

Expat

FXB FOUNDATION
Her loss is their gain

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Two villages in Si Sa Ket to be sponsored by the countess' charity. Countess Albina du Boisrouvray must rate as one of the great friends of Thailand.

The French humanitarian was in Bangkok again this week to announce her non-profit group FXB will sponsor another two villages in Si Sa Ket.

FXB supports orphans with HIV/Aids or left vulnerable by tragedies such as the tsunami.

The group already provides assistance to 400 children and disadvantaged families in a village in Buri Ram, plus several hundred in a village in Maha Sarakham. By the end of the year it expects to be helping about 2,000 people in Isaan.

The countess, who turned to charity work after losing her only son in the mid-80s, praised Mechai Viravaidya, the condom promoter and former senator. "We need more new, young Mechais to step in. There is a big need to continue the awareness [about catching HIV/Aids from unprotected sex]."

FXB works in 17 countries, and has been helping disadvantaged children in Thailand since 1990.

Countess Albina said FXB programmes aimed to boost incomes of poor Thai families - so that vulnerable children don't sink into crime, sex work, drug abuse or even terrorism.

"There are many orphans in the Northeast whose parents died in the tsunami...and so much trafficking [of people]. For me, it's an investment in society - in the next generation of productive adults."

FXB also works in Burma, but the countess said she opposed economic sanctions imposed by the West.

"I feel the sanctions are not working and that they're just hurting the people," she said. "They make beautiful products but we can't export, or sell them online."

She feared Burma was set to descend into violence, saying: "I'm worried it will become like Palestine. People are ready to get killed: they want change."

Visit www.fxb.org for details.

By Jim Pollard

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