

## Ministry of Education collaborates with teachers for the rights of migrant children in Thailand



The Office of Non-formal and Informal Education (ONIE) at the Ministry of Education took a critical step for the education of migrant children in Thailand, by strengthening the capacity of teachers in providing education to the migrant children; a critical move for the futures of all migrant children in Thailand.

Early in October ONIE launched a teachers' guideline and curriculum on informal education for migrant and non-Thai children, at a training workshop for the teachers. Ninety-four participants including education specialists and representatives from ONIE, provincial and district directors, teachers and NGO counterparts attended the workshop, from nine provinces of Thailand. The newly published teachers' handbook/lesson plans incorporate lessons about ASEAN, Thai life and laws, among other topics.

The workshop was conducted by ONIE and World Education, with the support of ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

Mr. Surapong Jamjod, Deputy Secretary of ONIE and Mr. Nilim Baruah, Senior Migration Specialist for Asia-Pacific Region of ILO Thailand, inaugurated the workshop, and emphasized the importance of applying the Education for All (EFA) policy in providing education service to migrant and non-Thai children.

ONIE's Deputy Secretary added, "The workshop today is very important as it again raises our awareness on universal human rights on education, and it will help clarify unclear issues on providing education for migrant children. As they have experience in handling adult students and not children, ONIE teachers have to learn new approaches and techniques in order to be effective. There are lots of migrant children in Thailand right now, ONIE is happy and committed to collaborate with stakeholders on this matter."

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Mr. Prayuth Lakkhum, Director, Non-Formal and Informal Education Centre for the Special Target Groups of ONIE

The publications launched at the workshop include: Guideline on Non-Formal Primary Curriculum in accordance with the Non-Formal Basic Education Curriculum Basic A.D. 2008 for migrant children and persons without Thai nationality; and other nine lesson plans on Thai Language; ASEAN Study; Health and well-being; Morality and life; Laws related to daily life; Culture and way of life and; Child rights and protection.

At the conclusion of the workshop, Mr. Prayuth Lakkhum, Director, Non-Formal and Informal Education Centre for the Special Target Groups of ONIE stressed on the universal right to education by expanding the context from Thailand to the region, "As a next step, it is important for Thailand's Ministry of Education to initiate dialog with its counterparts in ASEAN countries, especially Myanmar, on how children can continue their schooling without interruption when they return home," said Mr. Lakkhum. He added that, "in principle, children below 15 years should be studying *in school*. The option for them to be educated through non-formal education centers is the last option."

Equally important in this endeavour of making education accessible to migrant and non-Thai children is ONIE's

collaboration with the Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC). The collaboration helps ensure a smooth and effective transition of children from the non-formal education system to the formal system.

The ILO-IPEC project in Thailand (2010-2015) aims to address child labour and forced labour in shrimp and seafood processing areas. It helps to create an industry that is free of child labour and forced labour and offers decent working conditions and opportunities to Thai and migrant workers. Special attention is given to the situation of Thai and migrant children at risk of entering or/and involved in hazardous child labour.

Promoting access to education is one of the main strategies of the project to prevent and withdraw children from child labour. ILO-IPEC collaborates with different agencies in the Ministry of Education including the Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE) in promoting the implementation of policies to provide education provided to migrant children.

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