



MOEI Thailand 2008-09

Report

MOEI was launched by the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Hong Kong in 2008. Its core aim was to provide intensive English-language education for migrant children and adults along the Moei River section of the Thai-Burma border. Based in Mae Sot, it worked particularly closely with individuals from the Karen ethnic group. By recruiting undergraduate students as interns and volunteers, the programme also sought to boost engagement with Burma and promote student advocacy. By operating alongside NGOs with deep local knowledge, it was designed to complement existing work in migrant communities.

Following up on the launch programme in 2008, a small Thai-Burma border programme was organized in Mae Sot in 2008-09. This report provides an analysis of the work undertaken by MOEI Thailand participants in 2008-09.

Overview

In 2008-09, five students initially joined the MOEI programme in Mae Sot, Thailand. After one student dropped out soon after the start of the programme, the group was reduced in size to four students, all of whom saw the programme through to completion. The students first undertook four days of training in mid-December, and then through to early February delivered eight weeks of intensive English classes. Two students taught in refugee camps at Mae La and Nupo. The other two students taught at migrant schools in Mae Sot. The programme did not run entirely smoothly, and there was some negative feedback at the end

from one participant. All four students nevertheless agreed that they had found the experience valuable. The programme was also well received by pupils, schools and the community.

Participants

The 2008-09 cohort of four MOEI Thailand participants was drawn from universities in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. One student, Diana Parker, served as coordinator, picking up on a role she had previously performed for MOEI 2008. The rest of the MOEI teachers joined the programme as volunteers.

Training

From December 10 to December 13, Heith Gay conducted an intensive training workshop in English-language teaching. The training sections were hosted by one of MOEI's partner NGOs, Thabyay Education Network Volunteer Department – for which grateful thanks.

Teaching

In-class teaching took place for eight weeks from December 15, 2008 to February 6, 2009, though there was a sizeable break around Christmas and the New Year. In general, MOEI Thailand participants had about four hours of classroom contact per day for five days a week, though there were substantial variations on this pattern.

Organization

MOEI Thailand 2008-09 was organized by the University of Hong Kong, which recruited and liaised with all participants and took care of legal matters by requiring participants to sign a contract with the University. Diana Parker was in charge of coordination in Mae Sot. As before, NGOs in the border area were immensely helpful to MOEI.

Funding

Core funding for MOEI Thailand 2008-09 was provided by two main donors associated with the University of Hong Kong. Their donations were used to cover major programme expenses, such as organizational costs, some transport costs, training costs, and essential classroom materials for teachers.

Evaluation

Only limited formal feedback was received during the evaluation exercise at the end of the programme. This indicated that there had been some problems with programme delivery in Mae Sot, and pointed to improvements that could be made in the future. In general, however, MOEI participants were positive about most aspects of the programme, as were the students and schools in which classes were given.

MOEI 2009

Currently, plans are in hand to implement MOEI 2009 in China and Thailand. The provisional schedule for MOEI Thailand 2009 is:

Monday June 8 – Friday June 12, 2009	Training
Monday June 15 – Friday August 7, 2009	Teaching

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