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Programme No.853

Length: 3'40"

HIV/AIDS CARE: HELP FROM BUDDHIST LEADERS GOES A LONG WAY

VIDEO

AUDIO

NARRATION

TEMPLE/MONKS CHANTING (8")

In the Buddhist temple of Hua Rin, in Northern Thailand, life follows a pattern largely unchanged by time.

MONKS FILE OUT OF TEMPLE
(11")

After morning chants, the monks take care of daily chores. Then they make the rounds to collect alms from the faithful.

FAMILY SITTING IN DOORWAY
(17.5")

But in the past few years, this community – like others in Thailand – has had to cope with new and devastating effects of HIV/AIDS. Thailand's infection rate has now stabilized, but almost three-quarters of a million people are living with the disease here, and hundreds of thousands have died from it.

C/U OF TIEW (7")

This boy, Tiew, lost both his parents to AIDS. He is now being cared for by the monks at the Hua Rin temple.

MONK AT SCHOOL (21")

It is just one example of what UNICEF – the

United Nations Children’s Fund – calls the “Buddhist leadership initiative”: working with government and community groups to encourage religious leaders to carry out low-cost, sustainable prevention and care activities at the local level. UNICEF Representative, Prue Brothwick.

BROTHWICK:

PRUE BROTHWICK ON CAMERA
(23”)

“Perhaps the best known part of Buddhist teaching is the message of compassion, compassion for all living things. And I think that’s been an important foundation that monks have used and built upon in their activities. And one of the ways they show compassion is by providing a good example themselves to the community. But also by giving practical help and assistance.”

NARRATION

MONK HANDING CHEQUE TO
FAMILY (17”)

For this family, practical help means a small grant so that a child whose father has died from AIDS can attend school. For another family in which the main income earner has died of AIDS, it’s a loan to allow them to buy a new pig.

MONK AT WORKSHIP (12.5”)

Practical help also takes the form of assistance to people living with the disease, through community support groups and vocational training that helps

villagers stay active and productive after testing positive for HIV.

ARRIYA AND OTHER WOMEN
SEWING (19")

Arriya Armad used to work in the rice fields but could not keep up the hard physical work in the hot sun once she became HIV positive. With the help of the monks, the temple grounds are now used for workshops that teach women like her how to sew robes and other items of clothing that can be sold in Japan.

ARMAD:

ARRIYA ARMAD ON CAMERA
(22")

"My heart has opened and I now have friends who share my condition, and more people who understand me. I have more income now, a job, and better skills and knowledge. I never knew how to sew a shirt before, but now I do."

NARRATION

LUANG PI DENG IN CLASSROOM
(8")

Spearheading these efforts to help the community cope with the HIV/AIDS crisis is the head of Hua Rin temple, Luang Pi Deng.

DENG:

LUANG PI DENG ON CAMERA
(19")

"I think that the work we've done is making the community happy. In Buddhism, at some level, the fact that we have helped relieve the people of their suffering, we can count this as a success."

NARRATION

LUANG PI DENG AT SCHOOL
(16")

Working with such trusted leaders, gives UNICEF a chance to help build a better future for AIDS-affected children like Tiew. It's an important

lesson that is now also being applied to other Buddhist communities in the region.

LOGO (20")

This report was prepared by Michele Zaccheo for the United Nations.