



## Hill Tribes - Sexual and Reproductive Health Education

Over the past few months Rejoice has been increasing the frequency of "Education and Prevention" visits to rural hill tribe villages in the border areas of Chiang Mai Province. The meetings are organised together with the HIV healthcare workers from the various district and sub-district hospitals, Chiang Dao, Mae Ai, Chai Prakan and Wiang Haeng. The village school or village hall are used for the meetings, either during school time or, in some cases, at weekends. To date, parents and teachers have welcomed the initiative of sex education, since by having "outsiders" explain about sexual health, it overcomes the embarrassment of them having to broach the subject themselves.

According to the World Bank, [adolescent fertility rate](#) (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19) is 45 in Thailand as a whole but among some hill tribes it will be certainly much higher.

The meetings are designed to be friendly and informal with the children



participating in small groups. Activities include;

- simulation using beakers of water, bleach and litmus paper of how HIV can pass from one person to another
- Quiz style questions about HIV and Aids answered by groups sitting in a circle using cards.

Winning group gets a reward

- Separate groups of boys and girls draw outline of a body and name body parts.
- Correct use of condoms
- Videos showing consequences of an unwanted pregnancy and how to protect against HIV (and other sexually transmitted diseases)
- Decision making

*A recent, well written article entitled "[Sex and Sensibility](#)" covering the same subject in Myanmar can be opened by following the above link.*



## Home Care Outreach to the Hill Tribes

Rejoice continues to extend its outreach to more remote difficult to reach villages and communities in Chiang Mai Province. This is being achieved with the original "Three Men and a Truck" concept in conjunction with the volunteer HIV care workers.

Since the distances from Chiang Mai to Mae Ai, and more recently, Wiang Haeng, are quite far (see table on right), once a week the team stay overnight in guest houses and visit further villages on their return to Chiang Mai.

The objectives of transparency, accountability and responsibility have been rigorously followed by means of a monthly reporting system which shows monthly costs and monthly accounting of the expenditure of each of the clinics. Newsletters are published twice per year and management and control of the Rejoice website has been brought in-house.

Also, an Excel data base of the scholarship children, with hyperlinks to each child's PDF file which contains photos, thank you notes and school reports is maintained.

The table below shows the number of beneficiaries registered in the Rejoice clinics. Included in the "Home Care" are remote hill tribe communities who are most vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV in particular. Each hill tribe has its own language and religion which makes communication difficult. Over time, by repeated visits, trust can be built up within the community. School visits can be organ-

Distance and Travel time from Chiang Mai		
Chiang Mai to:	Km	Hrs.
Tha Ton	219	4
Chiang Dao	90	1.5
Wiang Haeng	170	3.5
Fang	170	3
Mae Ai	190	3.5
Phrao	113	2
Chomthong	52	1
Sanpathong	21	0.5
Sankampeang	18	0.5

**Current truck distance (since November 2012) :**  
**145,000 km (23rd June 2016)**

ised to talk to the children about basic reproductive health and for older children about HIV and safe sex.

Thus by providing transport and working together with the Health Care Workers (HCW), more communities can be reached, more children can receive scholarships, more school and community Education and Prevention meetings can be made and counselling and advice can be given to more people by empathetic experts on the topic of "Living with HIV".

(PLHIV)				
Number of People living with HIV				
	Dec-13	Dec-14	Dec-15	Jul-16
<b>Home Care</b>				
Mae Ai	36	38	47	49
Sankampeang	54	54	54	54
Chiang Dao Home Care	128	138	147	151
Chai Prakan	N/A	N?A	N/A	3
Wiang Haeng	NA	9	12	14
	<b>218</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>Core Clinics</b>				
Chiang Dao	93	94	99	100
Chomthong	18	18	18	18
Sanpathong	43	43	43	43
Sankampeang	36	38	40	40
Phrao	59	60	61	61
	<b>249</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>Formula Milk</b>				
	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Scholarships</b>				
University	8	7	7	8
High School	11	11	12	8
Junior +pre School	47	47	49	52
	<b>66</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>

## The Lahu Hill Tribes of Thailand

**The Lahu** are a strong independent and very diverse ethnic group who number about 60,000 in Thailand. The Lahu are located primarily in [Chiang Mai](#) and [Chiang Rai](#) provinces, but can also be found in considerable numbers as far south as [Tak](#) province. Their settlements are usually remote from roads and towns, due to their strong commitment to the maintenance of the Lahu way of life.

The Lahu are complex and diverse ethnicity. In Thailand there are no fewer than six different Lahu tribes, some of whose languages are not mutually intelligible. The majority of Lahus in Thailand are Red Lahu, pantheistic animists who follow a *Dtobo*, a messianic leader. There are also a significant number of Black, Yellow and Shehle Lahus in Thailand, many of whom have been Christian for nearly one hundred years. Black Lahu are the most populous throughout Southeast Asia and theirs is considered to be the standard Lahu dialect.

Although primarily subsistence farmers, growing rice and corn for their own consumption, the Lahu are also proud of their hunter-warrior heritage. They remain a strict, serious people governed by strong principles of right and wrong, every individual in the village answering to the common will of the elders. While less importance is placed on the extended family than in other hill tribe communities, the Lahu are still strongly committed to principles of unity and working together for survival. Lahus may have the most gender-equitable society in the world.

(Source: <http://www.hilltribe.org/lahu/>)



**Dr. Martin Huddart (Rejoice Foundation Trustee) with Gee Jaiglar (Rejoice Team leader), Kanda Sing Chai Chid (Healthcare worker) in Kaenoi, Lahu village on the Myanmar border, visiting HIV patient Nachi Aiwa (52 years old) and her daughter Somphet (16 years old)**

Links to further information for the Lahu (Muser) hill tribes

<http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat5/sub31/item184.html#>

<http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/text?people=Lahu>

<http://lahuhilltribe.blogspot.com/2011/10/traditional-lahu-new-year.html>

<http://a.northernthailand.com/hilltribes-of-thailand/377-the-lahu-hilltribe-of-thailand.html>



## Chai Prakan: Lahu Village (Education and Prevention)



One of Rejoice's objectives is to reach out to as many *new people* living with HIV as possible. To this end Rejoice has begun networking with the HIV healthcare workers at Chai Prakan Hospital.

On Saturday 9th of April, Rejoice and the healthcare workers were invited by Plan International, to help organise an *Education and Prevention* meeting in a remote Lahu village, Huay Nam Dip. The village has a population of about 250 agricultural workers and their families living in 60 houses. It is situated close to the Myanmar border opposite Shan state. The village is not connected to the Electricity Grid but utilises small solar power cells to pump water and it is very difficult to reach the village especially in the rainy season.

A major concern for the hospital is the increase in infections among the Lahu Hill Tribe teenagers especially at the time of the [Lahu New Year](#). The celebrations last for 3 - 5 days and there is much love making between the youngsters. Because of the stigma of HIV many do not disclose their HIV status with the

result that the virus is easily transmitted. The solution to this is difficult, since the status of person is often only known to themselves and the healthcare workers, who endeavour to persuade the person to use condoms, often without much success.

The meeting attempted to redress this situation. Since the meeting was 'open to all', people of all ages attended and it was necessary to split the people into appropriate groups. The meeting was

very informal with dancing and games accompanying the more serious aspects of reproductive health and HIV transmission and prevention.

Communication was difficult since the Lahu speak their own language and many, especially the older members, do not understand Thai, although their children learn Thai at the local school.



**Lahu New Year Celebrations at the Lahu village, Huaijakan**



## Chai Prakan - Lahu Home Care



Parents (mainly mothers since the men were working in the fields) and children at Wiang Pha Pattana village hall

### Reproductive Health Event at 2 Lahu hilltribe villages in Chai Prakan District.

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016, Rejoice together with Plan International and HIV healthcare workers from Chai Prakan Hospital held similar events at two Lahu hill tribe villages in remote areas in Chai Prakan district. The event was held before the monsoon rains had arrived since, in the rainy season, the villages can only be accessed by dirt roads and are difficult to reach and occasionally cut-off by flooding.

In the morning, the larger village, Wiang Pha Pattana was visited where over a hundred villagers, mainly women and children (the men were at work in the fields and orchards) had assembled in the village hall. Introductions were made and games were played to relax

both the children and parents. The language of the village is Lahu and although the children learn Thai in school it was often necessary for the village head man and school teacher to help with translations. An informal presentation about reproductive health, safe sex and how to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STD'S) was given to all and demonstrations made on the correct way to use a condom. A small snack lunch was provided for everyone and toys and games were given to the children.



In the afternoon, a similar event was made at a smaller Lahu village, Mae Fang Luang, where about 20 villagers had assembled.





## SDL Bangkok visit Chiang Dao



SDL, a language technology company based in Maidenhead in England are the main supporters of Rejoice. They have an office in Bangkok and in January five staff members, lead by Winston Wong (Country Manager), visited Rejoice to observe first hand the work carried out by Rejoice in a field location. The group, together with the Rejoice Team and Dr. Martin Hudart made an overnight visit to Chiang Dao where they distributed scholarships to 8 of the 12 the children sponsored by SDL. They also witnessed an Education and Prevention session at a school in Chiang Dao and a home-care visit to a Lahu hill-tribe village.

A very successful visit only dampened by the very cold weather they experienced. It was one of the coldest daytime temperatures ever recorded in Chiang Mai; Noon temperature 12 degC, this in the tropics in January. Dr. Martin remarked that the temperature in London (from where he had recently arrived) was 16 degC.



**Lahu traditional dress**



**Winston with Dr. Martin and Gee**



**Lots of goodies**



## Lisu Education and Prevention



Nong Khaem is a remote Lisu hill tribe village. Together with the HIV volunteers from Chiang Dao hospital and local village volunteers an "Education and Prevention" event was held at Nong Kaem school.

Although everyone was welcome to attend, the main target of the meeting was to bring together as many young people as possible to teach on the risks of HIV, modes of transmission, safer sex techniques and reducing the stigma of the disease.

This was achieved, in part, through informal discussion and a simple "bleach, water and litmus paper" experiment of how easily HIV can be transmitted.

The overall objective of the meetings was to reduce unwanted pregnancies and to educate youth, so that they are aware how HIV and other sexually diseases are transmitted and how they can be prevented.



*Lisu Hill Tribe (Wikipedia)*



## The Rejoice Education Scholarship Project

Children living within a family affected by HIV are eligible for a scholarship. The child may be an AIDS orphan, living with one parent, living with grandparents or living with relatives. Rejoice provides scholarships which enables the child to attend school, whilst allowing them to grow up within their own ethnic community rather than them being institutionalized in an orphanage. Currently there are 24 HIV+ children receiving scholarships. Also 8 students are attending University or Technical College and next year a similar number is expected to graduate from school to higher education. Without the Scholarship Programme it is very likely that this would not have been possible. A database of all the children is updated continually and database files are linked to PDF files for each child.

71 students benefit from the **School Scholarship Programme**.

Ostensibly, the sponsorship is in the form of an educational scholarship, but in reality it is much more, it will:

- allow the child to attend school
- allow the child to grow-up in his/her community with their extended family
- allow the child to learn to speak the language and follow the religion of their community
- make it easier for the family to accept financial help – the money is received on behalf of the child
- prevent the child becoming institutionalised in an orphanage
- be a significant factor in deciding whether the child continues his/her education to high school, college or university

SDL Foundation is currently sponsoring 12 children in the up-

per primary and secondary level. As can be seen from the table below, these children come from families ravaged by HIV Aids with at least one or both parents being HIV positive. The financial plights of these families are dire with the grandparents being the breadwinners.

Although basic education is free in Thailand, textbooks, writing materials, uniforms, daily commute etc is not covered. Therefore, without SDL, these children would have dropped out of school to earn whatever little they can as unskilled labourers. Therefore, SDL's support is crucial in providing the education foundation for these children to break-out of the poverty trap.

A wonderful way to help such families is to sponsor a child's education for one year. Recently, Rejoice Charity introduced a 3-tiered education sponsorship program (primary, secondary and college/university). This is to better reflect the differences in costs associated with each group of students;

- For infants and Junior School children 5,000 baht,
- Secondary School children (ages usually between 16 and 18) 7,000 baht
- College and University students 10,000 baht.

The higher figure of 10,000 baht reflects the higher cost of transportation and fees etc.

Rejoice keeps a PDF file, with text and pictures, for each student and an XLS database of all the students. Below is an example of a translation of a "Thank you" letter from a student. This is included, together with the original letter in Thai, [in the PDF file](#).

*Hello,*

*My name is Tidarat Yain. I am studying in Grade 12 at Chiang Dao Wittayakom School. I live with my grandparents who are very old and not very healthy but they both love me. We are all a little bit sick because it is cold in mornings and hot in the afternoons.*

*My grandparents work hard so that they can afford to send me to school. Transport to school costs 500 baht every month and lunch costs 50 baht every day.*

*When I am at home I help by doing the washing and ironing and also cleaning the house because I want my grandparents to relax and not become tired. At the weekends I help by making bamboo baskets, some days I make 30 baht and other days 50 baht.*

*I promise to study hard and be good for my grandparents and my sponsors.*

*Finally, I would like to thank you very much for your support again and I will use the sponsorship money in the best way. Without your support I would be unable to attend school.*

*I hope that you are happy and healthy and I will always remember you.*

*Best regards, Tidarat Yain*



## ....Education Scholarships



### Sponsor a Child's Education

There are many families affected by HIV/Aids. It could be that grandparents, relatives or one parent have taken on the responsibility of raising children affected by HIV. The child may be also be infected or orphaned by the virus. The hardships and difficulties of bringing up children in such circumstances can be quite substantial. Often without a regular income the household can be in danger of falling into abject poverty.

A wonderful way to help such families is to sponsor a child's education for one year. For either, at least 5,000 baht (for pre-school, primary and secondary school students) or, at least 7,000 baht (for high school) or, at least 10,000 baht for (college/university students). The excess goes towards providing formula milk, medicines, provisions and fuel for Rejoices mobile outreach and home care clinics.

There are many more children who could greatly benefit from your sponsorship. Please link to ["Ways to Help"](#) page on the website.

Please go to the [DONATE](#) page to sponsor a child and to make a donation.

Please also send an email to; [contact@rejoicecharity.com](mailto:contact@rejoicecharity.com) so that we can thank you.



## Please Support Rejoice....

- **By direct bank transfer;**

Donations can be made either direct to the local (Thai baht) account in Chiang Mai, Thailand or, alternatively to London, UK (GB pounds). or Maastricht, Netherlands (Euro). Account details are shown in the tables below.

Account	Alan Wheeler (Rejoice Charity)
Bank name:	Bangkok Bank PLC
Address:	Thapae Road
	Chiang Mai 50100
	Thailand
Account No.	251-4-767678
Swift Code:	BKKBTHBK

Account:	Rejoice Foundation UK
Bank Name:	HSBC Ltd
Address:	Canary Wharf, London E14
Account No:	41466879
Sort Code:	40-02-44
Swift Code:	MIDLGB22
IBAN	GB89MIDL40024441466879

Account:	Alan Wheeler
Bank Name:	ABN AMRO Bank
Address:	Maastricht,
	Netherlands
Account No:	Acct no: 41.28.64.495
BIC code:	ABNANL2A
IBAN:	NL85ABNA0412864495

- **By Credit Card via PayPal**

If you want to make a donation via PayPal, [go to Rejoice website and click on the "Donate Today"](#) button in the top right corner.

- **Create a Standing Order**

If you would like to make a regular contribution /donation, of whatever size, please print out and complete this standing order form with your bank details and amount pledged, then return it to Rejoice Foundation UK (not your bank) at the address below;

*Nigel Haunch, Chair, Rejoice Foundation UK, 119 Dundee Wharf, Three Colt Street, London E14 8AY*

- **Gift Aid**

If you are a UK taxpayer, Rejoice can reclaim tax on your donation from the Inland Revenue at no extra cost or inconvenience to you. This currently makes your donation (at basic rate) worth an extra 25p for each £1 given.

If you pay tax at the higher rate, you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment return.

**For us to benefit in this way when you donate, you can download and print this [PDF form](#), sign it and send to the address below OR, alternatively, you could email your home address to [contact@rejoicecharity.com](mailto:contact@rejoicecharity.com) and we will post the Gift Aid form to you to sign and return to;**

*Nigel Haunch, Chair, Rejoice Foundation UK, 119 Dundee Wharf, Three Colt Street, London E14 8AY*

- **Send a Cheque**

If the banks are still accepting cheques and you wish to make a one-off or intermittent donation to Rejoice, please make your cheques payable to 'Rejoice Foundation UK' and send them to;

*Nigel Haunch, Chair, Rejoice Foundation UK, 119 Dundee Wharf, Three Colt Street, London E14 8AY*



## Testimonials

I was stunned by the remarkable progress the Charity had made over that period. By linking in with volunteer HIV health workers from Chiang Dao Hospital, Mae Ai and San Kamphaeng clinics, Rejoice has effectively increased their outreach workforce from one to seven health care workers, with minimal staff costs. This has expanded the catchment area significantly and Rejoice is now visiting villages as close to the Burmese border as it is possible to travel by road and reaching communities, whom have no access to health care locally.



**Dr. Martin Huddart (Trustee  
Rejoice Foundation)**

However, the most impactful part was being able to use my time to give back in a meaningful way to those in need. It's clear the patients require the check in, medical support, and supplies the outreach team provides, but I think just as crucial is the emotional support – knowing they can count on an experienced team who cares being there for them on a consistent basis. At every clinic and home we visited, the patients faces lit up when they saw the truck and the guys coming to spend time with them. Knowing the Rejoice team does this week on week, year on year, my efforts were really just a small drop in the bucket compared to the work they do. I have so much respect and admiration for Alan, Gee, Wi, and Arm, and I'm so grateful to them for facilitating this experience for me.



**Russ Taufa (SDL Vietnam)**

Coming in for just a week, or two or three won't make it far even if you knew the language. Even if you would possess skills and education that are directly linked to the charity's field of work. You need months to get to know the culture, the system and most important of all the people and gain their trust.

Money is easy to give. PayPal, credit cards, money transfer, you name it. Problem is finding a charity that puts the money to good use. For the benefit of the people. A good indicator for a charity like this can be found from what Rejoice does. A real grassroots charity run by locals, that employs locals, empowerment is done by locals and thus they gain the trust of the people they work so hard (and with so little!) for.



**Viljami Hätönen  
(research student, and  
paramedic, Finland)**

## Notes for Donors

Please let us know about your donation by sending a short email to; [contact@rejoicecharity.com](mailto:contact@rejoicecharity.com) So that we may contact you and thank you directly.

If you would like part of your donation to go towards sponsoring a child's education (5,000 baht) please let us know whether we should select a child on your behalf or you would prefer to select a child yourself, in which case we will send the Excel file 'Children Seeking Sponsorship' to help you decide.

**Thank you all for your generous support.**

Please visit our website; [www.rejoicecharity.com](http://www.rejoicecharity.com) and let your friends and relatives hear about us by forwarding this newsletter or better still printing it and use it as a discussion topic.

Your help and constructive criticism will be gratefully received so please send all your comments to;

**[contact@rejoicecharity.com](mailto:contact@rejoicecharity.com)**

### Rejoice Foundation UK Trustees

The international fundraising arm of Rejoice based in the UK was started by Nigel Haunch who, after living and working in Asia for some years, returned to London to run his own media consultancy business. Having learned about the work of Rejoice on the internet, Nigel made a visit and was moved by the scale of the HIV/AIDS crisis in northern Thailand. At the same time, he was impressed by the extraordinary achievements of Rejoice in helping those infected and affected by the epidemic, particularly in outlying rural communities.

The Trustees of Rejoice Foundation UK are as follows;

Chairperson Nigel Haunch

Vice Chair Dr Darrall Higson—a Consultant in Pharmaceutical Medicine and formerly a medical director of GlaxoSmithKline  
RFUK honorary Secretary Prof Philip Evans, Director of Research for the University of Westminster,

Dr Martin Huddart is a General Practitioner in East London and also a tutor at the UK's Royal Free and University College Medical Schools

Alan Wheeler, a retired petroleum petrophysical engineer who now lives in Chiang Mai



[Alan Wheeler](#)  
July 2016

