

# Karen Teacher Working Group

## Summer Vacation Teacher Training Report

April 2008



**Karen Teacher Working Group  
Summer Vacation Teacher Training Report  
March 15-April 14, 2008**

**1) Introduction**

This year, KTWG mobile trainers provided training to 523 teachers in five districts: and 8 sites, 2 training site at Kler Lwee Htu, 2 training sites in Mu Htraw, one in Doo Tha Htu, 2 training sites in Du Pla Ya and one in Mergui Tavoy inside Karen State, Burma. Training was not able to take place in Taungoo and Pa-An districts due to the SPDC disturbances.

2) Each District training site was organized differently as the political and area situation in each district differed greatly. Training took place in Karen and Burmese controlled areas. Doo Pla Ya and Doo Tha Htu districts are under mixed Karen and Burmese control and have the highest number of school/teachers and students. Training took place in these districts.

**A) Doo Tha Htu District**

Most of the areas in Doo Tha Htu district are controlled by SPDC and are easily attacked. In order to carry out the training, district and local community leaders had to organize the training in a safe place, identifying and taking advantage of religious and cultural celebrations and arranging the teacher training at the same time. The teachers' transportation was easier because when the teachers were asked for the reason they travelled, they could say they were going to or coming back from the festival. The training was adjusted according to the festival dates; if the festival took ten days, the training would be for ten days, and the security is safer for teachers.

On March 6th 2008, Mobile Teacher Trainers and district education leader with local community security guides started their journey towards the training place in Doo Tha Htu district. To reach training the place, it took 7 days, walking 10 to 12 hours every day. On the way to training site the trainer walked through jungle, villages and dangerous area, including SPDC and KNLA restricted areas. They reached the training site on March 12th and the training started on March 14th, with 99 teachers who came from different townships (Doo Tha Htu has 4 townships). The teachers walked for a day to reach the training site, passing SPDC check points. On the way to training site, the teachers had to act like villagers on their way to celebrate an event, to prevent suspicions of attending different activities. The teachers acted this way because SPDC do not like teachers or villagers to be in contact with outside people (organizations, KNU or other supporters).

The training site was organised in a very secure place, surrounded by a stream and forest enabling the teachers to easily find their own vegetables and food, such as prawn and fish in the stream and vegetables at the river bank. Intensive training was provided, day and night, for 10 days, from 8:00am – 3:00pm in day

time and 6:00pm – 8:00pm at night time. Saw Pun Nu (Education Coordinator) said "We did the training at night time because we wanted to save the time and teachers don't have to stay very long in the forest, and we wanted to finish the course at the same time as the Buddhist festival. Trainees were so happy and most of the trainees were new teachers, who pointed out that it was their first training. It increased their confidence in teaching children and enabled them to gain more ideas about different methods to teach children." (New teacher – after graduating high school they teach children without receiving any training). At the same time Saw Mu Htee, Project Coordinator, pointed out that this was the most successful training he experienced as a mobile trainer in 6 years. He was very impressed how the teachers, community and leaders organized themselves without any disturbances by SPDC, as SPDC were very close to the areas. On April 14th all teachers left the training site and went back home. On the way home if any question were raised by SPDC, all teachers would reply 'I am on my way back from the water festival in XXXXX village'.

As the area is deep inside Karen state, Burma, materials, such as newsletter and story books, can not reach them easily. The only time it is easier for them is during the summer teacher training where they could access news and outside text books or story books. Even though they received them during Summer Vacation Training, they were unable to carry them back home as they were afraid of SPDC suspicions and disturbances. In order for the material to reach the schools, they had to organize an alternative way, therefore on April 14th the teachers left without texts and any materials they received in the training. The materials and texts were organized by a Head master (who has an important role in both the Karen and Burmese sites) who sent them to each school.



Trainees participates in different activities

Education leaders/MTT on the way to Training site /Temporary training place



DuTa Htu teacher /leaders (group picture)

## B) Kler Lwee Htu District

Kler Lwee Htoo is an area that SPDC classifies as a war zone and they always have a plan to attack the areas. It makes local people scared and worried, especially teachers who have to travel very far to the training site. There are three townships in Kler Lwee Htu district, Moo, Ler Doe and Haw Htee Township. Thus, local leaders organized two training places, one in Moo township and one

in Haw Htee township. In these areas the SPDC are always active, the community always have to be aware of SPDC and be ready to flee when ever the SPDC come to their village. But despair all the difficulty 99 teachers and parent attended the tanning.

### **Hsaw Htee training site**

On February 28th Mobile teacher trainers and district leader started on their journey to the training site, together with the training material, carried by villagers. The journey took 10 days; they had to wait on the car road as SPDC had blocked them. Saw Gay Htoo (MTT) said, "We were lucky and arrived safely at the training site, as the other group crossing the car road later that day were attacked by SPDC."

Teachers had to cross the SPDC car road at night time. Most of them were women and they worried for their families or children who they left behind at home.

The training took place in a village which is five hours away from the SPDC base. Most of the teachers were women and had babies, so they had to ask their neighbour to baby-sit during the training. One of the teacher (a mother with 5 children) said "We came to the training to gain more knowledge and skill, as we did not get them when we started teaching. The training was useful. Even though we are busy at summer time, farming, we long to get more training." 50 Parents attended Parent Education workshop for two days. Saw Htu Moo (Parent) said "I know more about what and how to cooperate and work closely with the teacher, for my child's educational development."

### **Mone Training site**

On March 2nd 2008 Mobile teacher trainers and education leaders started their journey to the training site with the district leader, who attended a district meeting at district office in Ler Doe township. They travelled for a week, crossing the car road. On March 6th, they arrived to the training site safely. There are 4 village tracts with more than 10 schools in the area. Training is rarely provided due to the restrictions of SPDC activities. To be able to hold the training, security guides, villagers, community leader and others cooperated together.

30 teachers participated in the training and they were mostly female teachers with children.



**Group work and group presentation in classroom**



**Parent /Teacher during the training**

### **C) Mutraw District**

Mutraw district is located close to Mae Hon Son province and is under the control of Karen. Training only took place in Dweh Loh Township, due to the SPDC disturbances this year. There were two training sites, and 147 teachers joined the training. Training was held in the forest, as the site was close to SPDC control area, and it was three hours walk from the SPDC post. Community leaders organized the training and cooperation together with community security guides, constantly being aware of security and communication.

Most of the teachers were women, having small babies, but participated well in the training. A trainee, who was 9 months pregnant, came to the training and her baby was delivered during the training. The mother and baby were in good health and the baby was named Summer Moo, as one aspect of Karen culture is to include the place, a village or house, where the baby was born in its name.

Hence the baby's name included Summer, as he was born during the Summer Teacher Training.

Parents were invited to attend an education discussion and Parent Education. 81 parents joined the training and Naw Tha Ku from Wah Tho Kla school said, "I am happy that parents joined the training and I am looking forward to working together with them, developing their understanding of who responsible for their children's education." When Mobile Teacher Trainers discussed problems the teachers encountered, they replied that they had difficulties with children and their parents. This is due to the parents believing the teacher is the educator, hence they should take full responsibility for education and caring for the children.

The training started from 8:00 to 12:00 am and 1:00 – 3:00 pm in the afternoon. Additional training took place from 5:30-6:00 pm. Due to security and lack of light, the training took place throughout the day. It is also the season when SPDC troops send food to their posts at the border line, Salween Bank, which was close to the training site.



Group Brain storming and present

## D) Doo Pla Ya District

Doo Pla Ya district has been controlled by many groups such as SPDC, DKBA, KPF and it was very difficult to adjust groups and activities. There are 4 townships in Doo Pla Ya and 3 townships, Kya Aye, Kru Tu and *Kaw K'Ray* there were a lot of fighting in these areas, so the training was held in Wao Ray township. This was the first time training took place in Wao Ray Township as in the past SPDC were very active in this area.

On February 22nd KTWG project coordinator met with education leaders and Mobile teacher trainers and discussed and planned for the Summer Teacher Training and at the training materials were handed out.

On March 12th 2008 in Papra and Thayago villages, teachers, Trainers and education leader gathered together for the first time since the opening of the teacher training with 167 trainees, 107 teachers in Papra training site and 60 teachers in Thayago training site.

Duplaya district is the biggest district with 1082 teachers. The education leaders are very wise and well organized, even though they encounter many political problems and fighting in the area, they were able to organize 2 training sites.

Saw Mya (Education Vice Chairperson) said, "We prepared training for 50 people in each site but when the training started we realized we had more than we expected, but we were pleased with teacher enthusiasm and eagerness to develop their skills."

In Doo Pla Ya district, almost all of the schools are recognized under both SPDC and KNU control, so the training took place in a small village with 167 teachers attending. The training site had to be kept a secret to reduce the risk of attacks by SPDC. In order to keep the location a secret the local leaders were responsible for the communications and security at the site. Teachers had to cross the SPDC base and it took some of them six to ten hours walking. One of the training courses was entitled 'Child Psychology', which the teachers benefited from. A new young teacher said, "This is the first training that I have attended and the teaching methods I have learnt in this training have made me aware of how the children learn and how we need to deal with them to be able to build their skill and knowledge for their whole life."



### **E) Mergui Tavoy District**

Mergui Tavoy District has been under SPDC control for many years. Karen villages were destroyed and people had to flee to refugee camp in Thailand. Only few schools are left inside. District and education leaders organised the training, close to the border line at Ah Htu Kee, but as there was no river it was difficult to identify the border line.

In December 2007, a message was sent to KTWG to acknowledge where the teacher training would take place and when and how many people they were expecting. KTWG received the message informing them that Mergui-Tavoy would hold their training with 20 teachers. The training site was difficult to access and it was a long way from the teacher's homes, travelling through a SPDC post on the way.

A new young education coordinator, who was elected by his district 2 months ago, sent the message to his township education leaders to organize teachers and send them to the training site. The district centre and each township centre are very far apart and communication is difficult, so it took a month to receive the answer from township and another month for the township to send teachers to the training site.

A teacher from Ler Mu La Township said, "I have to come along way to get to the training site, on the way I had to pass through thick forest and I was very afraid of SPDC attacking. Luckily I was saved and when I arrived at the border I thought I was safe. As I was thinking I was safe I saw the Thai check point. 2 Thai soldiers came towards us and said we could not go across. We went back to the nearest village (Burma side) and our leader made another plan to get us to the training. To reach the training there were many things to organise and there were many dangers. We had to sneak into the training site. There were some teachers who would like to attend the training but couldn't reach it due to the security problem."

"I was confused during the first day of the training but the second day I felt happier. After 1 week I felt more confident." said a young trainee from Ka Ser Doe. He participated in the 'Participatory training', which used group work, pair work, group presentations, sharing and discussing to show different teaching methods. This approach can be confusing because it is not used in Burma schools.



Small group discussion



#### 4) Number and types of Trainees

Summer Vacation Training for Karen teachers inside Karen State began in 2001 and continues until this day. We have both new and experienced teachers coming to the trainings. New teachers are those teachers who have just graduated or have taught for only one to two years, and have never attended teacher training before. Experienced teachers are those teachers who have been teaching for more than three years and have attended previous training. Parent Education workshop was given for the first time this year. The number of parents and teachers who attended the training and workshop are listed below:

Number and Types of Trainees at SVT, 2008

District	New Teacher			Experienced T			Parents			Total			Teaching Topic
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T	
Mutraw	15	14	29	29	19	48	22	48	70	66	81	147	School Management
													Parent Education
													Child Psychology
Kler Lwee Htu	9	12	21	19	9	28	25	27	50	51	48	99	School Management
													Basic Health
													Parent Education
Doo Pla Ya	34	26	60	58	49	107	-	-	-	-	-	167	Child Psychology
													Basic Health
													School Management
Mergui Tavoy	5	3	8	6	5	11	-	-	-	11	8	19	Evaluation
													Child Psychology
													School and Community
Du tha Htu	32	17	49	23	19	42	-	-	-	55	36	91	Child Psychology
													Basic Health
													School Management
Total	95	72	167	135	101	236	47	75	120	183	173	523	

## 5) Trainee Achievement

Our Mobile Teacher Trainers brought a Teacher Evaluation form with them during SVT, in order to evaluate their trainees' achievement, depending on each topic they taught. It helps us know which parts of teaching we can improve or give in the future. During the real-life role-plays, trainees were evaluated on their participated and responses to each situation, and given immediate feedback. Each trainer evaluated the trainees throughout the whole training course, changing and improving results where applicable. The numbers from the "Teachers total score in SVT" differ from the information given in the 'Numbers of types of Trainees' due to the different training focuses which took place.

**Teachers total score in SVT, 2008**

	Trainees show their enthusiasm during the training.				Trainees show that they understand the lesson during group discussion and class activities.				Trainees are able to discuss what they've learnt .				Trainees show they are able to use and adapt lessons they've learnt in their own teaching.				Trainees are able to respond to question about the lessons taught and explain their answers			
	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor
Doo Tha Htoo district (91 teachers)	1	36	54			18	73			39	52			17	74			27	64	
Mutraw district (74 teachers)		57	16	1		31	43		1	30	39	4	1	41	29	3	1	40	30	3
Kler Lwee Htoo district (49 teachers)	1	21	26	1		10	38	1		28	21			20	29			26	23	
Doo Pla Ya district (120 teachers)	4	68	42	6	1	37	82		5	55	56	4	2	76	42		4	24	92	
Mergui Tavoy (19 teachers)	1	6	12			15	3	1	1	13	5			4	14	1	1	11	7	
Total Teachers ( 353)	7	188	150	8	1	111	239	2	7	165	173	8	3	158	188	4	6	128	216	3

### Percentage summarize

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	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor
<b>Total teachers (353)</b>	2%	53%	42%	2%	0.2%	31%	68%	0.6%	1.10%	47%	49%	2.3%	0.8%	44.7%	53%	1.1%	1.6%	36.3%	61.2%	0.8%

Summer Vacation teacher training Material prepared in Mae Saraing



## **6) Cooperation**

In order to run Summer Vacation Training, everybody cooperated and worked together. Everyone took responsibility for different roles, including local security leaders who took care of the security and communication and villagers who assisted us in the carrying materials, cooking, building and transportation.

## **8) Local Opinion**

In every district, local people were very satisfied with the training, identifying the usefulness of Parent Education. The majority of parents don't know about education and how much important it is, but after they joined the workshop, they began to realize how important education is, how they can work with teachers and support their children. Education Leaders and trainers are now able to discuss schooling with the parents and develop the cooperation within the community. Local people believe the training must continue every year because it helps parents to understand more about education.

## **9) Summary**

In order to carry out Summer Vacation Training, teachers, parents, leaders and our trainers had to face many difficulties, such as SPDC and Thai military disturbances, communication and difficult transportation. However, we overcome all the challenges together, due to our people willingness and longing for developing our education for the children.

The Teacher trainers were very pleased with the 523 trainees attending the course this year. They were especially enthusiastic considering difficulties many trainees had to overcome in order to attend the training. It shows a great commitment to improving the level of education in Karen state.