

Teach to Reach Project

(July – August – December 2018)

This is the 8th year of the Lionheart Society's Teach to Reach project, a community service activity that involves teaching children in slum communities around Bangkok together with Kru Poo, a retired teacher who has devoted his post retirement life to helping the poor.

Bangkok may be known as the main commercial district and capital of the country, where the sight of high-end shopping malls, 5 star hotels and stunning skyscrapers has attracted visitors and investors from all over the world,



but it also has plenty of poverty and a growing gap between the rich and the poor. Woven through luxurious residences and exclusive accommodations are slum communities housing the poorest members of the society. To this day, there are approximately 2000 slum communities sprawled within the core urban area of the city, a clear indication of the rising divergence between the affluent and the impoverished.

In 2011, the Lionheart Society initiated the Teach to Reach project at two slum communities in Bangkok namely Hua Rot Chak Tuek Daeng and Rim Klong Rot.

Once again, this year we had the opportunity to visit Hua Rot Chak Tuek Daeng slum community, an area branded as a Red Zone by the local authorities due to widespread illegal gambling and rampant drug addiction cases among its residents. Children in this community mostly come from broken families with parents either away or separated, or for some having one or both parents in prison due to drug or other crime-related activities, leaving them in the care of their aging grandparents and siblings. As a result, the children grow up in a very hostile environment lacking guidance, attention, love, care as well as basic necessities including food and other daily needs. Likewise, living conditions are very poorly as

families as much as eight members inhabit small make-shift cubicles with barely any privacy or proper sanitation. Because crime and drugs are prevalent, the children end up



suffering the most, many lose the opportunity to receive good education, become involved in illegal activities themselves, fall into early pregnancies for the girls and eventually turn out to be just like their parents.

We have been performing this project with Kru Poo for eight years now, sharing the same vision of helping the children gain a better perspective on life and a brighter future through education. We want them to know that no matter how desperate their lives are, there are still many out there who care for them and understand their needs. Our visits, although brief and not so often are always well prepared and made with sincere intentions. Aside from the regular lessons and help with their homework, we perform fun games and activities as

well as provide simple entertainment through our mini-concert, a much anticipated part of the trip. It may be noted that due to the children's lack of adult guidance and supervision many have shown to have signs of aggressive behavior especially during our initial visits but is noticeably lesser now, being more attentive, calmer and most of all happier - clearly a positive change resulting from feeling loved and cared for.

Through our conversations with the children, we found out that many of them actually want to finish school and even dream of becoming a doctor, teacher, soldier, designer, entrepreneur, computer programmer and so on. But sadly, the reality is that these dreams may be too difficult for them to achieve as life in the slums is not easy and the present environment is largely responsible for this. In any case, through our visits, we still hope we are able to offer encouragement and help them focus on the value of education as a means to have a better life and a brighter future.

Aside from assisting with homework and other activities, we also give out food and toys for everyone, distribute rice bags as well as donate money to families who are unable to send their children to school due to insufficient money for transportation.

The Lionheart Society believes that anyone who is willing to share time, effort and even just a small piece of themselves to those in need can be an active participant in a happy and caring society. We hope that through our Teach to Reach project we can continue providing these children the opportunity to dream and with any luck and determination - they can make these dreams come true.



