

Iris is Burmese Karen who lives with her husband and two school-aged boys in Maesot. She evacuated Karen State to Umphium Refugee Camp in the mid 2000s, got her GED through Minmahaw, received a technology grant from BREF, and graduated with first honors in Education and Psychology from APIU in 2015. She spent the last nine years working for NGO's coordinating migrant education centers and working with families and children with disabilities. In the time she has been with us, she coordinated and delivered our application process, recruiting other BREF alumni to help find and screen candidates.



Saw Hsa Lay and Iris at Maw Kwee

She met with school administrators and local education support groups in the migrant education network. With this activity, coupled with her own life experience, Iris is helping us address critical unmet needs in the community. We look forward to her continued contributions.

BREF remains hopeful for a brighter future and dedicated to our efforts of providing education to those most in need. We would like to extend a huge thank you to all of our donors, volunteers, and partners.

Visit us at: www.brackettfund.org



Border crossing along Salween river at Mae Sam Laep.

Brackett Refugee Education Fund

Annual Brochure 2024

What Have We Been Doing?

The past five years have seen a lot of change in South Asia. The Tatmadaw Junta launches genocidal attacks on the Rohingya in Rakhine State. Survivors flee to refugee camps in Bangladesh or into the overcrowded slums of Cox's Bazar. Fighting along the Thai border recently peaks pressing families back into Thailand. Applications to school programs there are increasing rapidly, putting pressure on the network for educating migrants and refugees. The escape route from Chin State through into Mizoram State, India has been busy and many of the ethnic Chin families remain around Aizawl.

The Brackett Refugee Education Fund, BREF raises funds in the US to help displaced children in these areas get an education.



Students in Cox's Bazar line up for dismissal

The Covid pandemic passed through the region without creating a lot of problems. Whether it was the resiliency of the people, their discipline for effective hygiene, environmental factors rendering the pathogen less virulent, or some combination, it is a blessing that it did not add much to their suffering. The pandemic did interrupt our ability to travel and work as we had for 20 years. For scholarships, we moved to online applications with Zoom interviews and video submissions. We redoubled our online communication efforts with those who run schools in country. We brought online conversational English to augment local curricula. In Bangladesh, we supported developing video lessons for children in their native tongue. And we are rapidly moving more of our communications and fundraising activity online. **The pandemic made it necessary, but the people made it work.**



Beautifying the school



Naw Tamla introducing Meeliang to the students at Maw Kwee



Learning through creative expression Kutapalong Camp Sector 2W

BREF finds children most in need along the escape routes described previously and our support takes many different forms. In India displaced people can attend public schools but families need help with clothing and school supplies. In Bangladesh we work with Children on the Edge, COTE funding schools, teachers, developing curriculum and providing school supplies. We are also excited to support the effort to teach Rohingya children the newly developed alphabet and script for their native tongue. In the Thai/Burma border region, we support primary/secondary schools and offer scholarships for university study and vocational schools.



Vending area inside Mae La Camp Gate



Girl wants to be a reporter

Our operation in Thailand has seen the biggest changes. As recently as 2017, we had a dozen volunteer Trustee Representatives traveling annually from the US to South Asia to interview scholarship candidates. Generally TReps would operate in pairs visiting Thailand for six to twelve weeks a year for a period of five to ten years. Recruiting new TReps was increasingly difficult. The ideal TRep had a rare combination of passion, resources, and time. When the pandemic compelled a different approach, we moved the application process online. To keep the close personal connection with applicants and students, we have invigorated our alumni network, redoubled our efforts with our many school leaders, and hired a coordinator, Iris, to help us on the ground.