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School News

CTTC and the Environmental Conservation Group Release a New Book

KTTCC and the Environmental Conservation Group have released a new book titled "Environmental Conservation for the Future". The book provides information on the importance of environmental conservation and the need for action to address climate change. It also highlights the role of individuals and communities in promoting sustainable practices. The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in environmental conservation and the fight against climate change.

KTTC will be holding a lecture on the book on Saturday, September 21st at 10 AM at the KTTCC headquarters. The lecture will be followed by a Q&A session. Everyone is welcome to attend.

"It is crucial that we take action now to address climate change," said Dr. Lee, the lead author of the book. "Our planet is facing a crisis, and we must act quickly to protect our environment and future generations. This book is a call to action for all of us to take personal responsibility for the health of our planet."
Mutraw Education Department Will Distribute Student Health Provisions

Mutraw District Education Leaders have agreed to provide health provisions to the 14,885 students in their district for the 2010-2011 academic year. Of the 3 townships in Mutraw District, Lu Thaw and Dweh Lo townships will start to provide school health directly to their schools, but, in Bu Tho township, where schools are near existing clinics, medics from those clinics will continue to take responsibility for the students. In November 2007, the Karen State Education Assistance Group supported by the Karen Department Welfare and Health department began providing basic health provisions, such as vitamins A and B and deworming medicine, to students throughout Karen State. While this process started off smoothly in other areas, education leaders in Mutraw Township were hesitant to distribute health materials directly to students for risk of overstepping their mandate.

P’Doh Dee Gay Jr., the Mutraw District Education Leader, explained: “At first we thought that health can be provided only by health workers but during the District quarterly meeting, the Department Head Health coordinator explained a variety of health issues to us. We realized that the majority of children who need health care are students, therefore we now recognize the role teachers can play in providing this care.” Saw Gyi Gyi, the Karen Health and Welfare Department secretary, said: “The student health program provides de-worming and vitamin A tablets to all children. The medicine is distributed at the beginning of the academic year, where teachers are in a position to oversee the distribution to ensure all children receive the correct dosage. We (KHWD) only have a few members who are able to visit and distribute these medicines to every school. Therefore our plan is to provide primary health care, not treatment, through KSEAG and facilitate 2 day workshops to the teachers to enable them to manage and hand out the medicine appropriately.”

During Karen State Education Assistance Group workshops in October and November 2009, health workers provided basic health training to district, township and village tract education leaders. The health workers will also provide training directly to Karen State teachers during the summer vacation teacher training in March and April 2010.

KTTC Students Participate in their First Fieldtrip

Every year First year students at KTTC (Karen Teacher Training College) participate in a fieldtrip. This year 30 Year 1 students and 5 teachers provided basic health training to district, township and village tract education leaders. The school profile forms, collected by KSEAG (Karen State Education Assistance Group), show there are currently 20 schools with 33 teachers and 640 students in Taungoo District. Thra Eh Wah said, “Our current Education Leader is becoming old and is not able to work full-time. All leaders from Taungoo District have agreed to rebuild our Education Management system and we have selected an additional Education Leader, who will work alongside our existing Education Leader.”

Saw Way Htoo, who graduated Standard 10 in Taungoo Township, then completed a Post-10 course in Mae La Oon Refugee camp and taught in the camp for over a year, was selected as the additional Education Leader. He added, “Our current Education Leader is becoming old and is not able to work full-time. All leaders from Taungoo District have agreed to rebuild our Education Management system and we have selected an additional Education Leader, who will work alongside our existing Education Leader.”

Taungoo District Selected an Additional Education Leader

Taungoo, a district in southern Kaw Thoo Lei, has been greatly affected by SPDC (State Peace Development Council) attacks since 2006, and as a result most of the Districts departments have collapsed, including the Education Department. As SPDC continues to attack most departments have still not been rebuilt. To find a new Education Leader is very difficult as they need experience, ability and commitment.” Thra Eh Wah said, the Coordinator of Internally Displaced People in Taungoo District. He added, “Our current Education Leader is becoming old and is not able to work full-time. All leaders from Taungoo District have agreed to rebuild our Education Management system and we have selected an additional Education Leader, who will work alongside our existing Education Leader.”

Saw Way Htoo, who graduated Standard 10 in Taungoo District, then completed a Post-10 course in Mae La Oon Refugee camp and taught in the camp for over a year, was selected as the additional Education Leader in 15th December. School profile forms, collected by KSEAG (Karen State Education Assistance Group), show there are currently 20 schools with 33 teachers and 640 students in Taungoo District. Thra Eh Wah said, “These schools are all in Haw T’Hu Township, but we also have schools in Daw Pa Kho Township but no-one collected their school profile forms to register with KSEAG. Now we have an additional Education leader hopefully he will be able to collect the forms and submit them for the 2010-2011 academic year.”

Karen Teacher Newsletter - February, 2010
School News

Research Project
Mainstreaming Social Identity
Societies: Western approaches to the Problem,
20th Century Borders, Citizenship, Multi Ethnic
Restorative Approaches, International History or
Human Development & Culture, People & Power,
History of Equality Global Geography

Final Year Research Project

Manager ZOA, Thailand
ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)

ZOA is ADRA's modal office in Thailand.

Human Rights/ Human Wrong,
Peace & Justice:

ADRA (Assistance Coordinator)

Manager ZOA, Thailand

ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)

KSEAG-

Manager ZOA, Thailand

ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)

Manager ZOA, Thailand

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Manager ZOA, Thailand

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Manager ZOA, Thailand

ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)
Global Border Studies in Noh Poe Refugee Camp

A source from DHE (Department of Higher Education) said if everything goes as planned there will be a new post ten school in Noh Poe refugee camp in March 2010. Saw Law Eh Moo, a secretary of DHE, said, "In February, the students from every refugee camp, will sit the GBS entrance exam and only 15-20 student will be accepted. There will be no race discrimination but the students must have graduated from 10th standard or a post ten course." The students who graduate from the GBS School are required to serve in their community for at least 1 year. There will be foreign teachers in the school and 6 subjects are taught in the first year: Human Rights/ Human Wrongs, Human Development & Culture, People & Power, History of Equality, Global Geography and a First year Research Project. During the second year the students will learn about Peace & Justice: Restorative Approaches, International History of the 20th Century Borders, Citizenship, Multi Ethnic Societies: Western approaches to the Problem, Social Identity and a Final Year Research Project. Saw Law Eh Moo said, "It is good that the students have the opportunity to learn higher education and develop their understanding about education in different countries. It is also an opportunity to connect all post ten schools in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border, as in the there was limited communication and connection. For example, the students will get the same certificate, but different qualification, as students who are studying in IHE schools in other camps." World Education will fund the GBS School for this year and the curriculum will be adapted from Dundalk University in Ireland, to be best suited the needs of the community.

SPDC Burn Village, Including a School Dormitory

On the night of Sunday January 17, 2010, the Burma Army’s Military of Command #10 (MCC) attacked Hkeh Der village, which is Hkeh Der village tract, Kler Lwee Htoo District. Fortunately, Karen authorities were able to warn parents, teachers and students who were able to flee into the jungle night before the attack. The Burma Army burnt all the houses including the school dormitory. Saw Steve, secretary of the Committee for Internally Displaces Karen People (CIDKP) said, "SPDC (Burma Army) troops are still currently active in nearby villages. Villagers, teachers and students throughout Hkeh Der village tract are still hiding in the jungle." This latest Burma Army attack has left more than 1,000 people from Rghel Der village tract internally displaced in the region.

ZOA Said ADRA Will Takeover VT Projects

Saw Kelly, the Program Manager for ZOA Thailand, said ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) will begin taking over the VT (Vocational Training) in camps in June 2010. The process of handing over the projects started last year with the developing and signing of a Partnership Agreement Framework and followed with series of meetings between the two organizations. He said, "In June we will start working together, with ZOA acting as the advisors of the projects and ADRA taking the management and implementation roles. We will work together until 2012 and if ADRA are able to, they will take over all aspects of VT by the end of 2011." Since starting VT programme in 2003 with camp communities, ZOA has organised training in sewing, hair cutting and hair dressing, stove making, cooking and baking, clothes weaving, basket weaving, auto mechanics, radio mechanics, blacksmith, tin smith, carpentry, agriculture and animals raising, computer training, music, and elderly and child care, to over 18,000 refugees. Th'ra Saw Eh Htoo, Coordinator of Cooking, Bakery and Child-Elderly care said, "We started Vocational Training in October, 2007 and I have trained over 1,000 refugees in the skills of cooking, bakery and Elderly and Child Care. But most of the trainees have resettled to a third country. Therefore, I have to train new people (ToT) again and again." He added, "In the past, we gave the people who completed the training only a certificate which was provided by ZOA and Camp VT Committee. But during the past 2 years, we have been able to provide the graduates with certificates from Thai VT Colleges, which means they have graduated at an international standard, giving them recognition for their studies." Saw Lah Hay, Assistant Coordinator for ADRA, said, "We are still in the process of collecting information. We enter the camps together with ZOA staff and interview VT trainers, trainees and some refugees to discover what ADRA can do to improve the Vocational Trainings to make it more beneficial for them. When ADRA officially take over from ZOA, all funding and VT courses will be organised by our staff."

New Burma Army Camp Causes Disruption for KSEAG Distribution

KSEAG (Karen State Education Assistance Group) members had to arrange to meet some teachers at midnight, in Htee Wa Bway Khee village, Hsaw Hi Township, Kler Lwee Htu District, whilst distributing teachers’ subsidies in November and December, 2009, due to a new SPDC camp in the area. Thara Nay Kaw, a MITT (Mobile Teacher Trainer) and member of the distribution team, said, "Even though we are regular Mobile Teacher Trainers the local teachers are afraid to meet us." He continued, "When we reached Htee Wa Bway Khee, we noticed a new Burmese Army camp has been built close to the village. Due to this we arranged to meet the teachers at midnight for the teachers security." On 17th December 2009, the Burmese Army LIB #598 began to build a new camp close to Htee Wa Bway Khee village. Many parents are forced to assist in the building of the camp and constructing fencing around the perimeter.

Newly Widowed Teacher Continues Teaching

On the 15th October 2009, LIB (Light Infantry Battalion) # 343, 561, 590, 349 and 599 attacked KSEAG (Karen State Education Assistance Group) between the two organizations. He said, "In June
International Education News

Child Labour

R.M. Mohla

Child Labour

SSA Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan

Chalta Firta School

UNICEF

DFID (Department for International Development)

Butterflies

(UNICEF)
New Mobile Schools in the Slums of Delhi

India, situated in South-East Asia, is the seventh largest country, by geographical area, in the world. It is the second most populated country with the most people taking part in the nation's democracy. During the mid-19th century, India was colonized by the British, until they struggled for independence, through non-violent resistance, and became an independent nation on 15th August 1947.

It took them less than 3 years to establish their own Constitution of India, on 26th January 1950, making this the longest and most exhaustive constitution of any independent nation in the world. They created a Parliamentary system of democracy, with 2 sections (the upper house called the 'Rajya' the council of state and the lower house called the 'Lok Sabha' the house of the people), based on the British parliamentary system. Since the 1990's, when they were described as having a strong centre but weaker states, India's government has developed and is now the nation where the most people use in their democratic rights. Freedom of speech, expression, belief, assembly and association, migration and a choice of occupation or trade are the fundamental rights of every Indian citizen. If you were born in India, you are an Indian citizen, but your citizenship will be revoked if you become a citizen of a different country; they do not allow dual citizenship. In 2008 India had an estimated population of 1,147,995,904; with over approximately 40% living under the line of poverty. In 2007 there were approximately 21,500,000 people living within the 1,484 km2 area of Delhi, an area 3 times the size of Rangoon. A westernized schooling system was put in place when the British ruled India and many of its traits still exist in the modern system. Primary education, for children up to 14 years old, has the highest attendance rate of nearly two thirds of the population. Even though more money has been invested in education, more than a third of the population is illiterate and only 15% of students reach High school. In 1986 the central government created a National Policy on Education to create a uniform system throughout India. They also banned child labour to ensure children did not work in unsafe environments and could attend school, but there have been difficulties enforcing this due to differences in the government parties. There has also been an increase in corruption in schools and teachers being constantly absent from their positions. Over the past 2 decades, new schools have opened up, focusing on alternative education, supported by UNICEF, to encourage more children to attend school.

Recently the Indian government has placed an emphasis on schooling, promising to triple the education budget over the next 5 years. As a sign of their commitment to developing their levels of literacy, in August 2009 they passed an education bill stating all children aged between 6 and 14 years old are entitled to free education. There are many barriers which will need to be overcome in order for the 70 million children who have no education to start their learning. DFID (Department for International development) an English based organization, is supporting an innovative project in the slum areas of Delhi – School buses - initiated by the Delhi Government of Education under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the Indians governments new education program. The project, which started in 2009, is run by a city based NGO called Butterflies, with an aim to mainstream underprivileged children and prepare them for joining government schools. Old buses have been renovated, painted bright yellow with cartoons on the side, and changed into mobile classrooms, equipped with a variety of teaching and learning materials, including a TV, books, soft toys and computers. This means education can be taken to the children's doorsteps, in all areas of Delhi's slums. They are called Chalta Firta School, the Hindi name for a school on wheels or a mobile learning centre. It was the idea of R. M. Mohla, who is assisting to achieve India's universal education target of getting all children aged between 6 and 14 into school by 2010, who views the buses as a place of transition, not a permanent school for the children. It is very difficult for the teachers to teach children from the slum areas because many work to support their families. Some parents are resistant to send their child to the mobile schools as they prefer them to work in order to supplement their meager income. Some parents cannot enrol them in schools as they themselves cannot read or write. They are also afraid their children would be taken away from them, in the buses, as they had never seen anything like it before. After a while some parents became comfortable to send their child to the buses to gain an education. Since the beginning of the project, half of its students have been enrolled in full-time government schools. The teachers follow up with the child's progress in government schools. It is estimated the buses will be able to help approximately 5,000 children with some level of access to education. Snacks, such as fruit, are given to every child who attends the schools as an incentive to turn up. Many times, when a bus arrives at its site, it is not only the enrolled children who turn up and learn. Younger siblings are brought as there is no one else to care for them and many other children are curious and will arrive to see what is happening. Children are taught Hindi, English and Mathematics whilst sat on Chatali (mats) on the pavements. They are also given health and hygiene lessons and once a week a sports teacher comes to teach them different games. Children wait patiently and eagerly for the bus to arrive for their daily lessons. “They feel a great pride in the bus because it comes especially for them. Without the bus, they stand no chance of getting back to school,” says community mobiliser Durgesh Gupta. “It transforms their lives and gives them hope.”
**International Education News**

Shaheen

International Education News

[Image: People standing together, possibly at an event or conference related to international education.]
Many children have attended these mobile schools and are now in mainstream government schools. One such girl is 10 year old Shaheen, who now wants to become a doctor. Before she attended the mobile school she helped her mother, a street seller, fetching sacks of coal to roast corn with, and making cones from old newspapers to wrap them in. “I used to stand outside my house watching the other children go to school,” Shaheen said. “I couldn’t count and I could only write a few words of Hindi. Now I do multiplication and division and know some English too.” The Mobile buses seem to be a success but some are not convinced. Sunita Chugh, assistant professor at the National University of Education Planning and Administration, who studies education of the poor, said that with so many children in a small van, “I don’t think the teachers are able to serve the multi-grade needs of the kids.”

Due to the success of the mobile schools, more buses will be bought and renovated to introduce the children in the Delhi slums to learning, preparing them to attend mainstream government schools, and providing them with opportunities to improve their future.

The Youngest Headmaster in the World

Over 1,200 km South-East from Delhi, situated between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal, is the state of West Bengal. With a population of over 80 million it is the most densely populated state in India. There are 19 districts in West Bengal, with the capital, Kolkata (Calcutta), in Kolkata District. Here, as with most of India, education is difficult to attain. Even as India progresses, there are millions of children living with their families, barely affording a decent meal let alone education. These children have no opportunities to learn, working in order for them and their families to survive. But even though these children accept they have limited or no access to school and learning, their desire to become more educated continues to grow. Even attending free government schools is beyond their reach, as their families do not have the income to pay for the uniform and books needed. Babar Ali, a sixteen year old boy from Murshidabad District, is the first member of children the opportunity to learn. They begin by singing their national anthem, followed by their lessons. There are children of all ages in small groups all around his courtyard, eager to learn the new lesson of the day. During the monsoon season often lessons are cancelled due to no shelter for the students, and limited electricity; but they continue to return, eager to develop and continue their learning. After working in the fields or as a domestic helper, children go to school,” Shaheen said. “I couldn’t count and I could only write a few words of Hindi. Now I do multiplication and division and know some English too.” The Mobile buses seem to be a success but some are not convinced. Sunita Chugh, assistant professor at the National University of Education Planning and Administration, who studies education of the poor, said that with so many children in a small van, “I don’t think the teachers are able to serve the multi-grade needs of the kids.”

Babar rings a bell to summon the local children to attend Babar Ali’s school. They are able to attend this school as there are no charges for attendance, and books needed. Babar Ali’s school. They are able to attend this school as there are no charges for attendance, and books needed. Babar Ali’s school. They are able to attend this school as there are no charges for attendance, and books needed.

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Focus Story

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KSEAG Teacher Subsidy and School Materials Distribution

Karen State Education Assistance Group was established in 2005 by KTWG, KED and Partners, to accommodate the needs of the teachers and students in Karen State. Over the past 3 years KSEAG has expanded their project and is now providing teacher subsidies and student materials to approximately 90% of Karen State.

October

District Education leaders submitted their school profile forms to KSEAG, before the closing date, to ensure their schools were registered for teacher and material support. The school profile forms provide a lot of information, including teacher details, support already receive and materials provided last year. Photographs, student drawings and teacher letters accompanied the form, providing KSEAG with a detailed image of the school and students. KSEAG members inputted the information into the database, which was used to calculate the total amount of teacher subsidies needed for distribution. The database will also be used to calculate materials, both teacher and student, to be purchased and sent into Karen State for 2010-11 academic year. There are currently 1,049 open schools in Karen State, with 3,981 teachers, of which KSEAG support 2,955, and 83,920 students. The information received from the schools highlighted an increase of 406 teachers, mainly in Dooplaya district who have recently registered with their local KED. As a result of this increase KSEAG held intensive discussions with district and township education leaders and a meeting of the board of directors to discuss its policies. Consequently, 2 new policies were created and implemented referring to newly registered schools and teacher who receive SPDC stipends. From October 19th-23rd a workshop was held for the KSEAG monitoring team in Hoe Kay Village, including Mobile Teacher Trainers (MTT) and Area Teacher Trainers (ATT). This workshop focused on the role of MTT and ATT during the teacher subsidy distribution and their responsibilities. They were asked to list strengths and weaknesses of KSEAG, from their observations over the past 3 years.

Thra Mu Htee, MTT coordinator, explained how they evaluated the forms used during the distribution and changed them to make is easier for the distribution team and teachers. Overall the feedback was positive, recognising how schooling in Karen State has improved since KSEAG was founded. There were also areas for improvement. Thra Mu Htee added, “Attending this training has been beneficial to every involved with teacher subsidy distribution. Everyone now has a clearer understanding of their role and the wider context.”

November

Teacher subsidy distribution began in November. During this month KSEAG Central members met with district, township and village tract education leaders at the main 5 distribution sites. KSEAG distribution teams also attended the meetings where distribution procedures and strategies were clarified, school profiles and statistics were checked, distribution plans were finalised, training was given to education leaders and funds were handed over. At each of these meetings an additional 2-day basic knowledge training about Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Iron and Deworming was provided by Karen Health and Welfare Department to extend the leaders understanding and appreciation of the benefits and relevance of these medical provisions on students learning. KTWG’s Newsletter coordinator also took advantage of the situation to discuss with the district leaders the purpose of the newsletter and ways to improve its content, focus and circulation. Phyu Pweo’s editor, Saw Eh Doh Wah, said, “This was the first time a workshop like this has been held for the Newsletter. Before we only received information through letters, but having the opportunity to meet people face-to-face and discuss the positive and negative aspects of the newsletter was fantastic.”

December

After the teacher distribution was completed KSEAG members concentrated on translating and organising teacher letters, received from over 100 schools, in order to formulate a wider and more accurate picture of schools they are supporting. KSEAG central members focused on organising and evaluating students materials in preparation for the material distribution in February 2010. A variety of materials were purchased and organised to be delivered to the initial distribution sites along the Thai-Burma border, in time for the distribution. Meetings with District, Township and Village tract leaders took place where plans were made for the transportation of school materials to schools.

Future Plans

When the materials arrive at the initial distribution sites, KSEAG members will check the quality and amount received, prior to transporting them across the river. The members will also prepare the materials for individual schools, ensuring a quick and accurate distribution. Plans for transportation of the materials will be finalised with the District, Township and Village tract leaders in the coming month.

Continued from page 9
Traditional Knowledge

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Indigenous Elders and Shamans (IKAP-Burma) Workshop

From 14th to 15th December 2009, IKAP Burma group organised an ‘Elders and Shamans’ workshop at Hoe Hkay, Mutraw District, Karen State. This workshop was an opportunity to exchange indigenous knowledge and skills between the elders, shaman and Karen youth. A variety of elderly people, Karen people who live in Karen State and Thailand, Zomin(Chin), T’an(P’Laung) youth, and 41 KTTC students attended the workshop, eager to share and exchange indigenous knowledge. The aim of the 2 day workshop was to discover how and why indigenous knowledge was lost between generations. It was also an opportunity to identify possible ways of maintaining indigenous knowledge, through educating the youth about the value and uses of it. Therefore local youth were also invited to attend the workshop.

Pu K’Prü Say who’s from Hsar Law Pu village said, “Today the youth do not want to know and learn about indigenous knowledge. Unfortunately only a few youth are eager to learn, even though we invited all the youth from the local villages.” Karen people who live in Chiang Mai were also invited to the workshop, giving them an opportunity to share their knowledge and skills. “All the grass and trees here (in Karen State) looks the same as the grass and trees we live (Chiang Mai), but the plants, such as bamboo, and trees here are more colourful.” These were the first words by Uncle Moh Gloh, who lives in Hway Ei Khan village, Chiang Mai province, as he entered Karen State.

The workshop began at 8:30am, with activities and discussion continuing until 3:00pm. When the local community heard of the elders’ arrival, they travelled to Hoe Hkay to listen to their speeches and receive traditional medicine for their ailments. Pu Hsar Lor who’s from Ter Nya Der village opened the workshop with a prayer, inviting the spirits to be with them during the sharing and exchanging of knowledge and skills. Dr. Prasert, Chairperson of IKAP (Indigenous Knowledge and People), read a poem, “White elephant step on the border, brother finding his mother’s relatives”, as part of his opening speech, identifying the aims of the workshop and outlining the schedule. He spoke of the elders and Shamans who would be sharing their knowledge and skills with the youth, giving the youth an opportunity to develop their personal indigenous knowledge. He explained the reason for holding the meeting at KTTC, as it was an amazing opportunity for the students and youth to learn and discuss different indigenous knowledge with elders and Shamans. They would be able to identify the advantages of knowing and practicing indigenous knowledge, as well as recognising the difficulties of maintaining and developing it. The students will be able to use the knowledge and skills learnt from this workshop when they return to their villages to teach. Dr. Prasert emphasised the right of all indigenous people to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs, including the revitalisation of indigenous knowledge. This knowledge is then able to be included into the curriculum, providing the people with control of their own education system, which is appropriate to their cultural needs.

After the opening speech, Uncle Moh Gloh, a Thai-Karen, recited a traditional poem through song. The poem says that, “If brothers are united, we can climb the ladder to reach the sky; if brothers trust each other, when we cook a rock and it will become a yam.” At the beginning of the day, the students and youth did not know what questions to ask, as they were unsure of the content of the workshop; but as the day progressed, the majority of KTTC students and youth became eager to ask questions, clarifying and developing their understanding of indigenous knowledge.

During the second day of the workshop, every participant was eager and enthusiastic to share their knowledge and musical talents. During the free time, students were constantly asking questions, wanting to learn more. Some of the questions asked by the students were based on traditional medicine and ‘Ta T’Dee Ta’, which means when you have lost your way in the forest what do you do? How do you find your way again? If rats come and destroy your paddy fields or eat all your rice, what do you have to do?

When the youth asked the elders about incantations, the elders replied that these were sacred and protected aspects of indigenous knowledge. If the students wanted to learn them they would have to secretly go to an elder or Shaman and ask to be taught. Pu Mia Say who is from Hwee Pree Der said, “If you want to learn all about indigenous knowledge, you must be kind, tolerant, have a clean mind and be brave.”

There was a feeling of understanding, which had begun developing on the first day, and was apparent during the second day. It was an understanding of the significance of the workshop and the importance of indigenous knowledge. There were many people from different ethnic groups who were able to share and promote their indigenous knowledge and skills. Karen people are the strongest ethnic group still using indigenous knowledge. Due to the torturing and persecution of the Karen, and other ethnic groups, most indigenous knowledge has been lost. T’an(P’Laung) people, who have also lost some of their indigenous knowledge, often say ‘Mai Nai Darn T’ah’ which means when they return to their homeland; they will give training about traditional knowledge.

Saw Hsr Gu, a second year KTTC student, explained this was the first time he had been given the opportunity to learn and understand his indigenous knowledge. He describes his belief for his lack of indigenous knowledge and skills; his ancestors were Animists, who shared indigenous knowledge with their children; but when our parents became Christians or Buddhists, they did not share their knowledge as they believed the knowledge...
Interview

Image of a person:

In your opinion, what is the main goal of the Karen State Education Assistance Group (KSEAG)?

On the one hand, there are countries that are successful at developing their education system, while on the other hand, there are those that are still in need of assistance. KSEAG is an organization that aims to provide assistance to those countries and to help them develop their education system.

KSEAG was established to provide financial assistance to students who are unable to afford the costs of education. The group focuses on providing scholarships to students in need and on supporting educational initiatives in underprivileged areas.

The purpose of KSEAG is to improve the quality of education in Myanmar and to help students from marginalized communities gain access to higher education opportunities. The group is committed to working towards a society where everyone has equal opportunities to learn and succeed.

In conclusion, KSEAG is an organization that plays a vital role in promoting education in Myanmar and in helping to reduce inequalities in access to education. Through its efforts, the group is making a positive impact on the lives of students and on the future of Myanmar.

On the other hand, what role do you think KSEAG should play in the development of education in Myanmar?

KSEAG should be involved in all aspects of education development in Myanmar. The group should work closely with local stakeholders, including government officials, educators, and community leaders, to identify the most pressing needs and to develop effective strategies for addressing them.

In addition to providing financial assistance to students, KSEAG should also support efforts to improve the quality of education in Myanmar. This may include providing training and resources to teachers, developing curriculum materials, and promoting best practices in education.

Ultimately, the role of KSEAG should be to work towards creating a sustainable and equitable education system in Myanmar that provides all students with the opportunities they need to succeed.

(KSEAG) is an organization that has been established to provide assistance to students in need. The group is committed to helping students from marginalized communities gain access to higher education opportunities. Through its efforts, KSEAG is making a positive impact on the lives of students and on the future of Myanmar.

On the other hand, what role do you think KSEAG should play in the development of education in Myanmar?
Thara Kaw Khee Lah was born on 23rd July 1969 in Kwee T’Ma village, Mae Cho tract. Dweh Loh Township, Mutraw District in Brigade 5. He grew up in poverty and faced many problems with his schooling. Every year he passed his exam, and after graduating, he started to work for his people, joining the local Education Department group and in time he became the Township vice-secretary. As Dweh Loh Township Education Leader, he continues to work to improve the education for the youth in his District. ‘Pweg Phru’ interviewed him about the education in his District.

Q – What is the state of education in your District?

A – I think the state of education in my District has improved a small amount. When I became the Education Leader, it was very difficult to develop the state of education but the Education Department came together and worked closely with the Village tract leaders to make sure all the students who should attend school had the chance. Everyone, district co-workers, Village tract education committees and villagers, worked together, and started to understand each other. We find that every year more and more students attend school and the parents look happy.

Q – How did you lead and run your schools before you received support from KSEAG (Karen State Education Assistance Group) and other organizations?

A – Before we received support from KSEAG, we did not get any support from any other organizations. With the support of our community members we were able to run our schools and provide teachers and schooling to our students. Due to poverty and many diseases we couldn’t provide teachers and schooling to our students. Members we were able to run our schools and organizations. With the support of our community leaders gave them a small amount of money. Parents provided 9 tins of rice a year and the teachers received their salary from the government.

Q – During the 2008-2009 academic year, have there been any conflict between schools, students, community members and teacher concerning school materials provided by KSEAG?

A – In our District, we do not have conflicts between the community and schools about the materials we get. But we do have some problems with the schools which are located close to the fields, not in the mountains, as Burmese government and Karen teachers work together in these schools, and we are sure problems occur sometimes. However it is not a serious problem. The government teachers receive their salary from the government and we try to give them additional support for the time they work. We don’t want to favour any teacher in the District and want to treat them all fairly and equally. For the Karen teachers, they receive an agreed amount, which is the same as the government teachers. We don’t have any arguments and conflicts in our areas.

Q – How does the annual support from KSEAG benefit your teachers, students and district?

A – It definitely does. I feel strong about this and would like to inform others about all the benefits we have seen. In the past only the District and Township representatives went to meet the KSEAG representative, not the Village tract leaders. Therefore they would not hear first hand the information about the distribution sites, training sites, reporting process and forms, creating misunderstandings. After attending the workshop together, I believe the Village tract leaders have a greater understanding of the distribution process, the situation and how we can work together effectively for a better future. For the entire District, the materials provided by KSEAG are very valuable, bringing with it a sense of strength and enthusiasm. It makes everyone, including me, feel full of strength and capable to continue working for the future of the communities. I am very grateful for KSEAG providing teachers’ subsidies and materials to our teachers, as if we look at our teachers in Karen State, they appear pitiful and tired from always working in the paddy fields; especially at harvest time. Receiving the support from KSEAG means they are able to work less in the fields and provide more for their families. From the support the teachers receive from KSEAG, I believe their energy, enthusiasm and self-worth level are increasing.

Q – Is the sports materials, distributed by KSEAG, useful? Who does it benefit?

A – When KSEAG delivered sports materials to our schools, it was the first time many students had ever seen materials like this. Some students, in my opinion, don’t attend school as they are bored with play. We have noticed, in all tract and villages, more students attended school after the sports materials arrived. We are planning to organize sport competitions between schools, tracts and villages. Since the arrival of sports materials, there has been a big change in the attendance and attitude of students.

Q – Were parents and villagers willing to transport the materials from the distribution site to the schools? Do you often see parents and villagers participating in education?

A – During the 2008-2009 academic year, have there been any conflict between schools, students, community members and teacher concerning school materials provided by KSEAG?

Continues on Page 23
Teacher Education
Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

Every teacher wants their students to be secure and learn to the best of their ability. There are many ways in which teachers can provide and support this, including codes of discipline, teaching a relevant curriculum and sustaining a good classroom atmosphere. It is important for the students to feel secure in their environment and enthusiastic about attending school; one way of supporting and nurturing this is by creating a positive classroom atmosphere.

What is meant by “Classroom atmosphere”?

Classroom atmosphere refers to how the teachers and students feel when they are in a classroom. This atmosphere needs to be created and maintained by teachers, it doesn’t just occur automatically. Atmospheres can easily be changed and altered, affecting both students and teachers; therefore to maintain an atmosphere the teacher needs to be consistent as it determines how the students and teacher feel, act and learn. Classroom atmospheres need to be nurtured and stimulated in order for students to learn to their maximum potential.

Why is a positive classroom atmosphere important?

A positive classroom atmosphere can make a classroom a more pleasant place for the students to be in, and therefore a more effective and motivating place for the students to learn. Providing a positive atmosphere and environment for students to learn in can have an impact on their achievement and results, where they are able to maximise their learning and enjoyment of education. It allows for students to not only meet their academic needs, but also their basic physical and mental health needs.

How to create a positive classroom atmosphere

There are various approaches and systems which can be used to create a positive classroom atmosphere; but it is important to remember the approaches and systems need to be consistently managed if the atmosphere is to be maintained.

Classroom organisation includes creating routines, sit and where relevant resources are kept. A positive classroom atmosphere can make a difference when. Routines can be changed and altered, but make sure students are aware of changes and the consequences being fairly and consistently implemented. Classroom organisation contributes to creating a positive classroom atmosphere. It is important to ensure the classroom is organised in a way which the students know where they are to sit and where relevant resources are kept.

Atmosphere

As each student learns differently and has different reasons why they have been changed. Through classroom organisation contributes to creating a positive classroom atmosphere. It is important to ensure the classroom is organised in a way which the students know where they are to sit and where relevant resources are kept.

Conclusion

It is important to create a positive classroom atmosphere to ensure the students feel secure and are able to learn to the best of their ability. There are many approaches and systems teachers are able to implement to create a positive atmosphere within their classrooms, but it is important to maintain them. Students entering and learning in a positive classroom atmosphere will be able to maximise their learning opportunities and enjoy their education.
Karen Teacher Newsletter - February, 2010

Albendazole or Mebendazole

1) Boiled water system

2) Disinfected solar water system

3) Sand Gravel filtering water system

4) Chlorination water system

19
School Health

School Health (Mebendazole or Albendazole)

1. Mebendazole

A product of Jiajian Philippines

School Health (Mebendazole or Albendazole)

School Health (Mebendazole or Albendazole)

School Health (Mebendazole or Albendazole)

School Health (Mebendazole or Albendazole)
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- Boiled water system
  - Chlorination water system
  - Precipitate water system
  - Sand gravel filtering water system
Puzzle, Cartoon and Poem

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belonged to the spirits. He explained what he had learnt from attending the workshop; “I have learnt it is good to use indigenous knowledge in our classrooms; it is important to remember the traditional medicines the elders describe to use as we might need to use them, and all Karen people, whether they live in Karen State or Thailand, use the same poems from our ancestors.”

All participants enjoyed the workshop and were able to gain a better understanding of the uses of indigenous knowledge and skills within their own life and those around them. Pu K’Pru Say enjoyed the workshop so much he offered to hold the next indigenous knowledge and skills workshop in his village. In the evening of the 15th December, the elders who lived in Karen State returned to their villages, whilst the people who had to return to Thailand, travelled to Ee Htu Hta camp, where they celebrated Karen New Year, before returning to Thailand.

Naw Marry, a Thai-Karen from Ta Thwa Hta village, Chiang Mai province, was very excited about this trip as it was her first time in Karen State. She said, “I will be back in March to show and educate you about weaving and colouring the cotton thread.”

Continued from page 15

A – School committees are in charge of transporting school materials and organising with villagers and parents to help with the moving of materials, and if they require additional help they ask the District leaders and we arrange additional help. None of the parents and villagers protest and are willing to help; even if they do not have children in school. Some parents appear sad and have low self-esteem as they do not have a high level of education themselves and are not able to help their children with their homework. I believe that when Mobile Teacher Trainers visit parents and give them specific parents’ involvement in education training, they are able to raise their self-esteem and provide them with different ways of becoming involved in their child’s education. The Head-villager and other leaders support their schools with building materials. The Head-villager and other leaders support their schools with building materials.

Q – Is there anything else you would like to say?

A – There is only one way to develop and try to gain opportunities for our Karen people, through education. We need to build our level of education, peacefully, with energy and dedication. Through this there will be a higher level of education for the youth, providing them with knowledge and skills to develop and support our people. There is a proverb we need to remember, ‘After the storm, comes the calm’. It explains that after we have faced the difficulties and problems, I believe, we will be able to live life peacefully.
The Karen Teacher Working Group, through this newsletter, wants to share certain experience, ideas and information that we hope is useful for the development of our Karen education system. We need your feedback, opinions and news to help us achieve this goal.

Please write below your letters, stories, lesson plans, games, poems, experiences and anything else you believe would be useful to share in this newsletter. Make sure you include your name, date and place that you live when you write to us. Please use a plain piece of paper if want to send us your drawings. If you send your puzzle game, please put the answer.

We are looking forward to hear from you!