

September 2024

CARA
Children At Risk In Asia



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 UNCR.

Newsletter

A report from Sangkhlaburi, Thailand

Marianne Scholes and family recently returned from visiting One Sky in Sangkhlaburi, Thailand. They would like to share their experience with you through the article and photographs below

Our Inspiring Visit with One Sky in Thailand

By The Scholes family



Scholes family with One Sky at their crisis refuge centre

We recently returned from a family holiday in Thailand, where we spent three remarkable days with the One Sky team in the remote town of Sangkhlaburi. Surrounded by the lush tropical jungle, the local communities face immense challenges. Yet, One Sky is making a tremendous difference.

From the moment we arrived, it was clear that the One Sky team is deeply embedded in the local community. Their ability to speak multiple languages—whether Thai, Burmese, or Karen, allows them to connect effortlessly with the diverse (and many migrant) populations. Wherever we went, families warmly welcomed them, viewing them as trusted allies and respected members of their community.

During our stay, we joined the team for home visits, workshops, and met with scholarship students. It was heartwarming to witness firsthand the transformative impact of One Sky. Their work spans child protection, welfare support, early childhood development, income generation, and access to education, offering holistic support to vulnerable families.

Foster Programme

One of the most touching moments was visiting a foster family. One Sky runs Thailand's only rural foster care program, providing loving homes to children who would otherwise be placed in children's homes. These children, who have already endured so much, can thrive in the care of foster families, maintaining ties to their village, school, and friends. One Sky is working tirelessly to raise awareness of the need for regulated foster care in Thailand, ensuring that children's best interests are always prioritised.



Visiting a foster family

Scholarship and Buddy programmes

For our children, Florence (15) and George (13), a highlight of the trip was meeting a scholarship student their age. Supported by One Sky, this 13-year-old boy can now stay in school, enjoying his education and hobbies like playing football and fishing with friends. Without this scholarship, he would likely be forced to leave school early and work. Florence and George were struck by how much they had in common with him, despite the stark differences in their life circumstances. It was a powerful reminder of the impact One Sky is making.



Visiting a scholarship student at his home

We were also deeply moved by a visit to a One Sky buddy lesson. One Sky has trained Year 12 students (ages 16-17) to teach Thai to younger children who don't speak the language at home. We met a 12-year-old girl who recently arrived from Myanmar, now being supported by One Sky to enter a Thai school. Without this help, she may have been forced into illegal work, facing

a life of exploitation. Thanks to the buddy program, she will gain the education and documentation needed to secure a brighter future. The Year 12 buddies are also paid by One Sky, allowing them to save for university while positively contributing to their community.

Early Childhood Development

Another memorable experience was joining one of One Sky's early childhood development team's regular visits to a migrant community. During the visit, young children played with educational toys and received healthy snacks, while mothers and grandmothers took part in a lively workshop on contraception. The One Sky team explained how empowering these discussions are, helping families plan for their futures. This focus on mother's empowerment felt essential and meaningful.



Healthy snacks at the parent and child workshop

Seeing the casework One Sky does with young mothers was equally inspiring. Despite facing immense challenges, the mothers we met were thriving, thanks to One Sky's support in welfare, health, and income generation programs. It was a beautiful example of how much can change with the right support.

Final reflections

As well as highlighting the many extraordinary achievements of One Sky, our visit also highlighted the financial limitations One Sky faces. Due to budget constraints, they had to reduce the number of children receiving scholarships last year, and they are facing a shortfall again this year. While the team works incredibly hard and remains ambitious in extending their reach, they need additional funds to continue and expand their life-changing work.

Looking ahead, we learned about One Sky's commitment to extend the reach of their licensed Child Protection Officer, into neighbouring districts and help establish a Child Protection committee there. This expansion demonstrates One Sky's dedication to doing what's right for children in Thailand. The

profound impact they've made in Sangkhlaburi should be available to every child in need across the country.

Throughout our visit, we saw how the One Sky team serves as social workers, health visitors, and advocates for a brighter future. Their skill, dedication, and deep respect within the community are what make this charity so special.

Thank you for your continued support. Your contributions enable One Sky to empower families and give children the chance to thrive. Together, we are making a lasting difference.



Visiting a young mother and her thriving family

Other news

The war in Myanmar is intensifying with the ethnic armies controlling more of the country, but then being bombed by the government forces. This is driving more people to escape across the border into Thailand. Many of these are turning up in Sangkhlaburi where One Sky is supporting as many families as their stretched funds allow. CARA will be diverting some funds to the foster programme but meaning we will have to cut back on the number of scholarships we can fund. This is frustrating as we know each scholarship can make the difference of a child being at school or having to work instead. At the same time a number of major donor organisations to One Sky are pursuing a policy of reducing donations year on year, leading to a projected severe shortfall next year. If you would like to help, please contact Colin Lillicrap, Chairman of CARA Trustees on 01442 873439 or email colin.lillicrap@btinternet.com. Alternatively, you can make a bank transfer to:

Children At Risk in Asia (CARA)

Account number; 22075849

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