

RMFC 2023 AGM Report – Education

As the world emerges from the Covid pandemic, we have seen that it is back to business for our children at the Rescue Mission. They have fully returned to school campus and Asa reports that the necessary modifications to schooling during the crisis period have broadened the skills of the children as they undertook their remote learning at the Centre.

All children undertake their learning with a positive attitude. We presently total 63 children in our care. Of these one is at a Special School in Chiang Rai and one is in her second year at University also in Chiang Rai. We have 40 children attending primary school and 21 attending high school. Primary school reports have recently come to us and all students have passed and will be promoted to their next year level. Key learning areas are like ours here, with time emphasis being on Thai, Maths, English and then Science. Interestingly right down to Year 1 they do a course called 'Fraud Prevention' which receives the same time allocation as subjects such as History, Art and Health/PE.

In the high school one student is in Year 12 and has her sights set on university, her preference order at this stage being Dentistry, Structural Engineering then Teaching. There are 4 students in Year 7, 11 in Year 8 and 5 in Year 9. During our February visit, with Asa's help, Lenore and I had an evening chat with the high school students to encourage and elicit thoughts on future education pathways and plans. This is quite new, yet exciting territory because we now must research vocational and other pathways as the children increase their self-assurance and gain a view to the future. It is to be noted too that one of our long-term children has had to return to his village to assist his needy family, but he still hopes to continue learning through Distance Education. While we are not sure of available facilities for this, it shows his awareness of the value of continuing education and his schooling to date will stand him in good stead.

Following this futures chat, Lenore, Asa, and I spent two days in Chiang Rai visiting technical colleges and researching the various options. We were impressed with the facilities and variety of courses. These included Accounting, Marketing, Commercial drawing, Clothing design, Culinary, Hospitality, Tourism, IT and Logistics, Auto mechanics, Auto electrician, Industrial mechanics, Welding, Architectural Drawing, Construction, Electrician, and a whole college campus devoted to Agriculture. We have requested that Asa bring at least the Year 9 students to any Open Days so they can get a feel for what is available, and firm up their preferences. As Chiang Rai is an hour's travel by public transport, we figured it would be possible to remain in residence at the Centre and commute daily, retaining familiar home routines, while navigating this new territory in education. This would be financially more achievable as well.

In all areas of the Education space the feeling is positive and encouraging. Personal growth and increase in confidence are evident in all students. Asa reports that she feels supported by the children's schools which in turn is affirming for us also. We thank God for this great provision and forward progress.

Jennifer Stevens