

FUNDING PROPOSAL  
FOR PURCHASE OF HOUSE AND LAND  
FOR THE



**1 million Baht (approx. AU\$34,000) before November 2010**



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## Who we are

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The Ayui Foundation is an organisation established in Chiang Rai, Northern Thailand that runs a hostel for poor, at-risk, Akha hilltribe teenagers, mostly from single-parent families, promoting the importance of education and preservation of Akha culture. We support both boys and girls of any religion (Buddhist, Christian and traditional believers in Animism), aged 11 and older. We focus on providing practical support, educational opportunities and a safe, warm environment for hilltribe adolescents. We have been supporting up to 15 students but the larger houses we have purchased enables us to expand to 20 children next year.

Ayui (pronounced 'a-yeu') is an Akha word meaning 'older sister' and 'Baan Ayui' means 'our older sister's house'. The hostel is based on the concept of a nurturing and understanding older sister (both the housemother and the Director) providing guidance and support on all levels. Baan Ayui empowers young Akha people with the skills they need to succeed in a world where the odds can be against them, due to being a minority group, giving them a positive teenage experience and the chance to become happy, fulfilled adults with a secure future.

## Baan Ayui

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Situated on the outskirts of Chiang Rai town, the home we have secured through a deposit is located in the peaceful and semi-rural Baan Mai community, populated by a mix of Thai lowland and hilltribe people. It is a short walk from the local market, and near the Sahasart Suksa School that the children attend. The school is Chiang Rai's first and largest school established for hilltribe children, where the youth also have cultural classes and must wear traditional hilltribe dress to school every Friday.

Baan Ayui is run on a day-to-day basis by a married Akha housemother and father. They live at the hostel and are responsible for the practical needs of our young people and organisation of the household. They are supported closely through the hands-on involvement and management from the Foundation's founding Director.

The most important aspect of this model is that the young Akha people are in an environment with strong Akha role models and their own culture, beliefs and traditions are being celebrated. We have an Open Door policy for parents to come and visit their children at any time. The children have daily chores and weekly activities include Discussion Group on topics related to hilltribes and teens, hostel meeting, sports, traditional Akha embroidery, Akha songs and dances, guitar lessons and the occasional Thai, computer, art, and English and lessons - the last two supported by our volunteers. The hostel is run like a large family that learns from and supports each other.

## The Akha Hilltribe

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Hilltribe people face many challenges, such as restricted land rights, illiteracy, racism, and lack of employment and political power. Economic hardship stems from being forced to join a cash economy after centuries of relying on barter economy and being self-reliant, producing their own food and clothing. The Akha hilltribe is one of the nine main ethnic minority groups living in the mountainous Northern provinces of Thailand, who originated from China and migrated south through Burma. The Akha people settled in Chiang Rai province over 200 years ago, however, they still exist as a minority group who are often treated as second-class citizens.

The Akha are known as the least "developed" group, and are even looked down by other hilltribes. Many Akha people lack proper legal documentation to make them eligible for Thai citizenship and are considered illegal immigrants, even in the country of their birth. Without legal documents and citizenship, many Akha people have no rights to healthcare, driving licenses or school graduation records, and cannot open bank accounts, rent accommodation or take legal action if they are exploited by employers. We work continuously with our children and their families to secure citizenship.

As each hilltribe has its own distinct language and culture, the Thai language is not their mother tongue, which makes school more difficult for hilltribe children. Educational opportunities are limited in many hilltribe villages and there are great social problems facing their communities including drug use, drug trafficking, HIV/AIDS, prostitution and exploitation. Illiteracy and poverty result in lack of opportunities and choices for young people.

## The Ayui Foundation

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### Vision – The Ayui Foundation

The Ayui Foundation focuses on breaking the cycle for unwanted or at-risk adolescent Akha hilltribe people who come from low socio-economic backgrounds, through education and future pathways, while raising awareness of traditional hilltribe cultures and the adversities they face in the wider community.

### Mission – Baan Ayui

Baan Ayui provides a loving, safe, and long-term home environment and supports the emotional, physical and social development of young Akha hilltribe people. Baan Ayui works to instill a pride in cultural heritage, imbed the importance of education and actively assist with identifying and achieving future pathways for each house member.

### Objectives

1. To provide a home for poor, unwanted, or at-risk Akha adolescents, orphaned or from single-parent families where they will receive educational support and care;
2. To provide the young people with the opportunity to obtain a secondary and tertiary education;
3. To ensure the young people have a mentor to support their physical and mental development and emotional needs;
4. To teach life skills including computer skills, cooking, budgeting, advice and guidance for after graduation, and job placement assistance;
5. To provide opportunities for the children to preserve, practice and celebrate their traditional culture to instill pride in their heritage, and
6. To provide assistance and support with legal status and Thai citizenship applications

### Funding Request

After three years of operation The Ayui Foundation has purchased a hostel and our young people have moved in. We have paid the deposit of B500,000 – prt of this funding came from a donation from the Australia-Thailand Association (ACT, Australia). We have also secured another B500,000 from a Spanish organisation called the Vistare Foundation. We are now seeking funding for the remaining **B1 million (approx. AU\$34,000) before November 2010.**

The land has 2 large wooden houses on it (one each for boys and girls) and we plan to dig a fishpond to raise fish and start a vegetable garden, both to help with food costs. The house is off the main road in a quiet street and opposite a small primary school where the children can play sports on the school field. In the long run we will have greater security and save each month on rent payments.

