



Grassroots Human Rights Education and Development Committee (Burma)

Toward Self-Sufficiency and Self-Esteem through Sewing

“What is a woman’s worth? What is her place in the community?” These are difficult questions in any community. For Burmese migrant women living in Thailand, it becomes more difficult and complicated to answer these questions. Traditionally, Burmese women stay at home, but many are forced to work as day laborers in Thailand.

“There are thousands of migrant families in Phang Nga Province in southern Thailand,” says Ms. Ei Ei Chaw, who is the coordinator of the new project titled, “Sewing Training for Migrant Women” at Grassroots HREDC.

Ms. Ei Ei Chaw continues, “Some can find work as helpers with their husbands, but others, especially single women, have difficulty finding work. So, women need a vocational training to be able to make a living in Thailand. And I believe this project will give them a better future.”

With the support from Istituto Sindacale per la COoperazione allo Sviluppo (ISCOS) of Italy, Grassroots HREDC will purchase five sewing machines, a cloth cutting machine, and other supplies necessary for sewing. ISCOS will also provide a support for renting a house for the project as well as for the transportation of participants.

Ten women will be selected from various Burmese communities in Phang Nga Province. They will be trained in the art of sewing for three months. Grassroots HREDC has already found an expert instructor, Ms. Wai Phyoe, and her assistant, Ms. Na Ni La. Ms. Ei Ei Chaw has also found an ideal location near the Grassroots office in Khuk Khak, Phang Nga.

“We would like to start the project, at the latest, by the middle of June this year,” says Ms. Ei Ei Chaw. She adds, “We will provide an intensive seamstress training to ten Burmese women. After this training, they will be able to sew competently and have a better chance at finding a good job.” She hopes that the knowledge will help the women earn money for their households while it will also increase their self-esteem.



Mr. Teodoro Aniceto of ISCOS and Grassroots staff members visit the potential project site.



Mr. Aniceto (left) of ISCOS discusses details of the operation with Ms. Ei Ei Chaw (second from left) and Mr. Myant Thu at the potential project site.