

Examining the Impact of Mentorship
on Youth Development in Isan, Thailand

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Introduction

“She inspired me. She’s a good role model.” 19-year-old Ball from Isan, Thailand, beamed ear to ear as he shared about “Teacher Nee.” While he called Supunee Pargul his “teacher” from the after-school English classes, a more profound sentiment unearthed. Ball first learned how to speak English by watching YouTube, and Nee was not only the adult who helped grow these skills, but she was one who introduced him to native English speakers when they visited. She took him and his classmates on field trips around his province of Udon Thani. She showed him how to teach children, share his knowledge, and care for the young ones. Ball’s confidence in speaking, patience, and vision for his future as a middle school English instructor all grew. Teacher Nee was much more than a teacher. She was a mentor to Ball, walking alongside him as he developed from a struggling student to a confident young adult.

Children all over Isan need the intentionality, care, and accountability of a mentor like Nee to reach their full potential and usher in a new hope for their community. Mentorship, offered in an after-school context, supports the development of youth in Isan, Thailand, and empowers them for healthy, productive futures. In a context with traditionally high-power distance and lower parental engagement rates, mentorship provides a relationship in which youth can experience social, emotional, and behavioral growth alongside academic and career-oriented development. By drawing on the reflections of youth, parents, teachers, and after-school staff, this thesis will examine the context of Isan, Thailand and factors of youth development in this region. This thesis will also identify the need for mentorship and the potential for utilizing after-school programs as a delivery method. Finally, a grant proposal package accompanying this thesis seeks to expand these critical mentoring services for youth in Isan, Thailand by providing support to Share Space for All, a free after-school program.

Personal Investment

As a woman from the United States, I bring an etic perspective to my research as I examine youth development and mentorship in Thailand. These topics have personal significance in both content and geography. A significant portion of my career has involved working with youth in settings ranging from outdoor camps to after-school programs. I value youth's personal development and am interested in fostering contexts and relationships where children can thrive. The topic holds geographic interest for me as I called Southeast Asia home for a year. I specifically have enjoyed working within these communities as they explore what the rapid development of their countries means for the next generation.

Fieldwork and Qualitative Research

Throughout the summer of 2020, I conducted my fieldwork with the organization Shared Space for All (SSFA), an after-school program in Isan, Thailand, specifically in the village of Sam Prao. Given the context of the unfolding global COVID-19 pandemic, most of my research was conducted remotely utilizing email exchanges and zoom video calls; however, two in-person interviews were also held. After completing a thorough review of existing online documentation about SSFA, I prioritized interviews with both their US and Thai staff. Interviews were held with multiple stakeholders, including board members, key program leadership, mentors, past students, and the Executive Director.

Apart from video interviews, some of which required translation, I gathered qualitative data by joining a virtual US board meeting and observing one after-school class in Sam Prao. Additionally, I prepared various survey questions, which the Program Director asked of approximately ten parents and four mentors of the SSFA program. Throughout this thesis, I draw heavily from the qualitative research I gathered and SSFA's model of mentorship, youth

development, and after-school programs. Shared Space for All provided a rich fieldwork context, and as a form of reciprocity, I created their annual report and other vital documents, which I will further explore in the accompanying thesis project.

Terminology

This thesis centers on individuals ages 6-16, for which I use the terms “youth,” “children,” and “students” interchangeably. I do not focus on older teens as concretely throughout this thesis as they may either be the recipients of mentorship from older adults or may act in a mentoring capacity for younger children. In sections, when I do refer to this older segment, I qualify “youth” to denote the differing age.

The term “mentorship” that is highly utilized refers to the wide range of intentional, supportive relationships from older individuals to younger individuals with the intent of fostering support and aiding development. While I am often referring to “mentors” as older adults who provide mentorship to youth, older teens also can act as mentors to younger children, given that there is enough differentiation in age, life experiences, and maturity.

“After-school programs” is a term identified by its time and location rather than the content. However, I use it to encompass programs offered regularly to youth outside of school that provide more than solely academic assistance. Typically, after-school programs involve a variety of activities and provide holistic support to youth.

Background on Isan, Thailand

Inequality

Thailand has seen drastic social and economic growth over the last few decades, reducing the percentage of people below the poverty line. Thailand also boasts a high human development index. Many would praise it as a development success; however, “its reputation has been

tarnished by high GINI index score,” which indicates income inequality (Camfield et al. 1068). The growth that has occurred in Thailand has been far from distributed equally. The Northeast region of Isan, which is the country’s largest region in size and population, has the lowest per capita income (Lao et al. 7). Isan experiences disparities in economic opportunities, educational attainment, and many other areas that disproportionately affect youth. This inequality in Isan translates into poverty experienced as a deficit in resources, diminished personal agency, and lack of freedom to grow (Myers 132).

Childhood is a crucial time for individual capacities to develop, and “deprivations during [childhood and adolescence] can send children into a lifelong trajectory of low education levels, marginalization and reduced productivity” (“Towards the End of Child Poverty” 3). As parents in Isan seek work in urban centers, such as Bangkok, to offset the economic barriers, children are raised by grandparents and often lack adult supervision and engagement in their development. Isan’s compounding economic disadvantages result in increased social issues among youth such as high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, entry into the sex industry, domestic violence, and alcoholism (“Our Work”).

Economic Background

Isan, Thailand is predominately an agricultural region; however, it lacks robust local economic opportunities, and “the majority of people still struggle to make ends meet due to declining income and rising costs of living” (Lao et al. 16). Many people in Isan view industrialization as a means to help the area develop through an increase in job opportunities. Individuals who had graduated from universities and wanted to return home found it “very hard to find modern employment in Isan” (Lao et al. 60). However, if industrialization occurs, then

often higher education levels will be required to fill these expanding job opportunities, which makes education another essential component to reducing poverty in northeast Thailand.

Globalization has undoubtedly shifted the landscape of economic ambitions throughout Isan. People outside of Isan often assume that there is no future in Isan, and the adult generations have migrated for profitable employment beyond agriculture. Whereas the younger generation is “increasingly frustrated by the combination of rapidly globalizing aspirations... with few opportunities for well-remunerated, skilled work” (Camfield et al. 1069). Instead of turning to urban migration as the economic solution, Generation Z aims to improve the Isan job market through entrepreneurial pursuits, which will likely require corresponding higher education levels.

Education Background

Historically, education in Isan has been less emphasized and seen lower levels of attainment than other urban areas, such as Bangkok. This has resulted in adult generations without substantial levels of education; in fact, “49.9% of working people in Isan only have a primary education.” (Lao et al. 59). The low levels of education among adults have significant implications for their ability to educate and prepare the youth of Generation Z for a globalizing world. However, it also impacts Isan residents’ acceptance of current educational offerings. In one study on Isan’s inequalities, the majority of respondents had primary education or less and were generally satisfied with the expanded educational opportunities from previous generations (Lao et al. 15). While opportunities have developed in the past decade, there is a long way to go before Isan achieves equitable access to education.

In 2009, Thailand introduced a 15-year free education policy; however, it did not eliminate all of the barriers children face in accessing education, such as transportation costs. While the new policy brought educational reform, it primarily focused on addressing short-term

financial barriers rather than eliminating structural constraints. Tuition fees may have been eliminated; however, “transportation cost, which is not covered by the new policy, is a significant cost of attending school, especially for poor students living far away from the schools. (“Structural Policy Country Notes Thailand” 4). Other than the barriers of access, the quality of education is not equally distributed throughout the country. Isan often experiences inferior quality of teachers, facilities, and resources, which hinders students’ academic growth and ultimately perpetuates poverty cycles.

Youth Development in Isan

To examine the potential influence that mentors can have on youth, it is crucial first to explore the elements that play a powerful role in the development of youth throughout Isan. The contexts of education and family comprise the majority of students’ waking hours and, therefore, greatly influence their behaviors and values. Additionally, youth in Isan are continually shaped by the cultural values of collectivism and high-power distance. For better or worse, youth behavior is influenced by these various factors and can notably shape their future development, especially when the behavior is high-risk such as drinking, smoking, or sexual promiscuity.

Education

Thailand’s 15-year free education policy ideally sets the stage for children in rural communities to improve academics and develop cognitive skills. In the early stages of development, education acts as a guide for intellectual growth and the formation of soft skills such as navigating conversations, reasoning, and problem-solving. However, if children cannot access education with highly-skilled, engaged teachers, then the growth of these noncognitive skills also will suffer. Apart from access barriers such as transportation costs, students’ home situations have an influence. One study conducted in rural Isan found the “interconnections to

parents and siblings also affected educational outcomes... having more siblings, both those in the household and those migrating, reduced education” (Piotrowski and Paat 907).

While access to education throughout Northeast Thailand still needs growth, it has dramatically improved over the past few decades. However, another consideration for the influence of education on youth’s holistic development is the inferior quality of schools in this rural region. As previously explored, “there are continuing problems with the education system. These include the lack of quality teachers, lack of quality learning materials, and lack of student discipline” (Lao et al. 60). Providing quality education and expanding student’s cognitive skills are crucial as these skills “have been found to determine individual earnings, the distribution of income, and thereby influence overall economic growth” (“Structural Policy Country Notes Thailand” 6). When the quality of, or access to, education is subpar, students are impacted far beyond achieving low grades – their lifelong earning potential is hindered.

Parents and Family

The importance and influence of family on the development of children cannot be overstated. Interactions between parents and youth are essential to their child’s development, impacting areas such as “cognitive ability; communication and linguistic competency; motivation to explore and learn about the world; understanding self and others; and, development of positive social relationships” (Chivanon et al. 306). When parents are less present during the critical window of youth development, all these areas suffer and have implications for their futures. Parents and caretakers must invest in children’s well-being early on, as a failure to do so “increases the likelihood of poverty in adulthood and perpetuates the intergenerational transmission of poverty.” (“Advancing Child Sensitive Social Protection” 1).

Since the mid-20th century, Isan has seen a significant shift towards urban labor migration in efforts to increase income and reduce poverty. However, this shift may have other negative consequences on children's long-term development. Typical household dynamics and the cultural landscape of parenting are changing as more parents have migrated to urban centers to seek profitable work away from the traditional agricultural industry of Isan. As more men and women choose to work outside the region to support their families their presence and availability for their children decreases.

The movement of parents to work outside their provinces has caused a change in childrearing practices; “some parents now are unable to provide full-time care to their children and must rely on grandparents and child care centers/nurseries in their communities” (Chavianon 306). This reality was echoed throughout many of my interviews. Supunee Pargul, or Nee, is the Program Director for Shared Space for All (SSFA), an after-school program in Isan. Nee shared the challenges that youth in her program face: “Most of my students live with grandparents. Nobody helps out with the homework, with school things. Or they live with their parents, but their parents have no education, so they cannot help out that much.” Parents are often not present or able to support their children's academic learning needs, nor the extensive social and emotional attention that the youth require for positive growth.

Similarly to education, the decreased adult presence in youth's lives influences their cognitive and noncognitive development, and it strongly impacts their behaviors. In a study conducted in Northeastern Thailand, Saowaluck et al. reported that “parents in Thailand today worked hard to earn enough money to support their families and had no time to monitor their children's behavior outside of the home” (68). With less guidance for healthy behaviors, and

diminished supervision and accountability, youth are likely to engage in behaviors that are damaging to their physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.

Children's home and parental contexts have a significant, if not the greatest, impact on their development. It may be no surprise then that the children who fall furthest behind in development outcomes are "those growing up in the poorest households; children in rural areas... and children with less educated parents." (Dornan 3). Intervening through other positive adult figures, like mentors, will prove necessary to counteract the difficulties that youth throughout Isan face in their family contexts.

Collectivism

In addition to the context of education and family, cultural values strongly influence youth's growth and trajectory. There are now six commonly accepted dimensions of national culture: power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, femininity vs. masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint (Hofstede 31). One value throughout Thailand that impacts youth development is collectivism, which "represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular ingroup to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" ("National Culture"). While it may seem contrasting in nature, elements of this particular value can even be seen in parents' commitment to seek work with which they can support their whole family regardless of location. However, collectivism doesn't just drive duty or obligation to the group, but also the desire for proximity to that group. Research on *Thailand's Inequality* revealed that "it has been overwhelmingly apparent that the farmers, workers, and students of Isan want to stay closer to home" (Lao et al. 47). Despite still having many parents working in urban areas, labor migration is, in fact, slowly declining.

From birth, youth in Isan learn the value of collectivism and loyalty to their group. Most of the youth in my interviews reflected this cultural value as they expressed their desire to go to the local university and find employment in the province to be near their families and community. One student named Ball demonstrated the influence of collectivism in his career aspirations. Ball's English skills improved drastically over the past few years as he studied and watched countless English YouTube videos. He now has the skills to seek more skilled labor positions in urban centers, where he could earn a high income. However, Ball expressed his affinity toward collectivism as he indicated he wanted to work and live closer to his hometown and all the people he knew. Furthermore, Ball aims to be a middle school English teacher with the direct intent of looking after his community by equipping the next generation with the English skills needed to thrive in a globalizing world.

Thailand's value of collectivism has influenced Ball and many others in their familial relationships, geographic situations, and future aspirations. Other research supported the continued importance of collectivism among youth, finding that "students are more interested in becoming entrepreneurs in Isan, rather than workers in Bangkok" (Lao et al. 49). The preference for and loyalty to the group has a strong influence on youth's lives. Consequently, the individuals within that group will also have a powerful impact on children's lives in contrast to the effect they may have in a highly individualistic culture. This level of impact that people have on one another in collectivist cultures can also position adult mentors well to be a positive influence on youth.

High Power Distance

Another cultural value is power distance, which indicates the degree to which those with less power accept inequalities. Isan mirrors the rest of the country's values, and "Thailand would

be considered a high power distant country with the corresponding unequal distribution of power” (Farrell and Tipnuch 32). These gaps or divisions can be experienced in households or across communities based on age. Older individuals, such as parents or grandparents, have greater power and influence over situations and people. However, more commonly, Thailand’s high power distance is determined based on status. Community leaders, government officials, and teachers are just a few examples of individuals who typically wield power. While power differentials are common across all cultures, what makes high power distance cultures different is their acceptance of the unequal power distribution.

One way that the tolerance for power inequality has played out is in the education sector. Students are expected to take in what the teachers lecture on without posing questions or verbally engaging. During an interview, Danielle Neufeld, “Executive Director of SSFA noted that “the power distance is interesting in the way it plays out in the classroom because students... they don’t feel free to ask questions.” Questions can be seen as a challenge to the authority and power level of the teacher. This can negatively affect the youth’s development as they may not be able to ask pressing questions about a topic and sufficiently process information. Not only does existing in a high power distance culture impact the learning process, but it also implies that youth will have difficulty approaching adult figures with other issues relating to sexual health, social conflict, or mental illnesses, as these are typically taboo in Thai culture.

Another way that power distance affects youth is through parent-teacher interactions. Nee shared how “there’s a gap between the parents and the teacher because parents will get scared. They would feel kind of guilty – like they don’t have an education they don’t know how to talk to teachers.” This gap exacerbates the difficulty parents in Isan often have helping their children with coursework as they progress through school. Nee, who serves as a mentor to the youth in

her program, identified one of her roles as helping bridge the gap between parents and teachers. In doing so, she is not trying to remove the cultural value of high power distance. Instead, she offers the solution of being a mediator between the two groups that allows them to better help the child.

While Nee's ultimate goal is not to dismantle high power distance, she emphasized the hindrances it has on youth development. Nee also reported that as she works with her youth and encourages them to ask questions, they become more comfortable with less power distance. Her students are mirroring a shift happening throughout Thailand. Research on Generation Z throughout the country reports that youth are demonstrating lower tolerance for unequal power distribution than previous generations (Farrell and Tipnuch 44). This cultural shift may also present a window of opportunity for adult mentors to play an impactful role in youth's lives as they develop.

Risky Behaviors

As children grow, there are increasing opportunities to engage in risky behaviors that can cause lasting damage to their future development. While moderate risk-taking is part of the learning process, high-risk behaviors such as underage drinking, smoking, or sexual promiscuity pose more significant risks. They must be intercepted and discouraged when possible. Specifically, "adolescents engaging in these risky behaviors may have subsequent adverse outcomes such as accidents, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancy, and school dropout" (Pimrat et al. 229).

Throughout northeast Thailand, the lack of supervision or parental engagement has played a role in youth acting out risky behaviors. Additionally, one study shows that even the beliefs about parent approval influence youth's actions: "The belief that parents disapprove of

smoking has been shown to be a powerful predictor of behavior” (Parkinson et al. 367). So, while more active engagement from adult figures is desirable, even parents expressing their values and views will influence youth actions.

Risky behaviors are prevalent among Isan’s youth: “after school, they would go run around when they were younger. And when they get older, teens get involved with drugs. Girls start dating at an early age and get pregnant unexpectedly. So it’s come to the same cycle.” (Pargul). The problems among youth have existed for a long time. There are mutually reinforcing elements that increase the likelihood of risk behavior, including uninvolved parents, lack of topic-specific education, and an environment of risk-taking among youth in the community. The atmosphere around sexual behaviors in Thailand has seen youth “engaging in more online sexual relationships, frequently drinking alcohol before having sex, living with a boyfriend/girlfriend without marriage, and having multiple sex partners without further personal commitment” (Saowaluck 64). The irreversible harm to youth’s development that results from these risky behaviors suggests that there should be efforts from multiple influencers – families, teachers, and mentors – to educate youth and offer safe spaces to process their decisions.

Impact of Mentors on Youth

Adults and older teens throughout Isan, Thailand have a unique chance to step into youth’s lives and help them pave a different future – one that helps them emerge from the cycles of poverty prevalent in Isan. These needed adult figures would go beyond encouraging youth in their academic development. These mentors would join the ranks of other global changemakers in their “one common feature: they are building platforms that unleash human potential” (Bornstein and Davis xix). Youth especially have immense potential, as they not only have a

larger portion of life yet to live, but they also are strongly shaped throughout these adolescent years.

The significant level of influence that mentors have on youth begins with the power of transformative presence, which comes when they “notice the humanity of others, especially those invisible and neglected” (Lederach 47). Youth in Isan who fail academically, have absent parents or do not easily fit in social groups need a supportive adult figure to be present and simply notice them. Research conducted on the impact of a mentor’s age found that “students who met with mentors are more likely to exhibit positive youth outcomes than students” who did not meet with a mentor (Hwang 3). This research underscores that mentorship positively impacts youth and that older teen mentors are of similar effectiveness as adults in this role. Of greatest importance is that children throughout Isan have these figures in their lives as they go through the many changes of adolescence and make pivotal decisions about their future.

According to the “Developmental Relationships Framework,” five main actions that adults should exhibit for supportive relationships include “express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities.” Each of these ways of interacting with youth contributes to positive youth development and helps them move towards healthier, more productive futures. Most notably, mentors in Isan could have a positive impact on youth in the areas of academic improvement, goal setting, career readiness, confidence, curiosity, social and emotional learning, and decreased risky behavior.

Academic Improvement

The role that mentors can play in youth’s academic improvement cannot be overstated as “educational attainment is widely regarded as a major predictor of upward mobility and economic development throughout the world” (Piotrowski and Paat 907). Improving academic

understanding and increasing education levels will help build a healthier future for youth with increased employment opportunities and social capital. Mentors' primary contributions to the academic endeavors of youth are improved motivation and accessibility.

Students' motivation to learn is an essential but commonly overlooked factor of educational attainment. Throughout Thailand, the motivation to learn is reported to be the lowest in the Northeast region of Isan, which has direct effects on the years of completed schooling. In fact, "the North Eastern region seemed to have more students who did not concentrate on the topic, were 'not interested' and did 'other things' during the lessons" (Loima and Vibuphol 35). One predictor of motivation is the affinity for the teacher; "the more the students liked the teacher, the better their motivation was" (Loima and Vibulphol 31). While a mentor would not replace a teacher's role, they could act as a key adult figure whose relational connection motivates the student to put in an increased effort to their academics. Students also have the motivation to initially put in good work as they know mentors will help them through the remaining concepts they don't understand - an incentive not often afforded by teachers who oversee an entire class's education.

Adult mentors should also be present for youth in Isan as they make academic improvement more accessible for students across the board, regardless of their financial or familial backgrounds. In Thai culture, most teachers anticipate students will utilize tutors for both academic help and English language learning. However, tutors are an additional cost that families who are already financially strained cannot afford. Alyssa Huff, board member of Shared Space for All (SSFA), explained that "a lot of the families in Sam Prao, where Shared Space is, don't have the supplemental resources to pay for these tutors that the education system

is really relying on.” This gap in academic support for youth experiencing financial poverty is not isolated but is prevalent throughout the region of Isan.

Mentors who act as relational support to students and do not require payment for their services allow youth who come from low-income families to receive one-on-one academic support. Additionally, there were multiple cases in my research where teachers or family told students that they are stupid and would not achieve good grades. In these scenarios, mentors use their relational role to offer positive reinforcement and change prevailing narratives to make academic improvement more attainable. Finally, mentors’ ongoing presence in youth’s lives allows them to break down the steps of growth needed and celebrate with them at each accomplishment. This aids youth in their academic development as they “enjoy progressively difficult challenges when there are opportunities to win at each level” (Bornstein and Davis 84). Mentors not only offer the tangible support of working through problems or quizzing students free-of-cost, but they provide a relationship that helps encourage students to achieve more accessible goals.

Goal Setting

Another critical area that mentors impact youth is in the area of goal setting, both large and small. In Isan, youth are expected to proceed through their education; however, they are often not presented with the array of career options toward which they could set goals, nor with the question of what they desire to do. In a survey conducted with parents of the SSFA students, one mother expressed reduced aspirations for her daughter: “I don’t have hope for her future, to me she can live daily is a blessing. I don’t think my daughter will continue to secondary school.” On the other hand, some had specific hopes: “I hope that my daughter will become a doctor in

the future.” However, it seemed less common that parents or guardians conferred with their children to cover what goals and aspirations they personally had.

Adult mentors are perfectly positioned in a non-threatening and non-persuasive relationship to reveal what options exist for their futures and their careers so they can accordingly set smaller goals to achieve their more significant aim in life. At SSFA, one thing mentors are currently doing is asking “the students real basic things like, ‘what do you want to do for work?’ And nobody [else] is asking them that” (G. Neufeld). Mentors can help youth identify and name their goals, which brings intentionality and purpose into their academics and life. The goals become a source of hope for youth and also a motivation. When referring to the youth in Isan who had a mentor at SSFA compared to those with no mentor, Huff shared that “they definitely had more drive and ambition... motivation.”

Mentors are not just adults who can help youth set goals, but their consistent relational presence allows them to aid students in achieving these goals, both career-oriented and aspirations about their personal development and integrity. Au, a Thai board member of SSFA, explained how the mentors helped “set up goals for them to make them see the wide vision.” Au also noted that mentors helped students have “a high standard for them to walk with, but we all walk with them- not just set up the standard for them.” Having specific goals to work toward and a supportive adult to help achieve those goals gives youth more agency in their lives. This agency could otherwise be described as empowerment, and “at the heart of this concept is the idea of having greater power and therefore more control over your own life” (Willis 112). Goal setting is a pivotal act for those wanting to emerge from poverty and is especially powerful when done in adolescence, prior to key life decisions. Mentors in Isan can fill this need for goal setting

by asking questions, presenting career options or standards for personal development, and continuing to walk with youth as they work toward their goals.

Career Readiness

In previous eras, youth throughout northeast Thailand pursued agricultural career options like their families or possibly higher education in Bangkok. However, now, “most students from Isan aspire to attend top universities in the region... rather than the elite schools in Bangkok” (Lao et al. 17). In addition to the shift toward local career preparation routes, youth are also seeking more entrepreneurial directions in Isan rather than accepting the old dichotomy of working in Bangkok or staying a local farmer. Making the shift to local higher education and unique career fields can be difficult to navigate. It is especially challenging for many youth in Isan who are raised by grandparents with low education levels unable to navigate the emerging systems. Mentors can help close this access inequality gap as they help walk students through the necessary steps to prepare them for their careers. Nee Pargul, the Program Director of SSFA, is an example of how essential mentors can be in helping youth be ready for their careers. The Executive Director of SSFA shared how “Nee helps [the students] write portfolios. She helps them with college applications. One of our students ended up going and studying in Australia. She was instrumental in helping him apply for that program and helping him with his visa and passport applications” (D. Neufeld).

As mentors in Isan help remove entry barriers to higher education and career fields, they are increasing students’ job opportunities and exposing them to the globalizing world. One other area needed for career readiness in the emergent economy is English language skills, as it “is the medium of the digital world. English is not only considered as the language of communication but also the language of the Internet.” (Puriwat and Tripopsakul 101). Youth in Isan face the

difficulty of gaining career-specific knowledge and require adequate knowledge of English to compete in the workforce for more lucrative employment. One teen leader in the SSFA after-school program is pursuing education for work in the Tourism sector (Toey). Besides the required complex geographic, historical, and business knowledge, she must improve her English skills to communicate with future tourism clients. This pressure for English learning is not isolated to the tourism field but emerges as a highly sought-out skill. Mentors can play a role in English language learning in a similar manner to the academic support they can provide. For students without access to English tutors, mentors bridge the inequality gap by spending one-on-one time with low-income students to improve these needed English skills beyond what public school can provide.

Self Esteem and Confidence

At each turn throughout my fieldwork and literature review, increased confidence and self-esteem were reported as a result of students engaging with mentors. Confidence often pertains to an individual's trust in their *abilities*, whereas self-esteem is more commonly understood as a belief in one's inherent *value or worth*. Both are vital to youth development, as "low self-esteem in adolescence is linked to poorer mental and physical health, worse economic prospects, and higher levels of criminal behavior during adulthood" (Marino et al. 2). Youth having confidence in their own abilities and worth can set themselves on a positive trajectory as they are more likely to seize opportunities and take healthy risks. Mentors specifically can have a positive impact on self-esteem and confidence through the empathy, attention, and praise they provide children with. Confidence is built when youth are reaffirmed that they have worth and are given opportunities to exercise their growing abilities in safe settings.

While self-esteem and confidence tangibly aid social and emotional development, their effect on academic success was the strongest theme throughout my research. Interviews and surveys revealed that parents and educators in Isan failed to adequately foster academic confidence in their teens. According to Nee Pargul, teachers would even explicitly demean children's abilities and worth, calling them stupid and saying they would fail. As part of my research, a four-question survey was conducted with parents of youth in SSFA's after-school program. In response to what they hoped for their children, one mother shared, "I hope that SSFA will equip my child in many ways such as building self-esteem, reading skills, and other areas that I do not know how to help my daughter." Not only did the mother identify self-esteem as something that was challenging to help her child with, but she identified the mentorship-based after-school program as her hopes for improving this confidence in her daughter.

Shared Space for All Executive Director, Danielle Neufeld, shared one particular instance of a student in their after-school program whose confidence flourished as the result of mentors' active engagement.

We had one student in particular who was last in her class; her self-esteem was really in the gutter, and Nee and some of our older students worked with her trying to get her where she needs to be academically with her Thai language skills, reading, and writing. And now she's moved up in her ranking in the class, and she's like a different kid. I really think it's from people working with her and telling her she is smart. She has been told by previous teachers that she was stupid. (D. Neufeld)

Simple encouragement from trusted adults can be transformative in growing youth's confidence. Even the teacher's assistant of SSFA reflected on his past when he was learning English in the program, "Nee told me, 'go hang out with [the American people]', and she made me confident.

I'm not scared anymore" (Fluke). Mentors can interrupt negative thought patterns regarding children's self-worth that have been perpetuated by family, teachers, and often the children themselves. As they interject a new narrative that youth are valuable and capable of growth, transformation takes root.

Curiosity

The confidence that mentors help grow is also correlated with the ability of students to ask questions. Curiosity can be stunted within a high power distance context like Thailand, where students are discouraged from challenging authority or asking questions. Curiosity without condemnation, which mentors help foster, allows students to develop more critical thinking skills as they reason through their ideas. Au, a Thai nurse who partners with SSFA for teaching students reports that, "they are very confident. They can ask questions; they can share their ideas without hesitation but with politeness." As she shared this in her interview, she specifically noted how this was a contrast to the public school setting in which students are expected to silently accept the instruction, even if they do not understand. Au continued, "We set up the boundaries, so they have to be polite, but we want to be different, someone they can trust, someone they can play with, and ask many questions without conditions - no right or wrong."

Asking questions of trusted mentors and becoming curious is one way youth can move from factual knowledge to creativity and critical thinking. In *Creative Confidence*, Kelley and Kelley encourage this alternative approach to learning, "if you let go of what you 'know,' you can start to look at things with fresh eyes and with more questions than answers" (106-107). Additionally, mentors make space in conversations for questions about subjects that are typically taboo. Engaging these questions and conversations is just one of the many facets that mentors can contribute towards youth's social and emotional learning.

Social and Emotional Learning

Adolescence can be a tumultuous time for students as they navigate changes in their academics, social circles, aspirations, bodies, and emotions. In addition to these internal stressors, “the high expectations of family, school, and peers cause chronic stress and depression among the students” (Asana et al.). Academics are a powerful influencer of distress for Thai students; “educational stress is a common emotional state among school children and adolescents worldwide and appears to be more severe among Asians” (Assana et al.). Mentors can help youth healthily process their emotions as they are trusted figures whose relational connections transcend the typical power distance between youth and adults. Throughout her interview, Au repeatedly emphasized how the mentors at SSFA help students through the relational connections; “at school, you know the hierarchy is very high, especially in Thailand. Asian countries’ teachers and students are at different levels, but at Shared Space [for All], we are like a big sister - we are here for them, and they can feel it” (Au).

In addition to emotional learning, mentors help youth learn how to engage in and navigate social situations. Trusted adults not only act as a sounding board for existing social dilemmas, but they can prepare youth for situations they may face. Whether it is peer pressure for risky behavior, learning how to best support friends, or how to balance their social commitments with other areas of life, mentors have a level of influence over youth and can share wisdom. Au noted that some of the Thai students in the SSFA after-school program lacked these social processing skills. She differentiated that students are often encouraged to get book smart through academic improvement but not street smart through social and emotional learning that can be applied to real-life situations outside an educational context. When reflecting on a particular student, Au shared, “the thing that [the student] lacks often would be the social

skills... which SSFA tries to provide. We create a scenario like ‘if this thing happens, what would you do?’” In helping youth process these situations, mentors are equipping youth to make developmentally-appropriate social choices that aid them in the long-run.

Decreased Risky Behavior

Mentors who are present for students in personal, academic, and vocational capacities also greatly influence youth’s likelihood to engage in risky behavior. As discussed earlier, risky behaviors such as underage drinking, smoking, and sexual promiscuity are prevalent among Isan youth and can have damaging impacts on student’s futures. With these pressing problems, “cooperation from several sectors is required to attempt to jointly prevent multiple risk behaviors of adolescents, and this includes individual, family, and community levels” (Pimrat et al. 229).

While mentors are not the only needed relationships to decrease risks, they support students by addressing issues with the individual, families, and communities. Within the highly collective Thai context, mentors must address the communal factors that contribute to risk-taking behaviors; for instance, “community-based interventions are needed to focus on different parenting skills, sex education teaching skills, and addressing community norms” (Saowaluck 61). Mentors at SSFA specifically use their relational connections to increase teen’s comprehensive knowledge of risk-taking behavior. Danielle Neufeld reflected on the environment at SSFA which enables this type of learning:

Our students really feel safe and feel a connection to Nee and the other adults. They’re asking questions about bullying in the classroom that aren’t addressed in the schools there as much. They’re asking questions about sexuality- questions that they wouldn’t necessarily feel comfortable asking their parents.

By continuing to affirm the safety of the relationship and the value of curiosity, mentors effectively foster open learning environments about risky behaviors rather than shame-oriented spaces. The presence and engagement of mentors in youth's lives have profound impacts on their current well-being and future successes. One environment where these ongoing relationships can be fostered is through after-school programs, like SSFA.

Mentorship in Afterschool Programs

Mentorship occurs in a variety of formal and informal settings, ranging from apprentice career-oriented mentorships to relationships with neighbors who are invested in the personal growth of youth. One particular context for youth mentorship to unfold is in after-school programs, whose recurring nature and particular components make them ideal for fostering supportive adult relationships. They offer spaces for mentors to address academics not in isolation like tutors do, but alongside stimulating activities, career preparation, and holistic support. One successful after-school program in Thailand is Shared Space for All (SSFA), whose name in Thai translates to mean "unity, togetherness, holding hands, oneness," which reiterates the collaborative, relational nature of mentorship happening at after-school programs (Au).

Tutoring

A key component of many after-school programs is academic assistance or tutoring. The SSFA model of tutoring aligns with the advice given in *Celebrating Children*, as they are "supporting school attendance and even developing new programs. Where traditional government schools are understaffed or under-resourced or just too expensive, it may be necessary to establish community schools" (Miles et al. 309). Shared Space for All supplements public school education for rural Isan youth and works with the public school teachers to help students stay on track with their learning. Their approach is effective specifically due to the

relational connections mentors provide; mentors learn each student's specific strengths and weaknesses, offering specific encouragement and resources. Additionally, the relationships students form with mentors provide a more personal level of accountability in completing their work and submitting their best efforts.

This mentoring approach in after-school contexts has proved highly successful for youth at SSFA. Danielle Neufeld shared that “we have a lot of kids like that in our program who they were not doing well academically, and now they're up to par with other students.” Multiple parents echoed this sentiment in a survey about the program. One mother attributed her daughter's school improvements to SSFA: “her test scores at school are very good each semester.” At the same time, another parent highlighted their child's advancing language skills: “the differences that I saw in my daughter is that her English is very improved compared to other students in her classroom.” Throughout my interviews, students cited the English classes as a highlight of the after-school program. Their academic improvements in these and other areas across the board highlight that the tutoring components of after-school programs are an effective way for mentors to positively influence youth in Isan.

Activities

Outside of academics, “school/community-based programs are particularly promising in terms of skills development because of the wider range of activities and settings that youth can experience” (Marino et al. 2). After-school programs often incorporate activities that stimulate youth's mental, emotional, physical, and social health. When mentors engage with students in these diverse activities, they have more platforms to help youth build on things like confidence, curiosity, and social and emotional learning that were previously identified as essential in youth development. At SSFA, some activities include outdoor games, yoga, painting, “singing,

dancing, hands-on [activities] – they love to do that. We provide paper, crayons, all kinds of artwork to create to get the imagination started” (Fluke).

In addition to these daily opportunities for creative learning, they also have occasional workshops led by two Thai board members who are also medical professionals. The nurses teach students about CPR, protecting against Dengue fever, and rescue techniques for drowning victims (D. Neufeld). After-school programs help students learn tangible, non-academic skills that will equip them for life after they complete school. After-school programs also offer field trips that provide opportunities for students outside their traditional context and comfort zone. These opportunities expose students to new people, places, and ways of living. Shared Space for All has taken youth on a trip to a local mountainous region where they not only engaged with the new landscape and waterfalls, but they were able to try the local food and learn from communities different from their own. These same students also visited Ban Chiang, an UNESCO World Heritage site, which exposed them to the renowned history and value of their home region. While the activities have intrinsic value, incorporating mentors into this after-school component strengthens relationships through shared experiences. With trust that is built and a deeper understanding of students’ barriers or challenges, mentors are better able to support the student to succeed in their future and overcome some challenge points.

Finally, after-school programs can operate activities that expose older youth to new career fields and equip them with new skills. While career-oriented activities could come through guest speakers or field trips to particular employers, they could also be more fundamentally integrated into the program. Shared Space for All recently raised funds to build a Center which will expand their operations to include a community garden, a café, and a technology lab. Not only will the garden equip students’ families with nutritious produce, but it will serve as a

training ground for youth pursuing agricultural careers. The café will expose students to basic business management principles, and the technology center will prepare students for more computer-driven careers. Mentors facilitating these activities can call out the strengths they see in students and help them process what their long-term goals are relating to careers. In a survey about the program, one mentor at SSFA reflected on the array of activities: “the students who participate in Shared Space for All get knowledge and skills that they can use in their life, but the students who do not participate in Shared Space for All only get knowledge for the exam.” The practicality of the knowledge and skills gained from SSFA’s activities extends far beyond academic improvement and sets youth up with life skills that will help them succeed in their futures.

Scholarships

With students balancing their future career options with their current commitments to family, friends, and academics, there are many stressors for youth in Thailand. One of the most significant sources is student loans. Older teens with loans “have been found to feel more physical/mental, school-related, and emotional stress” (Maritta et al. 223). These findings emphasize the need for supportive adult relationships that help students effectively manage stress. But more so, there is a need to support interventions to reduce stress, such as offering college scholarships, like SSFA is doing for Thai high schoolers. Shared Space for All is “paying for kids to go to college... We have four kids who are first-generation college students. Now those same four students are volunteering with us weekly and teaching the younger students” (D. Neufeld). The financial investment from the after-school program allows mentorship to thrive as mentors are able to support youth’s preparation for future education and career paths in ways that were previously linked to intangible futures. Incorporating scholarships into the after-school

program model also is an incentive that mentors can remind students of as they are goal-setting or dealing with barriers to academic motivation.

Holistic Support for Families

In addition to fostering academic improvement and social-emotional growth for students, after-school programs offer holistic support to youth by meeting their families' needs as well. The structure of these programs helps to "provide the caregivers within families with time to attend to other needs while giving children opportunities to play and learn" ("Daycare & Parent Support Groups"). This extra time that parents now have without supervision responsibilities benefits the family as a whole as they can bring more income into the home. Parents can also use this time to invest in their personal well-being and development, which improves their parenting and consequently, children's development.

Apart from this direct benefit to the families, SSFA takes a further step in supporting families by having the mentors visit with them at their homes to understand how they are doing and to offer help. Rather than concentrating solely on the youth, SSFA works with "the student *and* the family, because they stay with the family more hours than us... We believe if the family is doing okay – if they have enough to feed the kids – then they are happy, and they can focus more on our students" (Fluke). When mentors regularly engage with the students and their families, they help establish a community that families can rely on, especially in challenging times that would otherwise adversely impact the youth's development. In *The Art of Community*, Charles Vogl identifies that this type of communal "belonging is created through frequent interactions plus persistent caring" (105). When SSFA families experience ongoing care and know they belong to this community, they are more likely to welcome mentors into their familial problems that impact the youth. This likelihood is also amplified by the collective nature of Thai

culture, which gives trusted community members like mentors an expanded role in creating solutions.

Through this holistic family approach, SSFA has seen students in their after-school program develop in ways that they could not have if the family's problems were not congruently addressed. In practice, SSFA's family engagement also operates as a form of child protection which encompasses "all measures taken to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and all other forms of violence against children" (Forbes et al. 17). Danielle Neufeld shared about a particular family who received this needed intervention and support through their program:

We have these two siblings in our program and... their relationship with their parents was really strained. The dad is borderline abusive and would tell them that they're stupid and that they can't succeed in school. Nee actually worked with those parents to change their approach with their kids. It's been interesting to see that whole family change. I think she's also mentoring parents as well. [The staff] really have a strong rapport with the whole community and the whole family unit. (D. Neufeld)

Utilizing after-school programs as the context for mentorship allows mentors to engage with and support students more holistically than other contexts.

Conclusion

Youth throughout Isan face unique challenges in their development due to economic and educational inequalities and cultural dimensions such as high power distance. To promote healthy youth development and to empower successful futures, mentorship should be employed throughout Isan, Thailand. Mentorship offers youth a relationship in which they can experience social, emotional, and behavioral growth alongside academic and career-oriented development.

Experiencing this transformational development in the context of an after-school program further strengthens the effectiveness of mentorship through its experiential nature. Shared Space for All is leading this form of holistic support for students in Isan. It is a model for future organizations seeking to utilize mentorship to bring sustained development to Isan, Thailand.

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APPENDIX A: Grant Project Justification

Developing new funding sources can be a daunting process for non-profits such as after-school programs. However, Henri Nouwen posed that “fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission” (16). This approach to fund development frees organizations to cultivate financial partners who are truly invested in their work and who will support them strongly throughout seasons of organizational growth.

Shared Space for All (SSFA) is in a state of expansion as it has recently raised funds for a new building in Thailand, which would allow activities to relocate from Program Director Nee’s private property to an education facility. This organizational expansion will also create opportunities for new programs to emerge for the youth of Sam Prao, Thailand. Throughout this state of physical growth, SSFA also aims to invite more people to participate in its mission through financial partnership. Shared Space for All operates as a registered non-profit in the United States and as a foundation in Thailand, qualifying it to receive funding from federal, corporate, and private sources in both countries. Currently, SSFA relies heavily on monthly US donors who are actively participating in the mission of mentoring and educating the most at-risk children in Thailand. However, Simone Joyaux proposes in *Strategic Fund Development* that “your organization needs a balanced mix of funding sources and solicitation strategies” (15). One area they seek to grow funding sources is through grants.

Searching for, applying for, and reporting on grants can be a time-consuming process and often merits a staff with those designated roles. However, in SSFA’s context, there is not currently the human or financial resources to support this role. For the project component of my

thesis, I have established a grant package that brings together key documents and information to streamline the application process and equip the organization to easily apply for future grants.

In the first component of the grant package I have drafted answers for SSFA to all of the questions commonly asked within a grant proposal, including the organizational background, problem statement, program description, and evaluation plan (Karsh and Fox 127). These questions can then be tweaked or supplemented with minimal effort to suit each unique grant application. For the second component of my thesis project, I initiated the compilation of key supporting documents that are consistently requested when submitting a grant. The recommendation is to “assemble a folder – preferably on your computer with subfolders for materials about your organization, its financial status, and its staff” (Karsh and Fox 70). I specifically worked with SSFA’s Executive Director to gather the following documents from multiple staff members: 501(c)(3) certification, Articles of Incorporation, Certificate of Incorporation, Employer Identification Number, Form 990, 2019-20 US and Thai Annual Financial Statements, and the 2019-20 US and Thai Budgets. In addition to gathering these documents into one easily accessible location, I created three other key documents for SSFA that are frequently required for grants. The first is a current list of Thai and US board members, the second is an organizational chart, and the final document I created is their 2019-20 Annual Report, which can also be used as an external communication piece. The grant package will ideally equip SSFA to seize more opportunities for financial supporters and ultimately serve youth throughout Udon Thani more effectively.

APPENDIX B: Grant Proposal Responses

Organizational Background

History & Organizational Overview

In 2016, Danielle and Garth Neufeld founded Shared Space for All (SSFA), which operates on the prevention side of sex work by mentoring and educating the most at-risk children in Thailand. Children from low-income families in the rural Northeast are at risk of dropping out of school to help with family finances. They move to cities like Bangkok and Pattaya to find lucrative employment to send money back to their families. After struggling to find employment in the cities, many girls are recruited into sex work. Shared Space for All confronts this cycle of sex work and poverty by providing education and opportunity that would not otherwise be available in Isan, Thailand. We invest in children by operating an after-school program that provides a safe space for learning, qualified adults to teach and mentor, and engaging activities to complement academic growth.

Shared Space for All operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the US and as a foundation in Thailand with three full-time and five part-time staff. Our Thai and American boards work together to shape the work of SSFA. We believe that serving the people of Isan must be culturally responsive and holistic. Our Thai team of local professionals primarily guides the work we do in Isan and stays attentive to students and their families' evolving needs.

Mission Statement

Shared Space for All operates on the prevention side of sex work by mentoring and educating the most at-risk children in Thailand.

Vision Statement

Shared Space For All provides children an alternative future through education.

Program Overview

Problem Statement

Thailand is a thriving, developing country, but the wealth of Bangkok and other tourist areas is not distributed equally. Isan is the largest region of Thailand in size and population, yet it has the lowest per capita income in Thailand, making its people particularly vulnerable. Isan, Thailand is predominately an agricultural region; however, it lacks robust local economic opportunities, so families suffer from declining income and rising living costs. Many adults from Isan migrate to city centers for lucrative work, often leaving children behind to be raised by grandparents. Young women are particularly at risk in this scenario, as the pressure on them to make enough money to provide financially for their extended families makes prostitution a viable choice. Workers from Isan often end up in high-risk or hard labor employment after migrating. There are systemic consequences to the southern migration of Isan's workforce that disproportionately affect youth.

In their parents' absence, children raised by grandparents often lack adult supervision and engagement in their development, leading to elevated rates of school dropout, teen pregnancy, and underage alcohol consumption. Children throughout Isan also face educational inequalities as their public schools often have inferior quality of teachers, facilities, and resources, which hinders students' academic growth and, consequently, future career paths. Youth already on the educational and economic margins do not receive adequate support from teachers and often cannot afford privately-hired tutors. Children throughout Isan require improved access to quality education and supportive adult relationships that encourage academic and personal development.

Program Description

Shared Space for All is a free after-school tutoring and mentoring program in Isan, Thailand, that provides children a future alternative to sex work through quality education and relational support. The program runs five days a week after school and serves children ages 6-18. We offer academic support through English language classes, one-on-one tutoring, and additional classes on topics ranging from math to Chinese language skills. Additionally, SSFA offers non-academic activities that contribute to holistic youth development, such as art projects, exercise, group games, and field trips. Students also receive various life skills sessions on topics including CPR, drowning prevention, basic sexual education, and how to prevent viruses like COVID-19.

The SSFA staff also prioritize students' healthy development by connecting with parents and guardians during home visits, which surfaces underlying family needs and challenges. Our team works to offer support or provide appropriate resources to improve the quality of the students' home lives. Beyond after-school activities and home visits, SSFA continues to grow its vision for child protection and prevention of sex work in Isan by opening new opportunities for youth. We support children in our program by offering university scholarships, vocational training, and micro-financing to those who complete high school. With these expanded futures, Isan's youth will be equipped to take care of their families without putting themselves at risk of exploitation.

Target Population

Shared Space for All serves children in primary and secondary school, ages 6-18. While the program is open to students of all socioeconomic backgrounds, our free services especially appeal to students from low-income households who are otherwise unable to afford academic support. Our staff also work closely with public school teachers and administration to identify the children who require additional academic, social, and behavioral support.

Staff

Shared Space for All programming is led by three full-time Thai staff and four college-aged volunteers, all who are established in the local community and act as mentors to children in the program. Our Program Director oversees staff and mentors, acts as a liaison with the public school, plans curriculum, and pioneers community partnerships. Our social worker addresses a wide range of social, psychological, and behavioral challenges with youth and forges relationships with students' families for a more holistic approach to youth development. The third full-time position acts as an assistant to the Program Director by teaching classes to students, preparing activities, and providing hands-on program support. The four college-aged mentors are past program participants who teach program classes, lead activities, and form transformative relationships with the youth.

Program Request – Expansion Specific

After nearly two years of grassroots fundraising, Shared Space for All has raised enough capital (\$70,000) to build an educational facility, a gift to the children and families of Sam Prao, Isan. Shared Space for All seeks additional funding to outfit this new facility for an after-school program and for other community services. The after-school program, which currently operates on the Program Director's private property, will relocate to the new facility and utilize indoor classroom spaces and the outdoor grounds. Requested funds will provide indoor equipment such as computers, books, desks, furniture, projectors, and other classroom necessities. These resources will serve youth in Isan during the after-school program and support the expansion of services to include job training for adults in the community. Additionally, SSFA will equip the outdoor facilities with a play structure, play equipment such as balls, and a community garden that introduces youth to the agriculture industry and provides nutritious food for families.

Goals and Evaluation

Goals and Objectives

Shared Space for All aims to prevent sex work and provide alternative futures for the most at-risk children in Thailand. We achieve this through our complementary goals of providing relational mentorship and high-quality education. Measurable objectives within these goals include increased job opportunities, improved self-esteem and confidence, decreased risky behavior, strengthened resources for families, improved student grades, and construction of an educational center.

Evaluation Plan

Shared Space for All uses a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the effectiveness of its after-school program. Mentorship objectives such as improved self-esteem and decreased risky behavior are evaluated by self-reported student data and staff observations. Strengthened family resources can be measured through quantitative data such as the number of home visits staff make and the number of families supported with essential items such as food. Increased job opportunities are measured by the number of local Thai staff SSFA employs. Shared Space for All also evaluates educational objectives such as improved grades by regularly reviewing the student's school report, which tracks grades and school attendance. The objective of completing an education center is evaluated as a percentage of the facility constructed in relation to the estimated timeline. Finally, SSFA encourages ongoing, qualitative feedback from students, parents, and mentors to improve our program's effectiveness at preventing sex work and providing alternative futures for the most at-risk children in Thailand.

APPENDIX C: Current Board Members



US Board Members

Danielle Slaughter Neufeld
SSFA Executive Director

Garth Neufeld
SSFA President / Psychology Professor

Randy Harlow
SSFA Secretary and Treasurer / Executive Project Manager

Katie Carpenter
Special Events Manager

Adam Gilbert
Physician's Assistant

Jason Harwood
Entrepreneur

Alyssa Huff
Educator / Community Development Professional

Jill Lamb
Graphic Designer / Videographer

Laurie Reddy
Educator

Julie Slaughter
Former Public Health Nurse



Thai Board Members

Paniti Teerakathiti

Supplier Technical Assistance General Manager

Umaporn Kensila

Nurse / University Professor

Jurarad Kensila

Military Medical Professional

Sunantha Songsri

English Educator

Supatra Suthibun

Entrepreneur

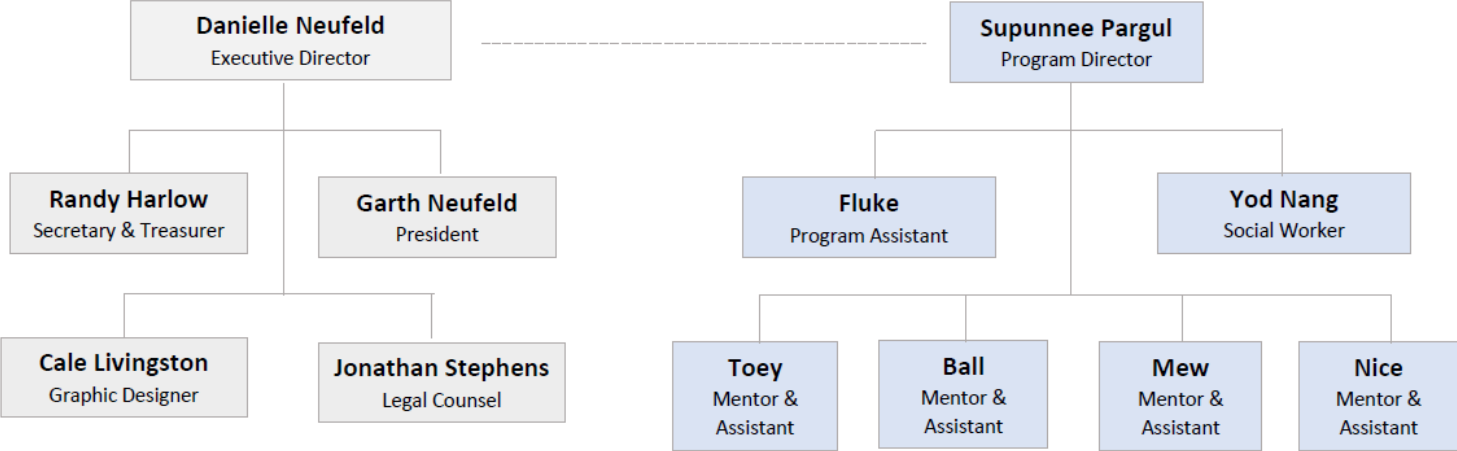
APPENDIX D: Organizational Chart



Organizational Chart
as of March 2021

SSFA U.S.

SSFA Thailand



APPENDIX E: 2019-2020 Annual Report



shared space
for all



2019 - 2020
ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION

Shared Space for All operates on the prevention side of sex work by mentoring and educating the most at risk children in Thailand.



VISION

Shared Space for All provides children an alternative future through education.

OUR IMPACT

Each day after school, 30 students in the village of Sam Prao, Thailand, come full of energy to Shared Space for All (SSFA). And each day, our staff and mentors equip these youth for future alternatives to sex work through quality education and relational support.

Many of our resilient students come from low-income homes, have absent parents, or have other barriers to accessing the support and care they need. Thanks to our supporters' incredible generosity, children throughout Sam Prao received education, mentorship, and ongoing support throughout the 2019-2020 school year and during the summer.



One of our most successful ventures was the annual 6-week summer camp run by our staff and college mentors. At camp, children participated in a variety of activities, sports, English lessons, and games. Not only did students strengthen friendships, improve English skills, and have fun, but the camp also provided free childcare for families. It was a gift to the community.



Additionally, our students went on quarterly field trips to experience the beauty of Thailand. Just an hour from Sam Prao is Ban Chiang, a UNESCO World Heritage site and renowned archeological site. None of our students had ever been, so SSFA took them a field trip, exposing students to regional history and geography. On another trip our older teens took this year, they experienced the joys of the outdoors through hiking and rafting.



Outside of ongoing academic support and enriching activities, SSFA provided four older teens full-tuition college scholarships to continue their education beyond high school. Youth are expanding their vision beyond the classroom or SSFA afterschool program and dreaming of vibrant futures alternative to sex work.



SSFA provides afterschool classes for 30 students and full college scholarships for 4 older teens.



OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The 2019-2020 school year held unprecedented changes and challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded around the globe and in Isaan, Thailand. In response to the new difficulties our students and parents faced, Shared Space for All prioritized understanding needs, maintaining safety protocols, and equipping families with resources. Our staff members have checked in monthly with each family in our program to assess food security, health, and transportation issues.



Some of our students were missing school due to lack of transportation funds, lack of uniforms, or lack of money to purchase school supplies. Shared Space for All now helps meet these individual needs and plans to continue these monthly family check-ins even after recovering from the COVID-19 crisis.



In addition to supporting students' school-related needs, SSFA equipped 50 families in our program with food baskets, including Thai cooking essentials. In the words of Program Assistant Fluke, "We believe if the family is doing okay – if they have enough to feed the kids – then they are happy, and they can focus more on our students."



As schools shut down in Thailand, students from low-income homes with less access to the internet were at risk of falling even further behind academically. Shared Space for All made adaptations to continue the afterschool program even during the pandemic. We made the class sizes smaller, staggered the students' schedules, and emphasized wearing masks and sanitizing regularly.



Two of our Thai board members, who are also nurses, expanded safety at SSFA by teaching youth about various health-related topics. Students were trained on how to prevent viruses like COVID-19, wash their hands properly, and provide basic first aid. Throughout the pandemic, SSFA has continued supporting students' education and futures by meeting their holistic needs and keeping them safe.

50

families supported during the COVID-19 crisis

“Teacher Nee made me confident. I’m not scared anymore”

- Fluke, past SSFA student





THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

2019-20 THAILAND REVENUE

From SSFA US	\$30,000.00	100%
Total Revenue	\$30,000.00	100%

2019-20 THAILAND EXPENSE

Program Services	\$17,200.91	88%
Management & General	\$2,339.23	12%
Total Expense	\$19,540.14	100%



Thanks to our generous donors, children in Thailand are dreaming of new futures!

SPECIAL THANKS TO

The Banium Foundation
All our monthly supporters



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