

Monthly Publication Of KSDC

SDC successfully completes the 2015 Summer Course

Our summer course has been successfully completed. A total of 45 students participated in the one month special English training. This year's summer course ran from the 20th April until the 19th May.



Students and volunteers from the Summer Course

We are proud to have seen all of our students make solid progress with their English. These skills will help them in studying our

own advanced Course or will provide them with the ability to access further education elsewhere.

This year's course saw students overcome the challenge of the fire in the Camp to continue their education.

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A word on SDC and its coordinator

SDC is located in Karenni Refugee Camp 1, on the Thai-Burma border. It was founded in 2002 by three alumni of EarthRights School Burma (ERSB).

The ERSB alumni had learnt about subjects including democracy, law and environment at the school.

They wanted young people in their community to be able to study these subjects so they founded SDC.

SDC has produced over 200 activists for the environment and human rights, since its formation.

Our coordinator and co-founder, Aung Sun



Aung Sun Myint speaking at the 2014 enrollment

Myint, continues to work with our team to realise the vision he set out with his fellow ERSB alumni in 2002.

Issue 11

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SDC updates from May 2015:

- The 2015 SDC summer course is completed
- SDC welcomes our new volunteer, Maggi
- SDC selects students for the 2015—2016 Basic Course
- SDC selects students for the 6th Advanced Course
- SDC publishes a report on resettlement

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Principal's Message



This month has been a quiet month for all here at SDC. With the school year starting in June, our staff have been preparing for the new school year and completing our summer tasks for our students.

According to our schedule for May, we have implemented our recruitment for the basic course and advanced course by holding

placement tests and interviews with the applicants.

For this year's 2015-2016 project, we have accepted (51) young people including (28 females and 23 males) for the 14th basic course and (20) students including (10 males and 10 females) for the 6th advanced course. For the Advanced course, we had 39 applicants. All of these 39 applicants were graduates of our most recent basic course. The students who were unsuccessful or decided not to apply for the Advanced Course are already taking up jobs in their communities.

As per our annual process, before accepting our new students for both courses we held an enrollment day and made a contract between our SDC organization and the

students with their guardians. On the enrollment day, we explained our SDC policy and regulations to the students with their guardians.

We also completed our SDC special English summer course. We had a total of 45 students successfully attend this course from start to finish. They learnt to speak about their communities and to prepare themselves for the Advanced Course entrance exam and interview.

We are now very excited and apprehensive for the coming 14th Basic Course and 6th Advanced Community Management Training Course. We are hopeful that we can provide a successful learning experience for all of the 38 women and 33 men taking part in this year's courses.



SDC staff interviewing with an applicant for the Basic Course.



The entrance examination for the SDC Basic Course.

SDC plan for June

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 SDC Basic Course orientation week | 2 SDC ACMTC starts | 3 Fresher's welcome ceremony | 4 Office Management starts on ACMTC | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 SDC Basic Course starts | 9 | 10 Rule of law starts on basic course | 11 Human Rights starts on basic course | 12 Environment starts on basic course | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 World Refugee Day | 21 Karenni National Day |
| 22 Sustainable Development starts on ACMTC | 23 | 24 | 25 Community Organisation starts on ACMTC | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

Future event: SDC Fresher's welcome ceremony

This month, we will begin our courses and celebrate the start of our new school year. Every year, we begin our new school year with our fresher's welcome ceremony. This is an opportunity for students to relax and get to know their fellow students before the beginning of the school year.

During May, our SDC organised and looked through our applications until we selected a total of 51 students for our 2015 – 2016 SDC Basic Course and 20 students for our 6th Advanced Community Management Training Courses.



SDC basic course students sing during their 2014 Fresher's welcome party

The fresher's welcome ceremony will be held on the 3rd June and it will provide all of the students with an excellent meet and greet opportunity before the school year begins.

It is important our students build strong relationships throughout their time here because the relationships of our alumni will help us to build our new society

SDC successfully completes the 2015 Summer Course



Classes A and C with volunteers from the 2015 Summer Course

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During the course, students were taught in classes of 12 giving them a lot of opportunity to learn directly from their teachers. The lessons rotated from speaking and listening focused to reading and writing focused. We separated the groups into A—D based on their English ability. This gave all of the students ample opportunity to fine tune their English skills.

Our special English course is only in its third year, now. The reason we run our SDC summer course is to help our students English in order to progress to a suitable level so that they are successful on the SDC Advanced Course. If students are successful in completing the summer course, they will have a

high enough English level to participate in our Advanced Course. It will lead to a better understanding of our subjects and ultimately better activists for our society in the future. With these goals in mind, we focused the course around our students' language needs.



A student practices his interview skills in preparation for the Advanced Course Entrance Interview

The summer course worked through a series of topics focused on the students' communities. We looked

at problems in the refugee community as well as in Karenni State. We then considered the causes of these problems. After which, we looked at possible solutions. These steps were concluded by creating some aspirations for the future and making a needs assessment of how to build towards that future.

The course also included preparation for the SDC Advanced Community Management Training Course entrance exam and interview. The lessons we provided included mock interviews and CV writing. These skills will provide all of the students with the necessary ability to successfully apply for positions within their communities.

After the summer course, 20 of the students have continued to participate in our SDC Advanced Course. For the rest of the students, they will now go to look for jobs in their community and become activists for our Karenni people.

We are now wishing all of our students the best for their futures. May all of their aspirations be fulfilled.

School recruitment in Karenni Refugee Camp 1



Our new SDC Basic Course students are enrolled at our school

During the summer season, schools in Karenni Refugee Camp 1 recruit their new students. These schools include our SDC. We have now successfully recruited our new classes for the 2015 – 2016 Basic Course and the 6th Advanced Community Management Training Course. We have 51 students ready to begin the SDC Basic Course and 20 Students preparing to start the Advanced Course.

Our SDC staff have all been very busy in the past month with recruitment and preparation for the new school year. Both groups of students have experienced an interview and entrance exam. After the interviews and entrance exams, our staff began the difficult task of selecting the students. For the basic course, we selected 28 women and 23 men. For the advanced course, we selected 10 women and 10 men.

The new school year will begin on the 1st June. Both of our courses will begin on this date. The Basic Course students will participate in a one week orientation to prepare them for study at our school. They will learn about our expectations of them and experience some introductory games to build up their confidence and meet their fellow students. For the Advanced Course, the course will start immediately on the 1st June. This is because the students are already well accustomed to each other from their work together on the basic course.



Prospective SDC Basic Course students take their entrance exam.

For the basic course, we interviewed and selected from students who had completed grade 10 in the refugee camp or inside Burma. For the advanced course, we selected from our recent basic course graduates. It was a difficult and challenging process and we wish the students who have been selected all the best for their studies.



A prospective student interviews for the SDC basic course

We are now very excited for this upcoming school year. As with every year, we hope to produce plenty of new young activists to serve our community now and in the future. We wish all of our new students, good luck for studying on our SDC courses.

About our traditional Karenni beliefs



A traditional Kay Htoe Boe celebration

The Karenni people have many different cultural traits and beliefs. Their beliefs are also dependent on their sub-ethnic group. The Karenni is a broader term used to describe all of the sub-ethnic groups that comprise the Karenni. There are 8 main sub-ethnic groups: Kayah, Gekho, Gayba, Kayan, Manu Mano, Yintalae, Yinbaw and Payae. The Karenni are not just diverse in ethnicity. As a group, they also have different traditions and religions.

The main religion of Karenni people is Christianity (Including both Catholicism and Baptists). In addition to Christianity, there is also a minority Buddhist population. The third main religion is the traditional animist belief. Some Karenni people only believe in their animist traditions. Other Karenni people

hold on to their animist traditions and also follow other religions.

The animist traditions of Karenni people are centered on serving and protecting their community. They are separated into two main groups; the Ee-Lu-Phu and the Khai-phu. The Ee-Lu-Phu has responsibility for leading rituals and worship to their gods and spirits. The Khai-Phu has the responsibility of feeding the souls that guard the environment (Mountains, forests and rivers). They must also lead the festivals.

Traditionally, the Khai-Phu and Ee-Lu-Phu have held relatively distinct roles in Karenni culture. In traditional culture, Karenni people are not allowed to marry outside of their society. Each society also must

select a chief for their village. There will be a chief for the Ee-Lu-Pu and a chief for the Khai-Pu. These chiefs must follow by strict rules as part of their leadership responsibilities

As part of their leadership responsibilities, the chiefs must avoid certain meats. The Ee-Lu-Phu chief also has different responsibilities for each of the three annual Ee-Lu festivals. The most important festival for Karenni people is the Pole festival. It is also known as Kay Htoe Boe festival and is for all Karenni people.

The main festival of Kay Htoe Boe reflects the story of how the Earth came into being. Every year, Karenni people must erect a pole to protect their health. This pole is erected on behalf of an order from their goddess. In order to maintain their health, people must dance around the pole and make musical sounds with their body.

SDC considers the preservation and dissemination of our cultural practices and ideas a key part of our vision for a free and democratic society. All Karenni people must have freedom of religion and freedom of expression in their state.

Environmental issues in Karenni State by Oo Reh April



The hills of Karenni State

I'm Oo Reh (April). I'm studying at SDC School. Now, I would like to write about environmental issues in Karenni State. In our community, we have many problems. However, I choose only this problem because the environment is very important for people's living.

We have a deforestation problem in our community because the Burmese government made a lot of companies and cut down a lot of trees to sell to other countries. They made a lot of money for the military so in our country there is a lot of desert and global warming. Furthermore, we need to protect against this and do reforestation for the rest of our lives. We need to learn more about environmental issues. It is everybody's responsibility. How can we care for

and make the environment pleasant? We should learn about it.

When I studied at SDC, we learnt about the environment. We learnt about how to protect the environment and organise people to march. The environment is really important for people's lives. If people live in the forest and there is global warming, there will be many problems. So, I hope for our community that one day we can find a solution together for these problems. I will organise people and share information about the environment. After, we can march against the Burmese government. I hope for the best for our community. Deforestation is the first problem. The second problem is Dam issues.

The Burmese government has a plan to build dams in our Karenni State. They made an agreement with Thai, Chinese and India for building the biggest and tallest dams in ASEAN. But they made in secret. They didn't give knowledge to citizens. If they build the dams, indigenous Karenni people will disappear because they will resettle to the city. However, they won't get benefits like electricity and reparations. If they don't move, it will flood. If they move, they will lose more resources. After, they will lose their lives. It is happening in Karenni State. The Karenni people don't like to build dams and not receive this project. The Burmese government uses power and guns so the citizens are afraid to go against. However, when I learned at SDC, we learnt about protesting dams and demonstrating against the government. So I hope, we will find a solution because now in our community at SDC school they teach many important subjects for citizens.

Now, those who have finished this school are starting to activate to protest the dams. So, I will also do these projects. Because I love my nationality. I am generous so I will try hard for my nationality. So I choose this topic and introduce this information. Whoever reads this information, good luck for your life.

All about me by Mi Meh Poe



Mi Meh Poe with her fellow students

I would like to write about myself. My name is Mi Meh Poe. I come from Karenni State. I am 18 years old. I was born in Daw Pue Village, Dee Maw So township.

While I stayed in Karenni State, I was not happy because I was very poor. I could not study because we did not have enough money. My parents often went to the farmlands. My parents did not have enough money. Also, we didn't have food. At the time, I didn't know anything. I was a baby. I have seven people in my family. Now, we have left to the refugee Camp from Karenni State. I have one older brother, one younger sister and two younger brothers. Now, I do not have a mother.

My mother died in August 2014. My brother left school. He did not study. Now, my father has a job. My father's job's name is clinic and

animist. I have only my father. I was feeling very sad. When my mother died, I did not want to study but my father said to me "You need to continue studying". He encourages me. If I want something, my father buys it for me. I feel sorry for my father. My father works hard for us. My father is good-natured. Now, my younger brother studies in the future star boarding house. We are still poor but whatever happens I continue to study. I am not discouraged. I never give up. I hope my life will get better in the future.

My hobbies are playing volleyball and table tennis. I want to play with my friends. I don't want to play alone. If I play alone, I am not happy. I will feel sad. I can play volleyball well. I want to teach how to play volleyball well because I want to be famous in my community. If I am famous, my friends will be surprised at me. So I

really like to play volleyball. I want to teach my friends in the community. If my friends can play volleyball very well, I can play with my friends. Then, we will be happy together.

I have many friends but I have one best friend. My best friend's name is Ko Meh. She is very beautiful. Now, she does not study. She left school. I love that she loves me. She is richer than me. She has six people in her family. I want to improve everything. My ambition is to be a teacher. If I finish school, I will help my community. I will share my knowledge in my community. I want to improve my community. I want to be a teacher because I want I want to know how to teach the students. I want to know teaching and I want to have knowledge. I like to play volleyball and I want to play with my students. I want to be a teacher because I want to improve my community. I want to do as my father does. I want to improve everybody.

Finally, we must improve in our community. We must forget the past. I continue to try at everything. I hope I will continue to be a teacher in my future. I hope my family will not be poor. I believe my family will have peace. I will get a good job.



Alumni Profile: Rosie



Rosie with the head of KNWO during KNWO’s Against Gender Based Violence Campaign

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about your history?

A: I joined SDC School in 2004. After that in 2005, I served for my community in the Karenni Refugee Camp Committee for 6 months. Next, I interned for 6 months at Karenni National Women’s Organisation (KNWO). I have now been working at KNWO for 10 years. For the first 4 years, I was working as a staff member. I was then promoted to the position of treasurer for 2 years and then for the last 4 years as coordinator.

Q: What effect has SDC had on your life?

A: I have benefited from my experience at SDC by improving my knowledge and becoming more confident to speak than before I

studied there. After attending SDC, the knowledge that I received from this school makes my work more effective. My study was especially helpful in preparing me for a leadership role. Due to this study, I am able to implement my activities, successfully and with confidence.

Q: Since completing SDC school, what have you done?

A: I have tried to share the knowledge and experience I have learned from this school with predominantly women and the youth as much as I can. I have participated in the social services to do this. Also for the women’s role, I try to organise for women’s programs and education for women.

Additionally, I have made photographic and video documentation.

I have seen the effects of this work. Especially regarding women’s rights, women are regaining their rights and are able to participate more and more in society.

Q: What does your community need for the future and what do you want to say to SDC for the future?

A: For our community in the future, people need to the knowledge of human rights, women’s rights, leadership skills, management skills and legal knowledge. They also need political knowledge.

I would like to encourage SDC to not only provide students in the classroom. I wish them and their students to share the knowledge in the wider community. For example, in the middle and high school, one or two times per year. The students should make a meeting and workshop in our community. If they can do this, our community will get more knowledge and will improve.



'The vision of Social Development Center is to promote the lives of the people who have suffered human rights abuses, to teach non-violent skills to build up a new society, to develop the rule of law, to value human dignity and to protect the environment.'



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To achieve our mission statement we rely on various avenues of support including core organizational and project funding from our major donors. We are also supported by our own community, local staff and the generous help of volunteers from across the globe.

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If you are interested in volunteering with us, please email us at the same address: officesdc@yahoo.com. We accept volunteers for a minimum of three months.

Furthermore, if there is any other way you would like to provide us with support or assistance, please email us at the same address: officesdc@yahoo.com.

Visit us at: <http://sdcthailand.wordpress.com>

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Finally, we would like to thank you the reader for showing an interest in supporting the cause of our people with your support we can go from strength to strength in the future.

Thank you!



The Curriculum Project

