

Monthly Publication Of KSDC

Flash flooding destroys SDC classroom and materials

This month, we have suffered serious damage because of flooding. On the night of 26th of August, heavy rain damaged both of our campuses. It is not uncommon for there to be some flooding in rainy season. Every year, our campuses experience some difficulties with travel and minor flood damage. This year the damage has however been much more extensive.



The remains of our classroom

During rainy season, flooding is always a risk but the recent flood was more serious than previous ones.

The flood has destroyed one classroom entirely. This leaves 50 students without a classroom.
CONTINUED ON P4

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 3

01/09/2014

SDC updates from August 2014:

- SDC welcomes our new volunteers, Sarah and Julia
- SDC advanced course students begin studying Community Organisation
- SDC basic Course students' classes cancelled for rebuilding of school campus
- We published a report on Water in Karenni Refugee Camp 1

Inside this issue:

Principal's report	2
SDC future plans	3
SDC school news	4
Karenni Refugee News	5 - 6
Student's work	7 - 8
Alumni's story	9
Acknowledgements	10

Principal's Message



August has been a challenging month for us. We have completed our planned activities, though we have been faced with a serious problem. I would like to notify, our readers, of some serious challenges that we have faced and some impacts that have affected our program regarding serious flooding that occurred in Karenni refugee camp #1 during this month.

According to our SDC schedule for the basic course, starting on 25th-29th, August, 2014 our SDC staff have met with the students' parents or guardians and discussed about how to cooperate to improve each student's affairs and how to cooperate to improve our program in the future.

We have also met with our donors, AJWS, on the 5th August, 2014 and discussed about some of their new strategies, structure and about the update of our program today and our plans for the future. We also discussed about the implementation of our project, particularly relating to our last 3 years.

Unfortunately, we were faced with serious flooding during August. It created a big challenge for our

program and had a very negative impact upon our school's process.

During this flooding, one of our classroom buildings was completely destroyed and 2 dormitories were seriously damaged by the flooding. Due to the flooding, a lot of equipment such as chairs, tables, teaching materials, stationery and other used materials were lost and destroyed. Regarding the flooding, now we are trying to rebuild our classroom building again and repairing the destroyed dormitories for the students to be able to stay in them. And also, it has made a delay for our program to run properly and smoothly.

We hope this coming September, we can overcome our recent challenges. We are currently asking for donations to support our school.



The extent of the damage



Students remove debris near their dormitory

SDC plan for September

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1 Deeku chicken bone is read	2 New SDC volunteers, Sarah and Julia start	3 Community organisation starts on ACMTC	4 Basic course classroom is being repaired	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Project planning starts on ACMTC	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Teacher - parents meeting at SDC school	28
29	30					

Future event: Deeku, a traditional Karenni festival

The month of September is a special time for Karenni people. During this month the community come together to celebrate Deeku festival.

The festival has no set annual date, as with much of Karenni tradition, it depends upon a chicken bone. At the start of September, an elder of the community will take a specific bone from the leg of a chicken. This bone will then be read and the date for the festival will be set. Different areas set different dates. The festival usually lasts for a few days. Once again its length is dependent upon the chicken bone.



Deeku is often eaten with sugar

During the festival, sticky rice is prepared, wrapped and cooked in leaves. Everyone then enjoys eating the delicious 'Deeku'.

The 'Deeku' are tied together in sets of three. This represents unity. We are all excited at SDC to be united in festivities for this coming month.

Flash flooding destroys SDC classroom and materials

CONTINUED FROM P1... Over the next few weeks, we will have to rebuild this classroom. This is a serious disruption to our student's studies and to our program.

The damage goes beyond merely structural. There have been tables, chairs, stationary books and many other materials that are now completely unusable. In order for our school to run smoothly again these will all need to be replaced.

Our classroom will now be rebuilt in the next few weeks. Parents and family of the students will help by bringing us bamboo to rebuild a classroom. The rainy season also offers further challenges for rebuilding. The school needs to be functioning as soon as possible but there is going to be heavy rain and there is also the risk of further flooding. In addition, to rebuild bamboo structures, there needs to be dry leaves available for the roofing. At this time of year due to the wet weather these are very difficult to find.

Education is a right but refugees in Karenni Refugee Camp 1 face many challenges to receive it. These challenges often include security



Other buildings were also damaged including the clinic

challenges due to the policies of the country they reside in. They also include environmental challenges due to weather. We hope we can open our center again, as soon as possible, and provide valuable education to our community.

One of the reasons that we are vulnerable to flooding is because Karenni Refugee camp 1 is a temporary shelter area. Due to its temporary nature, we must not build permanent structures using materials such as concrete. Therefore, the vast majority of structures in the camp are made of bamboo. These structures are easily damaged if there is heavy rain and completely destroyed in the event of a flash flood.

Many other organisations have suffered damage due to the flooding. The clinic has lost a lot of equipment. These organisations are crucial for the refugee's daily lives. Without them minor problems can become much more serious.

This flash flood has also effected many other organisations within the camp and the day to day life of over 12,000 refugees residing in the camp. Our community has suffered hurt, distress and worry from this disaster. We hope in the next few months, our organisation and community will find strength amongst these challenges.

If you are interested in donating to help our school, please email us at officesdc@yahoo.com

A short history of conflict in Karenni State



Karenni leaders attending ceasefires talks

The ethnic groups that comprise Karenni State have suffered from a long history of conflict. The ongoing ceasefire talks will hopefully bring forth a peace process and an end to this suffering, but this is not the first ceasefire in the 66 year conflict and Karenni people know, now, more than ever that their hopes of returning to their homeland can be easily dashed.

The history of the Karenni provides context for the conflict and the current negotiations. The Karenni were previously granted independence in 1875 according to an agreement between the Burmese government and the British colonial administration

After World War II, the Karenni were invited to join the union of Burma but they refused citing their long history as an independent state. In 1947, father of Burmese independence, General Aung San was assassinated. Following this, U Nu took power in Burma and he encouraged Karenni State to be written into the constitution as a constituent part of the union.

After Karenni State was written into the constitution, without their leaders consent, they continued to refuse to join the union. Due to these refusals, the Burmese Army invaded Karenni State in August, 1948. The Karenni resistance movement soon formed to counter this invasion and the conflict had begun.

Since the conflict's beginning, the Karenni people have suffered many abuses by successive governments and dictators. These include Ne win, SLORC (The State Law and Order Restoration Council) and currently, the SPDC government (The State Peace and Development Council).

The current ceasefire began on the 6th March 2012. The impetus on the talks following this have been to create a nationwide ceasefire for the whole of Burma. This is a feat that has not been accomplished in over 60 years. There was a previous ceasefire in Karenni State in 1995 but this broke down after three months. The break down caused serious fighting.

Now, Karenni people reside all across the world. There are large populations of Karenni people who have resettled in The USA, Finland and Australia. Additionally, there are about 20,000 Karenni refugees living along the Thai Burma border in Karenni Refugee Camps 1 and 2. Other Karenni people remain internally displaced within Burma. The Karenni community across the world is hoping that this round of ceasefire talks can finally bring peace for their homeland and their people.

Solyaku village will require a demonstration if the SPDC don't stop confiscating land by San Phyo Htun



The trench being built around the confiscated area

In Solyaku village, Hpruso township, Burmese Army's 531st light infantry battalion have taken villager's land. If the government cannot solve this problem, the villagers will demonstrate said Solyaku villager, Khu Htu Reh.

"We are always looking at this situation. What will they say to us? How will they respond to our demands? What measures will they take? Finally, if they do not respond to us or do not take any measures, we will demonstrate."

Solyaku village is surrounded by mountains. There are only a few areas on the eastern side for growing plants. The local people rely on growing plants and using this land for agriculture. This land has

now been confiscated by the military, so the local villagers do not have land to use for agriculture anymore.

This issue has already been submitted to the officials according to Oo Sue Reh, a villager from Solyaku. He said "If there isn't any measure taken by them, we just need to demonstrate. We told the chief that if they don't accept our demands, we will demonstrate. We cannot do anything else. At last, by doing this the officials will see our response"

"We have already submitted to the government officials that if they don't take any measures to return the land of Solyaku village during the next 15 days, we will go beyond

the local government. We will request step by step from the district government all the way up to the state government" said Khu Htu Reh.

Khu Htu Reh continued "This issue has already been submitted to the state government to take measures because the army have come and are digging a trench around the land for protection. As they dig this trench, it feels like they are digging a hole in our hearts. Due to this, I have requested to the state government."

Furthermore, because of this situation, in the confiscated fields and farmland, on the 27th May, about 300 farmers gathered as a demonstration and attempted to plough and grow plants on the confiscated land.

After this demonstration in Solyaku village, four Solyaku villagers were arrested, prosecuted and have been sent to court. Another 190 villagers were questioned by the police.

About the land confiscation problem in Karenni State by Tin Zaw

I would like to tell you about an event of Karenni State. It is land confiscation. Villagers have had this problem for a long time.

Today, this matter isn't finished yet. Burmese soldiers didn't give back their land. Many villagers can't grow rice and other crops. They also can't make money for a living. Many Karenni people leave from their homes and move to Thailand, every year because they don't have any jobs. Next, for future years, they don't know how to tell to their children about their situation.

The worst point is Burmese soldiers made many crimes to Karenni ethnic group. Now, Burmese soldiers make many buildings in areas where they can control. They extend their army force in Karenni State.



Military presence remains strong within Burma

Karenni leaders cannot solve this problem because the Burmese government has passed the law in the constitution.

In Hpruso Township, Karenni State, there remains over 3,000 acres of confiscated land that has been used by the military for the No. 14 Advanced Military Training School. They have returned only 199.86 acres. This is an ongoing issue in Karenni State.



Karenni farmers march to confiscated fields

A short biography of Gandhi by Ti Moe



I watched a movie about Gandhi. It was a very strong movie, because there were a lot of Indian people killed by British soldiers. There were many different kinds of people. Most of the population were Hindu and Muslim. They were controlled by the British government. They

didn't want the British government to control their country. Therefore, Gandhi tried to change the law.

Later in his life, Gandhi was a very famous person in the world, especially in India. He was an intelligent person. Furthermore, he was clever, generous and very brave. He tried to get independence for India. When he was speaking to his citizen, everybody agreed with him. Immediately after, he was arrested by British police many times. He went to the British jail many times, but he never gave up and didn't get depressed.

He was clever, generous and very brave

Following this, all Indian people were respecting him. He didn't like violence and fighting. He was an independence father in India. His wife died earlier than him. She had not seen India be independent. Soon after, his wife had passed away, he planned to go to Pakistan but he was shot by a Hindu person. When Gandhi had a funeral, there were a lot of people.



Gandhi marching for Indian independence

Alumni's bio: Soe Meh



Soe Meh with KSWDC staff, students and a volunteer

Q: Can you say a little bit about your history?

A: I was born in Loikaw Township, in 1989. I grew up in Daw Kraw Aw village. I stayed there until I was 13 years old. After this, I arrived to Karenni Refugee Camp 3 in 2000. I attended middle school there. I stayed with my uncle and my cousin. I didn't stay with my mother. After a year, my mother came to camp 1 so I moved there and continued my schooling. After I finished high school, I attended the SDC basic course 2008-2009.

Q: How was your experience at SDC School?

A: When I attended SDC School, I was very happy to attend and I was very interested in the subjects. I tried hard to speak Burmese and English. Before I attended the school, I couldn't speak Burmese

very well. I was very happy to attend SDC School. My favourite subjects were Environment and English. I enjoyed studying environment because all of the people in my community don't know about the environment. They throw plastic on the road. I need to give trainings about recycling and growing plants. Inside Karenni state, there are no trees and the mountains are bare.

Q: What have you done since completing SDC School?

A: After SDC, I began an internship at Karenni Social Welfare and Development Center (KSWDC). During my internship, I typed up reports on the situation inside Karenni state particularly about landmines and internally displaced persons (IDPs). I also attended further trainings, joining with other organisations. This provided me with further knowledge. Following

this, I attended Network for Environment and Economic Development (NEED) school from 2010-2011. At NEED, I was very interested in the subjects. we learned about organizing, environment, computers, livelihoods, video editing and communication. My favourite subjects were video editing and livelihood because we don't know about editing in my community and we have limited computer skills. It is very difficult to make videos about our situation. I returned to work at KSWDC after completing my course at NEED. Since then, I have been a full-time employee working on reports. When, I have free time, I share my knowledge with the students at KSWDC school.

Q: What do you want to do in the future?

A: In the future, I am interested in applying to another school, ASEAN Burma. I want to get further education because my skill is not enough. I want to be able to write, speak and read very well. If I can do this, it will improve my organisation and we need educated people. Therefore, I must promote my life. If I can attend ASEAN Burma, it will be good for me, my organisation, my community and my nationality.



'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.'



Mae Hong Son
Thailand
PO BOX 20
58000
+66 0898526619
officesdc@yahoo.com

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.

If you are interested in making a donation, please email officesdc@yahoo.com. Please title your message SDC Donation.

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>

Acknowledgements

On behalf of SDC and all our students, we would like to thank our core funders:

- The American Jewish World Service
- The Open Society Institute
- Refugees International Japan

Our partners:

- Earthrights International
- The Curriculum project
- Mote Oo Education

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

