

## RMFC 2024 AGM Report – Education

Education is one of the areas that has made a huge difference to the hilltribe children at RMFC. The new school year begins soon, and we will have a spread of students from Prep level right through to third year university. We will have one more entering university this coming academic year, studying Social and Community Development, coupled with Business Administration. Our student entering third year is working towards finishing her degree in Public Health. We also have a third student beginning a tertiary course at a Technical College, to gain his qualification in hair dressing, which has long been his passion. These courses are all through institutions in Chiang Rai. Two other senior boys have found local work and will try and continue schooling through Distance Education.

Recent end of year school reports sent by Asa show the majority of the students have done very well. The schools report on a GPA scale to 4, so it is easy to get a fair indication of how they are achieving. Preps don't receive an academic report, but all others in primary and high school are assessed across 12 subject areas. 95% of our students received a GPA of above 2. Of those below, one is at Special School, one in mid-primary level is getting extra learning support and one who is well suited to a manual job, still wants to continue in high school for now, so we have been able to support those individually according to their needs. Of the 95%, 32% have a GPA between 2-3, 30% are between 3 and 3.5 and an astounding 33% gained a GPA above 3.5, including two who achieved a straight 4.

This last academic year, the funded tutoring for Thai language was channelled into a smaller group. We targeted the younger and newer children (as they have had less exposure to Thai language) as well as any who would benefit with intensive support. The lessons were conducted at their school in classrooms with teachers there after school, a setting more conducive to learning. Reports indicated this had lifted these children to "standard requirements" level with improvement by all.

Although still small in number, those looking to tertiary study are increasing gradually. This is such new territory considering where and how far they have all come. There is a higher number of girls in the coming senior cohort, and they have shown interest in nursing courses. We know that there are a lot of courses available in Chiang Rai and as more trickle across to these options, the younger ones can see these as tested pathways. It must seem a huge leap from what they know and where they have come from. It is worth noting that a number of the senior children are engaged in part time week-end work around Mae Suai ranging from café/waiting jobs to rubber tapping, other manual tasks and seasonal tourism work, which is giving them a feel for independence and life skills.

We can celebrate with great joy, the achievements evident here. This is due to the children's' efforts, the importance placed on the privilege of education, the funding by sponsors and donors to cover schooling requirements along with the extra tutoring of some, as well as their health and wellbeing, which is obviously necessary for their focus and success at study. Overarching all this is God's hand and blessing which continues to make it all come together in such a miraculous way. Thanks be to God.

Jennifer Stevens - 9 May, 2024