

Monthly Publication Of KSDC

A serious fire damages the Karenni Refugee Camp 1 community

This month, the camp faced a serious challenge due to a fire. On Tuesday April 7th at 11:15am, a fire broke out in Karenni Refugee Camp 1. A total of 148 homes were burned to the ground. This incident happened during the traditional festival of Kay Htoe Boe.

The fire started at 11:15 and lasted for almost 2 hours. It destroyed 148 houses. This has left over 700 Karenni refugees



A camp citizen watches on as the fire blazes

without homes. One of the buildings destroyed was the primary school number 1. The fire narrowly missed one of the clinics.

The fire started in a small house in section 1. It is believed a resident left a pot unattended.

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Issue 10

01/05/2015

SDC updates from April 2015:

- The 2015 SDC summer course begins
- SDC welcomes our new volunteer, Marian
- SDC gives application forms for 2015—2016 Basic Course
- SDC staff attend teacher training on media for organizational development
- Our SDC community celebrate Deeku festival

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.

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Principal's Message



This April during our annual school break for our traditional festival, we faced a serious challenge due to a fire in Karenni Refugee Camp 1. Amongst these problems, we were able to run most of our activities

According to our schedule for April, we are busy with preparation for the placement test and interview to be able to recruit our new candidates for the next project of 2015-16.

From the 16th - 18th April 2015, we have conducted a training for video and photography editing in order to develop our staff. This was provided by the volunteers of Andy Smith and Marian.

On 20th April, we started our ESL summer course for the graduating class of 2014-15. The course is being provided by the volunteers of Andy Smith and Marian. This summer ESL course will take one month from 20th April - 20th May 2015. There are 45 graduates from our program on this summer course.

There was a big fire amongst the buildings in Karenni Refugee Camp 1 on 7th April 2015. 150 houses were completely burnt by the fire and around 700 people were made homeless. Now they are being provided for food, clothing, and housing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), The Border Consortium (TBC) emergency relief along with

the camp administrators.

As a result of this fire, many problems have affected not only the victims but also to the other refugee people in the camp. After a fire building occurred in the camp for many days, our refugee people were not allowed to ride their motorbikes, to go outside of the camp.

Also, it affected our program's ability to run. It made it difficult for our daily transportation and communication properly. Additionally, it affected the other refugee people as extra loading to help the victims for reconstructing their houses to live in with their family members again. Regarding to this fire problem, many victims' emotions were affected by symptoms of depression.

We are hopeful our community can recover and not face these problems again for our daily work.



Volunteer Marian providing the ESL class.



Volunteer Andy Smith providing the ESL class.

SDC plan for May

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2 Our new volunteers arrive	3
4 Basic Course entrance test	5 Basic Course entrance interview	6 Basic Course entrance interview	7	8	9	10
11 Enrolment day for Basic Course	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Our Summer Course ends	21 Advanced Course entrance test	22 Advanced Course entrance interview	23	24
25 Basic Course students enter dormitories	26	27	28	29	30	31

Future event: SDC Basic and Advanced Course recruitment

This May amongst many other exciting activities, we will be completing our 2015 SDC recruitment. This will mean deciding upon the most suitable applicants for our courses through a test and an interview.

Candidates will be tested on their general knowledge and English skills for admission to the basic course. For the advanced course, they will face an examination of their ability to analyse and critique problems in their community. After testing, students will be interviewed to assess their commitment to support and help their community in the future.



A future SDC student at his interview for the 2014— 2015 basic course

We will consider students based on our criteria, for both courses. The most important one is that they have a strong commitment to helping their community in the future.

We are looking forward to next month when we will be able to confirm the number of participants on our 2015 – 2016 Basic Course and 6th Advanced Course.



SDC runs a three day Staff media training



A staff member and alumni looking at their pictures

Every summer, here at SDC, we look to build our capacity for change. In order to increase our staff skills, we have just completed a three-day training course. The aim of the course was to build the multimedia capacity of our staff. We hope that after this training all of our staff will be able to take and produce high quality photography and videos.

For three days, between April the 16th and 18th, we ran a workshop to provide effective instruction and practical guidance in the art of photography and video. The workshop was provided by volunteers and the participants were all SDC staff and alumni.

The first part of the workshop taught how to take and edit quality photos. The trainers introduced some photography methodology. After this, staff practiced taking photos of people, our school and our environment. Finally, they used a video enhancement program to improve the quality of their photos.



Students helped us to run the workshop by looking after the school for the staff

The second part of our workshop was focused on videos. Staff worked together using various hints and tips to create a brief video of our campus. After this, they used video editing software to produce the video.

During the workshop, our team took regular breaks to compare the photos and videos they had produced and to discuss how to make improvements to them.

The feedback from the workshop was excellent. We have also provided some of the pictures taken from the workshop with this post to show some of the final product produced during the workshop. We are committed to putting these new skills into practice and furthering the outreach and success of our organisation.



Participants took pictures of people and scenery to practice

A serious fire damages the Karenni Refugee Camp 1 community

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On a hot, windy day, the fire spread quickly throughout the camp due to the refugees only being allowed to build their houses with bamboo and dried leaves.

Due to the hot season and a lack of materials, camp residents were unable to limit or control the fire. A lack of materials also affected resident’s ability to control the fire. They needed to wait for two fire trucks to arrive before they could control the fire. In total, the fire affected 200 – 250 homes including the 148 houses that were destroyed.

This incident happened during the Kay Htoe Boe festival, an important time of celebration for Karenni people. It meant that people felt



Camp citizens trying to contain the fire

unhappy during their traditional festival and that they could not celebrate as they would have liked.

In the aftermath of the fire, people who were made homeless by the fire went to stay with their relatives or at one of the organisations. These organisations include The Karenni Women’s Organization’s office, the

United Nation High Commission for Refugee’s office and the camp’s Thai Ministry of Interior’s office.

The damage caused the Karenni Refugee Committee to need to consider carefully about shelter, food and cooking utensils for the people who were affected by the fire. Additionally building materials began arriving in the camp for reconstruction towards the end of April.

We are hopeful in the future that camp residents can rebuild their homes and their lives. However, people in the camp remain cautious and uncertain about the future. The threat of fire is always looming in their day to day lives



The aftermath of the fire

The armed groups within Burma crawl closer to an NCA



Ethnic leaders signing the draft NCA (Photo: THE IRRAWADDY)

The various armed ethnic groups within Burma appear to be moving closer to a nationwide ceasefire agreement with the Burmese government. On 31st March, the Burmese government and 16 ethnic armed groups agreed in principle to the draft Nationwide Ceasefire agreement. Some have acclaimed this agreement as a precursor to peace but others believe this draft agreement is being over emphasized and that it is only a small step towards peace.

All of the ethnic people know well that much has to be done before a genuine and long lasting peace can be achieved. For the Karenni people, it has been a long wait for a

long lasting peace. The conflict in Karenni State has been ongoing for over 60 years and there has only been a Burmese government and KNPP ceasefire since 2012.

The KNPP wish to participate in nationwide ceasefire talks before moving on to peace talks with the Burmese government. The KNPP and other ethnic armed groups have joined together in the Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) to try to achieve this. The reason the ethnic armed groups are pursuing a nationwide ceasefire is due to years of distrust with the Burmese military using ceasefires to marginalize groups and pursue conflict with different groups.

Despite global plaudits, the UN special adviser on Myanmar called it “A historic and significant achievement”, the agreement is now only in its draft stage. Before being accepted, the UNFC must wait for approval from all of its members. Many ethnic groups have reservations about putting pen to paper as conflict continues in the country. Additionally, a signature may do little to contain a Burmese regime experienced in mistrust and broken promises.

Unfortunately for the Karenni people, it appears many challenges lie ahead and the real meaning of this draft nationwide ceasefire accord is difficult to quantify. Serious conflict continues in the northern areas of Burma with the Kokang area being a clear example of the instability of the country.

Karenni people are still wary of trusting the government and even with slow and gradual progress in the ceasefire talks, little will change their opinion if fighting on the ground in Burma continues. The only true way to bring stability to the country will be when the Burmese military put down their arms for good.

How can we become a democratic country? By Aung Than

Hello everybody,

I'm Aung Than. I'm from Karenni State. I'm an SDC student. Now, I would like to talk about the civil war in Burma. After Burma got its independence from the British in 1948, the civil war broke out immediately because Ne Win wanted to control and they wanted to build a military state in Burma. But the ethnic groups disagreed. Therefore, the civil war began. During the civil war, the people ran away and became homeless especially the ethnic groups. Some people remained in the country like IDPs.



IDPs from Karenni State (PHOTO: Free Burma Rangers)

At the time the Burmese military abused their power and violated human rights because they torture the people and rape the women. Because of the civil war thousands of people have died. Now, we need to find a solution to this problem.

Firstly, we are going to have a ceasefire and negotiate about a peaceful, political solution. We need to be in contact with each other. Secondly, we need to withdraw the military and rebuild the people's lives. Thirdly, we need to resettle refugee people and people in IDP areas and we need to give them their rights. Finally, we need to respect each other between the Burmese government and the ethnic governments.

If we can follow these steps, we can find a solution. I hope we will build a peaceful country and become a democratic country.



Former leader of Burma, Ne Win

The Burmese military abused their power and violated human rights

Karenni people need self-determination by Than Hein Win

Hello! Good morning everybody. My name is Than Hein Win. I finished SDC basic course, last year. Now, I would like to tell everybody about a problem in our community. This problem is self-determination. We have not had self-determination for a long time. In our community, our ethnic groups are demanding self-determination from the Burmese government but they have not given us it until now.

Our ethnic groups are colonized by the Burmese. They are controlling us using a dictatorship system. We don't like this dictatorship because they forced us in a variety of ways using this system. They control our land to grow rice and vegetables. They force us to carry their military equipment and also they rape girls in our ethnic group. So, we don't like their actions and political system.

The Burmese government is very cruel. They didn't allow us to teach our own language. They kill our animals for themselves to eat without paying. This problem is in the past but some actions are still happening until now.

Now, my wish to resolve this self-determination problem is to change the Burmese government system. We all need to participate to do that. We should try to transition from dictatorship to democracy or federal system. Everyone should take actions to cancel our government system that we don't like. If everyone participates, the best democracy system will come to everyone.



A Burmese army (Tatmadaw) propaganda billboard (PHOTO: The Irrawaddy)

In conclusion, I hope everyone can solve this self-determination problem one day. Thank you for your interest in my community.

Everyone should take actions to cancel our government system that we don't like



Burmese soldiers marching at a military parade (PHOTO: The Irrawaddy)

Staff Profile: Khu Myar Reh, Principal



Khu Myar Reh in a photo with his other staff

Q/ Why is SDC important?

SDC is very important because the knowledge of human rights, environment and the rule of law are very important to our people. Most of the people lack this knowledge. We need this knowledge to be able to build a new democratic society. The knowledge provided from SDC is essential for our people to have and understand first.

Q/ What are your goals for SDC?

My goals for SDC are to produce more human rights, environment and the rule of law activist in our society. We also need to spread the knowledge of human rights, environment and the rule of law in our society through our alumni. Next, we must produce more young people to be able to take the leadership role and help people in our society in the future. We will be able to defend our people's rights and environmental rights by providing training at Karenni Social Development Center (SDC) school and beyond inside Burma. My hope is to rebuild a new society for our people based on the democracy.

Q/ Can you tell me about your background?

I am Karenni. I was born in Karenni State. Because of the political unrest in Burma as well as human rights violation practiced by the military government and their allied military groups, I fled my village to Karenni Refugee Camp in 2003.

school for 4 years in Karenni refugee camp #1 before I continued my schooling in EarthRights. I graduated EarthRights School Burma (ERS) in 2007. Since completing this course, I have been working at the SDC until this day.

I finished my grade ten in 1988 in Burma. After this, I finished my distance university in 1995 in Taungyi, Shan state of Burma. Before arriving in the refugee camp, I used to be a teacher for over 10 years in Karenni State. I arrived in Karenni refugee camp #1 in 2003 and had worked as a teacher at high

Q/ What has been your role at SDC over the years?

I started my work at SDC in 2007 as a trainer. I taught; human rights; democracy and government; non-violence social change; and the rule of law. Now my responsibility is as principal or assistant coordinator of SDC, as trainer and as treasurer.



'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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We would also like to thank anyone who has volunteered with our organization now or in the past.

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

