



# Burma Children

## Medical Fund

*operating to give  
people a future*

April - June 2016

### BCMF Quarterly Report



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## 1. Overview

The second quarter of 2016 was a period of transition and capacity building for Burma Children Medical Fund (BCMF). In April, BCMF and referral partner Mae Tao Clinic (MTC) jointly relocated to the new Mae Tao Clinic facility, adding to the seasonal decline in patient numbers expected during the wet season. BCMF's initiatives in Thailand focused on organizational and staff professional development. And, in Burma, capacity building initiatives continued.

While the number of patients treated under Burma Women Medical Fund (BWMF) program remained steady, Burma Adult Medical Fund (BAMF) and BCMF patient numbers declined by 55% and 45% respectively.<sup>1</sup> This was due to three factors: the difficulty of travel during the wet season, interruption to healthcare services while MTC departments underwent a staggered relocation, and the 50% increase in transportation costs for many patients traveling to the new MTC location.

### The Big Move - Relocation of BCMF Mae Sot office



*BCMF Office at new Mae Tao Clinic*

*Preparations are underway for the move.*



*Mae Tao Clinic Director Dr. Cynthia Maung's address at the opening ceremony of the newly located Mae Tao Clinic*

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<sup>1</sup> See Figure 1.0, *BCMF Program Statistics April – June 2016*, on page 10

## 2. Partnerships and Staff Development Activities

### 2.1 Palliative Care Training

Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital Medical Faculty, hosted a Palliative Care Training event for hospital staff and health-care workers in May. The two-day training included workshops and lectures on holistic approaches to providing care for patients and their families through

emotional support and pain management services. This training was attended by two BCMF staff: BCMF's senior patient liaison officer, who is the primary point-of-contact for BCMF patients and their relatives, and Mi Aye, a patient coordinator for patients and carers accommodated at BCMF's B.K.Kee Patient House in Chiang Mai.



BCMF Senior Patient Liaison Ma Myai (Left) and Chiang Mai Patient Coordinator Mi Aye (second from right) join Child's Dream Foundation staff at Maharaj Nakorn Chiang Mai Hospital

### 2.2 Volunteers and Interns

We said goodbye to volunteers David (USA) after 10 months, Royce (USA) after three months and Maurizio (Italy) after two months with BCMF. Thankyou to all of them for bringing their many skills and diverse experience, for enriching the patient interviews, connecting with staff, assisting with the office move, and much more. The BCMF Mae Sot office will miss them all.



And then.... BCMF hosted two registered nurse volunteers from Central Queensland, Australia. Adrienne and Jamie-Lee arrived for six weeks and shared their experience and knowledge with BCMF staff through in-service trainings and the development of health-care materials for BCMF patients. In June BCMF welcomed two volunteer interns, both

graduate students from universities in New York State - Caitlin and Jason will prepare program and donor reports and conduct patient interviews.

## 2.3 B.K. Kee Patient House Garden



The garden at the B.K. Kee Patient House in Chiang Mai, Thailand was re-bedded and regenerated. Built with the labour and financial support of local professor, Ajarn Vin and his students, the garden provides patients and caregivers with fresh produce and an opportunity to tend the garden and plant seeds for future harvest.

*Harvest time*

## 3. Capacity Building, Skill Development and Empowerment

Three projects implemented in Karen State were designed to improve access to healthcare for remote, vulnerable patients who experience multiple challenges.

Additionally, BCMF was featured in a documentary aired on ABC News, Australia delivering wheelchairs to children with special mobility needs from some of the most remote parts of Karen State.

### 4.1 Wheelchairs for Children

The healthcare services facilitated by BCMF reach beyond corrective surgeries. BCMF works to improve the quality of life of all its patients and for children with special mobility needs this means removing barriers which prevent them from participating in their community. Their primary caregivers are often grandparents or other family members who provide care while parents work to support their families. By the time a child reaches the age of three or four, they're usually too heavy to carry, and as a result they spend most of their day confined to the family home. They don't attend school, interact and play with other children, or participate in the life of their community.

In 2014 BCMF began a partnership with Wheelchairs for Kids (WFK), a volunteer-led organization based in Perth, Australia which manufactures and delivers wheelchairs globally. Since 2014 BCMF has received annual shipments from WFK and delivers wheelchairs to referral partners and patients in Thailand and Burma.

ABC News, Australia documented the journey of one wheelchair which travelled from Perth, Australia to nine year old Saw Beebe who lives in the remote village of Thay Maw Ku. Local news group, Karen News travelled with BCMF and contributed the local video footage. Through patient contacts and local village health workers, BCMF also heard of four children from villages

within an hour's drive of Thay Maw Ku, who also needed wheelchairs, and the team prepared for the journey to transport wheelchairs ahead of the rainy season, in April. The wheelchairs delivered to Saw Beebe's village were transported by truck and long boat.



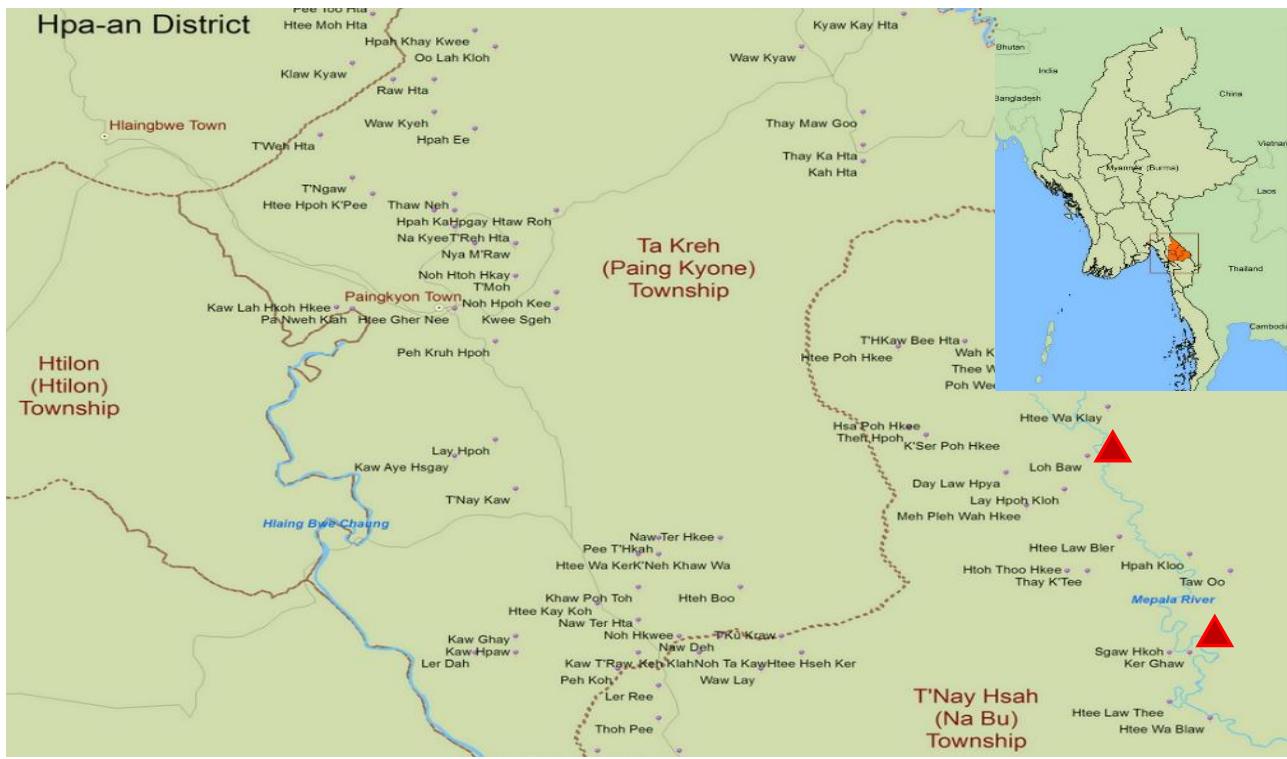
*Saw Beebe and his grandmother*

Like most Karen boys, Saw Beebe enjoyed playing outside with his friends and singing and dancing. However, in July 2013 he was struck down by a debilitating bacterial infection that left him partially paralyzed and mentally impaired. Upon arrival at Saw Beebe's village, his wheel chair was assembled and fitted. The team then travelled on to Loh Baw and Ker Gaw villages to fit wheelchairs for the other children referred for fitting. All BCMF's small patients now have the opportunity to participate more fully in family and community life outside the four walls of their homes.



*From Left to Right: Lay, Eh, Jue, Saw enjoy their new wheelchairs*

## 4.2 School Stationary and Health Education Project in Karen State



*Service area of Burma Children Medical Fund's wheelchair and stationary project*

Approximately 71% of BCMF patients travel from Karen State. Additionally, BCMF conducts regular community outreach to deliver healthcare prevention, health promotion and other support projects.



A recent community consultation with community leaders and village health workers identified a need for basic education supplies for students and teachers of eight village schools. The families of many students cannot afford to send their children to school with note books and pencils. As a result many children do not attend school. Teachers are paid with rice, and other locally grown food and don't have resources for educational materials for themselves or students. Donations such as stationary are appreciated by both teachers and students alike.

BCMF launched a school stationary fund which raised funds from donors in Australia, Ireland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. In addition to the requested school supplies, BCMF also sourced information posters in Karen and Burmese to raise awareness about Dengue, nutrition, and personal hygiene such as hand-washing.



With funds raised and supplies purchased and donated, in June, BCMF staff returned to deliver the much anticipated supplies. However, due to heavy rainfall, access to three of the eight village schools was impossible by four wheel drive and so one of the local headmasters coordinated students from the three village schools to meet BCMF along the way. The journey by foot took students almost five hours, and BCMF prepared a light meal for their arrival. As for the remaining five schools, BCMF was able to reach them directly using a combination of truck, long boat,

and “electric buffalo” (a local vehicle drawn by buffalo or powered by electric motor). Supplies distributed that day provided for 462 students and 26 teachers.



#### **4.3. New Pilot - Primary Health Care and Referral Internship program**

BCMF regularly visits and supports two village health clinics in Ler Per Her and Htee Ka Haw in Hlaingbwe Township working with the medics and local village health workers to identify clinic and local community needs. One recent outcome of these consultations is an Internship

program for medics and BCMF enrolled one intern from each of the clinics. Billy and Paw Boh travelled to Mae Sot in April to spend two months with BCMF learning about the most common conditions treated by BCMF, appropriate referrals and simplified policy and procedures for referring patients with complex conditions. Our village interns were provided with training in the use of computers and data bases, patient interview and recording technique, and appropriate use of social media platforms to facilitate exchange of information regarding patients.



*Medics from Ler Per Her and Htee Ka Haw clinics during their training at BCMF*

As part of the program, our interns accompanied BCMF patients by van enroute to the patient house and hospital in Chiang Mai, to understand the “patient experience”. They were also provided with a laptop computer and a cell phone with data, to facilitate patient referral. In the near-future BCMF plans to train more medics, provide additional professional development opportunities, and supply village medics with solar chargers so that they can stay in the field longer, and relay information to BCMF.

**And many thanks .....**to those friends, partners, and donors already mentioned, and additionally BCMF would like to thank the following individuals and groups for their fundraising efforts on behalf of BCMF: Natasha Baker and Leyla Ostovar from the UK; Godstowe Preparatory School in the UK; and Jason Pierce from the community of Ithaca, New York.

## Patient Spotlight



**Fay**

Fay was three months old when she was enrolled as a patient of Burma Children Medical Fund (BCMF).

Her parents, Burmese Muslims, run a taxi service and snack shop in the Burma-Thai border town of Myawaddy. When Fay was born in Mae Sot, Thailand in January 2014, the doctor explained to her mother that there was a problem with her health, but because of the language barrier, she didn't understand.

When Fay and her mother returned to Burma, Fay's grandmother was the first to notice that Fay's heartbeat was very fast. Six weeks later, Fay's fingernails, lips, and general skin color had turned blue. With no sign of improvement, her mother returned to Thailand to take Fay to Mae Sot Hospital (MSH) in 2015. MSH conducted an echocardiogram and referred Fay as an emergency case to Mae Tao Clinic, from where she was referred to BCMF. BCMF transferred Fay to Chiang Mai Hospital for treatment and on July 1, 2015 she had

a cardiac catheterization procedure. However, Fay's ailing health made surgery too risky and surgery was postponed several times. In 2016 surgery could be postponed no further, and was performed as soon as her condition stabilized, on March 28<sup>th</sup>. After surgery Fay was admitted to the intensive care unit and was monitored closely.

Before surgery, Fay often experienced severe coughing and difficulty breathing. She could not move from bed without assistance, ate little and was tired all the time. Since her surgery she has become an active little girl and can now move about freely, without assistance.

In the future, Fay's mother wants her to go to school to become a doctor. Her mother said, "I want to support my daughter to become a charity doctor because the place where we live is very poor, and a lot of people lose their life because they are unable to afford medical treatment".



**May Saung**

May Saung is a three year old girl who lives with her parents and two brothers in Mawlamyine, Mon State, Burma. She was born with right-side clubfoot, impairing her ability to walk.

May Saung began walking at the age of two, but only on her toes. She never placed her heels on the floor. After a few months she started walking normally on her left foot but her right foot did not correct and the family didn't consult a physician because they heard that treatment would be too expensive. Fortunately, a neighbour and former BCMF cardiac patient told the family about BCMF and suggested they take May Saung to MTC.

In January 2016, BCMF organised for May Saung to be treated at Mawlamyine Christian Leprosy Hospital (MCLH) where TA lengthening surgery and casting was performed on her right foot. After the removal of her cast she was given corrective footwear to wear until the end of June 2016.

BCMF staff saw May Saung and her mother again on June 29, 2016. She stands, walks, and runs naturally. May Saung is polite and playful, though a little shy. When it was time to pose for a photo she became very camera-shy but she was finally coaxed into posing for this photo when the photo shoot became a game that she could engage with. Her mother said that when villagers saw May Saung playing outside they were happy and surprised. "They never imagined that anyone could fix her foot. Seeing their smiles as they watched my daughter warmed my heart." May Saung will start kindergarten later this year.



### BCMF Program Statistics April – June 2016

<b>Total Number of New Cases by Program</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter '16</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter '16</b>
Children BCMF	33	18
Children CDF	9	12
Adult BAMF	40	18
Gynecological case BWMF	17	15
TOTAL	99	63
<b>Diagnosis</b>		
Cardiac Disease	18	14
Obstetric/Gynecological Condition	17	16
Gastrointestinal Condition	14	5
Severe Burns	4	0
Urological/Kidney Condition	3	3
Neurological Condition	8	5
Congenital Musculoskeletal Deformity	7	0
Blood Disorder	1	0
Orthopedic Condition	6	6
Eye Condition	4	7
Abnormal Growth/Benign Tumor	14	4
Other	3	3
<b>Ancillary Support</b>		
Wheelchair	29	20
<b>Patients Home State/Division</b>		
Karen State	57	35
Tak Province (Thailand)	16	17
Mon State	12	6
Mandalay Division	2	0
Ayeyarwaddy Division	0	0
Kachin State	0	0
Bago Division	4	3
Yangon Division	2	0
Shan State	0	0
Sagaing Division	1	0
Rakhine State	0	0
Other (Thailand)	3	1
Magway Division	1	0
Tanithayi Division	1	1
<b>Country Where Treatment Was Given</b>		
Thailand	88	61
Burma	11	2