



Karenni Student Development Programme reg. charity 1108288

SUMMER ON THE BURMA BORDER

Everyone involved with KSDP has had another busy season since the last newsletter. Bridget has remained out in Thailand and Beryl, Steve and Andy have spent extended periods there this summer. Beryl, Steve and Bridget have also visited the resettled Karenni living in Finland. We were pleased to see that they are all coping well, starting to speak their new language and adapting to a very different culture. Most importantly they are all enjoying their life of freedom.

For the first time we been able to bring one of our Karenni refugee students to the UK for a year to work as a volunteer assistant to KSDP. Moe Bue arrived in October and is living with Beryl & Steve at Laceby. We hope many of you will have the chance to meet her during the coming year. We know you will be impressed by her resilience and you can read her own story on page 4. So far she has adapted well to life in the UK and has already attended several fund raising events where she helped raise the profile of KSDP.



You can now donate on-line to KSDP. Visit [Charity Choice](#), a secure site administered by the Cooperative Bank. You state your donation, Gift Aided if applicable, and it is automatically credited to our bank.

3-VILLAGES COURSE—Training Kayan refugees

In addition to the two large Karenni refugee camps housing around 23,000 Karenni there are three other refugee villages on the Thai/Burma border where the Kayan, a sub-group of the Karenni live. They are famous because the women wear brass coils or rings around their necks, and they are often referred to as the “long necks”. You can read more about the Kayan on page 3.



The Kayan have little access to any education, and receive very little support from the other official aid organisations working within the main camps and so KSDP decided that this year we would adapt our Skills Development Programme and offer a 3-villages Kayan training course. We have seven young Kayan (4 women and 3 men shown here) and it is proving very successful. For the first time these young people have the opportunity for self-determined education and they are like sponges—soaking up

all the information we give them. They are outgoing and receptive to everything we show them and for people who have never used a computer before, they have learnt very quickly and now able to use the Internet and email their friends all over the world.

They have prepared display notices for their villages, acted as assistant teachers to a Thai school children’s IT class that KSDP helped to run, become advisors to others in their community and one has now become a broadcaster on the Karenni radio service. It is proving very interesting for all of us involved (Beryl, Bridget, Rebekah, Marcus and Andy, briefly in July, as shown).



Several of the students have plans to pass on their new found skills to their own people when the course ends in December and maybe KSDP will have to look at a new project to continue to support this extended education.

NEW VOLUNTEERS

We have recently been pleased to welcome two volunteers to our Mae Hong Son team. Rebekah hails from Vancouver, Canada and has been able to pass on her many skills to our 3-villages course. In addition to her teaching skills in history and world affairs, she is a talented musician and dancer and our office now resounds to much improved performances from the students.



Marcus from the UK (hairy legs shown below as he helps MuJon at the computer)



is making a return visit to our office. He produces amazing presentations and his IT skills mean that our office/study centre computers are the best maintained in the whole region. With wireless connections, 24 hour broadband, Skype and MS Messenger all of our students are able to maintain contact with their many friends around the world. Thank you Rebekah and Marcus for everything.

giftaid it

Don't forget that we can now collect GIFTAID on your donation. If you complete the Gift Aid declaration on the back page and send it with your donation the government adds 28% to the sum, at no cost to you. This now forms a very major part of our annual income—don't let us miss out.

WANTED

Sponsored Runners

Would you raise sponsorship for KSDP by entering for a marathon or mini-marathon?

WANTED

Sales people

Could you sell some Karenni hand woven scarves for us? Each one takes two days to weave. You pay out no money up front. We send you 10 scarves— you sell them for a minimum of £8.50 each and then send us the money when they are all sold. They make ideal gifts.

Speaker Available

Would your school or organisation like a presentation/talk with many pictures on the Karenni refugees? Preferably easy travelling distance of Lincolnshire, but we might be able to manage further afield if we can have overnight accommodation, or can arrange several together.

If you can help with any of these requests [email](#) or phone 01472 872217 for more details.

YOUR RUBBISH IS WORTH CASH TO US—RECYCLING APPEAL

Items that normally end up in the bin - toner and inkjet printer cartridges, and old mobile phones - can be recycled to raise valuable funds for KSDP.

We have teamed up with leading recyclers at the Recycling Appeal in an environmentally friendly fundraising scheme. Every time you donate a cartridge or old mobile phone to us Recycling Appeal will make a donation to KSDP. Recycling Appeal is an easy way to help the environment while supporting us and with your support, we are confident our Recycling appeal will be a success and raise much needed funds. Not only will your participation in the KSDP Recycling Appeal raise funds, recycling allows you to make a positive impact on the environment. Some

of the mobile phones even end up in developing countries where little or no landline infrastructure exists meaning your old mobile could provide a lifeline for someone.

So put your old mobile phones, inkjet and toner printer cartridges to one side. The Recycling Appeal provides free collections if you have more than ten items, and freepost envelopes if you have less. To get more details and begin recycling, visit www.recyclingappeal.com or call the Recycling Appeal team on 08451 30 20 10, telling them you want to support KSDP account no: 718936

Please support us—it won't cost you a penny.

The Kayan People — Living in a human zoo



The Karenni race are made up of many sub groups, each having their own traditions, religion and language. When the first Karenni came to seek refugee in Thailand around 1990, the Thai Government offered a limited Thai ID card, although this concession soon ceased, and now no-one is given any Thai papers.

The Kayan are one of the sub-tribes and many of their women wear brass rings on their necks and legs. Because of this it was perceived by the Thai Government that they would be a good tourist lure to the North West of Thailand and so they were accommodated outside the main refugee camps in three separate villages. Tourists who pay an admission charge to Thai village masters are under the misapprehension that all of this fee goes to the Kayan people. Only a small percentage reaches them and in many cases it is often never handed over. Many women weave scarves to make ends meet. (You can buy these—see Page 2).

The postcards reproduced here appear all over Thailand and none of the Kayan receive royalties. In some cases postcards have been produced against their wishes and are most intrusive. One of our students was photographed without her knowledge when she was breast feeding her baby and this picture can now be seen all over Thailand.

In June a directive was laid down by the Thai Government that the three Kayan villages were to be forcibly combined into one village. There was little consultation and they were told they must either move, go back to Burma or go to live in the main refugee camp. One of the women who was attending our 3-villages training programme was told that she could no longer attend training and she must remain in her village to be on show for tourists.

On hearing this she decided to remove her rings, despite the fact that this was part of her culture and she had worn them since she was 7 years old. All income for her has now ceased and she is especially concerned how she will provide for her daughter but she is so determined to gain an education that she is prepared to battle her case. She is not allowed to earn money outside the village and has even been told that her small shop will be taken away from her. Whilst on the surface the Thai government appear to offer refuge to the Karenni people fleeing from atrocities within Burma, in reality they are imposing as many restrictions and control on the lives of the Kayan as they had within Burma.

Our 3-villages course has at least taught the Kayan that they have a voice. Visit [this website](#) to read more about the Kayan.

CAMP LIBRARIES

“Helping the Karenni to help themselves”



‘proper’ reference books for the first time.

Some of the students in our Karenni Leadership and Management School in Camp #1, spend many hours in the adjacent library, reading the books and they then report back to other students on their findings. In this way they not only learn for

themselves but are assimilating this new knowledge and passing it on to others.

Thank you everyone who helped with this project.



In our last newsletter we reported that we had successfully shipped out 2500 library books, donated by Nettleham Library, Lincolnshire. We are pleased to show photos of the libraries and can report that many of the students are enjoying reading

Moe Bue's story

My name is Moe Bue and I am 20 years old. Now I am in England but my father and my three younger brothers are still inside Burma. I have not seen them or spoken to them for over three years.

I came to Karenni refugee camp in 2003 when I was 17 years. When I was very young Burmese Army (SPDC) soldiers often came to my village in Karenni State and made threats to us. In 1996 the army made us move to another area. We didn't know why, we had no rights to refuse, we just had to do as we were told. We could only take the few possessions that we could carry and we had to start all over again. We only had a knife and a few tools and had to go into the jungle to collect wood and bamboo to build our new house.



*Moe Bue aged 11 with her family
Her mother died two years later*

The SPDC set up their camp around the new village and did not allow people to leave to work, farm or plant vegetables. They only gave us a little rice and a few clothes. Many families with lots of children did not have enough food to eat. We had no medicine, no schools and no security. My mum got high blood pressure and had to stay in hospital in Loikaw which was a long way away. It was difficult for us to visit her. We also had to sell animals to pay the hospital fees.



When I heard that there was a possibility for me to go to live abroad for a year, I was very excited because it meant I would have the opportunity to talk to people about the problems in Burma. However I could only have this chance if I had a Burmese passport which meant I would have to return to Rangoon, Burma.

Despite the dangers involved I was determined to do it and had to travel back across country. I had to wait a long time in Rangoon to lodge my application and then

At this time my father joined the Karenni army otherwise he would have been arrested by the SPDC. The soldiers often asked the Karenni villagers for shelter and food and forced many of them to work for the army for no pay. I could not work because I had to look after my brothers and so instead I had to pay money to the SPDC.

We lived like this for two years until the SPDC moved away and we were able to go back to our original village. Most of the buildings and our homes had been destroyed. We had to rebuild everything and start planting our vegetables and rice all over again. We also had many other villagers living there so we were very overcrowded. My mother came out of hospital but she had to keep returning for treatment. Soon after she became pregnant again but my baby sister died when she was only 2 days old, because the hospital could not care for her. My mother died one year later when she was only 34 years old. Now we had no mother and no animals left because they had all been sold to pay the hospital.

My mother had been a teacher and had taught me that education was important so I went to stay with my uncle in Phrso because we only had a primary school in our village with no teachers. Although I was able to study until 10th standard I was sad to leave my family and I had to look after the house for my uncle because he did not have a wife to take care of him. I returned to my village when I finished school and helped to look after the children in the primary school because where there were no teachers.

Three months later in 2002, my father told me to leave the village to run away to the refugee camp in Thailand because he was frightened what would happen to me. Since he had been in the army he was a special target of the SPDC and he said if he and

my brothers had to run and hide from the SPDC I might not be able to keep up and terrible things would happen to me. I had heard about women and girls being raped and killed by the SPDC.

*"I feared for my life if I stayed
in Burma any longer"*

We went in a group of seventeen girls from different villages. It took us three months to reach the refugee camp. We had to live in the jungle and beg food from villagers on the way. The SPDC followed us and we were very frightened, and had to stay hidden during the day. We only walked at night and mainly in rivers because there were many land mines everywhere else.

At last we arrived in the camp and I was very happy that I would not have to hide from the SPDC again but I was very sad because I missed my family. Firstly I went to live with an uncle in the camp, but then I was given the chance of attending KSDP's training programme in Mae Hong Son and afterwards I stayed with them to help KSDP and the Karenni Students Union in the office.

Now I am helping KSDP in England and I am very happy for the chances I have had in my life.



Moe Bue (centre) with friends in camp

in June I had to return again to collect my passport. I was so excited.

This year will teach me many new things; I hope I will have the chance to meet many of KSDP's supporters and tell them about the Karenni. I know that when I return to my people next year I will be able to teach all the students many new things that I have learnt. I know that this year many things will be strange for me, but I am prepared to adapt and learn. I am even enjoying English weather and food though they are very different for me."



THANKYOU

Thank you for buying hand woven items made by the women in the refugee camps. For many of them, the Kayan (long neck women) especially, this is often the only income that they receive. Many labour for several days to make items and then have little opportunity to sell them. Since visitors are not allowed into the refugee camps they rely on us and other volunteers bringing out finished goods to sell. We regularly fill our home-ward baggage allowance with woven and embroidered scarves and bags to sell at UK fund raising events. 100% of the sale price goes to the refugees.

Come to our Christmas Sale to see a good selection and support our work or take some scarves to sell (see Page 2)

Gift Aid Declaration

KSDP, Laceby Manor, Laceby, N.E.Lincs, DN37 7EA

Registered Charity No: 1108288

Title _____ Forename(s) _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____ email _____

I want KSDP to accept all donations that I have made since February 24th 2005 and those that I make in future, until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid. I currently pay UK Income Tax. I confirm that should my circumstances change in the future and I no longer pay tax on my income and/or capital gains equal to the tax that KSDP claims on my donations, I will write and advise you to cancel this declaration. I also confirm that I will keep KSDP advised of any changes to my name or address.

Signed _____ Date _____

Frequently Asked Questions:

What help is available for IDPs within Burma?

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) receive no official aid from foreign governments. Teams of refugees aided by a few foreign volunteers make dangerous sorties back inside Karenni, Karen and Shan State to take medical aid, educational supplies and food to support them, but it is not sufficient. Since 1996, more than 2,800 villages in eastern Burma have been destroyed. It is estimated that more than 1 million people are internally displaced in the jungles of Burma. They are on the run, "hunted and shelled like animals", and do not have adequate food, medicine or shelter. This year, the number of IDPs rose further. In the SPDC's biggest and most savage offensive against Karen civilians in almost a decade, more than 20,000 Karen people had to flee their villages. Reports from the Free Burma Rangers and the Karen Human Rights Group reveal horrifying atrocities, including beheadings, severe mutilations and the shooting of civilians at point-blank range. See www.freeburmarangers.com

Can the refugees contact their families in Karenni?

No, this is almost impossible. Since there is no postal service within Karenni and few have telephones, all messages must be relayed personally whenever the above named groups venture back inside. It is also dangerous to send letters in case they are intercepted by the SPDC, which can lead to serious consequences. Many of the students in our schools and orphanages have had no contact with family for several years and do not know if they are alive or dead.

- KSDP exists to provide educational and other support to Karenni refugees who are living in camps on the Thai/Burma border.
- KSDP was founded in 1999 by Stephanie Lee, who was killed in Thailand in a road accident in 2001. **KSDP is now run by Stephanie's family in her memory, and is a registered charity.**
- KSDP needs to raise at least £35,000 each year to fund all their on-going projects.
- You can sponsor a student for just £5 per month— Contact us for a standing order form
- KSDP operates a policy of minimum administrative costs. 100% of your donation goes directly to the Karenni.

Thank you for your continuing support. Please contact us if you have any comments or ideas for fund raising.

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