Better World Showcase 2018

Demonstrating how the Faculty of Science & Engineering is Making a Difference

Educational Tools for Disadvantaged Communities in Thailand

Initiative

Thailand is a country that has seen frequent and severe political unrest, which has hindered educational reform. Teaching practices and technologies are limited in poorer areas, particularly in rural communities. Through two British Council projects Ben developed educational tools for teaching concepts in robotics. These were delivered to young learners at Baan Ratchawiti Orphanage for Girls, and two rural primary schools.

The first project included a hands-on workshop for 50 students and teachers on the topics of flight physics and robotics. For many students this was their first opportunity to learn about, and use robotics technologies. The students were bright and enthusiastic, and were each given their own model aircraft to continue experimenting after workshop. The workshop gained coverage from channel 3 news Thailand, and Ben was interviewed for a feature on robotics in Thailand.

In the second project Ben collaborated with Thai researchers to develop an engineering challenge for students based on an ecological issue faced in their community. In Lopburi province degradation of forests has led to the decline of a local species of monkey. The engineering challenge was to design a robotic seed dispersal unit to help regrow these local forests.

How Ben has Made a Difference

By engaging not only students, but also their teachers, Ben made a difference by providing educational tools that can be sustained in boosting science and engineering education in Thailand. Ben instilled new approaches to teaching and learning, and also used his funding to provide some important educational resources that would otherwise not have been available to them.

Nominee

Dr Ben Parslew
(Staff)

Nominated for
Outstanding public engagement initiative

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