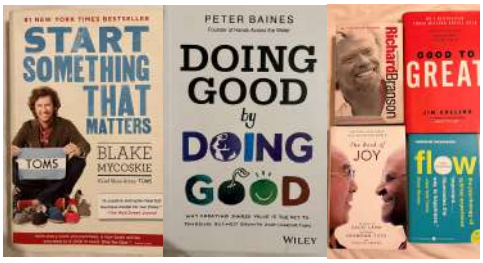
The incredibly inspiring story of Kenshi Life Changing Candles



It all began when Liam Foldi was 12 years old and he started reading ..... and reading.



When Liam was 14 years old, after a school trip to FareShare (a charity kitchen in Melbourne) he decided that something needed to be done about the growing problem of hunger and food insecurity in Australia. And Kenshi Candles was born.

December 2018





Throughout school holidays and weekends, Liam's mates would come over to make candles to keep up with demand.

But before long they outgrew the garage and that's when

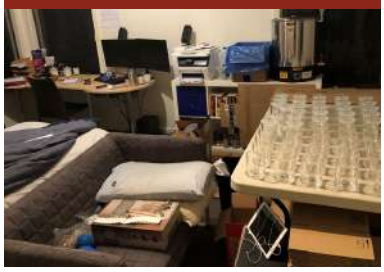
Kenshi Candles became even more

life changing!

As the demand grew Liam struggled to keep up with production.

Kenshi grew steadily as the inspiring story of such a young boy starting a social enterprise began to spread.

March 2018



April 2018



Candle production moved from Liam's bedroom to the very first hand pour at the kitchen bench.

May 2018



From there the operation quickly moved out to production lines in the family garage.

February 2019



Liam training the Chin Community in his garage

March 2019



The famous "handover day"

In 2019, Liam began a partnership with the Chin refugee community from Myanmar who live in Melbourne's west to make the candles.

After fleeing from civil war, the Chin people spent several years on the run before being granted refugee status in Australia. Some of the older members do not speak English and struggled to find jobs until Kenshi provided them a reliable source of income.

April 2019





Jacob Thang
Director of Chin Myanmar Community Care

From April 2019, the Chin refugee community made the candles in Jacob's garage until September 2021.

After 2.5 years and around 20,000 candles Kenshi finally grew large enough to have a proper home!

October 2021



Liam decided he will solely focus on eradicating hunger in Australia and use Kenshi Life Changing Candles and Diffusers to feed thousands of people every year.

Together with other members of Make A Difference Community, we have now funded over 170 tonnes of pasta and rice for homeless people and families in need.

June 2022



Liam was offered a full scholarship to Princeton University in USA.

Michael, (more famously known as the candle boy's father!) stepped in to fulfil Liam's vision of funding massive volumes of food for Australians doing it tough and ultimately working towards eradicating hunger in Australia.

September 2021



Kenshi moved to a new candle-making facility in Sunshine that has the capacity to make over 500 candles and diffusers a day!

This professional space allows us to host corporate days for groups of people wanting to show their support for these amazing people and the challenges their friends and family still face back in Myanmar.

Jan 2023

With so much production capacity Kenshi began to grow quickly and gained support from hundreds of new partners keen to help feed more people.
In 2023, Kenshi purchased and distributed more than 12 tonnes of pasta and rice in Australia and Myanmar.





June 2023

***Kenshi Life Changing Diffusers** are officially launched and the Kenshi "Life Changing" range is expanded beyond candles.*

October 2023



Jacob and Michael visit Myanmar to see the terrible consequences of the civil war. As there are no NGO's on the ground this led to Kenshi donating over 6 tonnes of rice directly to families who have fled their homes to survive.

Please share our story and together we can feed hundreds of thousands of people every year.

kenshi
Life Changing Candles & Diffusers

1300 143 358
kenshi@kenshicandles.com
kenshicandles.com.au

kenshi
Life Changing Candles & Diffusers



A Crisis the World Is Ignoring

The Chin People of Myanmar and the Australians Who Went to Find Them

Field Report · January 2026

All photographs taken by Michael Foldi, Lucas Foldi and Jacob Thang (Founder, Chin Myanmar Community Care)

A MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL FOLDI

1

TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED KENSHI

In January 2026, I travelled with my son Lucas and Jacob Thang — Founder of Chin Myanmar Community Care — to the refugee camps of Mizoram, India, and into Chin State, Myanmar.

I want to share what we found, because it deserves to be known.

The trip was incredible and terrible. Pretty much every emotion was experienced multiple times — swinging from hope to frustration, sadness to anger, and back again to something that felt, in moments, like joy.

In every refugee camp we visited, the same story: no NGO had ever come.

Communities of thousands had been surviving entirely on the generosity of their Mizo ethnic kin and organisations like ours. Camp leaders told us their people cannot work, cannot sell anything, and face deportation simply for existing.

We interviewed over 30 people because we wanted them to know we cared about their stories. We visited wounded soldiers on crutches who had received no prosthetics and no rehabilitation. We sat with the only surgeon within ten hours of the conflict zone — a man performing operations with Fentanyl as the only available drug. His field hospital closed the day after our visit.

We also found extraordinary hope. The Konjac cooperative, the chilli farming project, the new hydro unit now powering a village that previously had no electricity — these are not acts of charity. They are the architecture of self-sufficiency, built on the same principle that drives Kenshi.

This report is a record of what was done and what still needs doing.
The world is not paying attention to this crisis. We are.



— Michael Foldi
Managing Director, Kenshi Life Changing Candles & Diffusers

The Camps: What We Saw

The team visited 7 refugee camps across remote Mizoram, India — Sihmui 1 & 2, Kawlchaw, Lungzarhtum, Km10, Niawhtlang and Lungbun. In every single camp, the same story: no NGO had ever visited. No formal aid pipeline existed. Communities had been surviving entirely on the generosity of their Mizo ethnic kin and occasional support from organisations like Kenshi.



A woman weeps as she describes fleeing bombardment in Chin State and losing everything she had built. This scene repeated camp after camp.

> *"Not one NGO has ever visited this camp. We have been here for three years. We cannot work. We cannot sell anything. We just wait."*
>
> — Camp leader, Lung Zarh Tum, Mizoram

Every camp also faced a desperate shortage of water for drinking, washing and cooking.



Dozens of jerry cans at the community water collection point — families must carry all their water daily.



The Lung Zarh Tum Refugees Camp sign — one of 7 camps visited, none of which had ever received an NGO visit.

THE MEETINGS

Community After Community

3

At every camp and village, the community assembled. Hundreds gathered in packed halls, elders, leaders and families, each with something urgent to say and people they trusted to listen.



Michael addresses hundreds of community members in a packed village hall. A Kenshi candle sits on the table — recognised immediately by people whose relatives hand-pour candles in the Melbourne workshop.



Michael, Jacob and Bawi — Jacob's close friend of 20 years who lives in Delhi — being blessed by community elders at a camp gathering.



Community meeting — village leaders discuss the urgent needs of their people.



4

Chin resistance soldiers recovering from war injuries sing together in their camp. The team interviewed 14 of them — all determined to return to the frontline. Eleven had lost arms or legs in battle.

CHIN RESISTANCE

The Fallen: Fighters Who Paid the Highest Price

One camp was dedicated to Chin resistance soldiers recovering from war injuries. The team interviewed 14 of them — every single one wanted to return to the frontline. Eleven had required amputation of a leg or arm. They have received no formal rehabilitation, no prosthetics, no government support of any kind.



Michael with two young Chin resistance soldiers on wooden crutches — both lost limbs in battle. No international medical support has reached them.



Michael with the miracle surgeon — the only doctor within 10 hours of the conflict zone, performing operations with Fentanyl as the only available drug. His field hospital closed the day after our visit.



Jacob, an Indian doctor, Michael and Lucas in a Delhi hospital corridor — visiting a wounded Chin soldier transferred from the frontline. He later died.



Michael with another young soldier who lost his lower leg in battle — one of many fighters who received no prosthetics or rehabilitation.

The Rice Delivery: Food Relief at Scale

Across 7 camps, the team coordinated the delivery of 12 tonnes of rice, alongside cash support and education assistance. Deliveries were timed to arrive the day before the team's visits — giving communities both immediate relief and the chance to receive it together.

7	12T	30+
Refugee camps visited & supplied	Tonnes of rice delivered	Personal stories recorded on film



Rice bags being carried and distributed to families in the village square.



Village elders eat rice together on a wooden porch overlooking the mountains — simple dignity in the hardest of circumstances.



Lucas and Jacob with the community after a rice distribution — families, elders and children gathered together.

Faith, Community and Lucas Foldi

The Chin people are almost entirely Christian and their faith is the architecture of their survival. In every camp and village, the church is where people gather, grieve, decide and hope. Lucas accompanied Michael on the full trip — teaching in local schools, conducting filmed interviews and praying alongside community leaders.



Lucas teaching mathematics at a whiteboard in a Chin State village school — the classroom has no electricity.



Lucas with the full class — smiles and thumbs up despite everything these children have been through.



Lucas conducting a filmed interview with a community member — over 30 people's stories were documented during the trip.



Lucas filming an outdoor interview — with the mountains of Chin State stretching into the distance.



Chin children at Sunday School — gathered together in faith. It is what sustains what aid cannot reach.



Michael and Lucas with the local priest and nuns outside the village church — the community's most enduring institution.

Why Help Has Not Come

To understand why Michael and Lucas found communities so completely abandoned, it helps to understand the simultaneous layers of failure that have converged against the Chin people.

83,000+	$1.4B	2,500+
Chin & Myanmar refugees in India since 2021	UNHCR aid cut or suspended globally in 2025	Junta airstrikes in Falam Township in 4 months

BOMBS

The Myanmar military has been systematically bombing civilian infrastructure — schools, churches, hospitals and displacement camps. Human Rights Watch's World Report 2026 documented deliberate targeting of protected civilian sites. A single airstrike on 12 May 2025 killed 22 school children and 2 teachers. The Institute of Chin Affairs recorded more than 2,500 airstrikes in Falam Township alone between November 2025 and February 2026 — the months immediately before Michael and Lucas arrived.

AID COLLAPSE

The United States previously provided 40% of UNHCR's global budget. In early 2025, the Trump administration froze all foreign aid and cut 83% of USAID programmes. By mid-2025, UNHCR had received only 23% of its $10.6 billion annual requirement, forcing suspension of $1.4 billion in programmes globally.

INDIA'S BORDER WALL

In February 2024, India announced it would scrap the Free Movement Regime — the historic arrangement allowing Chin-Mizo families to cross freely — and begin constructing a physical fence along the entire 1,643km frontier. The Manipur state government has been actively deporting refugees, calling them 'illegal immigrants' despite documented war crimes in the communities they fled.



Michael and Lucas at CDF Lauta Camp 21 General Headquarters, an active Chin resistance base in Chin State.



A very important meeting with the Lautu business council — discussing the plan to create a cooperative supporting over 300 farming families.

The Konjac Opportunity:
A Path to Self-Sufficiency

During the trip, Michael visited Lautu village elders who were examining their Konjac harvest — a large root vegetable (Amorphophallus konjac, also known as elephant foot yam) that grows naturally and abundantly in the fertile Chin Hills. Indian brokers visit each year to buy the entire crop at whatever price they choose to offer — because the farmers have no other buyer and no knowledge of the crop's real market value.



Michael, Lucas and the team outside the Myanmar (Chin) Refugees Fellowship building — meeting with community leaders about the Konjac cooperative opportunity.



Families working the steep hillsides of Chin State — the same fertile land that produces some of Asia's finest Konjac, yet farmers see almost none of its true market value.

Konjac is one of the most commercially valuable crops in Asia. Chin State produces exceptional quality Konjac — specifically sought after for its high Glucomannan fibre content — by buyers from China, Japan, South Korea and India. The global Konjac noodle market alone is worth $4.87 billion and growing at 12.6% annually. Glucomannan powder sells for $15–$30 per kilogram globally. Yet Chin State farmers receive a fraction of this because they sell raw roots to brokers with no bargaining power.

Industry	Application	Why Chin State Konjac?
Food & Beverage	Shirataki noodles, Konjac rice, gels and snacks — low-calorie, gluten-free, vegan staples. Global noodle market growing 12.6% annually.	High Glucomannan content, naturally organic, preferred by Chinese, Japanese and Korean buyers.
Pharmaceutical	Glucomannan capsules for weight management, blood sugar control and cholesterol reduction.	Chin State Konjac documented as richer in Glucomannan than competing origins — premium quality.
Cosmetics	Konjac sponges, moisturisers and skincare products.	Organic, wild-harvested profile commands premium in Western markets.

A Farmers' Cooperative

- Pool the harvest of approximately 300 farmers to create negotiating scale
- Establish direct relationships with processors in India, China, Japan and South Korea — bypassing brokers entirely
- Provide farmers with real market pricing information so they can negotiate with knowledge
- Develop basic processing (drying chips) to increase the value of what leaves the hills
- Run in parallel with the chilli cooperative — creating two income streams for the same farming families

"The Chin Hills are fertile, organic and largely untouched by industrial farming. The world already wants what grows there. The farmers just need someone to connect them to it."

— Michael Foldi

Alongside the Konjac cooperative, the Lautu district holds a second opportunity. A specific variety of chilli grows well in the Chin Hills and commands strong demand in the Indian market. Around 300 farming families in the area have the land and the labour to grow it at scale. What they lack is seed capital and market access. A modest investment in seed funding could unlock a significant crop and give those same families a second income stream alongside Konjac — reducing their dependence on any single harvest.

300+
Farming families in the Lautu district

2
Income streams per family

$20k
Estimated seed investment needed



The fertile valleys of Chin State — the same hills that produce some of Asia's finest Konjac and chilli, now largely abandoned due to the ongoing conflict.

The Hydro Unit & Other Projects

Among the projects funded during this trip, a micro-hydro unit was purchased and installed — a turbine-and-generator system powered by a local stream that now provides electricity to a village that previously had none. This is permanent infrastructure, not a temporary fix.



The micro-hydro turbine and generator — now providing electricity to a Chin State village for the first time.



Meeting under the trees: Michael and Jacob with village farmers discussing cattle husbandry — knowledge most farmers take for granted was entirely new to these men.

ALSO FUNDED THIS TRIP

Road Access	**New road connecting a Chin State community to the Indian border**
Chilli Cooperative	**Seed funding for the Lautu chilli cooperative supporting local farmers**
Education	**Support for students displaced from their home towns**
Community Support	**Cash distributions to disability and youth development programmes**



Children in the back of a truck in Mizoram — life in the camps, caught between one place and the next.



A village road in Chin State at golden hour — simple homes in extraordinary landscapes that these families were forced to flee.

The Land They Were Forced to Leave

Chin State is one of the most beautiful and remote regions of Myanmar — mountain people who have farmed these fertile, largely organic hills for centuries. They did not leave by choice.



The hills of Chin State at sunset — the homeland the refugees dream of returning to.



The river crossing — looking from Chin State across to Mizoram State, India. This is the route taken by thousands of refugees fleeing the conflict.

The Faces Behind the Numbers

Every photograph represents a real person with a real story. The team could only stay briefly at each location — but every person who wanted to speak was heard.



A man sits inside his shelter at the camp — one of thousands living in makeshift housing with almost nothing.



Four cheeky boys climbed in the school window after hearing there were some white people speaking with the senior class.



Another young soldier facing life with no lower leg — one of many fighters who received no prosthetics or rehabilitation support.



Michael with the two young soldiers who stayed close for all 7 days in Chin State — always on watch and ready to protect the team.



Jacob with two women carrying firewood in Sentung Village — a glimpse of daily life for those who remain in Chin State.



Michael with an elderly Chin woman — one of many community members who shared their stories during the visit.



A woman weeps as she shares her story — grief was a constant presence in every camp we visited.



Michael and Lucas with village elders in Chin State — one of many meetings where community needs were discussed in depth.



A young woman washing clothes in a bucket — water so scarce for washing that families often had to wait days and ration with neighbours.

What Comes Next

The rice has been delivered. The hydro unit is generating electricity. The fighters on crutches know someone came and listened. The widow whose husband and son were taken by the junta knows her story was recorded and will be shared.

Now comes the harder work — building the infrastructure of self-sufficiency. The Konjac cooperative and the chilli farming project together have the potential to more than double the income of 300 farming families. Not through charity — through commerce. The same principle that drives Kenshi.



"The world gets kinder one purchase at a time. Thank you for being part of this."

— Kenshi Life Changing Candles & Diffusers

Kenshi Life Changing Candles & Diffusers

kenshicandles.com.au · 1300 143 358 · kenshi@kenshicandles.com

Every Kenshi purchase funds a minimum of 500g of food · Social Traders certified

All photographs taken by Michael Foldi, Lucas Foldi and Jacob Thang — January 2026