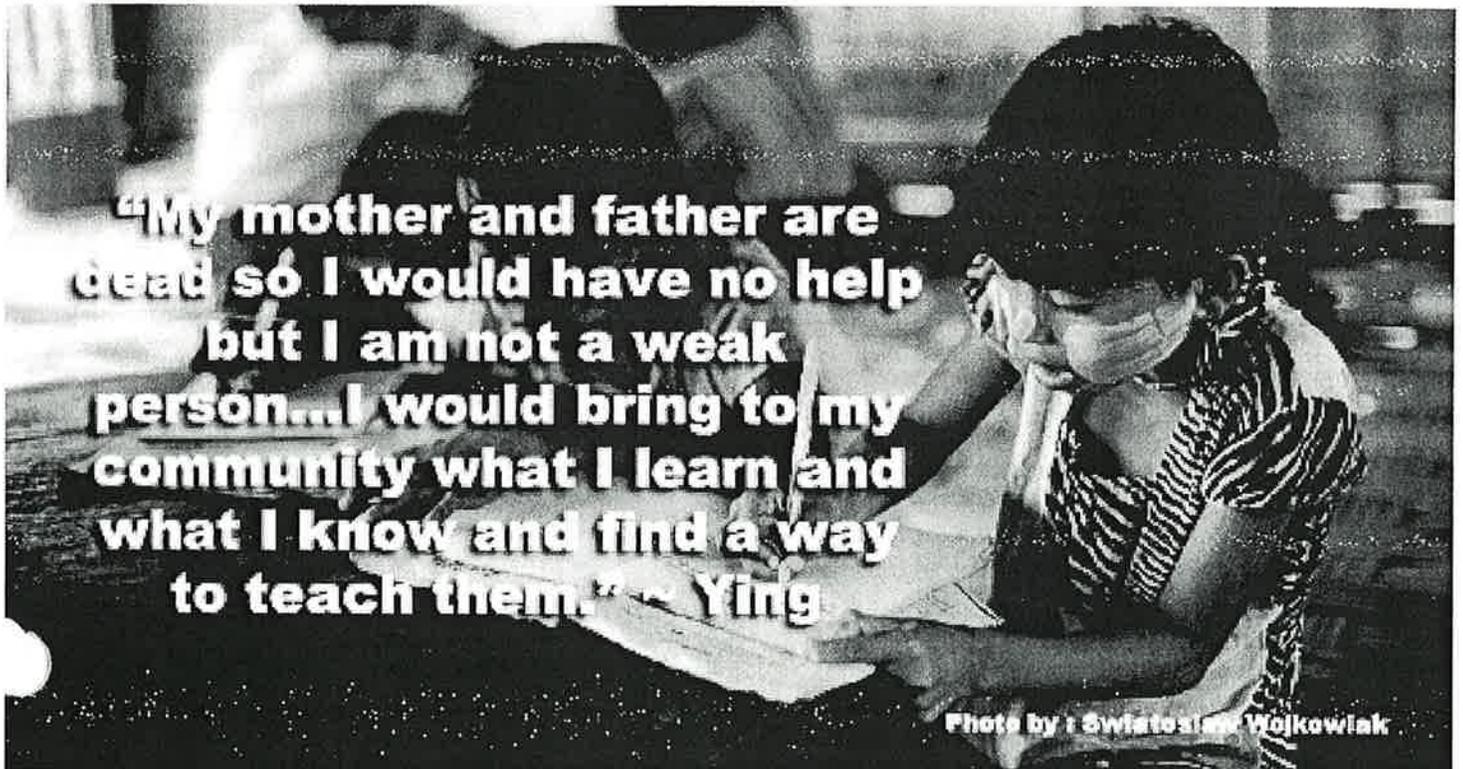


When I first came to Thailand I noticed the Thai people have more confidence than Burmese. The Thai are very creative and active in their thinking. I think Burma needs more knowledge; more critical thinking. This I believe can be accomplished, even if it's not very big. Knowledge starts small but becomes bigger. Knowledge can always improve.

There are 25 teachers [at Shan Youth Power where Ying teaches]. About five of these teachers have degrees. The difference between those that have a degree and those who don't is the level of study they teach. When someone has a degree, they are able to teach at a higher level.



Right now I am not a legal teacher. I do not have a teaching certificate. But I love to teach. I teach one camp [class] – 24 students. I teach students English and math. I like English because I can teach Shan history and culture through it. Before I came [to Shan Youth Power] it was a problem because students didn't know where they came from or who they were. But now they know they are Shan and come from Burma.

My students are so active. In groups they think of how Burma can be in the future. They are confident and curious. They want to know more about their country and why they do not live there. They ask me, 'is it true we are the poorest people in the world?' They make me think and I must do research and so I learn too.

I would like to go back to Burma someday. No one [in Burma] knows what democracy or human rights means. Human rights? I did not know when I was in Burma. Democracy? I didn't know. I want to be a teacher who can help my community. My mother and father are dead so I would have no help but I am not a weak person. I would start all over again. I would bring to my community what I learn and what I know and find a way to teach them. First thing I would do is start an addition to school in my house—like after school. It would start small but will get bigger.

I think Burmese need to have more confidence in their thinking and doing. Right now we have no confidence to speak out. We need to speak out. People are afraid because of the government. If students have no fear, people can change the system in a knowledgeable way.

I believe if we can build confidence among students, teachers, and communities then the government is afraid because the people



From Left: Ying and her sister

About Ying

What I found extraordinary in her life were the parts you'd never know about unless you asked:

Ying sold lottery tickets and produce, and worked as a janitor for nearly a decade to keep her sister in school.

After her sister left for college, Ying was accepted to study English at ALTSEAN (Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma) in Bangkok (where I first met her). Ying mentioned she teaches English at Shan Youth Power, but she never said how she learned it. This happened at ALTSEAN. ALTSEAN trained her in basic English, management, and computer literacy.

In 2006 Ying was accepted to attend the Social Justice School for Shan State Nationality Youth (SJS).

Ying told me in a prior conversation it was at SJS she realized how important it was to be an active member in the politics of Burma. She told me that she was never interested in politics, but after seeing so many people who weren't Shan working to help her people, she felt like it was the right thing to do.

When I met Ying in 2009, she was at ALTSEAN completing another internship. She was one of only two accepted to study and complete the six-month internship.

As Ying referenced, she now works with an organization called Shan Youth Power (SYP). SYP educates over 300 Shan students a year in over 17 classrooms, and is beginning to branch out into preventative health care and computer training. Last year, SYP held 9 HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention training workshops and 11 different computer literacy training sessions. There is still much to do, however.

Over 80,000 Shan live in the areas SYP teaches. The potential this organization has to expand past the hundreds and into the thousands is not extraordinary; it's only a matter of time.

Only 5 teachers hold higher degrees at SYP, Ying tells us. As I said earlier, this is due to need not excellence (Ying is not a qualified teacher). At the rate SYP is growing, with Ying and a college education, SYP would likely expand to reach into the thousands a year. Ying has the tremendous untapped potential to be a leader in this organization or anywhere else of her choosing.

The impact her college degree will have in the future lives of thousands of Shan Burmese migrant refugee students cannot be overlooked.



Burma's Ethnic Minorities

The Shan

Imagine a country where over 135 different ethnic groups (all with different languages and customs) live in an area slightly smaller than the size of Texas. And then picture that many of these different groups are territorial rivals to the point of waging war against one another. And then imagine that all this is happening under a military regime that has been in power since 1962.

This is not a hypothetical country. In a nutshell, this is the very real and oppressive state of Burma today.

Out of 135 officially recognized ethnicities in Burma, the Shan are the second largest group in Burma. 10 percent of Burma's population is Shan, or just slightly over 5 million people. By comparison, this is the same size of the legal Mexican-American population in the United States—the equivalent to over 30 million people in the United States.

Some of the Shan have historically pushed for autonomy from Burma. Some groups have even organized and turned violent to push for secession. Today, parts of the rural Shan State frontier in Burma resemble a warzone.

Unfortunately, between warring Shan rebel groups and the Burmese army, the Shan people are the ones suffering. The abuses are tragic, but the grossest human rights abuse committed is neglect.



Health

- The Burmese government spends approximately \$56 dollars annually per person on health and education combined. In perspective, Thailand, Burma's neighbor, spends over \$1,000 per person on education and health.
- Burma has over 700,000 cases of malaria and close to 150,000 cases of tuberculosis a year.
- Over 35 percent of children under the age of five are malnourished to some degree. When the World Health Organization listed countries by health care, Burma ranked second worst in the world.



A Burmese field medic delivering aid

Education

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that half of students in Burma drop out before finishing primary school.

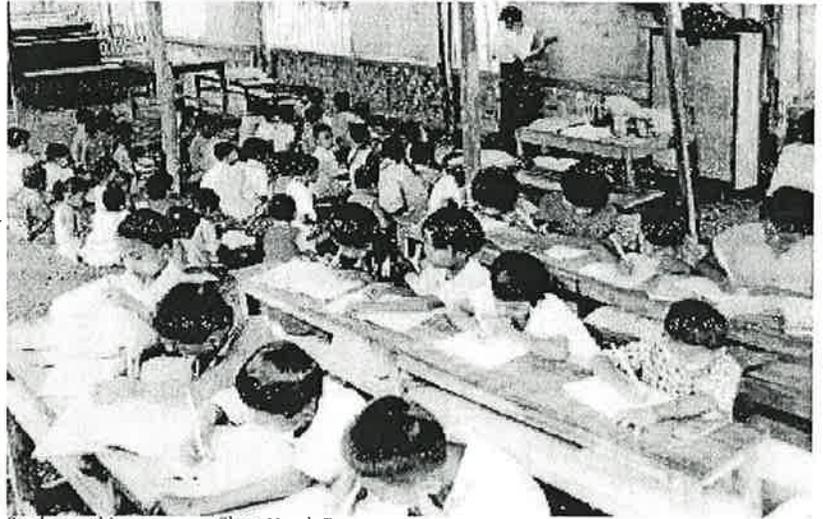
- Although enrollment in school in Burma is high, attendance is low. Education is said to be compulsory, but in reality, parents must pay bribes to military officials to keep their children in school.

- Because the system is so underfunded, teachers offer after school tutoring to teach the curriculum students are supposed to learn during the school day. The tutoring costs are expensive, and only the wealthy can afford it.

- Between 1988 and 2006, the military regime kept universities in Burma closed longer than open. Still, today universities and schools are close without warning and for extended periods of time.

- Distance learning is the preferred method in universities. (Not for convenience, but in order to prevent students from gathering and discussing politics.)

- Higher degrees in Burma are often not recognized abroad.



Students taking exams at Shan Youth Power

Why Ying? Why Now?

In the long-run, Scholarships for Burma is not about me or Ying. Yes, sending Ying to college will serve her well the rest of her life. But past that, the mission of this campaign is the belief that Ying's education is the best investment we could make into Burma.

Most scholars argue the ethnic minority issues are the largest roadblock to a future, democratic Burma, and education is often proposed as the best solution. Ying is from the Shan ethnic group, the largest minority in Burma. Ying is also dedicated to a future Burma that is free and stable, where she can teach students about human rights and democracy. She is, finally, at the front of teaching one of the largest neglected groups from Burma living in Thailand, estimated at 80,000.

What Ying is not is someone running from her country's problems; she is confronting them in Thailand, educating refugee and migrant children. As she said in our Skype interview, she wants to go back to Burma and teach. She is simply waiting until the conditions in Burma are right for that to happen.

Such a small investment of \$26,220 gives Ying a four year education, which will enable her to reach more migrant and refugee students more effectively. Over time this ultimately leads to more minority children getting educated from a country deprived of education. What better way to invest in Burma than sending Ying to college? How can we afford not to send someone so dedicated and passionate about changing her country to college? The potential gains are too great to let go unrealized. But they will if we don't act now.



Payap College Expenses

Ying hopes to study English communication at Payap College, a private Jesuit college, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Ying holds all the qualifications to get in. The only obstacle standing between her and her dream is financing.

Ying's financial situation requires a comprehensive scholarship that includes everything from tuition and room and board, to the cost of living expenses. After speaking with Payap College, I have estimated these costs to total \$26,220.

Thailand public school expenses	4-Year Total
Tuition	\$14,800
Housing	\$4,880
Cost of Living	\$1,640
Books	\$1,400
Contingencies (operating costs, tuition, and exchange rate fluctuations)	\$3,500
Total	\$26,220

YOU CAN HELP!

The US Dollar goes far in Thailand. Her entire four year education—tuition, room and board, books, etc.—costs less than the price of a new car or a semester at most private U.S. colleges.

Scholarships for Burma is a project of the Human Rights Action Center (HRAC), a registered 501(c)(3). All donations made to Scholarships for Burma are tax-deductible and go directly to fund Ying's college scholarship. No donations go to fund the trek through Burma.

The former president and founder of the The DuBois Group generously agreed to accept physical checks and donations for Scholarships for Burma by mail. The DuBois Group is a nationally recognized fundraising consultant firm I interned with in 2008. Mr. DuBois has been one of my mentors and is intimately involved and invested in this project. It is the duration of this campaign (at least four years) that conflicts with my plans to volunteer with the Peace Corps after college, and Mr. DuBois has kindly agreed to assist me *pro bono* by receiving donations.

Check

Donors should completely fill out the pledge card attached, make checks payable to "Human Rights Action Center - Scholarships for Burma," and mail the pledge card to:

Scholarships for Burma
c/o Carl DuBois, Treasurer
4275 Great Falls Loop
Reno, NV 89511

Donors will receive receipt of their gift at the end of the pledge period.

Online

By visiting www.scholarshipsforburma.com and clicking on the 'Donate' tab, donors may also make gifts directly to Scholarships for Burma through PayPal. Donors will receive receipt of their gift at the end of the pledge period.

Where's this Money Going?

Virtually all of the operating costs for this campaign have been financed by a grant from American University's Honors Program. I have also been generously helped by American University students and Alumni (website, photography, design) and former employers and friends volunteering their time to make this project as low-cost as possible. These savings mean nearly every cent donated goes directly to fund Ying's scholarship.

There will be two disbursements made at the beginning of each semester at Payap College (approximately every 6-8 months). The first payment will go directly to Payap College and pay for Ying's tuition. The second disbursement will go to Ying's personal bank account so that she may pay for books, rent, and costs of living.

An annual report will be compiled at the end of each year and sent to donors.

Donation Pledge Card

Yes, I support Scholarships for Burma!

(Please print all information)



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: () - _____

E-mail: _____

Pledge Amount: \$ _____

(to be paid up later than December 31, 2011)

Enclosed is my payment in full

Monthly increments starting _____, 2011

Signature: _____

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Please mail checks to:
Scholarships for Burma
c/o Carl Dubois, Treasurer
42 7/5 Great Falls Loop
Reno, NV 89511

* SCHOLARSHIPS FOR BURMA IS A PROJECT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION CENTER, A SOLIDLY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR INCOME TAX PURPOSES IN THE MANNER AND TO THE EXTENT OF THE LAW.*

Appendix

The Trek



Since 2009 I have realized that reading books and talking with activists – professors, diplomats, and experts – only give me snapshots and opinions of Burma.

I'm choosing to do this trek because in order to truly understand the country, to grow and learn more about it, I need to go there.

Starting October 1st, 2011, I will begin walking from Rangoon to Mandalay. I will be following Route 1, a small highway that runs between the two cities.

As of now, the Burmese authorities only extend visas to visitors for 30 days. This could change by October, but I plan to make this trip in one month. At 17 miles a day I will reach Mandalay in 27 days.

Safety: I have been asked frequently if I will be safe. It's a common misconception that Burma is dangerous for travelers. Granted, it is a terrible and oppressive place to live. But it is not a dangerous country to visit.

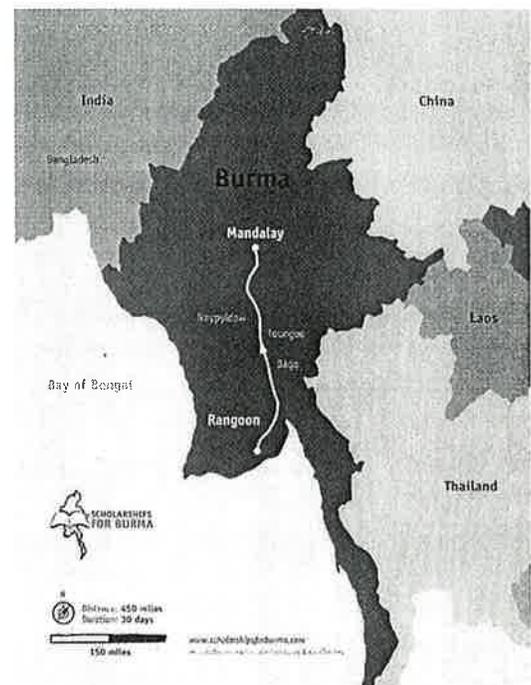
There has never been an American victimized or harmed by the regime while abroad in Burma.

Tourism is discouraged because of what the regime does to its people (human rights abuses—spending money supports the regime); not how it treats its foreigners.

As a precautionary measure I enrolled in the State Department's Safe Traveller Enrollment Program (STEP), and they will know my whereabouts while in Burma, and can respond should there be any need.

Accommodations: by sundown I plan on stopping in the nearest village and asking locals where I can lodge. In Burma, homes sometimes double as hotels, and I was told by people who have traveled through Burma that many villages have places to stay. I just need to ask a local once I arrive. In case I cannot find a hotel, I will be carrying a personal tent which I can use to camp along the way.

Contributing: I have been told by some that my trip will be contributing to the regime in Burma. My answer to that is yes and no. Yes, it is inevitable that the regime will receive money (e.g. visa, airplane ticket), but I can minimize those costs by purchasing goods only from local shop owners, where the money goes directly to the seller. I will be staying only in local hotels with local owners too. On balance, the good of this trip far outweighs the bad.





- Ying's Story
- My Story
- Burma
- Why Trek?
- FAQ
- News
- Support
- Contact



Photo by Ana Santos. www.anasantosphotography.com/

Hi, my name is Kirk.

In January 2009, I traveled to the Thailand-Burma border with a group of students from American University. During the trip, I met Ying Kawn Tai, a 23-year old girl from Shan state in Burma.

Ying told us her story. It was heartbreaking.

I will never forget the last part of her story - the part where Ying broke down and cried to our group and said,

"All I want is to go to school."

I was shocked. My parents spent thousands of dollars for me to fly halfway around the world to Thailand just to hear that one sentence. How privileged I was; how lucky. I took a college education for granted.

Ying's story has since changed my life, and now I want to change hers. With your help, now is our chance to give Ying an education.

Starting on October 15th, 2011, I will trek 450 miles across Burma's countryside, from Rangoon to Mandalay. My journey between Burma's two biggest cities will be done in order to raise \$26,220 to give a full college scholarship to Ying Kawn Tai, making her dream to go to school a reality and changing her life forever.

Will you help me?

Scholarships for Burma is a 501(c)(3) project of the Human Rights Action Center



Get more information: www.lizcaika.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com

© 2011-2012

Our mission


[Ying's Story](#)
[My Story](#)
[Burma](#)
[Why Trek?](#)
[FAQ](#)
[News](#)
[Support](#)
[Contact](#)

Ying's Story

 Read Ying's Story in Her Own Words

Ying is an ethnic Shan and comes from a family of four—a younger sister, mother, and father. Ying attended primary school in Burma until her mother contracted what is believed to be malaria when Ying was in the 8th grade. Her mother died soon after and Ying was forced to drop out of school and help her father earn money. Ying's father soon contracted Tuberculosis though and died as well. Ying was still a teenager and without prospect of finding a job to support her and her sister, in 1998 Ying left her sister for Thailand to find a better paying job.

Ying worked various odd jobs—selling lottery tickets and produce, and as a janitor—in Thailand to make ends meet for her and her sister in Burma. Ying managed to make enough to keep her younger sister in school through primary school where she excelled and was eventually accepted for a full ride scholarship to university in Thailand. This was one of the happiest moments of Ying's life, she told me.

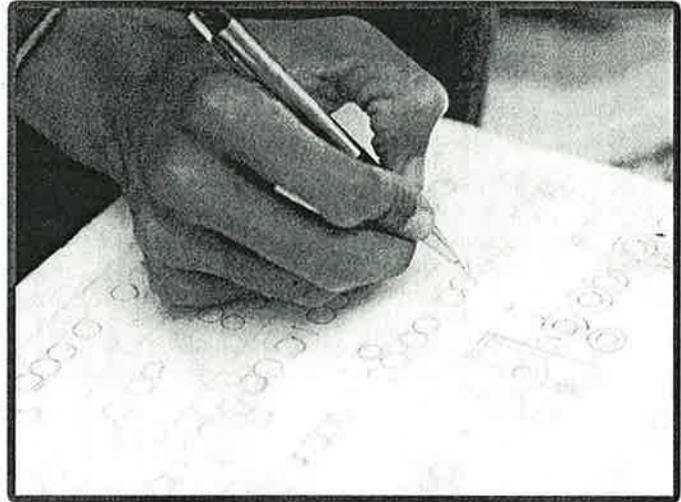


Photo by Mary Kate McKenna, www.MKsBlog.com
**To protect the safety of Ying and her family, we are unable to include her photograph on the site.*

Ying was determined to find a way to educate herself after her sister was on her own in college. In 2003, Ying was accepted to study English at Altsean Burma in Bangkok, an organization that trains future women leaders of Burma. Ying excelled and in 2006 was accepted to attend the Social Justice School for Shan State Nationality Youth, an organization that educates young Shan men and women about ethnic issues in order to transform the students to become active members in the politics of Burma.

Ying continued striving for an education. When I met her in 2009, Ying was back at Altsean studying and completing an internship. Ying worked hard enough to educate herself on her own that she is now a teacher working with Burmese migrant youth in Thailand.

Ying is an incredible woman. Not only did she sacrifice her own education for her sister's, she overcame tremendous obstacles and hurdles to educate herself. It meant not settling for being a janitor and selling lottery tickets, and in her free time learning English and Thai and taking three separate internships and education classes.

Ying is part of a new generation, and she is already a leader at the front of educating the largest disenfranchised ethnic minority in Burma. Ying has come a long way and she has done it all by herself. Imagine what she could do with a college education.

This is why, on October 15, 2011, I will begin walking 450 miles to raise \$26,220 for her college education. Ying is looking to study education and development at either Payap College or Chiang Mai University, both well known schools in Thailand. Now is our time to make sure Ying has every tool and resource available to get through college.

www.tszcaita.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com

Facebook: [Scholarships for Burma](#)

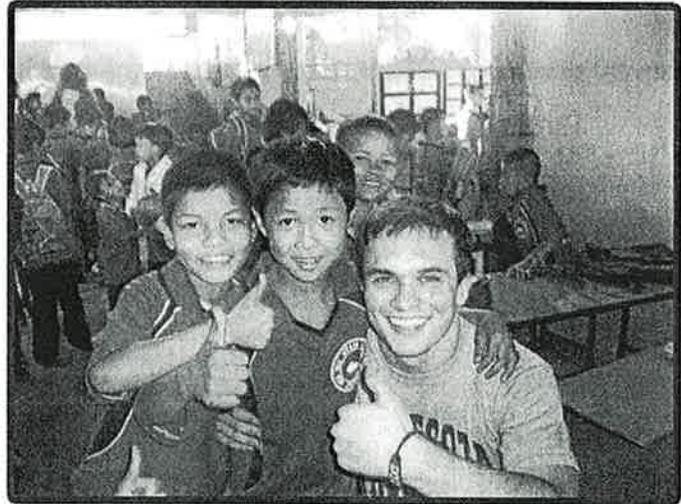
2011 10/15/11


[Ying's Story](#)
[My Story](#)
[Burma](#)
[Why Trek?](#)
[FAQ](#)
[News](#)
[Support](#)
[Contact](#)

My Story

Ying's story had a tremendous impact on me. Her story is similar to hundreds of thousands of other people from Burma. But her story was no longer a statistic to me; she was a friend. I wanted to learn more about why Ying had to flee from Burma and what I could do to help her.

When I came back to the States I started asking questions, began reading everything I could about Burma, and made the country the focus of my studies at college. I contacted the US Campaign for Burma, an advocacy group based in Washington DC that supports freedom, democracy, and human rights in Burma. I asked them how I could get involved.



A few weeks later I was interning as their Grassroots Organizer. I represented the US Campaign for Burma at STAND in Washington, a student-led movement against genocide and mass atrocities countries around the world; I escorted Burmese monks with the US Campaign for Burma's advocacy director around the House of Representatives where we met privately with the Foreign Affairs Committee and congressional office staffers; and I helped mobilize hundreds of volunteers around the U.S. who collected over 10,000 signatures at U2's 360 tour concerts to sign a petition asking President Obama to pressure the United Nations to create a Commission of Inquiry into human rights abuses in Burma. In my free time, I led American university's Student Campaign for Burma, led discussions with students on different issues of Burma, and coordinated one of the largest events of 2009 at American University where four monks who led the Saffron Revolution in 2007 came to speak about their experiences.

I am a senior in the Honors Program at American University studying international economic relations in the School of International Service. I have spent most of my research the past two years on the sanctions the United States has on Burma, their efficacy, and their effects on the relationship between the ethnic minorities and the military regime.

My activities have been featured in *Voice of America*, *Democratic Voice of Burma*, *Agence-France Presse*, and *iTunes*, and I have written about Burma for American University's *The Eagle*. In 2010 I worked with the editors of the book *Nowhere to be Home: Narratives from Survivors of Burma's Military Regime*, and assisted Benedict Rogers on a part of his book *Burma: A Captive Nation*. I am currently studying under former U.S. diplomat and eminent scholar on Burma David Steinberg at Georgetown University.

Site created by [fuzolive](http://fuzolive.com) www.fuzolive.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com

P.O. Box 12193, Washington, DC 20011

(202) 681-4571


[Ying's Story](#)
[My Story](#)
[Burma](#)
[Why Trek?](#)
[FAQ](#)
[News](#)
[Support](#)
[Contact](#)

Burma

Why Ying? Why Now?

Imagine a country where over 135 different ethnic groups (all with different languages and customs) live in an area slightly smaller than the size of Texas. And then picture that many of these different groups are territorial rivals to the point of waging war against one another. And then imagine that all this is happening under a dictatorship that has been in power since 1962.

This is not a hypothetical country. In a nutshell, this is the very real state of Burma today.

Ying comes from the largest and one of the most disenfranchised ethnic minority group of Burma—the Shan. Under the military regime, the Shan have been one of the most severely targeted groups for human rights abuses.

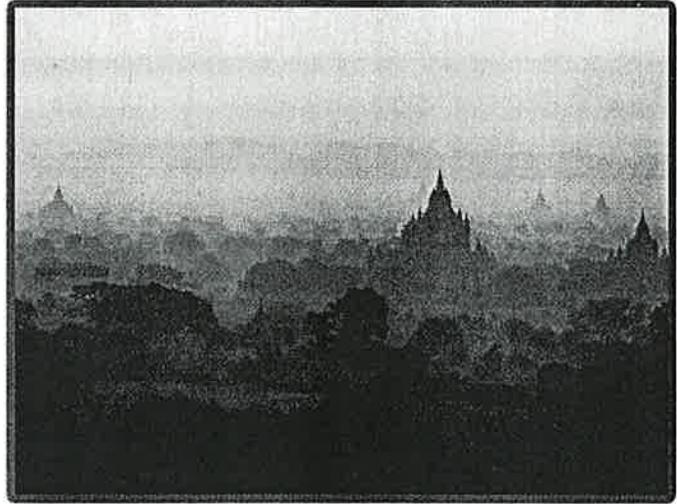


Photo by Mary Kate McKenna, www.MKsBlog.com

It is estimated the Burmese government spends approximately \$56 dollars annually per person on both health and education combined.

It isn't shocking that both Ying Kawn Tai's mother and father died from such preventable and treatable diseases. Like most Burmese, they simply did not have access to a doctor, hospital or medicine. And even if they could have visited a doctor, they were poor and did not have money to receive the right treatment.

The military took power in Burma in 1962, and Ying's parents were the first generation under military rule. They never received an education because the military regime in Burma spent so little on it, and Ying left Burma like hundreds of thousands of others because there was simply no future for her. Ying saw past her own situation and had the courage to leave Burma for a country where she did not speak the language, but knew there had to be more opportunities.

Ying's life is a micro story of the macro picture of Burma today. Burma needs future leaders and Ying's story, and the thousands like it, is the reason why I have decided to become active in raising awareness about Burma, and why I am embarking on this trek between Rangoon and Mandalay to raise money to send Ying Kawn Tai to college.

Site maintained by Liz Givlis www.lizgivlis.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com

P.O. Box 1977, Watonsville, VA 20197

(202) 998-8577



- Ying's Story
- My Story
- Burma
- Why Trek?
- FAQ
- News
- Support
- Contact

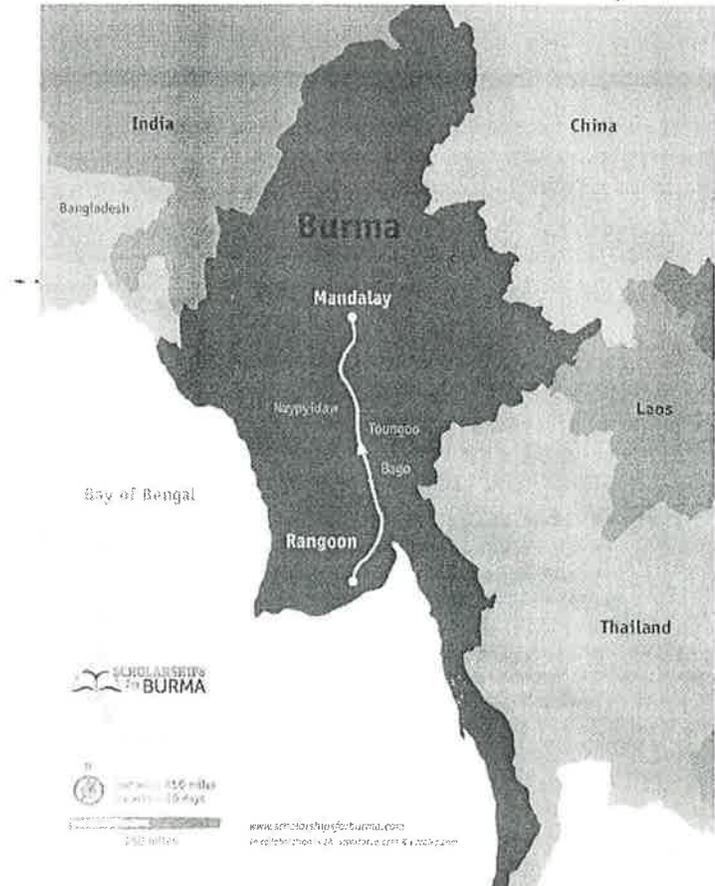
Why Trek?

I decided to do this 450 mile trek because I want to combine my academic learning about Burma and its people with firsthand experience of my friends like Ying.

When I visited Thailand in 2009, I couldn't believe the stories I heard from people like Ying, and when I came back to the United States I dedicated most of my time to studying Burma. But since 2009 I have realized that reading books and talking with experts only gives me snapshots and opinions of Burma. In order to really understand the country, I need to go there.

Starting October 15, 2011, I will begin walking north through the middle of Burma, up from the Irrawaddy Delta. I will be following Route 1, a small highway that runs between the two cities.

This trek isn't a tourist vacation. It is an independent study of the country and its people. Ying's story inspired me to spend my undergraduate degree working on Burma, and I want to meet more people like her to motivate me to continue working on the future problems Burma faces.



Graphic by Slava Molotov, www.vivertatva.com

Site created by Liz Galka, www.tizcaika.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com |
 Phone: 800-711-8821 |
 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/scholarshipsforburma> |
 Twitter: <https://twitter.com/scholarshipsforburma>


[Ying's Story](#)
[My Story](#)
[Burma](#)
[Why Trek?](#)
[FAQ](#)
[News](#)
[Support](#)
[Contact](#)

FAQ

- **Why thirty days? Is 450 miles in 30 days possible?**

The Burmese authorities only extend visas to visitors 30 days at a time. I have done long distance walks before and average about 15-17 miles a day. In order to complete this trip I will need to finish the walk in less than 30 days so that I can take a bus back to Rangoon and fly out on time. At 17 miles a day I will reach Mandalay in 27 days.

- **Will you be safe?**

Thousands of tourists every year travel to Burma. I will be staying in the Mandalay and Rangoon Regions of Burma, relatively far removed from the ethnic conflict regions.

I am enrolled in the State Department's Safe Traveller Enrollment Program (STEP), and they will know my whereabouts while in Burma, and can respond to any emergency.

- **Won't traveling to Burma, and spending money in Burma, support the regime?**

Yes and no. Yes, it is inevitable that the regime will receive money from me (e.g. visa, airplane ticket), but I can minimize those costs by only buying goods from local shops, where the money goes directly to the seller. I will be staying only in local hotels with local owners.

On balance, the good of this trip far outweighs the bad. For me, this is not a vacation but a learning experience to further my interest in the country in order to continue working for a better Burma, and to send Ying Kawn Tai to college.

- **Where will you spend the night?**

Many villages have small family-owned hotels. I will have to ask once I'm in the villages. In the worst case scenario, I will be carrying in my backpack a personal tent which I can use to camp along the way.

- **How will we know where you are?**

Burma is known for rolling blackouts and long periods without electricity. The government is also notorious for restricting internet and cell phone use. I will post updates when I can, but the reality is that the 30 days I spend in Burma will likely be without access to internet and updates to my whereabouts.

- **Where exactly does my money go? How do I know the money goes to Ying Kawn Tai's education?**

Virtually all of the operating costs for this campaign have been financed by a grant from American University's Honors Program. I have also been generously helped by American University Alumni and former employers and friends volunteering their time to make this project as low-cost as possible. These savings mean nearly every cent donated goes directly to fund Ying's scholarship.

There will be two disbursements made at the beginning of each semester at Payap College (approximately every 6-8 months). The first payment will go directly to Payap College and pay for Ying's tuition. The second disbursement will go to Ying's personal bank account so that she may pay for books, rent, and costs of living.

An annual report will be compiled at the end of each year and sent to donors.

Site created by [hizcalka.com](http://www.hizcalka.com)

info@scholarshipsforburma.com

P.O. Box 12077, Washington, DC 20012

(202) 462-2511

[Ying's Story](#)[My Story](#)[Burma](#)[Why Trek?](#)[FAQ](#)[News](#)[Support](#)[Contact](#)

News

- **My Sinchew - US students get out vote - over Myanmar**

"At American University, students are handing out ballots that offer the sole choice of supporting the junta. After casting their vote, students are asked to throw their ballots into the garbage.

Student leader Kirk Acevedo, 21, who also spent time on the Thailand-Myanmar border, said he was alarmed that many classmates could not find Myanmar on the map..."

- **The Eagle - Acevedo to raise money for Myanmar student with 450-mile walk**

"The School of International Service senior is preparing for a 30-day, 450-mile trek across Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, in October to raise money for a Myanmar woman's college education..."

Site designed by Liz Galka www.lizgalka.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com

PO Box 3371, Washington, DC 20007

202-640-2374



Support

Scholarships for Burma is a project of the Human Rights Action Center (HRAC), a registered 501(c)(3). All donations made to my project are tax-deductible and go directly to fund Ying's college scholarship. No donations go to fund my trek through Burma.



See how far you can support Ying through college

Where exactly does my money go? How do I know the money goes to Ying Kawn Tai's education?

Total costs for a 4-year public university in Thailand

Get Involved

You don't have to fiscally support Scholarships for Burma to get involved.

Are you a student? A member or leader in a club or organization? At your next meeting, have me speak. I'd love to share my story, Ying's, and my trek through Burma in October.

Friend Scholarships for Burma on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter. When you see a post or tweet, re-post or tweet the update.

Throw a party for Ying and Burma. I'll be sure to get people there and post your event.

Volunteer. I'll need your help for future events. E-mail zach.cohen@scholarshipsforburma.com to find out more.

FISCAL SPONSOR:



Human Rights Action Center
Supporting the Equal Rights and Freedoms of Burmese

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS:

U.S. CAMPAIGN
FOR BURMA



Site created by Liz Calia, www.lizcalia.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com P.O. Box 3202, Washington, DC, 20007 (202) 680-8977



- Ying's Story
- My Story
- Burma
- Why Trek?
- FAQ
- News
- Support
- Contact

Contact

For media inquiries, or if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to e-mail Robert Rose or Zachary Cohen at press@scholarshipsforburma.com.

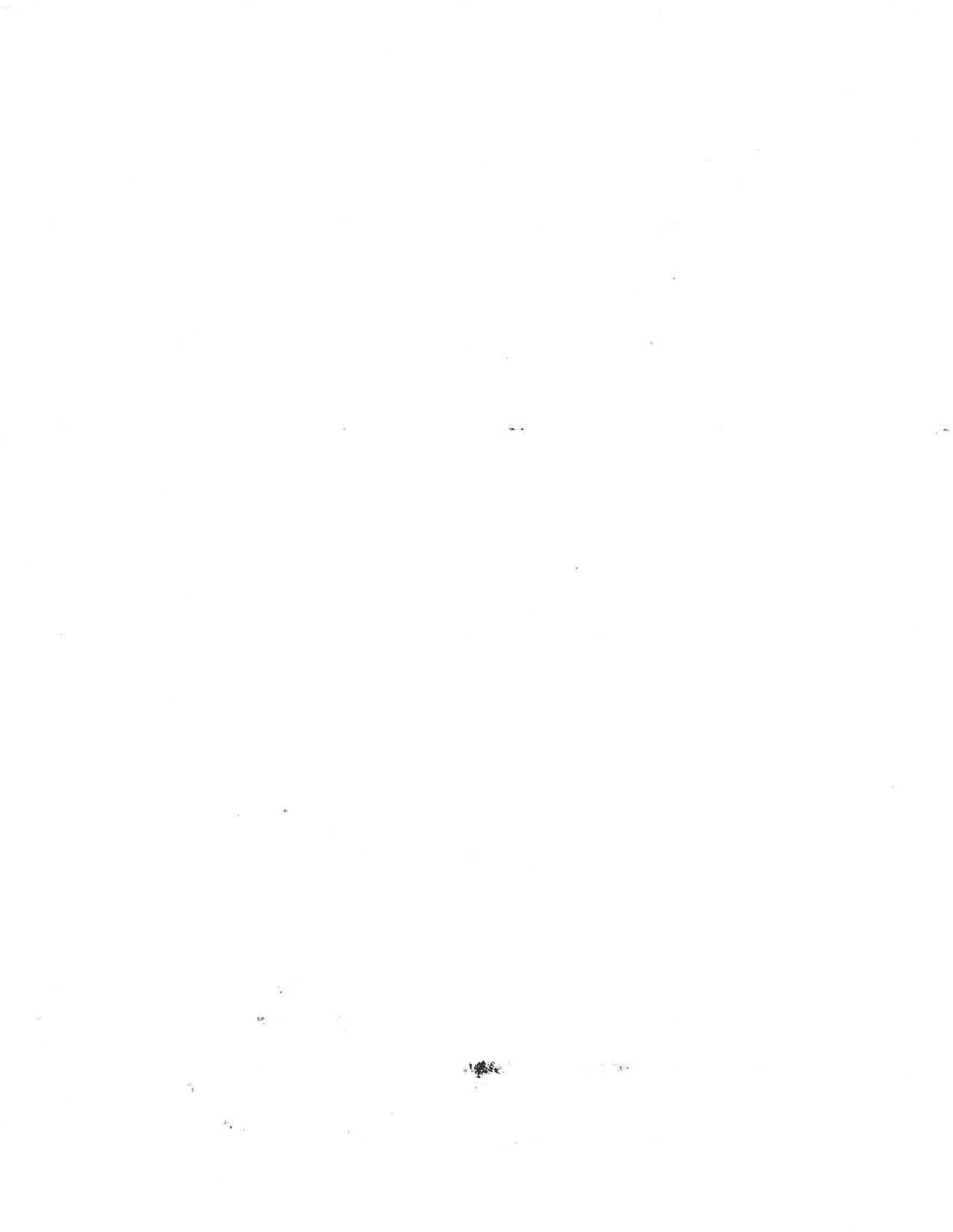
If you would like to arrange a speaking time, please e-mail me directly at kirk.acevedo@scholarshipsforburma.com, or contact me by phone at 202-680-8977.

Site created by Liz Calka www.lizcalka.com

info@scholarshipsforburma.com

P.O. Box 42911 Washington, DC 20067

(202) 680-8977



Raising Ying's College Scholarship

Fundraising Committee

A committee of six, including myself, was recruited to help raise money for Ying's education. I recruited members over the phone, in person, and by e-mail. Committee members' backgrounds came from former co-workers, mentors, family, and close friends.

Each member was responsible for raising \$2,500 on his/her own in a three-month period. Each member had three report dates which simply involved the member telling me how much had been raised on his/her behalf. After each report from the committee members, a master report with all the information was compiled and sent out to the committee.

The first committee report date was May 13, 2011. The committee had raised \$5,770 of the total \$7,226 (the rest had come in from unsolicited donations) by this time.

Donations

Donors are allowed to make donations online or by cash and/or check. Each donor is requested to fill-out a pledge card which allows us to keep track of the finances. Each donation and donor is recorded in an Excel spreadsheet as well.

Donors may make gifts in one payment or by installments. Installments allow donors to make larger contributions and space them over time (e.g. one donor was prepared to give \$100 but after she was told she could make it over time she signed up for \$500 over a one-year pay period). We created a billing system which would track pledged amounts and mail out bills monthly to donors who decided to pledge over a period.

The night prior to officially launching we hosted a “Scholarships for Burma kick-off party” at my apartment. Ying Kawn Tai called in via Skype and thanked everyone for working to get her into college. Afterward I made my official pledge for the campaign and asked if everyone would do the same and start the campaign off strong. That night brought in \$1,200.

The highest volume of donations thus far came in the first two weeks after launch, and totaled slightly over \$2,500. This was due mostly to supporting organizations advertising the website over Facebook and Twitter as well as our own social media launch and donation requests.

As of this writing (less than two months since launching), approximately \$8,000 has been raised.



Scholarships for Burma
c/o Kirk Acevedo
P.O. Box 32071
Washington, DC 20007
www.scholarshipsforburma.com

Welcome letter - Fundraising Committee

April 14, 2011

Dear

Welcome to the Scholarships for Burma fundraising committee! I am thrilled to have you involved as a member. As you read in the case statement, the final goal is \$26,220 for Ying's education. With your help, the committee will together raise a minimum \$15,000 of that sum, or over two years of Ying's college in Thailand. So thank you in advance for your commitment to Ying; this committee and your involvement will have a dramatic impact on her future.

As a committee member there are a few things you should know. Below you will find a brief outline of the committee members' goals, what to expect, its other members, and important dates to keep in mind. In order to meet Ying's financial needs by the time she enters Payap College in the fall, this campaign needs to move quickly, so the committee campaign will only last a little over a month.

Your commitment to this campaign ensures a vibrant start and strong finish. Before you begin, however, I would like to ask you to take a couple minutes and make your personal contribution to Ying's education.

You know what Ying has been through and overcome, and you have joined this committee because you believe sending her to college is the right thing to do. Your gift would be the perfect start to making her dream to go to school a reality.

Enclosed is a pledge card and return envelope for your convenience. I hope you will write in a gift that is generous and comfortable for you, and mail it with your first payment to the Treasurer, Carl DuBois, at the address printed on the card.

Thank you again so much for your commitment. Without your support and others, changing Ying's future would simply not be possible.

I'm looking forward to following up with you and your progress on this campaign. Please don't hesitate to call me with any questions you might have (202) 680-8977.

Sincerely,

Kirk Acevedo

Committee Member Description:

Committed to raising a minimum of \$2,500 towards the \$26,220 goal. There will be three report dates in which you simply notify me by phone the amount you have raised. I will send a letter out after all the committee members have reported with their totals.

Committee Members:

Acevedo, Edward and June (Venice, Florida)

Acevedo, Kirk (Washington, DC)

Cook-Deegan, Patrick (Washington, DC)

DuBois, Carl (Reno, Nevada)

McCarty, Sean (Washington, DC)

Schaitel, Jim (Idaho Springs, Colorado)

Committee Report Dates:

If Ying is to start school this year, she needs at least the first semester funding which totals \$7,000. Out of necessity this is a fast campaign, and the report dates scheduled every 2-3 weeks reflect that.

May 13th – First committee report

May 27th – Second committee report

June 17th – Final committee report



Scholarships for Burma
c/o Kirk Acevedo
Kirk.acevedo@scholarshipsforburma.com
P.O. Box 32071
Washington, D.C. 20007
www.scholarshipsforburma.com

Donor Solicitation letter

Date:

Dear

Starting October 15th, I will begin walking 450 miles between Burma's two largest cities—Rangoon and Mandalay—in order to raise \$26,220. This amount would give Ying Kawn Tai, a Burmese refugee whom I met in 2009, a full scholarship to college in Thailand. I want to ask for your support towards Ying's education.

Over Winter Break 2008-2009 I traveled to the Thailand-Burma border for two weeks with 12 other students from American University to learn about Burma. One young woman we met was Ying Kawn Tai. Although she was about my age, by the age of thirteen Ying had gone through more than most do in their entire lives. But it wasn't her past that haunted her... it was her future. I will never forget when, in that small house in Bangkok where she told us her story, she broke down and sobbed, telling our group, **"All I want is to go to school!"**

I realized in that moment how privileged I was and what an education looks like to many around the world—an impossible dream. But that didn't sit right, and I believe it does not have to remain that way.

With the help of you and others, this amazing young woman will make her dream a reality. Will you help me send Ying to college

Your support will contribute to changing not only her life, but the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of others from Burma in future generations.

This brief letter does not go into the details I would like to share with you about Ying, which is why I have enclosed Ying's story for you to read. Who is Ying? What is she doing? Why her? Why Now? These are all important questions, and I'm convinced the more you know about Ying, the more confident you will feel your support is not so much a gift as it is an investment. Only the people of Burma are to benefit with her education.

The Human Rights Action Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization generously lent Scholarships for Burma its non-profit status for this project. **All gifts to Scholarships for Burma go to support Ying's education; no money goes toward my trek for Ying's education through Burma.**

I have enclosed a pledge card and return envelope for your convenience. I hope you will write in an amount that is generous and comfortable for you, and return your gift today to the address listed on the pledge card.

If you know of anyone else who would be interested in receiving this letter, please let me know, or feel free to simply direct them to my website www.scholarshipsforburma.com.

Thank you. I appreciate your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you very soon, and I pledge to keep you informed of the campaign's progress and Ying's education.

Sincerely,

Kirk Acevedo

Below is a transcription of an hour long conversation I had with Ying on Skype over my Spring Break.

Background: Ying currently teaches for Shan Youth Power (SYP), a new but growing non-profit founded in 2002 to provide schooling for Burmese migrants working in Thailand. SYP is located on a construction site and currently reaches over 300 students a year. It is growing not necessarily because of excellent services or education, but need—over 80,000 Shan live in the area, most not reached by any form of education.

Exact Commentary from Ying Kawn Tai

"I grew up in Leikhe. Leikhe is a small Shan village of about 300 people. I have neighbors, but outside my house there is just a small road. Leikhe in Shan means 'place where you post'—like where you tie a horse—except in Burma we have cows, not horses. There are many mountains and monkeys in Leikhe. Everywhere you look there are mountains. Most people farm. They plant rice and garlic and fruit—mostly garlic, but also a lot of rice.

My family experienced forced labor because they worked for the government for free. The SPDC [State Peace and Development Council—military government of Burma] made my family plant a new crop, which they make into petrol. It didn't work and destroyed the soil. Also, all the village was forced to build the railroad near my village. We had to work for free. This was not our job, this was their job. We got no money. And my family still had to work for them.

It hasn't stopped. I have a book that tells of human rights abuses in Burma. I show people what they do to the Shan people. In my own home town there have been young women raped by the SPDC.

After my mother died, I walked with my father to Thailand. My sister stayed with my uncle. After two days walking we came to a road and a car took us to Thailand. In Thailand I helped my father sell produce and lottery tickets in the market. I also worked as a janitor for a long time. I woke up at 4:30am every morning to do this. When I worked, the day passing was just passing—that was it. I just wanted to make money. You know, stay one or two years, and then go back to Burma.

My father died from Tuberculosis. After my father died I tried to contact my sister. In Burma there are no phones so I had to write a letter. I told her I would come back to Leikhe and to wait for me. But my letter missed and she came to Thailand in 2001 when I went back to Burma. This time I told her to stay in Thailand and so I came back to meet her.

[In Thailand] I worked and she went to school. In 2008 she received a scholarship from Child Dream to attend Bangkok University. Right now she is in her second year. She likes school a lot. She studies news media. She comes to Chiang Mai to visit me when she has school breaks.

When I first came to Thailand I noticed the Thai people have more confidence than Burmese. The Thai are very creative and active in their thinking. I think Burma needs more knowledge; more critical thinking. This I believe can be accomplished, even if it's not very big. Knowledge starts small but becomes bigger. Knowledge can always improve.

There are 25 teachers [at Shan Youth Power where Ying teaches]. About five of these teachers have degrees. The difference between those that have a degree and those who don't is the level of study they teach. When someone has a degree, they are able to teach at a higher level.

Right now I am not a legal teacher. I do not have a teaching certificate. But I love to teach. I teach one camp [class]—24 students. I teach students English and math. I like English because I can teach Shan history and culture through it. Before I came [to Shan Youth Power] it was a problem because students didn't know where they came from or who they were. But now they know they are Shan and come from Burma.

My students are so active. In groups they think of how Burma can be in the future. They are confident and curious. They want to know more about their country and why they do not live there. They ask me, 'is it true we are the poorest people in the world?' They make me think and I must do research and so I learn too.

I would like to go back to Burma someday. No one [in Burma] knows what democracy or human rights means. Human rights? I did not know when I was in Burma. Democracy? I didn't know. I want to be a teacher who can help my community. My mother and father are dead so I would have no help but I am not a weak person. I would start all over again. I would bring to my community what I learn and what I know and find a way to teach them. First thing I would do is start an addition to school in my house—like after school. It would start small but will get bigger.

I think Burmese need to have more confidence in their thinking and doing. Right now we have no confidence to speak out. We fear to speak out. People are afraid because of the government. If students have no fear, people can change the system in a knowledgeable way.

I believe if we can build confidence among students, teachers, and communities then the government is afraid because the people have the power. In Burma democracy is fate. It is fate. It must happen."



SCHOLARSHIPS
for BURMA

Scholarships for Burma
c/o Kirk Acevedo
Kirk.acevedo@scholarshipsforburma.com
P.O. Box 32071
Washington, D.C. 20007
www.scholarshipsforburma.com

Donor Thank- you letter

Date:

Dear

Thank you so much.

Without considerable support, raising Ying's college scholarship will not be possible. I hope for you there is some excitement in knowing that though this campaign is for Ying, sending her to college is really an investment in a better future for Burma. To me at least, that's what is so inspiring about this campaign.

Sitting down to write this, I felt that a letter from me would be a good start, but a thank you really should come from Ying... after all, it's her life that will change forever because of your involvement. Enclosed is a letter Ying wrote for you.

She was concerned her English was not good enough to thank you properly, but after reading it I can't imagine you feeling anything but her sincerity. **I hope this letter from Ying to be the first of many between you and her over her college career** as I will send you updates of her progress—I know Ying is looking forward to my keeping you informed.

As for me, I am currently finishing my last round of finals at school, preparing for graduation, and beginning to train for the trek through Burma. I completed my first 20 mile walk through DC in mid-March and plan to do a two-week hike through either the Appalachian Trail or Sierra Nevada in August.

I hope you continue to follow Scholarships for Burma's progress throughout Ying's education.

Please don't hesitate to write or call me with any questions or comments you have.

Thank you again so much for your support. You will make a difference!

Sincerely,

Kirk Acevedo

Just to make sure our records are correct, you:

made a gift of \$

have pledged \$ and have asked us to bill you monthly.

If this is not correct, please e-mail me at kirk.acevedo@scholarshipsforburma.com, or the Treasurer Carl DuBois at carl.dubois@scholarshipsforburma.com.

Ying's Personal
Thank You

Dear Donor,

Thank you so much for your generous gift. The donation that you have provided will not only support my education but will also support the education of a new generation of students.

Right now I teach Shan migrant communities and their children in construction sites in northern Thailand. However, with your support, I will be able to graduate from university with a degree in English Communication and not only teach in migrant areas but I hope to return to Burma someday to teach a new generation there. The reason that I want to go back and teach there is because I hope to foster and develop a new generation of students who are creative and can think for themselves, rather than solely memorize facts the way I was taught to twenty years ago.

Seventy years ago the education system in Burma was very good. Many people from other countries such as Thailand and Laos came to study in Burma. But right now it is the opposite and people from Burma are going to other countries to receive an education. I think this is because the education system in Burma has not improved over the years. I do not blame the teachers who are teaching what they were taught themselves. But I do blame the government of Burma which has cut the funding for schools.

I hope to study English Communication. With a degree in English Communication, I will be able to provide students in Burma with a quality education that instills self-confidence and good communication skills. I believe access to educational opportunities is the only way to empower the next generation of students in Burma and bring about change.

Your donation does not only benefit me but also benefits the entire next generation of students in Burma. Thank you very much again for your support.

Sincerely,

Ying Kawn Tai

Pledge Cards for donations

Yes, I support Scholarships for Burma!

(Please print all information)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____

Please make checks payable to "Human Rights Action Center - Scholarships for Burma" and mail to:

Scholarships for Burma
c/o Carl DuBois, Treasurer
4275 Great Falls Loop
Reno, NV 89511

Mr. DuBois may be reached at carl.dubois@scholarshipsforburma.com, or by phone at 775-287-4521



Pledge Amount: \$ _____

(to be paid no later than December 31, 2011)

- Enclosed is my payment in full cash/check
 Please bill me in monthly increments starting ____/____/____
2011
 I will pay my pledged amount online

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Scholarships for Burma is a 501(c)(3) project of the Human Rights Action Center. Contributions are deductible for income tax purposes in the manner and to the extent of the law.

Yes, I support Scholarships for Burma!

(Please print all information)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____

Please make checks payable to "Human Rights Action Center - Scholarships for Burma" and mail to:

Scholarships for Burma
c/o Carl DuBois, Treasurer
4275 Great Falls Loop
Reno, NV 89511

Mr. DuBois may be reached at carl.dubois@scholarshipsforburma.com, or by phone at 775-287-4521



Pledge Amount: \$ _____

(to be paid no later than December 31, 2011)

- Enclosed is my payment in full cash/check
 Please bill me in monthly increments starting ____/____/____
2011
 I will pay my pledged amount online

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Scholarships for Burma is a 501(c)(3) project of the Human Rights Action Center. Contributions are deductible for income tax purposes in the manner and to the extent of the law.

Yes, I support Scholarships for Burma!

(Please print all information)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____

Please make checks payable to "Human Rights Action Center - Scholarships for Burma" and mail to the treasurer:

Scholarships for Burma
c/o Carl DuBois, Treasurer
4275 Great Falls Loop
Reno, NV 89511

Mr. DuBois may be reached at carl.dubois@scholarshipsforburma.com, or by phone at 775-287-4521



Pledge Amount: \$ _____

(to be paid no later than December 31, 2011)

- Enclosed is my payment in full cash/check
 Please bill me in monthly increments starting ____/____/____
2011
 I will pay my pledged amount online

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Scholarships for Burma is a 501(c)(3) project of the Human Rights Action Center. Contributions are deductible for income tax purposes in the manner and to the extent of the law.

Managing the Accounts

Scholarships for Burma is a project of the Human Rights Action Center (HRAC), a registered 501(c)(3) in the District of Columbia. Jack Healey, founder, Executive Director, and former head of Amnesty International for 12 years, lent Scholarships for Burma its non-profit status for this project. All donations made to the project are 100% tax-deductible and go directly to fund Ying's college scholarship. No donations go to fund the trek through Burma in October.

Another key figure in this campaign is the former president and founder of the The DuBois Group, a nationally recognized fundraising consultant firm I interned with in 2008. Since 2008, Mr. DuBois has been one of my mentors and has been intimately involved and invested in Scholarships for Burma officially as the Treasurer. It is the duration of this campaign (at least four years) that conflicted with my plans after school (one of which may be to volunteer with the Peace Corps), and Mr. DuBois kindly offered to assist *pro bono* by receiving donations, managing the accounts, and making disbursements in my absence.



Letter of intent
to HRAC

Dear Jack,

Thank you so much for taking my Scholarships for Burma project under the Human Rights Actions Center. It is essential for me to keep impeccable records of the money that comes in and out, and for you to know how that money is used.

As detailed in the draft case statement Mike sent you and attached in this message, I have estimated Ying Kawn Tai's total college education—room and board, tuition, and books—to cost \$26,220. Should the amount raised exceed \$26,220, at the end of Ying's four years the leftover money will be given to charity.

Funds will be released at the beginning of each semester of Payap College for Ying Kawn Tai. One set of funds will be routed to Payap College to pay for tuition, the other to Ying so that she can pay for books, rent, and the costs of living. These expenses will be tracked and provided to you at the end of each year.

For exceptional circumstances, you (or the person managing your accountant, whomever you prefer) will be notified of new releases of funds. I hope few, if any, of these situations will occur, but part of the budget is reserved for contingencies in case anything unexpected comes up.

Should I be out of the country for an extended period of time, I would like to add two other signatories on the account—Carl DuBois and Michael Haack—who will jointly be allowed to release funds with my permission. Both are very trusted friends invested in this project, Ying's education, and both have agreed to these responsibilities.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions you can reach me at 202-680-8977, or at kirka.acevedo@gmail.com

Thank you again so much. This project would not be possible without your generosity.

Sincerely,

Kirk Acevedo

Kirk Acevedo

1026
WACHOVIA
BRANCH 37352

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTION CENTER
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR BURMA
2300 41ST ST NW APT 201
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

Date

\$

Dollars

Pay to the
order of

Scan the
signature
area to verify
authenticity



Wachovia Bank, a division of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.

For

MP

⑆05400⑆220⑆2000053249845⑆1026

Voided check
for 501(c)(3) proof



Mission Statements



Scholarships for Burma
c/o Kirk Acevedo
P.O. Box 32071
Washington, DC 20007

Mission Statement:

The Human Rights Action Center is a non-profit based out of Washington, D.C. that works on the issues of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Aung San Suu Kyi. Using the arts and new technologies, they work creativity to develop new strategies to stop human rights abuses.

Scholarships for Burma is a sub-project campaign of the Human Rights Action Center to raise \$26,220 to send a Burmese refugee to college in Thailand. For more information, visit www.scholarshipsforburma.com

1

Executive Director's
fiscal sponsorship
letter



human rights action center

1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
www.humanrightsonlinecenter.org

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to inform you that Scholarships for Burma is a fiscally sponsored project of the Human Rights Action Center, a qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit.

Sincerely,


Jack Healey
Executive Director
April 7, 2011



Reimbursement
form (sample)

SAMPLE REIMBURSEMENT SHEET (NOT AC
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR BURMA

The following request is for reimbursement of funds related to operational expenses related to Scholarships for Burma. All reimbursements must be accompanied by receipts for the item(s) purchases.

Date: 02/22/2011

Name: KIRK ACEVEDO

Relationship to Scholarships For Burma:

Reimbursement Items Requested: (Must be accompanied by receipts)

#1 (3/28/2011) Printing of Case Statements (x10)

Amount: \$65.00

#2 (3/29/2011) Mailer x 2, mailings

Amount \$ 5.00

#3 (4/04/2011) Stationary

Amount \$ 13.50

#7 (4/04/2011) Committee letters printed

Amount: \$2.13

#8 (4/04/2011) Case Statements mailed to Committee members

Amount: \$17.5

Total = \$ 103.13

Approved by: Carl DuBois, Treasurer

Reimbursement Date: 04/18/2011

Form of Payment: (Check Number):

Amount: \$ 103.13

Send To: Carl DuBois, Treasurer
Scholarships For Burma
4275 Great Falls Loop
Reno, Nevada 89511

Informing the Public

Grassroots Outreach

Although this campaign focuses on sending Ying to college, it is also a vehicle to talk about Burma and the various problems the country faces. On the day of the launch, I spent four hours on AU's quad handing out 500 quarter sheets with a map of Burma and a route of the trek printed on it.

This was done for two reasons.

When I led the Student Campaign for Burma at AU, one of the first things we did was conduct a 'Burma-awareness quiz' on campus. We went around the quad each day for one week asking students to point out Burma on a blank map of Southeast Asia. Out of close to 200 students surveyed, less than 25% knew where Burma was located, though almost all could point to India, Thailand, or China. For the largest college in the United States teaching international relations, I always wondered why Burma, one of the world's most twisted and backwards country, so rich in development problems, never made it to the limelight, or why no one had even heard of the country or could point it out on the map. So the first, and most obvious reason, was to show how students how far I will be walking through Burma in October. The second, more subtle reason (and I think more important), was to simply show people where Burma is located on a map.

Talks

An important component to the campaign is the 'talks.' Whenever I get the chance to talk about Scholarships for Burma, it's a simple and effective way to tell people about Burma as well as ask for their support. I spoke to three classes and the community service fraternity at AU, as well as at the University of Maryland's Amnesty International human rights film festival. When possible, I use a power point with the photos of me along the Thai-Burma border, with Ying, and the progress we've

made on the campaign to send Ying to school. So far close to \$2,000 in gifts has come from public speaking.