

*The Ayui Foundation is a non-religious, non-government organisation that provides a home, educational opportunities and future pathways for disadvantaged Akha hilltribe teenagers.*

# **Ayui Foundation**

## **NEWSLETTER**

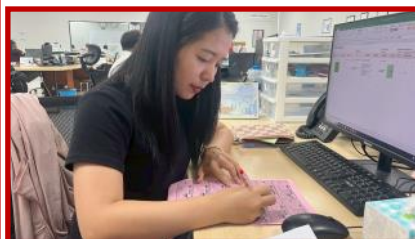


**Sumalee Milne, OAM**  
**Director**

**January 2026**  
**Chiang Rai, Thailand**

### **FROM THE DIRECTOR**

The Ayui students returned at the end of October to start Semester 2, and we had an old friend come to visit, as well as a short-term volunteer. We accepted 4 new girls, who have fit in well and already have sponsors. We also did our annual clothes donation in December, after last years' donation was cancelled due to the big flood that damaged all the items that we had collected to donate.



The two university students we support are in the final stretch of their final year, doing their internships. Asaw (majoring in Chinese) is interning in



HR at a Chinese factory in Chonburi while Fern (majoring in English) got an internship at a resort on Koh Chang island, where she also got to try scuba diving. For people from the mountains, experiencing the sea or beach is always a huge treat.

On behalf of the staff and students at the Ayui Foundation, we wish our friends and supporters all the best for 2026, and thank you for your support this past year.





# OUR VISITORS



Our old friend from Australia, Olivia Uawatanasakul, came with a friend for a brief visit during Loy Kratong. Her last visit was also during Loy Kratong, as she – and the children – enjoy letting off fireworks and going to the nearby river to float their *kratongs* and check out the fairground. She donated the fireworks, and soccer balls for the boys, and generously took all of us out for all-you-can-eat *moo grata* BBQ, which is always a big treat for the kids.





## OUR VOLUNTEER



From November 17-23, Australian Emma Gustafson came to volunteer at Ayui, teaching English to the children and learning about life at the Girls Home. While Emma was here, we had our annual cookout at the Boys Home, and the girls performed a few Akha dances. This was mostly a new group of girls - replacing those who have graduated and left – and it was their first time dancing together in front of an audience, showcasing their culture. On Emma's last day, she went with the girls to do a bit of sight-seeing around Chiang Rai. This is what she wrote about her time with us: *My week spent with the Ayui Foundation was nothing short of inspiring, touching and heartwarming. I was able to experience and establish relationships with kids from various ages and really get to know the girls of the Akha hill tribe. (Google translate*

*really was my best friend). I really enjoyed having the experience of teaching during the day as well. Having both experiences was very unique and something I value very much. The warmth and openness of these people made my week so special. Being able to see the cultural performance and dress up with the girls was a very special experience. The Ayui Foundation will always have a special place in my heart and I'll always remember my time there.*





## ANNUAL CLOTHES DONATION

This year, we chose to donate pre-loved clothes, toys, books and shoes at [Baan Padaeng Luang School](#) in Padaeng Luang village. The school has 107 students from different hilltribes, and some of the students board there. It took us 2 hours to drive there, going up and down very steep mountains. Our girls Chawisa, Nut, and Sunantra come from this village and their mothers came and gave us fruit and vegetables from their fields to take back. The school also gave us 3 boxes of eggs laid by their hens, so it really was a day of giving and sharing – a great way to end the year!





# THANK YOU

To the high school students at Waree International School in Chiang Mai for putting together Christmas gift bags for the Ayui students, for the third year in a row. Also, for donating toys that we gave to children at Baan Padaeng Luang School.



To the Chiang Rai International School's Community Committee for organizing the donation of clothes, toys and shoes from students and parents of the Elementary School and Kindergarten.



To the Prom Rak Foundation for inviting our college girls to join their training course on Safe Relationships and Online Safety. This course went for several months and ended in December with the girls teaching younger hilltribe kids, passing on what they learned. The Foundation gives courses to disadvantaged teenagers all around Chiang Rai province and will return to train a new group of girls from the Ayui Foundation in about 2 years.

*If you would like to VISIT, FUNDRAISE OR DONATE  
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Or visit [www.ayuifoundation.org](http://www.ayuifoundation.org)*



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