

NEWSLETTER

The latest news and updates from Dek Noi Pattana Foundation

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Ten Years On: How are the Children from the Watchaisrisa-ard ECD Center Doing?

By Supakit Simuan, Chanikarn Kosaphol, and Sakchai Kamwan

Introduction

The objective of this report is to present the findings from house visits of children who attended Watchaisrisa-ard ECD Center during the Academic Years 2014 and 2015, which were the first two years that the Center received expert support on personnel development. Subsequently, it received expert support from the Dek Noi Pattana Foundation (DNPF). Later on, the Center received more collaboration from key official entities such as the Donraed SAO, which has the direct relationship with the Center, as well as from the community. Every party appreciated the importance of the changes happening during that time, leading to the DNPF deciding to find ways to maintain such good results in the long term. In this context, DNPF considers it valuable to follow-up on the development of this first group of children to benefit from expert support through information gathering directly from children's families.

This report has been prepared by a team including Khun Ple (Supakit Simuan), one of the parents of children in the 2014/2015 cohort and a founder of the DNPF, Kru Rong (Chanikarn Kosaphol), Head of Watchaisrisa-ard ECD Center, and Khun Nu Noy (Sakchai Kamwan), a representative of the Center's Management Committee and also one of the parents of children in the 2014/15 cohort.

After collecting information on the names of the children attending the Center in both 2014 and 2015 and the parents/guardians of each child, the team made appointments with the children's families, most of whom still reside in Donraed Village. Our aim was to discuss directly with the parents/guardians of each of the children who are still in the area to gather the information on what happened while the children were attending the Center and what has happened to them since that time.

These included their physical development, thinking skills, behavioral and emotional development as well as responses to the community surrounding them and the families. We tried to meet as many children, who attended the Center, as possible. We made it flexible to accommodate the parents/guardians' schedules because some of them did not have much time. For some the timing was difficult because it was the agricultural season. For some families we agreed to visit without making advanced appointments because they live in the area anyway.

Overall, the interactions with the children's families were smooth, and the discussions conducted in a friendly atmosphere because Khun Nu Noy is a local and well known in the village, Kru Rong is the responsible person of the Center, where parents/guardians bring their children to study, and well known to everyone, and many of the parents/guardians remembered Khun Ple.

Feedback on the Experience of the Children in 2014 and 2015

From the 76 children that attended the Center either in 2014 or in 2015 or in both 2014 and 2015, the report team met and interviewed 59 of them (or 77.63%) together with their families.

The number of children enrolling in Watchaisrisa-ard ECD Center during the Academic Years 2014 and 2015 was 76, divided into 42 girls and 34 boys. In 2014 the total class size was 46, including 24 2-year-olds and 22 3-year-olds. In 2015 the total class size was 54, including the 24 children from the 2014 class that were now 3-year-olds and both new 2 year and 3-year-olds.

At the time the children were under the care of parents or grandparents:



During the interviews, parents/guardians shared the overall impression that during that year children liked to go to the Center because there were various activities and toys. They wanted to play with their peers, see their new teachers and listen to stories.

The parents/guardians reflected that attending the Center was very useful for the children. They learned to be disciplined, adjusted themselves to others, became more confident, and able to perform daily routines such as washing hands and feet, keeping their sleeping mattresses tidy and eating by themselves, which were impressive. These also prepare children for studying in higher levels.

More specifically, parents/guardians shared their impression on the following dynamics.

Children's Socializing

We asked about children's interaction during that period. The parents/guardians informed us that there were significant changes observed after additional activities were implemented. The children remembered them and told their parents/guardians about the atmosphere and excitement to play with their peers, meet with teachers and have extra activities every day. Almost all the parents/guardians reported remembering that children told them after returning home about how they played with friends at school. Some parents/guardians reported that at the beginning of attendance at the Center (with some newly enrolled age-qualified children), their children were not familiar with the Center yet. But it did not take long for them to adjust themselves and show positive changes. Overall, parents/guardians were pleased with this developmental aspect of children

Self-reliance Ability

Almost all the parents/guardians were pleased with the children's increasing self-reliance during that time. They were able to perform their daily routines. Some of the parents/guardians reported that the children did not perform well on some of the activities, but they improved later on. The parents/guardians were happy about the changes, children's ability to keep their hands and feet clean and brushing their teeth regularly and correctly.

Discipline

The parents/guardians informed us that children's discipline improved. Some reported that at the beginning their children were still disobedient, but they improved to a good level. Less than 10% of the children continued to have this problem - a reflection most likely of the individuality of each child and differences among families.

Building Good Habits

On this aspect, almost all of the parents/guardians reported that they were very pleased with the good development of their children at that time. Most of them mentioned changes in habits, emotions, better reasoning and politeness with friends. Another aspect that the parents/guardians observed significant changes in habits, such as keeping stuff tidy, making places clean and putting shoes at a right place.

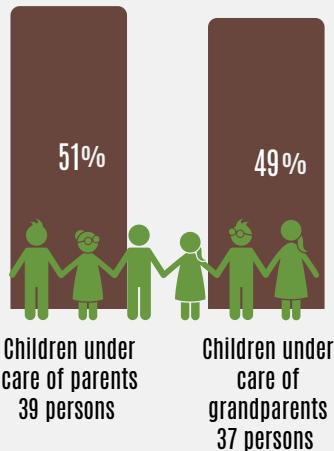
Learning

On learning aspect, several groups of parents/guardians reported that their children were interested in learning via different approaches. Some groups of children liked observing from various materials while some were interested in learning from their peers. Some were keen on exploring their parents' occupations like going to plant vegetables with their mothers. Overall, children have gained their learning skills through observation. They had more questions to ask.

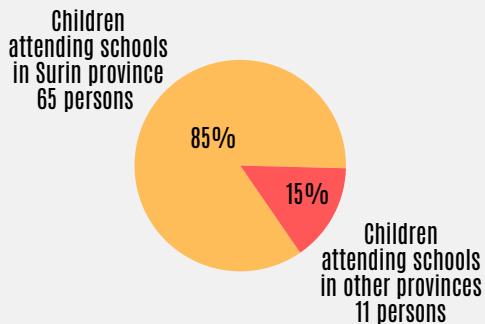


Feedback on Children's Current Situation

More of the children are now being looked after by their parents than in 2014-15. The details are as follows.



The numbers of children from the 2014 - 2015 cohort who are currently studying in lower secondary level are as follows.



According to the local context, most very small children are cared for by their relatives because their parents usually work in other provinces. Once the children reach primary and secondary education levels, more parents either return home and take care and spend more time with their children or they take their children to other provinces where they are working.

For children and their families who continue living in the area and studying in education institutions nearby (most of them are around 13 - 14 years of age studying in Mattayom 1-2 or grades 7-8 equivalent) we asked them about the children's performance and their memories of friends and the Center.

We were informed that currently both the families and the children are pleased with the children's learning performance. Forty-seven (47) children (94%) are confident in expressing their opinions and needs and representing their schools in sports, art, music and academic skills.

We also learned that most of the children are still in contact with their friends. Some of the children are pursuing further study in schools out of the area, but they do remember their friends at the Center well.

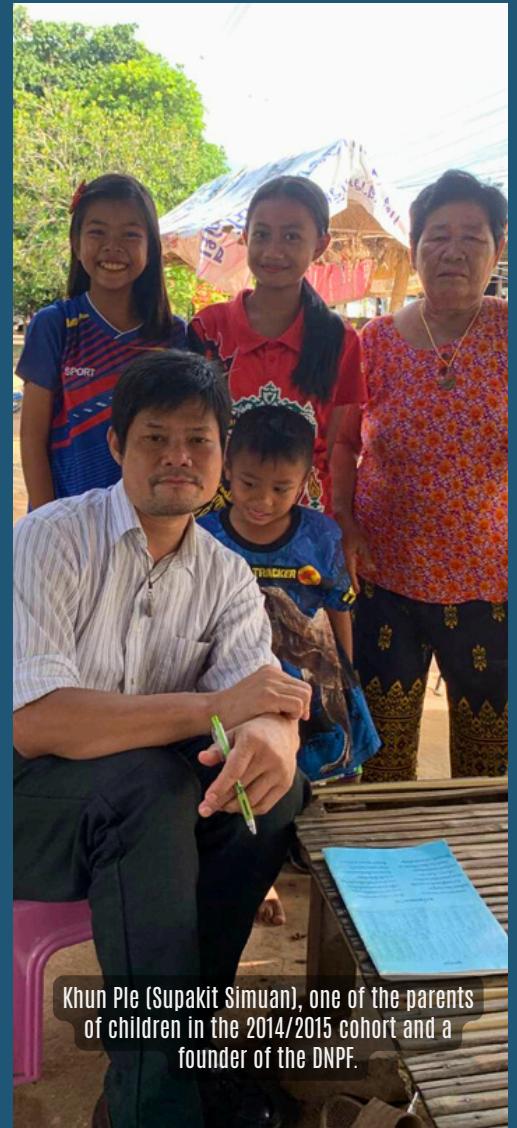
Concluding Remarks

The team would like to thank DNPF for caring about our children in the community and finding ways to support them and for the opportunity to conduct these home visits. Conducting home visits this time allowed us to know about the children's families, their different ways of living and their upbringing. The information collected will be very valuable for us to present to other stakeholders and very useful for improving the performance of the Center. Reaching out to all stakeholders and enhancing collaboration is important in planning for how best to improve implementation and enhance the development of the children's skills.

More specifically, as two members of the team (Khun Nu Noy and Kru Rong) are currently playing key roles in the operation of the Donraed ECD Center they will follow up on the results of the home visits and interviews and may seek assistance from the DNPF in some areas, and as needed. The team was also pleased to meet Kru Bay, the expert providing advice to the Center in the beginning, who also visited children at the Center. This is a demonstration of the continuous support she has given to our community.

The team hopes that there will be useful activities such as this one in the future. There should also be a continued focus on identifying problems and finding solutions collaboratively with the community and parents/ guardians. In the future, if parents/ guardians have a chance, they should also encourage life skills development for children because different ways of upbringing will result in different outcomes for children, especially when they are growing up in an environment that is influenced so much by social media.

In conclusion, the team recognizes that a few children are currently facing problems. But almost all the children are doing well, have creative minds and keep developing themselves to be part of society with happiness. So, thank you very much, DNPF, for the good project for our community.





Seminar to Increase the Efficiency of Local Government Organizations in Surin Province

Assistant Professor Dr. Kanoung Saikaew

The Surin Provincial Authority in collaboration with Surin Rajabhat University (SRRU) and Dek Noi Pattana Foundation (DNPF), organized a seminar to increase the efficiency of the management of local government organizations in the Surin Province. The seminar was held at Thong Tarin Hotel, Surin, on the 3rd of April, 2025. 450 participants attended the seminar, from all 170 sub-district administrative organizations (SAO), in the province. They included the chiefs of 17 districts as well as the chief executives and chief administrators of SAOs, and education officers.

Mr. Ian Porter, Chairman of the Dek Noi Pattana Foundation, made a presentation on high quality early childhood development (ECD), emphasizing that high quality ECD puts children on a much better path for the future. In this regard a pilot project in Surin begun in 2013 clearly showed that, with many preconditions for high quality ECD already in place, in-service training and coaching of teachers will result in children developing their skills much more rapidly. The success of the pilot project led to the Governor of Surin and the Provincial Administration deciding to develop model centers in each of the 17 districts in the province.

Ajarn Kanoung Saikaew, Senior Early Childhood Specialist of DNPF, started her presentation emphasizing that developing model centers was a means to eventually achieving the objective that "All Thai children should benefit from quality early childhood education." She said that creating ECD model centers requires 7 main processes

1. Awareness raising platforms on the importance of high quality ECD
2. Preparation of MOU, a strategic plan and engagement of strategic partners and stakeholders
3. Capacity building of teachers, coaching, monitoring, working with parents and communities
4. Building a team of facilitators and tools to support teachers.
5. Exchanging best practices amongst model centers
6. Developmental research and monitoring of children skills development
7. Creating an environment and ecosystem that supports early childhood development

The above-mentioned processes are being implemented through the following mechanisms: 1) sharing of lessons learned, 2) developing teaching and learning tools & equipment and providing a friendly learning environment both inside and outside the classrooms and 3) development and monitoring process.

Ajarn Kanjana Thaochalee, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, SRRU, completed the presentations on ECD by emphasizing the following:

- Educating parents about age-appropriate development and regularly organizing forums for teachers and parents to exchange information and approaches to child development.
- Restructuring the infrastructure of ECD to suit the number of children and activities.
- Promoting safe and age-appropriate learning materials.
- Encouraging creative participation of parents.
- Supporting ECD centers to be heard and respond appropriately to their needs.

In conclusion, the seminar to Optimize the Administration of Local Government Organizations in Surin Province has helped increase awareness of the importance and the opportunity to rapidly improve the quality of ECD in the province by building on the development of Model Early Childhood Development Centers and further replicating and scaling up. As a next step the Provincial Administration, SRRU and DNPF will be meeting with the chiefs of the 17 districts in the province to discuss how best to include their districts in the province's overall scaling up plan.