

My childhood was filled with poverty, and overcoming difficult circumstances is something I understand well. My mother and father have only a primary school education, and in Burma this meant a life of obstacles. My father worked in construction, earning little more than a back full of pain and arms exhausted from hard labor. My mother stood on her feet for ten-hour shifts at a clothing store. They fought for our survival and had little time to care for my siblings and I. However, they deeply valued education. No matter how expensive the used textbooks and tuition were, my parents found a way.

Although school was hard for me, and though I never had anyone to help me with my homework, other children in Burma had lives much worse than mine. They lived in bamboo huts with several families sharing one room. They were unable to attend school, clothe their bodies with proper garments, or even have enough to eat. Their eyes, once young and full of life, always grew ancient and dim with hopelessness. Their futures were not really futures at all; just a slow and painful passing of time.

If I could, I would sponsor a boarding school for Burmese children who live in extreme poverty. My building would be more than walls and books and educational lessons; we would fulfill basic needs like shelter, meals, and security. Teachers and mentors would be trained to care for the children emotionally and socially, and the children would learn to trust and grow in a supportive environment where education and joy of life are the main focal points. As a future teacher, I believe that children need some small space to live where they feel safe before they can be educated. My school would provide that and more.

When a child has someone to hold their hand and help them discover dreams, it can make the difference between a life of poverty and one of purpose. Educated mentors will guide the children in my program down the right path and teach them the social skills necessary for college and employment. If I could, I would partner with organizations like UNICEF and MCF to help fund the school and our training because I do not wish to be a fundraiser or an organizer; I want to be with the children myself. I want to help change lives through education, motivate students to see that they can have a dream and accomplish it, and provide them with hope. Instead of waiting for life and time to pass, I want to step forward and welcome children into our organization to become a part of our family. If I could, I would build not just one school but a chain of schools stretching from one side of Burma to the other; providing as many children as possible with the opportunity to grow up healthy, happy, educated, and empowered to live meaningful lives where they are free to laugh, live, wish, wonder, and succeed.