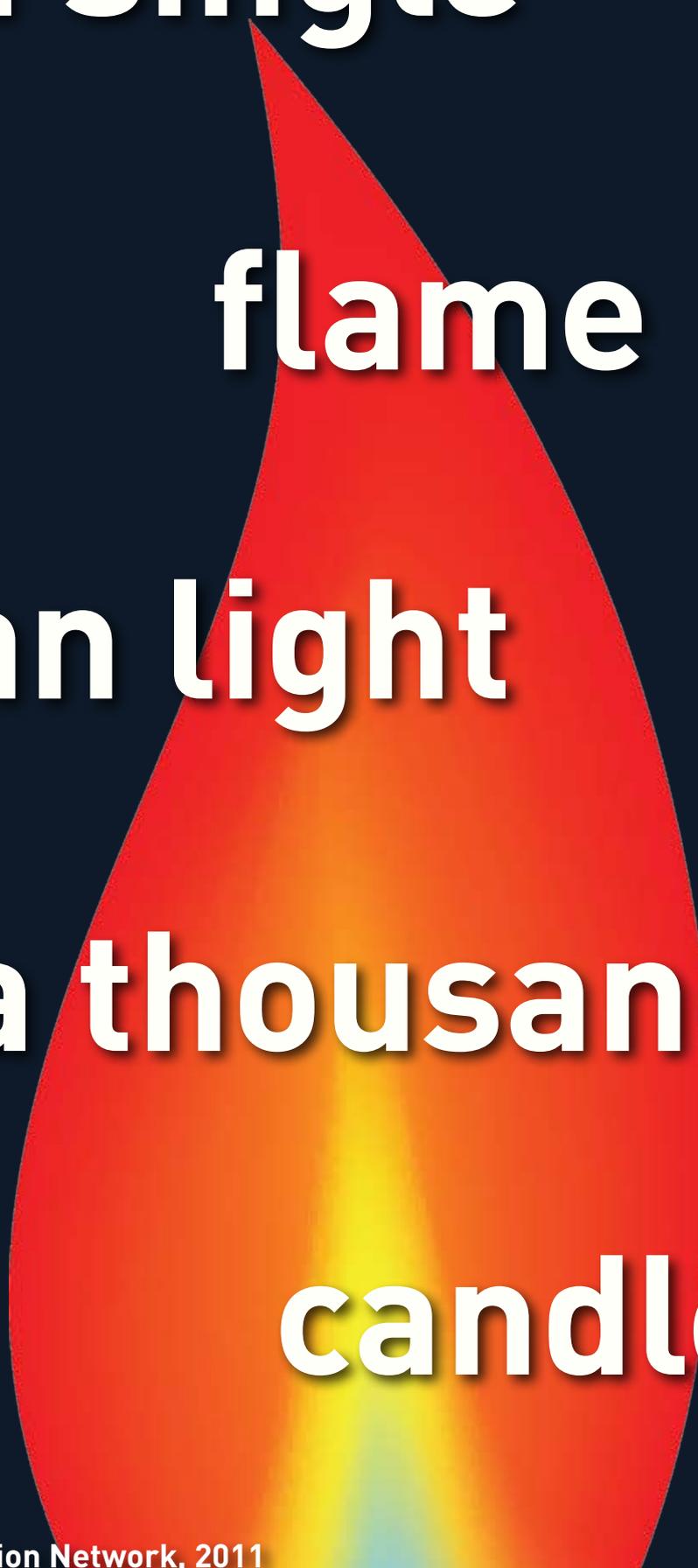
Email: development@thabyay.org

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

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

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