



Children in Ban Thong Noi, Nakai Nam Theun National Protected Area choose their first book to read

Donation of 1,589 Books Boosts Literacy in Nakai Nam Theun

Nakai Nam Theun National Protected Area, Khammouane Province- February 29 2012- The donation of 1,589 books in the form of 12 travelling libraries is the beginning of a renewed focus on creative literacy for Nam Theun 2 Watershed Management and Protection Authority, says Australian Volunteer Karlee Taylor.

Miss Taylor, who is currently volunteering with the Nakai Nam Theun 2 Watershed Management and Protection Authority (NNT2 WMPA) worked with Redwood Park Preschool and friends in Australia to fundraise, with the aim of providing a book for every child in one village. There was an amazing response with a total of US\$2,215 donated.

Funds were used to purchase 1,589 books including teacher resources, books suitable for younger readers, books for older readers and reference books. These books were separated into 12 mini libraries which will travel between schools in the NNT NPA, meaning every village in the area will have access to reading books.

The Nakai Nam Theun 2 Watershed Management and Protection Authority (NNT2 WMPA) Community Outreach for Conservation Awareness team members worked with District Education Staff to run three 'book parties'; one in each cluster centre of the NNT NPA that included creative literacy activities and games for the students with the aim of introducing reading as a fun daily activity in an effort to increase literacy rates.

According to UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report (2011), if all students in low-income countries left primary school with basic reading skills, "171 million people could be lifted out of poverty". This is equivalent to a 12 percent drop in

world poverty.

The NNT2 WMPA plan to continue working with District Education Staff and local village groups to run creative literacy activities and introduce more reading and educational materials to the NNT NPA as an important part of their ongoing Rural Development Programs within the NPA.

Miss Taylor feels that the libraries and book parties will continue to benefit the literacy rates and villagers' quality of life in the NNT NPA.

"The book parties were extremely rewarding to be a part of" says Miss Taylor, "this was the first time many children and adults had ever read a fun book. Giving people the opportunity to read is an amazing gift; it empowers people to become life-long learners, realise their full potential and contribute to their communities more effectively"

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