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VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 6

SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING ON THE THAI/BURMA BORDER

ACT FOR PEACE

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE **actalliance**

The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Peel gently to open

Peel gently to open



In 2012, Act for Peace's partner The Border Consortium, launched the Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP). The goal is to build refugees' capacity to start-up or improve small businesses for employment and income within the camps, and also to prepare for return to Burma or resettlement.

Thanks to your support over the past three years, the program is now operational in all 9 refugee camps on the border. So far, in 2015 more than 1,025 people have received a capital grant of 2,400 baht (approximately AUD\$90). The program targets groups such as single female-headed-households and people with disabilities.

To receive an initial grant, a refugee has to complete a training course and develop a business plan. They can then start up or progress their business. Six to eight months later, if their business is progressing and making an income they will complete another round of training and can receive a further grant to advance their enterprise. Thank you for helping refugees to help themselves.

Your support is providing:



A training course for three refugees in business skills.



A start-up capital grant for a refugee to create their own livelihood.

All gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

The Christmas Gifts for Peace catalogue is out now. When you buy a Gift for Peace, your gift will support long-term projects building a better life for those affected by conflict and natural disaster. Order online at www.actforpeace.org.au or free call 1800 025 101. Be quick, orders close on December 11th. New gifts this year include a Farmer's Starter Pack and a Toilet for a Refugee.

Thank you for your generous support throughout 2015. We at Act for Peace wish you a Merry Christmas. "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." Luke 2:7 (NRSV)

Act for Peace

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Dear Friends,

My name is Na Na and I work for Act for Peace's partner, The Border Consortium, in Mae-La refugee camp on the Thai/Burma Border. I want to tell you of the Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP) that you are supporting. With your help we are training people who are refugees to start up or progress their own business enterprises.

Many people and families already run their own shops in the camp, like selling clothes they make, or food and snacks they cook. We ask shop owners how they are doing and if they would like to get better skills to grow their business and help to support their families.

We invite the traders to come to training where they learn the importance of recording what is sold and income earned. We teach business planning, cost projection, pricing, stock management and accounting. They learn to do a market survey to understand their customers and competitors and realise their own strengths and weaknesses, and to analyse market trends.

When a trader successfully completes the course they apply for a start-up grant worth 2,400 Baht (approximately AUD\$90), to buy inventory or to set up a shop. Six to eight months later we review their progress and if they are doing well they can complete a second round of training and receive a further grant of 2,100 Baht (approximately AUD \$83). With better techniques their business can grow and bring in income.

Getting more income helps the entire camp. Business owners support their families and some also donate part of their income to help widows and poorer refugees. So when they earn more they can give more and help their community. This is what I see when businesses do well.

It is also very much about the future. Our training will be a benefit not just here in the camp but if the refugees return to Burma or resettle elsewhere it will help them to start a new business. So I tell people it will help them in the future.

I feel very happy with my job. I like to train people. It's quite a busy job and I often face difficulties but I like to work in the refugee community. I like my job very much and it is because of you that I am able to continue to help the refugees here and provide them with a brighter future. Thank you.

Na Na

Prayer Points:

- Pray that ceasefire agreements hold in Burma so people can return safely to their homes.
- Pray for guidance for the newly elected Government leaders in the November election.
- Give thanks for the skills and creativity that flourishes despite the conditions faced by refugees in exile.



Na Na oversees the EDG program



Small business owners in the EDG program