

Siam-Care Foundation Thailand

Background

Siam Care (abbreviated as SC) is an organization that provides support to vulnerable people affected by poverty and/or Hiv. SC also is active in Awareness raising about hiv/aids as well as Child Abuse and Safe Migration issues, by conducting training and awareness campaigns among individuals, groups, institutions and communities in Thai society. The work was started under an International NGO in 1991 and grew out to what is now Siam-Care Foundation Thailand. The organization operates under a Christian profile and is registered with the Thai Government.

SC operates a comprehensive program that seeks to provide holistic care to families and individuals affected by poverty and/or hiv. The program that has a strong focus on children, is carried out in Bangkok, Phang Nga (south) and Mukdahan (north, bordering Laos).

In the **Home-Based Care** program, poor families and families affected by Hiv are cared for in a holistic manner with ample attention to the health, social, economic and spiritual conditions of the recipients. Many of the supported families consist of (a) grandparent(s) caring for grandchild(ren), who are in most cases orphaned, caused in many cases by the demise of parent(s) who suffered from AIDS. Some of these children are infected through mother to child transmission.

SC Home-Based Program devotes attention to individual families in an intensive process of guidance and counseling. In addition SC mediates for access to health care, medicines (ARV) as well as for other forms of assistance from government's welfare programs. As these families are often poor and jobless, SC also provides assistance to set up income generating activities. For the most destitute, SC endeavors to find domestic and international sponsors to financially support these families and/or the education of their children. In 2009, SC supported 400 families and sponsored 250 children for regular education.

SC **Prison Outreach** program started in 2007 at the request of the Medical Correctional Institute (MCI), established in the Klong Prem Prison. The cooperation is aimed at providing holistic care to prisoners, from a human rights perspective, that sick prisoners have the right to care like any other Thai citizen. It also seeks to prevent the spread of HIV-infection among prison populations. 99% of the MCI patients have HIV. SC organizes focus groups discussions and provides individual counseling at the prisoner's personal request. Group discussions focus on emotional or physical health (e.g. ARV adherence, HIV transmission, group dynamics), or a craft based activity that allows the patients to work individually or in groups on mentally stimulating tasks. If the inmate so wishes SC ensures that the contact with the family is maintained. SC also guides prisoners to a well prepared return to society before release from prison. This includes ensuring prolongation of access to ARV and monitoring of adherence to ARV-intake. The contacts often develop into a relationship with the family, including the children who receive support under the Home-Based Care program. The start of the Prison program in 2007 in one prison, has expanded to 3 prisons in 2010, with 117 prisoners and 21 families receiving support.

In its **Community** program, SC reaches out to communities in Bangkok, Mukdahan and Phang Nga, targeting local government officials, community leaders, community groups including PWA-groups, youth groups, women's groups, parents, teachers, church leaders, church congregations, NGOs and other relevant partners, to spread the knowledge about HIV and AIDS, including child rights and child protection. Training, focus groups and working together, are ways of creating awareness and commitment to fight the spread of HIV and violence against children.

These areas of work have a direct and indirect impact on the lives of children, their well being in the community and at home. "The work SC does is meaningful and close to comprehensive," as appraised by an international independent evaluation, carried out in March 2010. This evaluation report is available for reference.

SC' work is funded by individual and institutional donors, mostly external donors, who provide short term project funding and donations for family and education support to children. The government of Thailand provides contributions in kind (material, transport and food support) to specific activities such as training and family camps. The donations SC receive for education support are adequate to pay for expenses at primary and at secondary school level, but are not sufficient to cover expenses at higher education level. Girls are particularly disadvantaged as families tend to give priority to the education of boys and if there are only daughters not to invest in their higher education at all.

