

Learning with the Irrawaddy 2

To accompany May 2005 Issue of Irrawaddy Magazine

Teacher's Notes

Welcome back to school! After a break, we are ready with the second copy of 'Learning with the Irrawaddy', a monthly educational supplement to the Irrawaddy Magazine. It is designed for reading, English or social studies classes in Post-10 schools on the Burma border.

With each issue of Irrawaddy magazine, we select one article and design some learning activities for it. We recommend that you use these exercises with students who have an Intermediate level of English. You don't need to use all activities suggested here – choose those that are most appropriate for your students.

In this issue we have included:

- this teacher's guide
- some copies of Irrawaddy magazine
- a class set of photocopies of the article
- a class set of worksheets.

Selected article: *Top of their Class*, page 28

Activities to do Before Reading

Activity 1

What do you know?
What do you think you know?
What do you want to know?

- a) Tell students they are going to read an article about schools in Karen refugee camps on the Thai border. Copy the chart onto the board, and get a few students' ideas.
- *Things they know* are facts that they are quite sure about, (e.g. There are schools in Karen refugee camps.)
 - *Things they think they know* are things they are unsure of.
 - *Things they want to know* are things they are interested in finding out.

Schools in Karen Refugee Camps		
Things I know	Things I think I know	Things I want to know

- b) In groups, or individually, students fill in the chart:
There are no right or wrong answers in this activity.

Activity 2

Prediction: Phrases

- a) Students read the article summary:

It is difficult to get higher education inside Karen State. Therefore many young people are coming to refugee camps on the Thai border to attend schools. One of these schools is the Karen Economic Development Course (KEDC), a two-year programme in Noh Poe camp. Although conditions in Noh Poe are not easy, students are glad to have a chance to study at KEDC.

- b) In the article, students will see these phrases. What do they think the article will say about these phrases? Get students' ideas, and write them on the board.

1. 100,000 kyat in tuition fees
2. dreams of becoming a nurse
3. More than 200 students
4. More than 100,000 refugees
5. accounting, economics, management, social studies, computer skills, Karen History and English
6. permission from the local Thai authorities

Don't let them check their predictions with the article yet – do activity 3 first. The answers to activity 2 are on the next page.

If any of your students know anyone from KEDC, discuss this school. What do you know about this school? What do students learn there?

Activity 3

Prediction: Who says what?

a) Here are some quotes from the article. Students match the quotes with the people.

1. 'I came to Noh Poe to continue my education because the cost for school in Burma is too high'

A student

2. 'The government is successfully nurturing a new generation of young people in the educational sector to overcome the challenges of the future'

The Karen Refugee Committee

3. 'I will not trade my education for a more comfortable life somewhere else'

4. 'Some students in the program eventually leave to study in other countries. Most, however, return to Burma or remain in the camp school to become teachers.'

A KEDC Coordinator

5. 'At Noh Poe you can study at all levels depending on your abilities. In Burma you can only study if you have enough money for tuition'.

A Burmese government official

6. 'More than 100,000 refugees live in the seven camps in this region; and of these, more than 10,000 live in Noh Poe'.

b) After students have done activities 2 and 3, give them the article.

Students read the article, and check their predictions in activities 2 and 3.

Answers to activity 2:

1. 100,000 kyat in tuition fees – *the cost for tenth grade tuition for one year.*
2. dreams of becoming a nurse - *one of the KEDC student*
3. More than 200 students – *come from Karen State to study at Noh Poe*
4. More than 100,000 refugees – *live in seven Karen camps on the Thai-Burma border.*
5. accounting, economics, management, social studies, computer skills, Karen History and English – *the subjects studied at KEDC*
6. permission from the local Thai authorities – *Noh Poe refugees need this if they want to leave the camp.*

Answers to activity 3:

1. *a student*
2. *a Burmese government official*
3. *a student*
4. *a KEDC co-ordinator*
5. *a student*
6. *the Karen Refugee Committee*

Activities to do During Reading

Activity 4

Words from context

Here are some excerpts from the article. Students locate the phrase in the text, and choose the best synonym or definition for the underlined words.

1. *That tuition, according to Khwe, is prohibitively expensive for most families.* (paragraph 4)

a. very	c. too
b. carefully	d. unfairly

2. *“Because of so many problems with school in Burma, I have to postpone my dream” says Klay.* (paragraph 11)

a. stop	c. obey
b. start	d. delay

3. *Farmers in these areas are required to hand over an annual allotment of rice for the support of Burmese troops stationed nearby.* (paragraph 15)

a. amount	c. kilogram
b. sack	d. shop

4. *They receive assistance from the Karen Women’s Organisation for access to medical service when needed* (paragraph 16)

a. help	c. training
b. medicine	d. hospital

5. *Noh Poe refugee camp, located in the Umpang district of Tak province, was established in 1997 to meet the needs of Karen refugees displaced by fighting.* (paragraph 17)
- a. looked after c. grown
b. bought d. set up
6. *The Karen Educational Project, under the auspices of the Thailand-based NGO ZOA Refugee Care...* (paragraph 22)
- a. money c. education
b. support d. care

Answers:

1. c 2. d 3. a 4. a 5. d 6. b

Activity 5

Key vocabulary

- a) Students scan the text and underline any words they don't know.
b) In groups, encourage them to identify the meanings of these words in their dictionaries.
c) Here are some words from the text. Students use them to fill the gaps in the sentences.

option	tempt	insist	sector	burden	access to
	located in	eventually	curfew	restrictions	

- Some children don't have _____ further education in Burma.
- One _____ is to study in Burma. Another is to go to a refugee camp.
- Because of the _____, we can't get any foreign guest teachers.
- The high-quality education in the camps _____ students to come from Karen State.
- My parent saved money for a long time, and _____ they could afford to send me to high school.
- High school fees are a _____ on poor families.
- The Burmese government _____ that education in Burma is going well.
- There's a _____ on, so we can't visit each other after dark.
- There is a lot of money going into the health _____ in the refugee camps.
- KEDC school is _____ Noh Poe camp.

Answers:

1. access to 2. option 3. restrictions 4. tempts 5. eventually 6. burden
7. insists 8. curfew 9. sector 10. located in

Activity 6**Pronouns**

Here are some excerpts from the article. Find them in the article, and decide what the underlined pronouns refer to.

1. *Noe Poh refugee camp in Thailand's Tak province is one of them.* (paragraph 1)
2. *...he completed his tenth grade at the Kyar Inn Seik Kyee high school.* (paragraph 3)
3. *"In my village, only one or two young people out of ten chooses to go to school" she says.* (paragraph 10)
4. *...where they hope to improve the quality and availability of education locally.* (paragraph 14)
5. *They receive assistance from the Karen Woman's Organisation* (paragraph 16)
6. *...and these have attracted more than 100 additional ethnic Karen students to their schools.* (paragraph 18)
7. *...who consider the training they receive in the camp school...* (paragraph 24)
8. *...and the hope it inspires for the future...* (paragraph 24)

Answers:

1. *refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border*
2. *Saw Eh Lar Khwe*
3. *Naw Tha Maw Klay*
4. *All the students at Noh Poe*
5. *More than 200 students from Karen State*
6. *Six other camps*
7. *Naw Eh S'khee and the rest of the students at Noh Poe*
8. *the training they receive in the camp school*

Activity 7**Identify the main point**

a) What is the main point of this article?

- 1) Students in developing countries often look to distant lands to fulfill their dreams of a good education.
- 2) Education in Burma is nurturing a new generation of young people to help increase stability and develop the economy.
- 3) Education in refugee camps is very higher quality and cheaper than inside Burma.
- 4) It is difficult to get an education in Burma, so many young people are coming to refugee camps on the border.

Answer: 4

b) Look again at the options above. One option is correct. Which of the other options is:

- *too general?*
- *too specific?*
- *not a point of the article?*

Answers: *too general – 1 too specific – 3 not a point of the article - 2*

Activity 8**True, false or don't know?**

- a) Students read these sentences, and decide whether they are *true*, *false* or *don't know* (there isn't enough information in the article to know if it is true or not).
- b) Students justify their decision. What evidence is there in the text for the decision?
- 1) More and more students from Karen State are going to the refugee camps to get education.
 - 2) It costs nearly 100 US dollars for tenth standard tuition in Burma.
 - 3) It is easy to get a job in Thailand.
 - 4) Education in Burma is a success.
 - 5) The Burma Border Consortium provides students with toothpaste, soap and other personal materials.
 - 6) Noe Poh camp was established eight years ago.
 - 7) Most students study overseas after graduating from KEDC.
 - 8) KEDC is the best school in Noh Poe camp.

Answers:

- 1) True (*A growing number of young people in Karen State... paragraph 1*)
- 2) True (*Students in the tenth grade pay 100,000 kyat US \$ 96 – paragraph 5*)
- 3) Don't know (*it says there is a lack of employment opportunities in Burma, so people come to Thailand. It doesn't say it is easy to find work in Thailand – paragraph 6*)
- 4) Don't know. (*The Burmese government claims it is successful, but the author of the article says 'the stark realities facing many students seem lost on the Burma government'. This shows that the writer disagrees with the government's opinion.*)
- 5) False (*The students receive no support for additional items such as toothpaste, soap and other personal materials - paragraph 16*)
- 6) True (*...was established in 1997 – paragraph 17*)
- 7) False (*Most, however, return to Burma or remain in the camp school to become teachers – paragraph 20*)
- 8) Don't know (*it doesn't say this anywhere in the article*)

Activities to do After Reading**Activity 9****What do you think?**

- a) Many people think that education in refugee camps is better than education inside Burma. What are the consequences of this thinking?
Students make a lists of consequences. You may want to do this on the board, or in groups. You may want to write a few examples on the board first.

Some possible consequences:

- *more people come to the refugee camps*
- *less students are educated in Burma*
- *the Burmese government gets angry with the camps*
- *the camps need more food for the new students*
- *camp schools get bigger*
- *schools need more materials and buildings*
- *schools need more teachers*
- *more teachers come to the camps to get jobs*
- *there are less teachers inside Burma*
- *education inside Burma gets worse*

You may need to **prompt** students to think of consequences, by saying ‘*What about the teachers inside Burma?*’ ‘*What about the Burmese government?*’ etc.

- b)** Do you think it is a good idea for people to come to refugee camps to get an education? Why/why not? Can you think of any better solutions? Have a discussion, and write students’ ideas on the board.

Activity 10

Similarities and differences.

How is your school similar to KEDC? How is it different?

Students write sentences comparing and contrasting KEDC with their school.

- e.g. - *Both KEDC and our school are in refugee camps.*
- *Our school has a longer program. KEDC is only two years, but we are a three year program.*

Activity 11

Word Families

Here are some words from the article. Students complete the chart, by adding other parts of the word families.

A few of the words are quite rare, such as *economise* and *authoritative*, so don’t expect students to know every word family member.

noun	verb	adjective	adverb	person
development	develop	developing	developmentally	X
	study			
ability	X			X
success				X
			differently	X
				educator
	X	ethnic		X
				authorities
		additional		X
economics				

Answers:

noun	verb	adjective	adverb	person
development	develop	developing	developmentally	X
<i>study</i>	study	<i>studious</i>	<i>studiously</i>	<i>student</i>
ability	X	<i>able</i>	<i>ably</i>	X
success	<i>succeed</i>	<i>successful</i>	<i>successfully</i>	X
<i>difference</i>	<i>differ</i>	<i>different</i>	<i>differently</i>	X
<i>education</i>	<i>educate</i>	<i>educational</i>	<i>educationally</i>	educator
<i>ethnicity</i>	X	ethnic	<i>ethnically</i>	X
<i>authority</i>	<i>authorise</i>	<i>authoritative</i>	<i>authoritatively</i>	authorities
<i>addition</i>	<i>add</i>	additional	<i>additionally</i>	X
economics	<i>economise</i>	<i>economic</i>	<i>economically</i>	<i>economist</i>

Activity 12

Poster Presentations

- a) Students work in groups of four or five. Give each group a large sheet of paper and some pens (coloured marker pens or paints are best). If you have any old newspapers or magazines students can cut up, distribute them too.
- b) Groups make posters advertising their school. They should think of all the good points about their school:
- the subjects (what subjects? why are they useful?)
 - the teachers (what are the teachers like?)
 - the students (what are the students like? what do they do after they graduate?)
 - the resources (what are the classrooms and other buildings like? What books and other teaching resources are in the school?)
 - the school aims and objectives
 - other things (how much does it cost to attend? who can attend? etc.)
- They should think of the most important points, and include these on the poster. Remember, the aim of the poster is to encourage people to attend the school!
- c) Groups present their posters to the class. They should encourage each member of the group to participate in the presentation.

If this is appropriate, send the posters to local high schools and community organizations to put on their walls.

