



Burma Children *Medical Fund* **Health for All**



WHEELCHAIR REPORT 2025



INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Burma Children Medical Fund (BCMF) established the Wheelchair Project with the mission of providing properly fitted wheelchairs for children and adults with mobility impairments. Many families living along the Thai-Burma border face significant financial barriers in accessing wheelchairs. Children, then, are often left immobile and unable to attend school, play with other children, or participate in the daily life of their communities, while adults lose much of their independence, social interaction, and ability to provide for their families. Caretakers frequently sustain injuries, such as back strains and herniated discs, from lifting and moving loved ones who cannot move independently and are handed the emotional burden of round-the-clock care that limits their own independence and livelihood opportunities.

Since the project began, BCMF has received various styles of wheelchairs but currently provides three different models to recipients. Child wheelchairs are donated by Wheelchairs for Kids in Australia. Wheelchairs in various sizes are provided by Free Wheelchair Mission through the Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development (RICD) Wheelchair Project, while other mobility devices such as crutches and walkers, are also provided by the RICD Wheelchair Project. BCMF also provides standard wheelchairs, funded by BCMF's donors, for medical facilities and for individuals whom the other models do not suit.

BCMF works both directly with recipients and through local partners, including hospitals, educational centres, villages, and towns in Thailand and schools, non-profit organisations and rehabilitation centres in Burma, to help individuals regain independence, return to education or employment, and re-engage in community life. Recipients are measured and fitted for wheelchairs that can be adjusted to their individual body size and needs, while BCMF also runs workshops to train partners to properly fit recipients with wheelchairs on their own and provides them with the requested number of wheelchairs each year.

From 2014 to 2024, BCMF provided **2,485** wheelchairs and other mobility devices to communities in Thailand, Burma, and Laos, while training **358** staff members from partner organisations on how to properly and safely fit recipients with wheelchairs.

This report outlines recipient data for 2025, key project highlights, challenges faced in 2025, goals for 2026, and beneficiary stories.

2025 RECIPIENTS

Overall, BCMF distributed **199** wheelchairs and other mobility devices in 2025, supporting **78** beneficiaries in Burma and **121** in Thailand. Additionally, the team donated **50** wheelchairs to Lao Friends Hospital for Children in Laos. Another **97** were donated to BCMF trained partners throughout Burma and Thailand, including hospitals and clinics in migrant, IDP camp, and refugee camp communities, Thai police stations, special education centres, and community-based organisations.

BCMF trained a total of **17** staff members from partner organisations to properly and safely fit recipients with wheelchairs, **5** in Burma and **12** in Thailand. Furthermore, BCMF produced videos in Thai and Burmese, instructing recipients on how to maintain their wheelchairs at home.



Shine plays with his mother in his new wheelchair.

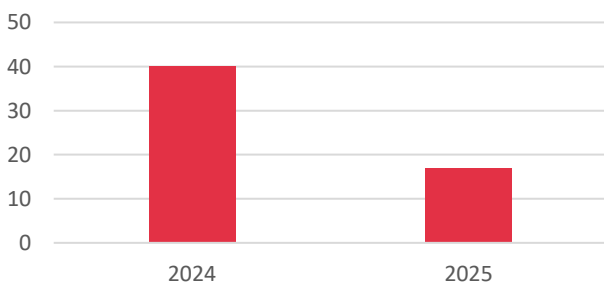


[Thai Instructional Video](#)



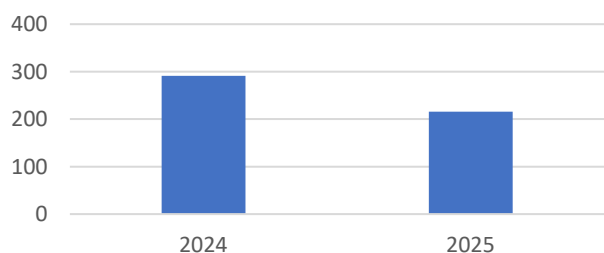
[Burmese Instructional Video](#)

Partners Trained



40 partners were trained in 2024, compared with 17 in 2025.

Mobility Devices



291 recipients were fitted with wheelchairs and other mobility devices in 2024, compared with 199 in 2025.

2025 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In 2025, BCMF sought to grow the wheelchair project and expand wheelchair fitting services. Although, this year the team fitted **199** mobility devices, which was less than 2024's total of **291**, a total of **147** mobility devices were donated to partners, allowing BCMF to reach a total of **346** mobility device recipients. BCMF also trained fewer partners to fit wheelchairs, with **17** partners trained in 2025, compared to **40** in 2024. The decline in fittings and training largely reflects two factors. First, 2024 saw unusually high numbers as progress was still being made on a large waiting list of recipients after BCMF was finally able to receive Wheelchair for Kids following delays previously due to COVID-19. Second, fewer missions inside Burma in 2025 due to security conditions limited BCMF's access to recipients and partners in conflict affected areas.

BCMF also set a specific goal to provide over **100** wheelchairs in Yangon, Mandalay, and Bago Divisions, as there had been a growing waitlist in those regions. Despite continuing to face challenges accessing many regions in Burma due to security concerns, BCMF was able to provide **78** beneficiaries with custom-fitted wheelchairs.

2025 LOCATION SPOTLIGHTS



Recipients and caregivers pose with BCMF staff at a wheelchair mission in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory.



Recipients and caregivers pose with the BCMF team after a fitting mission at Umphang Special Education Centre.

In Burma, BCMF successfully expanded the wheelchair project to Nay Pyi Taw in Burma, fitting **29** recipients with wheelchairs and providing training for **5** local staff members.

In Thailand, the team established new partnerships with **3** special education centres in Kamphaeng Phet and Tak provinces, fitting a total of **24** recipients with wheelchairs. At the Kamphaeng Phet Special Education Centre, the team fitted **11** recipients. At the Tha Song Yang Special Education Centre, the team fitted **7** recipients. Finally, at the Umphang Special Education Centre, the team fitted **6** recipients.

The team also held a wheelchair fitting training session at the BCMF headquarters, where **12** staff members from BCMF and partner organisations, including Mae Tao Clinic, Stepping Stones Therapy, and Safe Child Thailand, participated and received the ISWP Wheelchair Service Provider Certification at the Basic Level.

2025 CHALLENGES

In Burma, the team continues to face challenges in meeting demand. Despite fitting **78** beneficiaries, the waitlist for mobility devices in Burma grew from **56** to **70**. Longstanding barriers for patients, including poverty, transportation issues, and a lack of healthcare providers, have been exacerbated by the conflict. However, the main obstacle contributing to the growing waitlist has been the difficulty of sending wheelchairs to distribution centres inside of Burma. Due to the situation, transporting wheelchairs in Burma has been expensive, and shipments take six months to a year to reach their destinations.

Additionally, due to safety concerns, the team was only able to travel to Yangon Division, Mandalay Division, and Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory for wheelchair distribution and training missions in Burma. However, demand for mobility devices is urgent across the entire country.



The BCMF team assembles a wheelchair donated by Wheelchairs for Kids at a wheelchair fitting mission in Burma.



Per sits confidently in his new wheelchair.



U Maung sits gratefully in his new wheelchair

OBJECTIVES FOR 2026

Looking forward to 2026, BCMF will continue to work with Thai special education centres and local partners to identify gaps in access to wheelchairs and mobility devices for individuals with mobility impairments.

Redoubling its efforts in Burma, BCMF plans to return to Bago Division, which, in recent years, the team has been unable to reach. New partnerships will hopefully enable the team to organise the necessary security logistics to make the trip. The team also plans to run wheelchair fitting missions in new townships in Mandalay Division, Burma.

In 2026, BCMF will also focus on supporting refugees living in all nine of the refugee camps in Thailand. The team will work with Karen Women's Organisation (KWO), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and Malteser International (MI) to conduct fitting missions at the camps, helping fill the gap in mobility devices left after funding for programs providing wheelchairs for children and adults in the camps ended in 2025. BCMF will also work with rehabilitation centres for weapon wounded in Mae Hong Song, Chiang Mai and Tak provinces.



Chawany laughs in her new wheelchair.



Min smiles with newfound self-confidence in his new wheelchair.

BENEFICIARY STORIES

Tharaphi is an eight-year-old girl from Bago Division, Burma, who was born with cerebral palsy. Her condition causes severe muscle stiffness and weakness, which makes daily activities and walking very difficult. Without a wheelchair, she used to crawl to get around and spent most of her time lying in bed, as sitting up in a chair caused her discomfort due to her muscle stiffness. Due to her family's financial situation, her family could not afford to buy her a wheelchair.

Tharaphi received her first wheelchair from BCMF, donated by Wheelchairs for Kids. Her upright position in the new wheelchair has helped to relieve her back pain and improve her posture. The built-in tray of the wheelchair gives Tharaphi a space to eat and play sitting in an upright position.

Her mother said, "Thank you so much for donating this wheelchair. It has made a huge difference in our lives. We couldn't afford one on our own. Now, my daughter can go outside, sit comfortably and interact with others. We are so grateful to the donors and BCMF."



Tharaphi gives a big smile to the camera in her new, custom-fitted wheelchair.

Phaeowa is an 11-year-old girl living in Kamphaeng Phet Province, Thailand, with her mother. Phaeowa was born premature with hydrocephalus and cannot walk or stand. She spends most of her days lying down or in a wheelchair.



Phaeowa being fitted in her new wheelchair.

She was provided with a wheelchair by the local Subdistrict Administrative Organisation, but the wheelchair caused her pain due to its hard metal seat and back. Additionally, its two large wheels had begun to deteriorate. However, her mother could not afford to purchase a new wheelchair.

Due to the condition of her previous wheelchair, visiting staff from the Kamphaeng Phet Special Education Centre referred Phaeowa to BCMF for a new wheelchair. When Phaeowa received the new wheelchair, donated by Free Wheelchair Mission, Phaeowa's mother said, "The wheelchair that was given by BCMF will help my daughter so much. It fits her well and is much more comfortable compared to her old one. When I am working, Phaeowa spends all day in a wheelchair. I am very grateful and thankful for the teachers from the special education centre and the organisation [BCMF] for thinking of my daughter."



Phaeowa waits excitedly to receive her new wheelchair.



Kyaw's mother holds him in a wrap, which is how she used to carry him before he received his wheelchair.

Kyaw is a nine-year-old boy with cerebral palsy who lives in Tak Province, Thailand, with his parents. Kyaw's father works as an agricultural day labourer while his mother takes care of him at home. The family lacks the means to purchase a wheelchair for Kyaw, and their remote location makes it difficult to find one even if they could afford one. Kyaw attends a special education centre, which referred him to BCMF for wheelchair support.

Due to his condition, Kyaw often missed school. His teachers had to carry him around the school as he could not walk or crawl, and it became more difficult for his family and teachers to carry him as he grew.

In collaboration with the school, BCMF fitted Kyaw with a wheelchair donated by Wheelchairs for Kids. When he first sat in the wheelchair, Kyaw was visibly excited and did not want to get out of it. His mother said, "As he is getting too heavy to carry, he often stays home alone when we go out. This wheelchair gives him the freedom to go to school every day, and his teachers don't need to carry him around."

With the new wheelchair provided by BCMF, Kyaw can be transported easily and safely. He enjoys being around people, and the wheelchair will allow him to engage more in school and social activities. His mother said, "This wheelchair will change my son's life and make our daily lives much easier. Thank you to all the donors for this wheelchair."



Kyaw sits comfortably in his new wheelchair.

Choe is a 19-year-old woman with cerebral palsy living in Tak Province, Thailand, with her parents. Her father is an agricultural day labourer, while her mother takes care of her at home. Because of her condition, Choe cannot move around the house on her own, so her mother has to help her when she wants to go to the bathroom or go outside. Choe previously had a wheelchair, but the tyres were worn, and the brakes were stuck, so Choe's mother was forced to carry her whenever she wanted to move around the house. As a result, Choe rarely went outside, spending most of her days lying down.

In March 2025, Choe visited Mae Tao Clinic for physiotherapy. There, she was referred to BCMF and received a wheelchair, donated by the Free Wheelchair Mission, with a removable 3D printed tray created and added by BCMF's 3D printing team.

Now, with the wheelchair, Choe's parents can easily move her around the house and take her outside. Her mother said, "Every evening, I will bring her outside, and she can use the tray to eat. We cannot afford to buy another wheelchair on our own, so thank you so much for donating this wheelchair."



Choe can hardly contain her excitement in her new wheelchair.



A beams with happiness after receiving his new wheelchair.

Ais is an 18-year-old man with cerebral palsy, living with his grandparents in Tak Province, Thailand. His parents work in Bangkok and send money back to support him and his grandparents. He previously received a wheelchair at Mae Tao Clinic in 2015, but the seat broke in January 2025. Because of this, he spent most of his days lying down inside, as he is too old for his grandparents to carry around.

A receives physiotherapy through Safe Child Thailand twice a month at his home. Upon learning that his wheelchair had broken, staff from Safe Child Thailand referred him to BCMF, and he received a wheelchair, donated by the Free Wheelchair Mission, with a removable 3D-printed tray.

The wheelchair will allow A to travel with his grandparents to the temple or the market. His grandmother exclaimed, "We will take him to the market every morning and use the tray so he can carry what we buy. With his previous wheelchair, his arms would dangle off the sides, and his hands would get caught in the wheels. With this new wheelchair and tray, we can put his hands on the tray, so his hands won't get caught. Thank you for this free wheelchair. It will improve his life so much."

Naw is a 96-year-old woman living with her family in Tak Province, Thailand. Due to her age, Naw experienced trouble walking and used a cane to get around, although this also had begun to cause her back pain and fatigue. In August 2025, she gradually became unable to stand and walk on her own anymore. On 15 October 2025, she visited Mae Tao Clinic and was diagnosed with muscle weakness and poor balance due to advanced age.

She was then referred to BCMF and received a free wheelchair, donated by the Free Wheelchair Mission. Before she had the wheelchair, Naw did not go outside frequently and spent most of her time in bed. With her new wheelchair, her mobility has greatly improved. She explained, "I am very happy to have received this wheelchair. Now I can go outside, breathe fresh air, and go to church again. Thank you so much to the donors and BCMF for giving me this opportunity to improve my life."

In her free time, she enjoys listening to Karen stories on YouTube.



Naw is full of joy while trying out her new wheelchair.

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