Providing Learning Opportunities Outside the Classroom

Because private Islamic schools (pondoks) operate on a more restricted budget than government-funded public schools, students have few educational opportunities outside the classroom. To address this gap, The Asia Foundation helps support creative extracurricular activities—including science, math, language, and social studies camps—to improve the quality of education for pondok students.

For Many Students, Extracurricular activities are an essential part of their education. Designed to provide creative learning environments and foster healthy social and leadership skills, learning outside the classroom is a core component of a strong education. However, due to serious financial restrictions, pondok students have been denied such valuable learning opportunities.

To help these students gain access to equal learning opportunities, The Asia Foundation has been working with a network of private Islamic schools in Thailand to improve the quality of their academic instruction. Currently, the Foundation is supporting initiatives by local education reformers to train teachers, build quality lesson plans, and provide students with educational extracurricular activities.

“Students in the past were not confident to speak out or able to solve problems because they lacked the proper social and analytical skills before they had extracurricular activities,” says Ms. Sateehawa Chenik, a science teacher at Attarkiah Islamiah school. “In the past, we tried to organize camps but students could not afford them. With the help of The Asia Foundation the students now have opportunities that they have never had before.”

“Learning about science is easier here, because we can actually see what we are learning, see with our own eyes. I’m proud of being here and am having a great time.”
— Sarah Photae, 11th grade student at Attarkiah Islamiah School, and science camp participant

With higher quality secular education, Islamic secondary school students will be better prepared to enter Thailand’s competitive job market and gain access to higher education.

The Asia Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports programs in Asia that help improve governance and law, women’s empowerment, economic reform and development, and international relations.