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(Release The Potential)

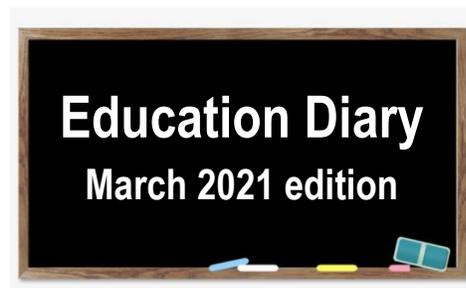
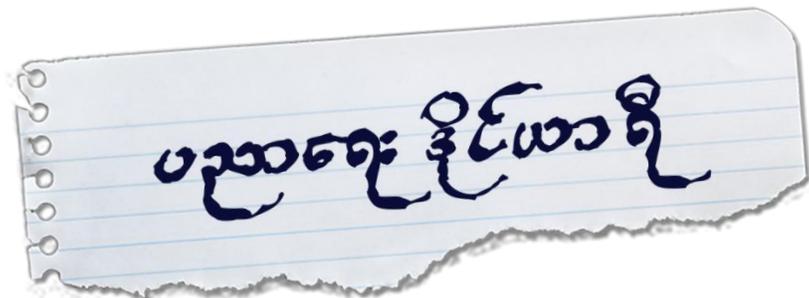
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Contents

I.	A message from our new Director!.....	2
II.	HOME-BASED LEARNING ASSESSMENT	3
•	Follow up from previous edition.....	3
III.	TRAINING FOR SAFETY, KNOWLEDGE AND HAPPINESS.....	5
IV.	COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION TRAINING OF TRAINER PROJECT	6
V.	SCHOOLS IN NEED OF AID: MORNING GLORY 2	7



A message from our new Director!

BMWEC has successfully transferred the roles and responsibilities from Executive Committee to Board of Trustees this month.

Our new director, Lar Shee, has begun carrying out her duties as BMWEC director starting from this month. We expect great things from her new leadership. May BMWEC be able to reach its goals and improve more than ever as we welcome our new director!



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Organizational structure may have changed, I want to say that but BMWEC will still be BMWEC. BMWEC as an organization is no longer an infant like it was in the previous decades. It needs to mature now. In the previous decades, we put emphasis more on quantity than quality, as in how many schools we were able to establish and manage or how many students were able to enroll in our schools over how many students managed to finish their education or how many students were able to pursue careers after finishing school. So in order to focus more on quality over quantity, not only BMWEC, but also migrant learning centers need to mature. Migrant learning centers were more dependent and reliant on donors and donations in the past. But starting from this new decade, they need work together and work harder to become more independent and stand on their own feet.

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HOME-BASED LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Follow up from previous edition



Last month, we touched briefly on how education organizations in Mae Sot, Tak region, were working together to draft a Home-Based Learning (HBL) board exam in order to assess the overall HBL experience. This activity was led by BMWEC, TeacherFocus, BMTA, HWF and MECC. They worked together to draft and review assessment exam questions for grade 1 through grade 8 students over 2 days from March 3rd to 4th. The main subjects focused on the exams for all levels will be Myanmar, English and Mathematics.



As also stated last month, the exam will not cover the full curriculum of the school year due to the pandemic.

We originally mandated that only 60-65% of the full curriculum would be taught—during this 2020-2021 school year. However, most schools only managed to finish around 40% of the curriculum because of the difficulties associated with Home-Based Learning (transport, location, time, etc). Only a handful of exceptions managed to finish more than 65% of the mandated courses. So the planners had to take that into account and based the questions on the lowest common denominator, the 40% of the full curriculum.

The purpose of the HBL assessment exam is to assess the migrant students and to recognize the parents who cooperated in the HBL activities for this school year and to enable students to transfer more easily between



different migrant learning centers (MLC) since the MLCs are all following the same curriculum. The exam will follow the format of HBL, which is to say that exams will take place in different locations with different groups, one at a time, and will take place from the end of March to the end of April.

DIALOGUE TO REOPEN MIGRANT LEARNING CENTERS IN 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

BMWEC and other education organizations in Tak region have been working since last year to get the permission from local authorities to reopen the migrant learning centers (MLCs). Under normal circumstances March would be the last month in the 2020-2021 school year. However due to the pandemic, only 1 out of 21 active MLCs for this school year managed to undertake normal school-based learning. Even then, the school was an outlier since it is located in a village in a remote location (about 10 kilometers from Maesot). Also that school still had to implement some Home-Based Learning (HBL) to reach its objectives properly.

During March, there were discussions between BMWEC and associated education organizations and respective local authorities in order to reopen the MLCs. The discussion produced positive outcomes. In the coming months, MLCs will be able to hold official meetings with their local authorities and health institutions to get the approval for reopening of their schools.

Once they get the approval and are allowed to reopen, MLCs will need to follow the 44 step guidelines issued by Thai Health Ministry for all education institutions in Thailand to follow.

In order to accomplish our goal of successfully reopening the schools and resume teaching normally, we will need helping hands and support from everyone, including education organizations and donors.



TRAINING FOR SAFETY, KNOWLEDGE AND HAPPINESS

During this month, 254 students and 30 teachers in 14 migrant learning centers under BMWEC received assistance from Equitable Education Fund (EEF), a Thailand-based project, to help children in need and to pay school bills. The purpose of this aid was to help out migrant students who do not have adequate money to attend schools, provide them with personal hygiene equipment and utilities and improve the education standards and quality of the teachers working in these MLCs.



The project hired professional trainers for these 30 teachers in order to provide training for them in child protection, community safety, etc. Once the training was finished, the 30 teachers went on to assess and evaluate the total of 254 students in their respective communities based on 3-color categories: green, yellow, red. Students are considered to be green if they are safe and their parents can protect and support them and even improve their safety further. Those categorized as yellow are considered to be facing a potential danger and will need intervention. Finally, those in red zone are considered to be in very worrisome situations. The teachers are paying more special attention to students in red and yellow zones. Later they will have a meeting in their respective communities to share what they have learnt.



Currently, out of 254 students, only 4 students are in the yellow zone while the remaining 250 are in the green zone. There are no students categorized as red which is a good sign, and the teachers are working on the 4 in yellow zone to improve their grading to green, while still paying attention to the 250 in the green zone.

As an example for this activity, we can look at Sunset night school. All their students are considered to be green, so the teachers split these 29 students into two groups based on their age group. One is from age 5 to 10, and the other is from age 11 to 16. A training workshop was given to the first group of age 5 to 10 for the children to learn to protect themselves, thus preventing behaviors that can cause diseases and spreading awareness of COVID-19 pandemic and related



health protocols along with teaching children how to stay hygienic through playing game activities.

The second group of youth, age 11 to 16, received the same training but with the added activity of re-teaching the students who missed out on lessons or who had trouble studying during Home Based Learning.

The outcomes of these trainings were that the children can protect their selves better, be happy, and are more knowledgeable about health and safety protocols to live hygienically.



COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION TRAINING OF TRAINER PROJECT

The Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Organization (SRHR), in cooperation with BMWEC has been giving Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Training of Trainers (ToT) for out-of-school children, adolescents and youth (CAYs). The objective of ToT is to provide training to people including teachers, peer educators, and community workers in certain subjects so that they can go back to their communities and become trainers themselves and improve their respective communities.



The workshops took place on March 19th and 20th, then from March 22nd to March 25th. The purpose of Comprehensive Sexuality Education is to educate young teenagers and young adults about sexuality so they have adequate knowledge to prevent teenage pregnancies and to understand gender-based violence, bullying and discrimination against people for their gender orientation, HIV status, and disabilities. This is important especially in recent times as schools are mostly closed due to the pandemic, and youths have a lot of free time on their hands, which can lead to them be more reckless in pursuit of something new or unusual.



SCHOOLS IN NEED OF AID: MORNING GLORY 2

The migrant learning center (MLC), Morning Glory-2 was established in 2018 near the infamous rubbish dump in Mae Pa, Mae Sot District, Tak region because the community living there desperately needed it. The rubbish dump has a lot of schools but almost all of them are primary schools only. Morning Glory-2, as the sole middle school, was meant to give the children who want to pursue secondary education the opportunity so that they would not become child wage workers and victims of exploitation after finishing only primary education.



It originally was not a formal school with a name, but rather just a handful of 7 dedicated teachers and 200 or so students with their devoted parents coming together for the common cause. The teachers managed to rent a plot of land and built a school with the help of the parents. Yet its size could not accommodate 200 students, and the teachers had to work hard to ensure its existence.

The school later received the assistance of BMWEC through which the teachers managed to get into contact with a benefactor who had connections with Christian missionaries abroad. This was when Morning Glory-2 finally got its own name and became a migrant learning centre.

All things went well for the teachers and the students during the two school years from 2018 to 2020. However, after these two years, the benefactor wanted to shift their focus from providing education for migrant students with no official documents to establishing a non-formal vocational education training center instead. Starting from the end of this March, the school will be no longer able to run in the compound provided by the benefactor, and the teachers and students will need to relocate to somewhere else to continue their education activities.



Morning Glory-2 MLC currently has 7 teachers (the same 7 teachers) and only 167 students in total because of the pandemic. It offers classes from kindergarten to 8th Grade (currently there's no 5th Grade, and 7th Grade uses both new and old curricula). The parents of these students have a lot of hope and trust in the school and they are eager for it to continue and to help make that happen. It would be a shame and a huge loss to the children of the rubbish dump in Mae Pa if the school ceases to exist after this school year due to lack of a school compound and a benefactor. The

teachers of Morning Glory-2 are hoping that someone will step forward to help them. Anyone who would like to contribute to this effort should contact: +66811823813 phone number and the school is located in No. 45/30. Ban Song Kwe. Mae Pa. Moo 10. Tak 63110.Thailand.