



**University of Utah Trainings
Ban Mai Nai Soi & Ban Mae Surin
Training Conducted – July 2013
Summary Report – July 2013**

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Report submitted by Rosemarie Hunter on August 11, 2013

Schedule Ban Mae Surin

Day 1: Introductions and Assessments

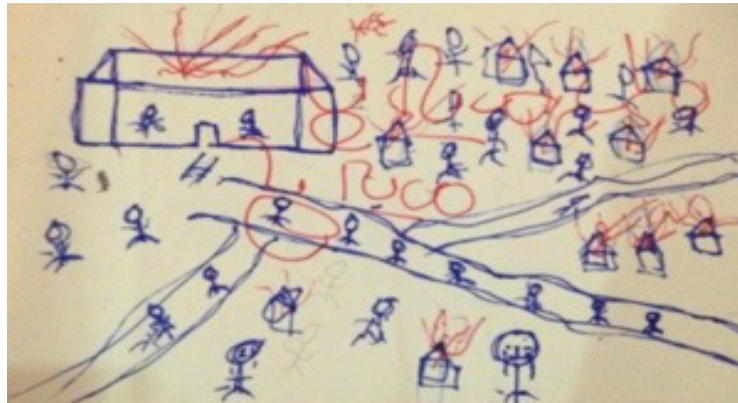
- Briefing with JRS Staff on the way to Camp 2
- Introductions and Overview – Icebreaker Activity
- Assessment of Participant and Community Priorities
- Divided Large Group into 2 groups. Group A (Dr Panos) - Primary Trauma Individuals who lost a family member in the Fires & Group B (Dr. Hunter) Secondary – Individuals Responding to those who lost family members and teachers who anticipated dealing with trauma in the classroom.
- Self Care - Yoga/Exercises for Stress Management
- Initial Emotional Assessment – Art Activity - How are you feeling right now?
- Small Group Processing – Sharing Art and Related Emotions



Day 2: Trauma

- Review of Themes from the Previous Day
- Group A & B - Range of Emotions - Art Activity – Drawings of Animals – Animal that symbolize anger and aggression; Animal that symbolizes strength and calm.
- Group Sharing
- Lunch and Self Care Activity – Musical Chairs

- Trauma Part 1 – Steps in Addressing Trauma, Normalizing Trauma, Understanding the Healing Process
- Small Group Activity – Discussion and Sharing
- Trauma Part 2 – Awareness of Trauma Response – What is happening to our bodies during trauma? Art Activity – Drawings of your own body.
- Trauma Part 3 – Healing Response and ongoing Self Care – Finding Balance
- Self Care - Yoga



Day 3: Community Capacity Building – Developing School-based Support Groups

- Morning Yoga - Review of Themes from the Previous Day
- Assessment, Goals Setting, Identifying Partners (Steps in organizing and developing support groups for each school site)
- Formed Support Teams for Each School Site – Developed Action Plans/Schedule
- Closure & Pictures



Schedule – Ban Mai Nai Soi

Day 1: Community Assessment - Engagement

- Intro with translators
- Introduction and Ice Breaker Interviews
- Self Care Activity – Body Awareness - Breathing and Stretches (Yoga)
- Assessment of Community Priorities
- Experiential Activity - What Does Engagement Mean? Introduction of Beach Ball
- Self Care Activity - Yoga

Day 2: Teen Development and Self Care

- Self Care Activity – Yoga
- Review of Major Themes from the Previous Day
- Teen Development Part I
- Developing “connectedness” Puzzle Activity
- Teens Development Part II
- Self Care – Musical Chairs
- Experiential/Processing Exercise - What did it feel like to be a teen? – Playdoh Activity
- Self Care - Yoga

Day 3: Parent Engagement

- Self Care Activity – Yoga
- Community and Professional Roles - Link to being leaders and followers in the community – Follow the Leader Activity
- Focus on Parents as Primary Educators - What parents can do?
- Group Activity and Role Plays
- Evaluation and Graduation, Gift Giving



Day 4: Half Day Training with JRS Staff

- Introductions and Soul Card Activity – Why I do what I do?
- Presentation on Trauma – Understanding the Trauma Response
- Secondary Trauma
- Understanding the Healing Process
- Balance and Self Care

Student Reflection, Kara Mileski

When we first arrived at Camp 1, I felt a weight. The group was quiet and didn't easily smile back. We introduced ourselves, and did an activity where they engaged with each other. I heard some giggles. We presented a bit, and the group was hesitant to respond to our questions. We ended the day with yoga and the group started to talk to us more, laughing at my attempt to make jokes. Entering the classroom the next day, I found that the group said good morning, and even took the time to teach us how to say good morning. This day, we started to see something in the group. They started to laugh a little more at us, at our jokes, and our activities. Not only were they responding to us, but they were sharing their brilliant ideas. By the third day, we saw the "spark." The group was beginning to light up. Not only did they begin to share their ideas, but they preformed them in front of the group. They asked us questions, and shared their experiences with us. When it came time to leave, I felt confident that this group had felt the spark that I saw and my hope is that they are supported and empowered to keep that spark lit.

Summary of Trainings

The overall goals of the University of Utah visit was to provide support for JRS staff and community residents of Ban Mae Surin and Ban Mai Nai Soi in the areas of psychosocial trainings, specifically trauma and recovery work in Ban Mae Surin following devastating loss from fires in March 2013. In Ban Mai Nai Soi, the goals were to provide child development and parent engagement trainings to support the work of the Home School Liaison Program (HSLP) staff, who work with students who are not attending the school and their parents, and the Special Education Assistants (SEAs), who works with children with special learning needs and their parents. The University of Utah faculty and students divided into 2 teams in order to conduct trainings in both Camp 1 and Camp 2 in the Mae Hong Son region.

Camp 1 - Ban Mae Nai Soi Training Summary

Presentations, activities, role-plays and discussions focused on developing a team approach and techniques to empower Home School Liaisons, SEAs, and parents. Content on teens involved developmental stages, normal teen behaviors, and methods to increasing protective factors. Group activities included exercises focused on ways parents and teachers can support their teens to make healthy decisions and avoid risky behavior. Specifically, these activities taught skills for parents to strengthen their relationship with adolescents. All activities were adaptable to work with youth and parents involved in special education.

Materials and interactive exercises focused on skill building activities with regards to assessment, intervention, and educating and supporting families. Working in small groups, participants also discussed and performed role-play exercises focused on empowering participants to develop solutions to common problems faced as HSLP or SE staff members.

In addition to these areas, activities were facilitated to encourage self-care of staff. JRS staff mentioned the importance of identifying the “spark” in participants, where they would notice participants engaging and getting excited about their work again. These self-care activities were provided as a pathway to the “spark.” The team provided trainings on how to do self-care by introducing beginner stretches, which targeted the lower back, but was not limited to it. The goal of this was to allow people a way to reduce reoccurring body pain in a safe and effective method. Beginner positions were altered to ensure that the stretches were gentle enough for the participants and still demonstrated that it can help heal muscle pain and increase flexibility if done on a regular basis.



Caption: Participants engage in a group puzzle activity. This activity was provided with two purposes: (a) as a self-care and fun activity for participants and (b) as an activity HSLP and SE staff could recommend to parents to connect with their children.

Camp 2 - Ban Mae Surin Training Summary

The overall goals of the University of Utah visit was to provide support for JRS staff and community residents of Ban Mae Surin (BMS or Camp 2), specifically trauma and recovery work in BMS following devastating loss from fires in March 2013. Dr. Panos and Dr. Hunter received a briefing from Rollie and Ba Su Whey (sp?) on the drive to the camp. It was at this time that we learned that there was controversy regarding the origins of the fire. It was evident that the “official” explanation of a “cooking fire” left many unanswered questions and much confusion and frustration across the camp community. In consultation with JRS staff, we decided to assess the participants and divide the group into individuals who experienced the loss of a family member and those who did not. In this way, community members with familial loss could process with others who were going through similar experiences. At the same time, those who did not experience a direct loss were dealing with feelings of helplessness, guilt and wanting to learn how to provide support to others (and specifically youth in their classes) dealing with the death of a family member. Groups were separated for processing sessions and then brought back together for training sessions on addressing trauma and understanding the healing process. Participants also came together to learn about the healing response, techniques for self care, and developing support groups at each school site.

In our experience, the BMS community is experiencing complex trauma issues. As community members began to share the stories of the fires, it became clear that the community was further traumatized by the suspicious origins of the fires. Community members shared stories and drew pictures of helicopters flying over and setting the fires. This suspicious origin of the fires developed much fear in the community, as they felt “attacked” and were aware that preventing additional fires were out of their control. In addition, the environment of shock, fear, and helplessness created a context that is similar to previous experiences connected to trauma from the war in Burma (Myanmar). Consequently, we found that many participants began the sessions with sharing stories of the fires, however, they soon moved to stories of violence and war. While this was difficult for community members to express, over the course of the 3 days, they began to open up and share more and more about their trauma stories.

Additional Topics Identified by Participants

In addition to the trauma issues discussed above, the community shared additional concerns about; *not having enough food, feeling trapped, and not knowing what will happen to them*. The topic of inadequate food rations was a repetitive theme across both groups. Additionally, there appears to be growing anxiety related to the future of the camps, resettlement, and repatriation. Throughout the trainings, participants shared their frustration with not knowing what is going to happen to them. Their feelings of loss of control mixed with fear and anxiety is contributing to and resurfacing past trauma. Whenever possible, the camp community will benefit from having as much information as possible. In this situation, information not only serves to inform the community, but also serves as a coping tool. Even if there is still much that is unknown, the community will need opportunities to process what they are thinking and their frustration.

Training Outcomes

Camp 1:

Participant engagement increased significantly over time. The group was quiet and responses were slow to emerge at first, however, over time, participants became more animated and willing to engage. The U of U team immediately identified that the infrastructure and knowledge was present in both the HSLP and SE organizations to facilitate healthy relationships between school, teachers, and students, therefore a major goal of was to empower staff to share and teach these ideas and skills with parents and teachers. The most significant outcome we observed was HSLP and SE staffs' ability to identify solutions to common problems and share these solutions with the rest of the class. The team identified this as a sign that group was more empowered as a result the training.

We also began to notice the “spark” in participants following fun activities such as the puzzle, musical chairs, role-playing, and play dough. All activities were transferrable to their role as professionals working with parents, teachers, and students.

Participants began to ask more questions as the training progressed, signaling to us a rasp of the concepts as well as an interest in learning more. The questions evolved into an open dialogue between participants and trainers on day 3 around professional and personal life.

Camp 2:

The BMS participants began the training sessions with obvious effects of trauma. Nevertheless, the participants responded very well and quickly to processing their trauma experience and engaging in discussions about the healing process. They were eager to learn and practice self-care techniques that can assist them with gaining control and recovery. While we feel a space for processing the trauma and subsequent opportunities for recovery was created, it was only a beginning of the type of ongoing work that is needed. The continuation of these conversations and a network of support are essential to creating spaces for healing and recovery. The BMS community has a strong history of resiliency and courage and they will need these skills and focused assistance from service organizations as they move toward recovery.

JRS Staff – The team was fortunate to spend a half-day with the JRS staff and we focused our presentation and activities on understanding secondary trauma and self-care. JRS staff members are caring professionals work with children, adults and families who have been traumatized and are in serious distress on a daily basis. They listen to their stories and feel their pain, helplessness and loss of hope. Often this empathic engagement can lead to *secondary trauma*. The JRS staff is very aware of their vulnerability and was open to sharing their emotions and challenges. JRS staff members deeply care for the camp communities and strongly identify with their struggles. The recent trauma of the fires, the injustice, and all the unanswered questions contribute to a *shared* experience of trauma. We admire and are inspired by the courage and caring service of the JRS staff members. They will continue to need support and time for self-care and healing. We are particularly concerned that as the Camp 2 community continues to process their stories, the JRS staff who have the language

and the culture will be particularly vulnerable and will need additional support to process their own feelings and the stories that community members share with them.

We recommend ongoing support and time for JRS staff to practice self care activities and to seek additional counsel as needed. The University of Utah team is available to develop an online space for clinical consultation and ongoing support for the JRS staff.

Acknowledgements

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to visit the camp communities of the Mae Hong Son region, and want to recognize and thank the JRS staff members who supported our work with their time in staying in communication to identify training needs and guide the development of the training schedule. In addition, we send our heartfelt thanks to all the JRS staff that supported us inside the camp; they were our constant companions and guides, providing high quality translation and cultural consultation in order that we could continually adapt our materials in ways that were culturally relevant. JRS staff members were extremely gracious with their time and support. Their knowledge, experience, and assistance were crucial to the success of these trainings. We greatly value their expertise and are inspired by their passion and commitment to the refugee community.

We look forward to feedback from the team and the community regarding areas that were well received as well as areas for improvement. We hope to continue our partnership and look forward to planning next years visit.



Caption: Monument in remembrance of the community members who lost their lives in the fire.