Group 1

Children's Development Centre (CDC)
Visited on February 5, 2024

About CDC

Children's Development Centre (CDC) is a school for migrant children from Myanmar who are unable to attend Thai schools. It offers education for nursery and kindergarten, primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

Missions and Goals

Curriculums

・Primary & secondary education: Mostly use Burmese in class.

Thai Non-Formal Education(NFE).

・Post-secondary education: Mostly use English and Thai.

Students can choose 「NFE」

「Thai Vocational Training」

「General Educational Development(GED)」

Difficulties

CDC has many challenges that it is facing. The biggest problem is lack of resources. As a school which is not supported by the Thai government but runs by some NGOs, alumni and parents' donations. It is very difficult to continue the class day by day with limited resources. The things we found out from visiting this school about its difficulties are:

Classroom constraint: CDC has insufficient classrooms compared with the number of students that are increasing every year. In addition, it also has limited space in the classroom that impacts the organizing of activities and student movement.

School bus limitation: Constraints related to the availability or capacity of school buses for transportation.

Teacher support: CDC does not have enough teachers compared with the number of students because they get low salaries. Even though some of them are volunteers but still have teachers who need support.

GED Program runs cost: GED course is very expensive for students, providing GED teachers salaries, pre-exam fee and GED exam fee after finishing the course.

Reflection

Pim: As a student, I feel very lucky to be able to attend the education easily but students there are different. They have to try so hard to attend the school and have many limitations on their study. Even once someone passes GED, it does not mean that they can go to the university. Sometimes I feel like what are they doing for? But now I found out that they just have faith and hope for their future.

Sei: I am very interested in the students in CDC about their 'identity'. This is because they come from Myanmar, study in Thailand, and are hoping to enter a university in Thailand or another country. They are also taught mostly in Thai and English. So I wondered: how do they perceive themselves? (their nationality, ethnicity, whatever). After I actually going to CDC and talking to the teachers there, I realized that the students do not consciously recognize their "identity". Whether it's learning a foreign language or living in a foreign country, it's just a step for them to have a better life in the future. I came to Japan to study as an international student, and now I always call myself “Middle people”. The is probably same for the children in CDC, for whom a better life is the most important thing than figuring out their "identity".

Aoi: It was my first experience visiting a place for migrant children and I would not be able to know about the facts and difficulties if I had been in Japan for my whole life. everything I saw such as the building, the atmosphere of the classroom, the curriculum, the GED system, and the children’s faces were fresh to me. The facility environment and student's abilities were Better than I expected. The one thing I found was that every child has a strong will for the future. When we visited GED students, it was impressive to see their serious faces listening to the advice of GED. I thought that it was more serious than Japanese people. This is because the environment I was in blessed place which is a regular thing to get an education.

Group 2

Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE)
Visited on 6th February, 2024

What is KRCEE?

KRCEE's objectives and purpose are to develop and give administrative support to the camp education offices and shoots in delivering education services for the refugee communities. Since Thailand government was not a signatory to the UN convention (article 22) in 1951, they have not officially recognized the displaced people as "refugees" and have not provided education in the refugee camps. Therefore, KRCEE is composed and financed by international non-organizations, charities, and parents.

The curriculum was brought by the refugees from the Karen state in Eastern Burma and it allows children and adults in the camps to continue learning.

Mission:

To serve and represent the Karen refugees temporarily sheltered along the Thai-Burma border by providing basic education and tertiary education to refugee students and children,

Vision:

To build true lasting peace and justice by producing graduates who are critical and creative thinkers, competent leaders, and good citizens who are proud of their identity.

Serve 7 camps:

・Mae La
・Umphiem
・Mae Ra Ma Luang
・Nu Poe
・Tham Hin
・Ban Don Yan
・Mae La Oo

Donors:

・Child's Dream (HE program)
・SCI and ADRA (BE programs)
・TOPS (Nursery program)
・SVA (Library)
・TBC (Ration)

Success:

・Accurate teacher/ student statistics
・curriculum
・teacher professional development (training)
・classroom support
・external relationship
・70% of AOP are being implemented

Challenges:

・Fund restriction/ reduction (camp offices, school renovation, school supplies, textbook printing)
・legal document
・implementation of policies
・recent resettlement program
・teacher/ staff turn-over

What did we feel and think through the lecture?

Paw Yu: On February 6, 2024, our group embarked on a field trip to Tak, Mae Sot, with the purpose of gaining insights into refugee education. During this visit, we had the privilege of engaging with the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE), where we had the honor of meeting Dorcas, the director, who provided a comprehensive overview of KRCEE and its initiatives. Dorcas shared valuable information about KRCEE's role as one of the educational entities serving seven Karen Refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border. We were impressed by their remarkable curriculum and the dedicated team working tirelessly to facilitate access to education for the young generation and children in the refugee camps. The management both at the center and on the ground demonstrated effective coordination and commitment to their mission. While observing the operations of the On-site Curriculum Education Entity (OCEE), which collaborates closely with schools, teachers, and students in the refugee camps, we gained a deeper understanding of KRCEE's goals and vision. Despite their commendable efforts, the organization faces numerous challenges and obstacles that hinder their progress. Among these challenges are shortages of teachers, teaching aids, not student textbooks, and infrastructure within the camps. Furthermore, a significant concern raised by Dorcas pertained to the uncertain future of students after completing high school. The absence of guaranteed employment opportunities, lack of avenues for higher education, and the non-recognition of certificates create hurdles for the students. This uncertainty is rooted in the fact that the education provided in the camps follows the Karen curriculum, which is in the mother language and is not recognized by the respective country's government. These challenges underscore the need for broader support and recognition to ensure the successful integration of refugee education into mainstream systems.

Sirinthip : After going on a field trip to a refugee camp in Mae Sot District, Tak, I gained a deeper understanding of the problem. From the beginning, I only learned about refugee problems in the classroom in some subjects. But when I actually went on a field trip, I got to see even more perspectives that refugee groups have to face, especially in the area of basic education. Refugees from Burma had to migrate across the country to Thailand in order to study. But the hardships they face every day are hiding and being confined to camps.

Unable to go out and find work Moreover, donors are not enough to cover living expenses. They have to struggle to do whatever it takes to be able to study at university and get a job in the future. KRCEE has helped a lot in teaching and facilitating students in 7 refugee camps. In Mae Sot, they work hard and strive to help educate the children in the camp.

Miyabi: The Karen people, forced to migrate to Thailand due to the civil war in Myanmar, are living in seven refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border. In the refugee camps, providing educational opportunities for the younger generation and children is a major challenge to be solved. On the other hand, the educational issues along the Thai-Myanmar border have not been recognized worldwide. Even in Japan, the movement of people and challenges between the Thai-Myanmar border, the situation within Myanmar, and the difficulties faced by migrants and refugees have not been reported. Honestly, I had no idea about the challenges of migrants and refugees between the Thai-Myanmar border until I participated in a field trip in Maesot. However, when we consider the world as a whole, the problems of migrants and refugees are faced by many countries and are considered to be a global issue to be solved. In light of this situation, we believe that the efforts to provide educational opportunities for migrants and refugees on the Thai-Myanmar border can serve as an example of how to address the educational challenges faced by migrants and refugees worldwide.

I believe that the efforts of KRCEE, which we visited this time, is one such example. KRCEE's efforts to provide educational opportunities for the Karen, a minority group among refugees, seemed to provide a relatively good education despite the restrictive environment. On the other hand, there were still many problems, such as a lack of teachers and teaching materials, and inadequate educational environment. Furthermore, what I found to be a challenge in KRCEE's efforts is that the ethnic consciousness of the Karen people is strongly reflected in the educational curriculum and teaching methods. The curriculum is based on a curriculum created by the Karen people themselves. Furthermore, the use of the Karen language, of which there are few speakers, creates language-related difficulties when interacting with non-Karen people. This strong ethnic consciousness also manifests itself in the study of history. The Karens tend to provide more ethnocentric learning than opportunities to learn about the history of the world.

On the other hand, if international cooperation intervenes in the education provided by the Karen people, there is a risk that their unique culture will be lost. While there is a need for international cooperation support for issues such as lack of educational resources, there is also a risk of undermining indigenous culture, and it is therefore necessary to search for a balance point and implement solutions to these issues.

Meika:
Since I did not have any opportunity to communicate with migrants about the education in the camp before I visited here, some topics made me find it hard to understand and imagine the situations. However, I felt that KRCEE has faced countless serious issues in a wide range of

topics, including school management, curriculum, resources, implementation of policies, and so on. Moreover, refugees and camps have been affected by everything in which the Thailand government, international non-organizations, Myanmar government, and so on surround them. Most Japanese media have not recently reported the Myanmar refugees since the time of the coup d'état happened in Myanmar in 2021 passed so long, and some media called them “forgotten refugees”. Since people in the world are controlled by the media, decreasing the number of seeing the news about Myanmar refugees makes people less interested and affects the supporters in the camps, like decreasing the charities. Therefore, we can donate money and educational resources and support the education in the camp, of course, but only this does make sustainable education.

Do you think KRCEE has a long-term educational system?

Paw Yu: When considering the prospects of long-term education, the state of refugee education in the seven Karen refugee camps administered by KRCEE raises concerns. It is evident that the sustainability of education in these camps is questionable, particularly as a significant portion of high school students are compelled to end their education after high school level. This limitation arises from the non-recognition of their educational achievements at the international level or for pursuing higher education. Currently, the education system faces numerous challenges, exacerbating the uncertainty surrounding its longevity. High turnover rates among teachers and staff result from the prevailing uncertainty about the future. The dearth of donors further compounds the situation, hindering the effective functioning of the educational programs. Moreover, attracting qualified teachers who have completed higher education is a formidable task due to unattractive salaries and insufficient teaching support within the camp. These multifaceted challenges underscore the pressing need for sustainable solutions and international recognition to address the systemic issues hindering the long-term viability and success of refugee education in the Karen refugee camps

Sirinthip : KRCEE faces many challenges. The first challenge for them is the resource aspect. This is an essential part of the process of providing access to teaching for students in the seven refugee camps. If they do not have sufficient financial resources and the current number of donors is decreasing, this will not allow them to work fully. Such as the problem of not having enough books or teaching equipment. And the next challenge is that while the number of students has increased, the number of teachers and personnel has decreased in opposite directions. Causing the remaining people to bear the burden of teaching a larger number of students may lead to incomplete teaching. and also received the lowest compensation when compared to the average salary of teachers This causes teachers and personnel to eventually give up and resign. Therefore, I think KRCEE must take on the challenge of long-term education.

Miyabi:I believe that KRCEE faces a number of challenges to do long-term educational system. While the number of refugees is increasing and the need for additional educational

resources is growing, the shortage of teachers and teaching materials has not improved. Furthermore, salaries for teachers are also a major challenge in achieving a long-term education system. If salaries, one of the motivating factors, do not increase, teachers will be reluctant to continue their work. Low salaries may also lead to lower quality education. These factors make it difficult to realize a long-term educational system in KRCEE.

Meika:
I don’t think KRCEE has a long-term educational system. Since their donations from international non-organizations and other supporters have decreased recently, the educational resources are insufficient even though the number of students has been increasing more and more. Furthermore, the situation of some teachers and staff at KRCEE find it hard to keep their motivation to continue their work as their salaries lacking, making them far away from constructing long-term educational systems.

Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD)

Visited on February 6, 2024

Member : Su Pyae Lin, Yaowaluk Homkong, Yuri Maeno, Chika Ebihara

About KECD

Background

The Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD) is the educational body of the Karen National Union (KNU), founded in 1947. They provide education access to Karen children and youths in Southeast Burma by working with local communities and international organizations, which enables them to administer schools in the seven districts under the administration of the KNU. Currently (2023–24 academic year), there are 1233 schools running under the KECD, and 109313 students are enrolled at the basic education level. While facing multiple challenges, the KECD strives to ensure sustainable, high-quality education for the Karen people as well as preserve their cultural identity in a changing world.

Vison / Value

The KECD recognizes education as a fundamental right that empowers both individuals and communities. Upholding principles of social justice and self-determination, they value inclusivity, equality, peace, and democracy, as they believe that education encourages people to realize their full potential and experience and maintain their cultures.

Goals

The KECD sets four goals under their strategic plan, targeting 2026.

1. Expanding opportunities for post-secondary education: To increase resources and pathways for higher education, including vocational training programs as well as providing scholarship programs, career guidance and counseling.
2. Enhancing the quality of education and the capacity of staff and teachers: Offer opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and upgrade educational resources such as teaching materials, textbooks, and technology to enhance the learning environment.
3. Communication and advocacy strategies: To raise awareness about the importance of education and cultural preservation among Karen communities and the wider public. Build partnerships with relevant stakeholders, which include government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations.
4. Strengthening systems and governance: Develop and implement education policies and enhance the governance of educational institutions.

Curriculum

According to the Basic Education Curriculum Structure, Karen language, English, mathematics, science, social studies, and development activities are compulsory subjects from lower primary to upper secondary. Health and physical education and Burmese language are elective subjects from lower primary to upper secondary. (According to KECD staff, Burmese language

classes are only for grades 3 to 12.) Thai language is also an elective subject from upper primary to upper secondary. English is a compulsory subject in Myanmar, so KECD also teaches English for their students. In secondary education, they use English textbooks not only for English class but also in other classes. Thus, some children learning at KECD schools are able to use Karen, English, and Burmese languages in that order. In health and physical education class, children can move around and do some sports such as football, exercise, and volleyball. KECD uses the same curriculum as the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE).

Problems and Effects

The difficult situations faced by the KECD range from natural disasters such as bad weather and climate change and their impact on livelihoods to floods and pandemics such as illness. The closure of schools, challenges in travel and transportation, inflation, and job scarcity are inevitable for students and staff. The conditions imposed by air strikes left people homeless because of the destruction. Due to security conditions, it is so hard for children to study in a safe place. And it leads to the "mobile school," which is another method by which children have to study in temporary places instead of permanent classrooms. So that they will not be a target in the attack and they can also hide. Students are not allowed to use lights at night because they may be targeted, so they had to read books under a small candlelight. Air strikes are not specifically targeted but mostly the random destruction of large buildings such as schools, churches, etc. In difficult situations, children and teachers are injured or killed if they do not escape or hide in the forest. These problems are caused by conflicts in Burma that have affected innocent people who have been hurt by frequent air strikes. As a result, the mental health of people who have suffered from depression and hallucinations from only hearing attacks. Anything similar to an air raid often responds automatically to hiding.

Career Opportunities after Graduation

We noted from the field trip that about half of the students who have graduated from KECD schools come back and serve for their community. Those who have finished teachers training colleges or junior colleges become the teachers, health care workers or community leaders. It means that most of them are willing to participate in their community development activities. Moreover the vocational training programs also help them to develop their skills in their career in such areas where there is very little chance to continue higher education.

Our opinions

We were really impressed by the children's motivation for studying. KECD staff said that “they don’t stop their learning.” The photos of children studying in the jungle because of airstrikes show their resilience. We were shocked by hearing that schools are hit by airstrikes and children study in a jungle where facilities are not enough, and they had to hide from the attack too. On the other hand, we realized that education is a place for children to learn and rely on the cooperation of KECD staff to do various things to continue their learning. Moreover, KECD’s staff, students, teachers, management team, and others do not stop trying to convey knowledge to the young generation, even if they are facing many problems. For this reason, we should focus on how we can solve these problems in a sustainable way so that they can live normal lives and have hope for their future.

Group 4

New Blood Learning Center
Visited on 7th February, 2024
Nagomi Hashimoto (Sophia), Mya Hnin Nu (CMU), Fadleeyah Samae (CMU)

- Introducing NBLC

New Blood Learning Center: NBLC

The school is situated in Nong Bua village on Thai-Burma border, Mae Sot, Thailand. After the military in Burma took a power in 1988, the country faced economic, social and healthcare challenges. Consequently, many people in the country moved to Thailand and settled in Nong Bua village by the end of the 1900s. The number of Burmese migrant people has been increasing every year, but there were no schools to provide education to the migrant children in the village.

To educate the migrant children, New blood school was established by Mr. Zaw Lwin Oo and Naw Mar Aye in 2003, the program served children from nursery to standard four and did not receive support from any NGOs, New blood boarding was established and began providing disadvantaged children with proper nurture, shelter, medical care, nutrition, clothing and security in addition to their continuing education. As the number of migrant students increased year by year, the school also had provided higher education grade levels for the students. Therefore, the school provided a primary school and provided a primary education in 2005. As the school continued to grow and improve, a high school education program was introduced to the migrant children in 2009. In 2003, the school joined Burma's official education system, the official General Education Development (GED), and the Thai School program. From 2003 to 2020, there are over 70 students successfully finished the Matriculation Program, and some completed the GED program. Many of these students are now graduates, and are still studying in and out of the country. During the school years from 2003 to 2022, the school progressed year after year and sent approximately 80 students to universities in Myanmar and another 20 students to international universities.

From 2020 until mid-2021, the school due to the outbreak of Covid-19, but school still tranied the student preparing for the GED class. And due to the 2021 military coup in Burma, many students, both local students and newly-fled students from Myanmar have enrolled in GED and pre-GED classes. There're now 200 students and those who are GED graduates are helping the school to teach the new students as well. (Mya and Fad)

- From Classrooms visiting

I visited a Grade 2 classroom. The age of students there are 8-9 and composed with Burmese students (who have face makeup) and Karen students. Students were very friendly and welcomed us with smiles. Some students showed me their English textbook. The textbooks are made in Myanmar with supervision from the UK. Students have just started learning English, so they cannot understand what I say in English so much, but a teacher guided them and they tried to speak with me.

I asked them, "Do you like English?" "Do you like studying?"
Students answered "Yes" and smiled. They all will get the Kenbridge curriculum and try to pass the GED so that they will go to this school for more than 10 years. I hope all of the students will have a bright future and they can keep working hard to get their future.

(Nagomi)

Lesson 6 The family weekend

Listen and say.

- From senior students

We had time to see high school students. They are students who will take GED exams, or who passed GED and are now waiting for their scholarship from University. Mya shared her experience and encouraged them. We were impressed by the reaction of students. They all listened to us seriously, and it told us how they think carefully about their future. We were also impressed that many students are interested in studying at CMU.

I interviewed one student. He is 19 years-old and he graduated high school last year. He has a GED, so now waiting for a scholarship. He wishes to go to university in Norway and study international business. I think that he is young to be on that stage with his age now, and he doesn't worry about passport problem, because he has it already. I hope he will get a scholarship soon. （Nagomi）

- Reflections

I understand that NBLC is superior to GDE, and education. However, they have some difficulties as well. Although there are some grounds where students can learn or play sports, it is still small for all students. At NBLC, there are about 600 students from nursery to

high school, and thinking about safe aspects, I think that the facilities need more consideration for all students. In a classroom, there were more than 30 students. Students have a table for each, but I think the capacity is still small for them. The floor of the classroom seems not safe for kids because it peels off. The schoolyard are huge, but it doesn't seem capable of bad weather. I only stayed for 3 hours, so I could see all of the parts at school, but I think that I need to see other situations as well to compare. (Nagomi)

There were images of the king of Thailand at NBLC as well, and teachers told us that they teach the Thai anthem. I wondered why students need to sing it even though they cannot speak Thai. However, I found that “showing their appreciation for the Thai government” is one of the answers. (Nagomi)

I asked teachers about how they encourage students to study, and they answered that they just believe students have a bright future if they study hard. I cannot believe how difficult it is, but if I have a chance to see how students overcome their difficulties with teachers. (Nagomi)

- What we can do for them
  Volunteers, finding donors, scholarship
  Teaching Thai language
  Sharing our experiences for the world
  Finding language teachers -connecting with tourists in Thailand
  Finding NGO jobs or INGO jobs

NEW
BLOOD
G-B