

# Teach to Reach Project

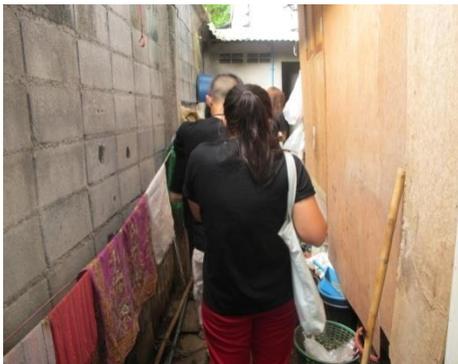
## Teaching Children in Klong Lord Slum Community

On Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, the Lionheart Society together with Kru Poo once again had the opportunity to teach the unprivileged children of the Klong Lord Slum Community (situated behind The Rattanakosin Hotel).



As scheduled, we arrived at the teaching site in the morning but were only met by Kru Poo and three other children. After some time, Kru Poo instructed us to personally call out the rest of the children from their homes (as this was always the case). Unfortunately, this happens all the time because these children have never been taught by their parents to value education or at least grab even the slightest opportunity to learn. Yet this is not surprising since the parents themselves are mostly illiterate and have always taken education for granted as well. Most of the time, these children are left on their own, unattended and often may be found idly roaming the streets while their parents or guardians are out to work.

Walking along these narrow passages and makeshift tenements was not an easy feat. The entire place was filthy, drenched with rotting garbage and an



overwhelming stench of urine met us with spite. The klongs were reeking with waste - an evident source of disease and infection. Both sides of the narrow path were the makeshift shacks of hundreds of families merely divided by wooden panels or scraps of materials ruggedly assembled and for some, plastic sheets with the faintest hope of having at least some privacy.



Each room is cramped by an entire family of about 4-5 members. There is a communal toilet and bath area, barely enough to accommodate the whole community so random urinating was in fact common and habitual. It was difficult to understand how people can actually live here and go on with their daily lives in such a squalid environment. We were so disheartened because what we saw was far too possible to call home.



Going through each improvised dwelling, we found most of the children, if not all, on their own. They tend to their own needs as well as to that of their younger siblings - even during weekends. A majority of these children have parents who are construction workers or transient labourers so their families do not reside in one place for a long time; they constantly move around where work is available, creating a very unstable life for the children. Regrettably, education only comes when there is time or opportunity or if pressured by the government's policy of compulsory attendance in public schools.

There was one child whose father had just died of AIDS and the mother left with another man, leaving her with her grandmother who is a flower vendor. Some have never actually met their own parents as they were already abandoned from birth and left to the care of their poor and aging grandparents. These



children are not only deprived of education and basic needs but are desperate for care and attention. They grow up without guidance ending up as drug addicts, gang members or juvenile delinquents engaging in petty crimes or early pregnancies (for the girls); a gloomy and less hopeful future and sadly never move out from poverty themselves.



As we went through the activities we planned for the day, we noticed that a lot of the children lacked manners and were quite aggressive. They were clearly deficient of proper supervision as well as parental love. This is the main reason why Kru Poo and other volunteers including ourselves willingly come to see these children, we want them to feel that there are still people out there who can hear their pleas and understand their situation. On this visit, we were able to assist them with their homework as well as teach basic English and simple Maths. We also gave out food and books to everyone.



The Lionheart Society knows that having the opportunity to have a very good education ourselves does ensure us of a promising future however, we should not forget that there are others who are not as privileged. We need to be mindful of those who are less fortunate and let them know that they are not alone. As we do this, we are able not only to help these children but inspire them to strive to be better individuals and grow up to be conscientious citizens themselves. Whether our means may be simple or seem insignificant to others, we are certain that somebody's life will change. The process may be slow but things will get better, and with any luck bring much needed hope for a brighter and more optimistic future for the whole society.

