



Adolescent Reproductive Health Network (ARHN) in Mae Sot, Thailand



Women's Refugee Commission and
Save the Children
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REPORT FOR COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS

WHO ARE WE?

The Women's Refugee Commission is an advocacy organization based in New York, United States (U.S.). It advocates for changes in laws, policies and programs to improve the lives and protect the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and young people.

Save the Children works to improve the lives of children around the world by providing food, medical care and education. It responds to disasters and conflict and help communities rebuild through long-term recovery programs.



The ARHN Youth Center

ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Everyone, including adolescents, has the right to access information and services that they need to take care of their bodies. Adolescent girls and boys 10-19 years of age need special attention and sexual and reproductive health information and care that meet their needs. This includes the right to learn how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, like HIV, and access to pregnancy prevention methods, like condoms and pills, if they are not ready to have children.

WHY DID WE COME TO THAILAND?

We visited Thailand to learn more about the Adolescent Reproductive Health Network (ARHN) and their youth center since we heard about the good work they were doing for the Burmese in Mae Sot. We wanted to find out more about the services that ARHN provides to adolescents and what the staff and clients think about the center. The information we collected will be part of our report on adolescent sexual and reproductive health programs around the world.

WHAT DID WE DO DURING OUR VISIT?

We visited Mae Sot in July 2012. We spent time observing what happens at the ARHN youth center and talking to staff and adolescent clients. We also had group discussions with 9 outreach workers and 10 boys and 10 girls.

WHAT DID WE LEARN DURING OUR VISIT?

ARHN was created in 2003 by eight community-based organizations (CBOs) that work together to meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of migrant adolescents from ethnic communities in Burma. ARHN opened the youth center in 2008. The youth center offers workshops that are facilitated by peer educators that teach how to prevent pregnancy and infections such as HIV that are transmitted by sexual contact. The center also provides counseling about how to delay having children, and supplies such as condoms; one of the methods for preventing pregnancy.

The fact that the youth center is run by eight CBOs is a big advantage. The center can refer clients to other organizations in the network, such as the Mae Tao Clinic, for more comprehensive support when they need it.

The center is located in a private and safe place and offers space for adolescents to relax, read, watch films, sing karaoke, talk or play table tennis. This makes it a comfortable place for adolescents.

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW?

We are writing a report about sexual and reproductive health programs for adolescents affected by conflict and disaster and the information we gathered about ARHN will be included in this report. The report will highlight good practices and challenges of these types of programs. We hope that by bringing attention to the good work done by networks like ARHN, these types of programs will receive more funding and can improve the sexual and reproductive health services that they provide to adolescents all over the world.



Clients are greeted by the ARHN coordinator when they arrive.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE?

The ARHN youth center is located in Mae Sot and is open from 10:00 to 18:00, seven days/week.

To learn more about the Women's Refugee Commission's advocacy on behalf of displaced women, children and youth, visit www.womensrefugeecommission.org or contact us at info@wrcommission.org.

Photographs: Women's Refugee Commission/Mihoko Tanabe

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