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Burma Interim Program Review

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by

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Summary of Burma Interim Program Review

Introduction

This paper details assessment findings of the two U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Asia/Near East(ANE)-managed humanitarian relief activities on the Burma-Thailand Border. Funded through the Burma earmark, the goal of these programs is to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees along the Thai-Burma border. The current program is focused primarily in Karen and Karenni Refugee camps. This assessment does not include USAID democracy programs funded by the Burma earmark, nor does it cover the ongoing Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration food aid to refugees in camps.

The assessment team spent three weeks in Thailand (January 16–February 6, 2002) reviewing the activities and impact of humanitarian relief programs managed by the two USAID partner organizations, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and World Education/World Learning Consortium. USAID funded activities include health, community development, and education programs.

Activities and Results

International Rescue Committee Activities (AEP-G-00-99-00028-00)

This project assists refugees from Burma, internally displaced, and pro-democracy groups in three main ways: enhancing access to basic preventive and primary health-care, expanding nutrition and food security, and upgrading capacity and management skills of national NGOs and refugee community leaders. USAID-funded IRC activities are broadly divided into two operational categories: direct assistance to the three Karenni camps in health and community development and a large sub-grant program covering all major sub-sectors that focuses on outside refugee camps.

Results of IRC's health program include a 300 percent increase in the number of medics from 1998 levels and sustained high levels of maternal and child survival (an infant mortality rate of 29 deaths per 1,000 live births) on par with surrounding Thai communities. Results of IRC's community development program include increasing the capacity of local staff, Karenni Refugee and Health camp committees, and community based organizations.

World Education World Learning Consortium Activities (AEP-G-00-99-00024-00)

Since 1999, Consortium has worked in collaboration with other NGOs to support the development of a viable and sustainable education system that would be transferable when refugees from Burma feel safe enough to return to their homeland. In the six refugee camps where the Consortium is working, the project develops and supports the production of education materials for use by schools, provides training for school administrators and teachers, and assists teachers and administrators with curriculum development. In all ten refugee camps, the Consortium contributes to the payment of stipends for 1,045 refugee teachers. Consortium also is piloting a small out-of-camp program implementing integrated pest management education in local Thai schools at the request of local and national Thai officials.

A result of Consortium's education programs is the increased capacity of local staff, camp education committees, school directors, and teachers.

Lessons Learned

Best Practices:

In reviewing activities and results, it is clear that IRC and Consortium share certain philosophies in their work:

- IRC and Consortium both share ‘extinction philosophy’ (working themselves out of a job)
- Both work with traditional leadership structures (camp committees) to assess and meet community needs
- Both increasingly work with community-based organizations (CBOs) in activity implementation
- Both are increasing local staff capacity in the hopes of turning programs over to them in future
- Both are working to encourage next generation of leaders in all fields

Findings:

- The following are ten findings from this assessment:
- Program constraints are due to Thai and US **policies and definitions**.
- Relatively high levels of NGO coordination can lead to **niches** that can be an effective use of limited funds.
- **Evolution** of assistance begins with relief to capacity development.
- Both IRC and Consortium seek to **work themselves out of the job** (ownership, human capacity and civil society building, and sustainability).
- “**Idle Youth**” in camps have few options (e.g. vocational training and certification logical programmatic approach to current and future needs. However, niches and Thai government restrictions hinder new programs in these areas).
- USAID **sub-grant** program is good but could be improved.
- Growing recognition of unmet **needs outside camps**, but program faces challenges and obstacles of how to access/address these needs (current efforts are a drop in the bucket).
- Large-scale **decrease** of in-camp assistance could have problematic effects.
- Framework of current aid does little to address the need for **tolerance**/ multi-ethnic harmony of future Burma.
- Donor-wide, much more **assistance** is needed for programs outside camps.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper details assessment findings of the two USAID ANE-managed humanitarian relief activities on the Burma-Thailand Border. Funded through the Burma earmark, the goal of these programs is to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees along the Thai-Burma border. The current program is focused primarily in Karen and Karenni Refugee camps. This assessment does not include USAID democracy programs funded by the Burma earmark, nor does it cover the ongoing Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration food aid to refugees in camps.

The assessment team¹ spent three weeks in Thailand (January 16–February 6, 2002) reviewing the activities and impact of humanitarian relief programs managed by the two USAID partner organizations, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and World Education/World Learning Consortium. USAID funded activities include health, community development and education programs.

1.1 Goal

In carrying out this review, the team worked to:

- a. Identify specific activities that have been conducted as well as how these activities have changed over time, based on changing conditions in and outside of the camps.
- b. Outline the types of quantitative and qualitative results that have been achieved by both implementers since inception of the grants, with an emphasis on impact at the individual level.
- c. Identify the specific indicators in the new planning framework that can be reported on with information generated by current grant-funded activities.
- d. Document best practices and lessons learned that may be relevant to future USAID-funded programs targeted towards refugee populations outside of the camps who are not currently served as well as capacity to implement activities across the border inside Burma if/when that opportunity arises.
- e. Identify and develop two or more success stories to meet program-reporting requirements.

1.2 Assumptions²

U.S. Government interaction with Burma is guided by a foreign policy that seeks progress toward democracy, an improved human rights climate and more effective counternarcotics efforts. The policy is implemented through diplomatic efforts and directed assistance to NGOs. Since 1996, the U.S. Congress has earmarked funds to support the achievement of democracy and human rights goals. Beginning in 1998, the Burma earmark included a directive that humanitarian assistance be provided to refugees from Burma on the Thai-Burma border. This humanitarian assistance would compliment that already being provided by the Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (STATE/PRM) to refugees from Burma displaced by conflict and the deepening economic crisis in Burma. This assistance helps fulfill the USG global strategic goal of minimizing human suffering from conflict and natural disasters.

STATE and USAID assume the following when planning programs:

¹ Personnel: The team consisted of three ANE personnel: (a) USAID's Thailand-based program coordinator – Tom Elam, (b) ANE Research Analyst JoEllen Gorg, who served as the team leader, and (c) DG Senior Research Analyst Thomas Buck. Gorg and Buck took the lead in collecting information, conducting field interviews, and drafting the assessment report. Elam provided overall guidance, and feedback on documented findings. At times the team also included Christine Wegman, Cheryl Anderson from USAID Washington, Lois Bradshaw USAID Cambodia and Paleerat "Joom" Srisartsanarat, from US Embassy Bangkok. Also, the assessment benefited from interviews, site visits, and focus group discussion arranged for Connie Woodberry who was visiting from World Education headquarters.

² From Burma: Meeting Policy Goals through Targeted Assistance

- The SPDC regime is financially, economically and politically unsustainable. A transition in government will occur, but not necessarily soon;
- The USG supports a peaceful transition to democracy, and would want to be a position to influence this transition and work closely with the new leaders in Burma who would emerge;
- The USG will continue to make available \$6.5 million per year under the Burma earmark; and
- The USG, through STATE/PRM will continue to provide basic humanitarian assistance for refugees from Burma living in refugee camps outside Burma.

State's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (STATE/DRL) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) jointly manage funds provided through the Burma earmark. STATE/DRL and USAID coordinate the programming of funds to avoid duplication of efforts and closely monitor program implementation. STATE/DRL and USAID work to align programs around the foreign policy goals stated above, and specifically to support multi-year activities that focus on the following objectives:

1. Develop the capacity of people from Burma to manage the eventual transition to a democratic society;
 - Sub-objective 1.1: Improve organizational behavior, procedures, practices and policies to promote greater efficiency, better governance, and increased civic participation.
 - Sub-objective 1.2: Improve the development and delivery of programs in areas such as community development, education and health services.
 - Sub-objective 1.3: Improve the development and implementation of indigenous training in areas such as health, education and management.
2. Maintain pressure on the ruling Burmese regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), to improve its human rights record; and
3. Encourage the Burmese regime's participation in a process leading toward a peaceful transition to a democratically elected government.

1.3 Methodology

The team used the following methodology as set out in the scope of work:

- a. Review IRC and World Learning/World Education reports to collect information on program activities and results. (pre-departure, in-country as necessary)
- b. Interview IRC and World Learning/World Education program management and field operations staff to hear self-assessments of program impact (Thailand)
- c. Interview IRC and World Learning/World Education sub-grantees, as appropriate, to hear of activities and results, and contributions of assistance to achievement of those results. Focus on how USAID-funded training and technical assistance was used to strengthen capacity and deliver services to targeted beneficiaries in camps (Thailand).
- d. Visits to activity sites to observe activities and interview camp leaders and beneficiaries (Thailand).

(See Appendix B for the itinerary, Appendix C for a list of questions asked, Appendix D for a list of persons and organizations contacted, and Appendix E for a list of NGOs.)

1.4 Questions Asked

In meeting with individuals, community organizations and other organizations we asked the following general questions:

1. Where did you start?
2. Where are you now and how did you get here?
3. What have you done? –(results/impact)
4. What have you learned? –(How have goals been met? Have they changed over time?)
5. Where are gaps that need filling? How do you envision filling those gaps?
6. What do you see as your future role?

1.5 Persons Contacted

The assessment collected information on impact as perceived by individuals and communities through individual and group interviews with the following:

- Nearly 50 camp residents in 5 camps
- 30 camp community leaders
- Over 10 health care workers
- Over 10 teachers and 5 headmasters
- Over 10 International Organizations working along the Thai-Burma Border
- Over 10 sub-grantees

The team interviewed many direct beneficiaries of USAID funded programs including pregnant and nursing women, medic training students and graduates, proposal writing and management trainees, school students, teachers, principals and students training to be teachers, families and students with special needs, and adult literacy students.

Direct observation of health clinics provided insights into the overall health environment. Eye care screening, vitamin A distribution, and the birth of a baby provided opportunities to see how medical workers and patients interacted. Direct observation of schools provided insight into school management as well as an opportunity to see how children and teachers behave in the classroom. Visits to sub-grant projects helped to show both opportunities and challenges faced by NGOs working along the border.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Conflict Background

The struggles in Burma have been two-sided in nature. The current political battle began in the wake of the 1988 popular uprising and the general election that followed two years later. In the latter, the main opposition party – the National League for Democracy (NLD) – defeated the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC, once called SLORC). However, instead of ceding power, the SPDC launched a systematic policy of harassment and manipulation of the NLD and other pro-democracy forces, jailing and bullying many of its members, and placing its leader and Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for eight of the last twelve years.

The second struggle has been rooted primarily in the longstanding center-periphery struggle between the majority ethnic Burmans in the central plains of the country and several of Burma's minority groups in its outer regions.³ At the same time the SPDC launched its crackdown on the democracy movement, it turned its attention towards suppressing ethnic insurgencies that had been smoldering in several outlying states since Burma's independence in 1948. Though ethnic refugees had begun leaving Burma in mid 1980s, major army offensives in the Karen, Karenni, Shan, and Chin states in the early to late 1990s led to massive displacement both inside and out of Burma. Government forces systematically targeted regions through a "Four Cuts Policy," cutting off supplies of food, funds, recruits and information, and essentially destroying the simple survival ability in these areas. Entire populations in these states were forced to abandon their villages and communities and move to relocation centers scattered throughout the country. Many chose to flee the country altogether. While cease-fire agreements have been signed with all but three of the ethnic groups, the SPDC's policy of forced relocation has continued to drive ten of thousands of Burmese from their homes.

2.2 Refugees and the Displaced

The exact number of displaced is difficult to assess. By 2001, an estimated 1.6 million people had fled Burma to Thailand, Bangladesh, India, and China. A further 1.5 million were internally displaced inside

³ Burma's ethnic population breaks down as follows: Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Mon 2%, Indian 2%, and other 5%. See <<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>>.

Burma.⁴ Of the Burmese refugees in Thailand, 118,512 resided in 10 refugee camps scattered along the Burma-Thai border.⁵ That number continues to grow. The most recent statistics place the overall growth rate of the Thai camps at just under 1,000 new refugees a month.⁶ The vast majority of official refugees – around 100,000⁷ – are ethnic Karen, and most reside in the ten camps along the Karen state-Thai border. Another 19,633 official refugees are ethnic Karenni, situated in three camps along the Thai border with Kayah state.⁸

In addition to the Karen and Karenni camps, a large number of ethnic Shan have fled to Thailand to escape SPDC relocation policies and general aggression. Over 100,000 Shan now live among the Thai populations of northern Thailand, according to several sources.⁹ Most survive as illegal migrants working in very poor conditions in the vast fruit industry of northern Thailand. In addition to the Shan, many thousands from other ethnic groups – including Karen, Mon, and ethnic Burmans – have left Burma to escape both the crushing economic conditions as well as political oppression. The Thai government has effectively classified most recent arrivals as “migrant workers,” not as refugees, long defined by Thai authorities as people actively “fleeing from fighting” (see next section). In actuality, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has begun to survey the populations of refugees from Burma outside Thai camps¹⁰ and has concluded that many are “unofficial refugees” under UNHCR’s definition of refugee status,¹¹ which has never been recognized by the Thai government.¹²

The number of Burmese refugees living outside camps now far surpasses the refugee camp population within Thailand. The number of illegal migrants in Thailand is estimated at between 1.5 and 2.0 million.¹³ According to statistics compiled by the World Health Organization (WHO), some 280,000 to 465,000 estimated non-registered migrants from Burma are now living and working in the border provinces of Thailand, while a further 540,000 were officially registered as immigrant workers by the Thai government as of November 2001.¹⁴ Most survive as seasonal agricultural and urban laborers and live in very difficult conditions, often in unofficial camps or communities set up near places of work. They generally reside and work in Thai provinces along the Thai-Burma border.

⁴ As cited in USAID’s 2003 Burma Congressional Budget Justification.

⁵ This figure represents the registered camp population as cited by UNHCR Thailand in December of 2001. The Burmese Border Consortium (BBC) assists 135,064 camp refugees, but this number includes three resettlement sites in the Mon State of Burma. BBC figures may include some refugees not yet registered by MOI/UNHCR.

⁶ As cited in Burmese Border Consortium (BBC). August 2001. *Program Report January to June 2001*.

⁷ The United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) estimates that upwards of 96,000 Karen resided in the 10 camps as of December 2000, while the BBC placed the figure at 102,932 by June of 2001.

⁸ The ten Karen camps: Mae La, Umpiem Mai, Nupo, Mae Kong Kha, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Ban Don Yang, Tham Hin, Bor Wui (not registered), Htee Wa Doh (not registered on the Burma side of the border). The unregistered Chumphon Camp closed recently and its residents were moved to Tham Hin Camp. The three Karenni camps: Ban Kwai, Ban Mai Nai Soi, Ban Mae Surin.

⁹ See the USCR 2001 Thailand Country Report, for example.

¹⁰ Interview January 21, 2002 with Javier de Riedmatten, Deputy Regional Representative for Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, UNHCR.

¹¹ According to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...”

¹² The Thai Government has not signed the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and is therefore not beholden to its rules, definitions, and mandate.

¹³ Estimate provided by Tom Elam.

¹⁴ The WHO South East Asia Region office compiled this data. The population figures of Registered Immigrant Workers are based on data provided by Thailand’s Office of Administration Commission on Irregular Immigrant Workers in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The population figures of Estimated Non-registered Migrants are based on Thai health authority and international health worker estimates.

2.3 Thai Restrictions

The Thai government's definition of refugee status has severely limited activities of and assistance to refugees both within and outside the camps. As mentioned previously, Thailand was not a signatory to the United Nations (UN) Convention on Refugees and has defined "refugee" more strictly than UNHCR. The greatest single effect of this disparity has been the restriction of asylum seekers from receiving official refugee status. According to the BBC, only 49 percent of the 23,229 people seeking official admission to Thailand had been accepted as of June 2001. 29 percent of those applying had been rejected outright and were awaiting "repatriation," in spite of the fact that UNHCR had publicly announced that the "6,728 rejected cases had legitimate fears of persecution."¹⁵

Most unofficial refugees in Thailand simply do not apply for refugee status. A large number work as migrant labor in agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and construction industries. Others, particularly ethnic Karen and Karenni, enter the camps unofficially and do not register with Thai authorities. Significantly, conditions inside the camps for "official" refugees currently surpass those for unofficial refugees and migrant workers outside the camps throughout Thailand. Health and nutrition levels have improved considerably in the last five years, as have the provision of basic education and other services provided by international aid agencies and NGOs. Current camp services and conditions often equal the conditions of nearby Thai villages. However, Thai villages are not receiving any outside assistance, which has drawn the ire of local and national Thai officials, who increasingly implore aid organizations to assist local Thai communities in need.

Thai authorities greatly fear an influx of refugees into the camps from inside Burma as well as from unofficial refugee and migrant worker communities already established inside Thailand. In addition to the growing gaps between the camps and the surrounding Thai communities, authorities also are wary of growing links between Burmese refugees and the Thai economy, both official (the growing migrant worker community) and illegal (the drug trade). Thailand has also attempted to improve relations with the Burmese government, and is increasingly reluctant to show support for anti-SPDC forces. Because of these reasons, the Thai Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and the National Security Council – which officially runs the camps – have severely restricted the kinds of activities that can be provided by aid organizations within the camps. MOI regulations established in 1991 state that international assistance had to be limited to "food, clothing, and medicines," although this was later amended to include basic education and some vocational training. Aid organization staff had to be kept to a minimum, and "no publicity" of activities would be allowed. Any type of program falling outside this strict humanitarian definition, such as income-generation activities, is simply not tolerated. Refugees are not allowed to leave the camps without special permission.

2.4 Organizational "Niches" and the CCSDPT

Perhaps the greatest impact in terms of activities, however, was the Thai government's restriction on which aid organizations could actually assist refugees from Burma, and how they could do it. Originally established to deal with NGO inputs into Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese refugee camp issues within Thailand, the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT) has been coordinating NGO responses to refugees from Burma since the very first Karen refugees streamed over the border in 1984. At the insistence of MOI, one of the primary goals of the CCSDPT has been to avoid duplication of competition of NGO relief and assistance activities, and it has been largely effective in this regard.

The active NGO members of the CCSDPT have carved out relief assistance "niches," both in terms of activities and location. Each NGO has identified a general type of program – within the nutrition, health care, or education realms – in a particular camp and has acted as the only provider of that program in that particular camp. Under the CCSDPT umbrella, some NGOs have coordinated even further. The Burmese

¹⁵ Burmese Border Consortium (BBC). August 2001. *Program Report January to June 2001*, p. 2.

Border Consortium (BBC, formerly the Consortium of Christian Agencies) was formed by six NGOs to harmonize the delivery of food assistance.¹⁶ The BBC currently provides food in all 13 camps (ten inside Thailand, and the three in Mon State, Burma). A variety of NGOs provide health and medical care in different camps, including International Refugee Committee, American Refugee Committee, Aide Medicale Internationale, Malteser Hilfsdienst Auslandsdienst and Medecins Sans Frontieres. In the education sector, meanwhile, camp activities have been divided between World Education/World Learning Consortium, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Zuid Oost Azie Refugee Care (ZOA), the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), and various other organizations. CCSDPT has formed Sub-Committees in the education and health sectors to deepen coordination among participating NGOs, which include organizations not officially members of the CCSDPT. (See Appendix E for list of CCSDPT members.)

Through the systematic division of education, health, and food provision activities, the CCSDPT mechanism has effectively led to an efficient mechanism for communicating and coordinating the programming of limited assistance resources. This division, however, has been primarily quantitative in nature, not qualitative. NGO territorial parceling has not been accompanied by an over-arching ‘quality control’ mechanism for activities. The MOI sanctioned lack of competition has in fact led to a de facto program monopoly. An organization that might be better placed to provide services cannot encroach upon another organization’s programming territory.

3.0 USAID FUNDED ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

This section details activities and impact of humanitarian relief programs managed by the two USAID partner organizations, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and World Education/World Learning Consortium (Consortium). IRC conducts health and community development programs, while Consortium conducts education programs. IRC and Consortium program goals broadly fit under the three sub-objectives under the USG’s first objective for Burma:

1. Develop the capacity of the Burmese people to manage the eventual transition to a democratic society;
 - 1.1 Sub-objective: Improve organizational behavior, procedures, practices and policies to promote greater efficiency, better governance, and increased civic participation.
 - 1.2 Sub-objective: Improve the development and delivery of programs in areas such as community development, education and health services.
 - 1.3 Sub-objective: Improve the development and implementation of indigenous training in areas such as health, education and management.

Highlights of USAID funded health, community development and education programs working to meet sub-objective goals include:

Health (in Karenni camps)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300% increase in medics in camps (15 in 1998, to 67 in 2002) Resulting in a change from 1 medic per 933 people in 1998, to 1 medic per 284 people in 2002 • 98.7% of deliveries in camps attended by trained birth attendant in 2001 • 100% attendance of registered pregnant women at camp weekly ante-natal clinic in 2001 • 99% of children in camp received immunizations in 2001 • Infant mortality rate of 29 deaths/1,000 live births in Karenni camps (Compared to 	

¹⁶ The BBC members have included ZOA (ZOA - Zuid Oost Azie Refugee Care Netherlands), JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service – Asia-Pacific), DIAKONIA (DIAKONIA, Sweden), TBMF (Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship), and (Church of Christ in Thailand – withdrew in 2001), and IRC (International Rescue Committee, which withdrew in 2001).

Infant mortality rate of 25 deaths/1,000 live births in Thailand; and
Infant mortality rate of 78 deaths/1,000 live births in Burma)¹⁷

- Malnutrition (children under 5 weighing less than 80% of the median for their height) is under 2% in all camps

Civil Society

- 40 camp committee members attended 180 hours of management training
- 34 organizations submitted sub-grant proposals after attending proposal writing training; 10 were funded
- 40 camp leaders attended 180 hours of English or Thai Language training

Education

- 70 school directors attended 180 hours of management training
- 90 new teachers trained in 1 and 2 year teacher preparation programs
- 150 adults attended literacy classes in 7 languages

3.1 IRC Activities

International Rescue Committee (AEP-G-00-99-00028-00)

Grant Period: 6/24/1999 – 4/23/2001

Life of Project Period: 6/24/1999 – 11/30/2002

This project assists refugees from Burma, internally displaced and pro-democracy groups in three main ways: enhancement of access to basic preventive and primary health-care, expansion of nutrition and food security, and upgrading capacity and management skills of national NGOs and refugee community leaders. USAID-funded IRC activities are broadly divided into two operational categories: direct assistance to the three Karenni camps in health and community development and a large sub-grant program covering all major sub-sectors that focuses outside refugee camps.

IRC Program Goals

1. To improve access to quality basic preventative and primary health care
2. To improve access to educational services and resources.
3. To improve nutrition and food security
4. To increase capacity, as well as organizational and management skills of national NGO's and refugee community leadership providing basic food, shelter and health services to the target population.

Strategy

- To train and develop refugee technical, administrative and program implementation skills.
- To provide essential inputs (medicine, food, and educational supplies) for program implementation.
- To monitor programs closely by meeting regularly with refugee community leaders, implementers and beneficiaries to assess whether needs are being met.
- To promote refugee rights through advocacy and influencing work with the Thai government at national and local levels, the UNHCR, and the international community.
- To encourage coordination and communication among ethnic and Burmese groups and local NGOs.

Program beneficiaries

IRC direct implementation activities in health and community development are concentrated in the three Karenni camps in Mae Hong Son. Through the sub-grant program they work with refugees inside and outside camps along the Thai-Burma border. They estimate that they serve no less than 50,000 people border wide.

¹⁷ UNICEF Child Mortality End of Decade Database. <http://www.childinfo.org/cmr/revi/db1.htm>

Partners

IRC collaborators include:

- Camp Refugee Committees, and Health and Education Sub-committees
- INGOs and NGOs including Burmese Medical Association (BMA), American Refugee Committee International (ARC), Distance Education Program (DEP), Aide Medicale Internationale (AMI), and Dr. Cynthia's Mae Tao Clinic in health sector, Consortium in education sector
- Various small and medium organizations/groups through sub-grants

3.1.1 IRC Health Activities and Results

A. Background and Evolution

IRC started working in the Thai-Burma border in Karenni refugee camps in 1992 and continue to be the lead health INGO in the Karenni camps today. Over the period of USAID funding from December 1998, IRC program activities have focused on augmenting the Karenni refugee groups' capacity to manage essential services in the camps themselves. Many of the funded activities have therefore concentrated on training and support to a wide spectrum of Karenni community based organizations and groups, including the Karenni Health Department (KnHD) which is in charge of camp clinics.

B. Activities

IRC programs emphasize the need for developing both preventative and curative health care capacity in the camps. Upon completion of IRC health training, participants agree to work in the KnHD camp clinics for a set period of time. IRC provides Health Training for New Medics, Primary Health Care Training and Distance Education for Primary Health Care Training (in Tak Province and therefore not under KnHD supervision.) In 2000, IRC's Maternal and Child Health Program was expanded in the Karenni camps to include other aspects of Reproductive Health. Also, the border-wide Eye Care Program (started in 1997 by other donors) became partially funded by USAID in late 2000.

IRC funds Dr. Cynthia's Mae Tao Clinic in Tak Province and the Emergency Medical Referral Program border-wide through their Sub-Grant Program. Through their Health Small Sub-Grants Program IRC also funds a variety of other health activities both in and out of camps. IRC funds agriculture related projects such as seed distribution and fruit tree gardening programs through their Food Security Small Sub-Grants.

C. Results

IRC health activities are significantly contributing to the IRC goal of improving health capacity and health care. Results of IRC's health program include a 300 percent increase in the number of medics from 1998 levels, and sustained high levels of maternal and child survival (an infant mortality rate of 29 deaths/1,000 live births) on par with surrounding Thai communities. A more detailed look at how the IRC health program is contributing to IRC health goals follows.

Goal 1:

To improve access to quality basic preventative and primary health care

Health Training for New Health Workers

Recognizing the lack of trained medical personnel in the camps, IRC is directly responsible for increasing the capacity of the KnHD to provide quality primary health care to the Karenni refugees as well as internally displaced villagers in Karenni state through cross-border medical teams by training 23 refugees to be medics. By the end of May 2002, approximately 30 more medics will graduate. This brings the total of medics in the camps up to 67, an increase of over 300 percent from their 1998 level of 15 medics (permanently based in the camps.) All medics trained by IRC agree to work for the KnHD for five years. Additionally, IRC has created seven related, quality medical training manuals in English and Burmese. These manuals are starting to form the standard to be adopted in other medical training, such as the Mae Tao Clinic.

When interviewed, one student recalled the terrible health conditions inside Burma, which motivated her to become a medic, including the death of a friend in childbirth. The medic student said that her family is very supportive of her working as a medic in the camps. However, she wants to become a traveling medic. Because of safety reasons, the KnHD only allows men to travel across the border. But the student looks forward to the day when everyone can return to Burma and she can offer healthcare to all.

IRC has also trained a number of other health workers including a 30-person Community Health Worker training, which is currently underway. On only the second day of training, participants showed a high level of enthusiasm and creativity. In one role-play, a man delighted the class by constructing a sunshade for his imaginary child as he took her to be immunized. Actions like this suggest that the trainees will have the confidence to work as health educators in their community. IRC has produced 4 health books for these trainings. As part of their capacity building strategy, IRC involves the KnHD in a Trainee Selection Committee, which is responsible for the development of selection guidelines as well as in the recruitment, screening and selection of trainees.

Reproductive and Child Health Care Program (R/CH)

This program has been instrumental in creating and sustaining appropriate health care services to women and children in the Karenni camps. An important part of the program is the training of R/CH workers in clinics and within the community. IRC created a traditional birth attendant (TBA) book which was used in ten, seven-day TBA trainings. A total of 100 TBAs were trained in the camps. This led to a reported 98.7 percent of deliveries in camp attended by a trained birth attendant in 2001. In a mid-afternoon visit to a health clinic, there were two medics attending the birth of a child. The father stood in the outer room with their son and was overjoyed to see his wife and new baby daughter when the medics called him in. He expressed a high level of confidence in the medical care available in the camp. Community understanding of the importance of R/CH can be seen in 2001 reports of 100 percent attendance of registered pregnant women at weekly antenatal clinics and of reports that 99 percent of children in camp received immunizations.¹⁸ This results in maintained high levels of maternal and child survival.

D. Performance Monitoring

Students in healthcare trainings must pass an exam to receive their certificate. IRC coordinates with other medical NGOs along the border to standardize their health curriculum. Clinics are monitored by the KnHD, the refugee staff, as well as IRC.

E. Indicators

IRC health programs aim to improve access to quality basic preventive and primary health care. One measure of this goal is the proportion of the target group having physical access to services. All camp residents now have access to health clinics and the health status of the population is good. Conditions in Karenni camps exceed Sphere minimum standards for humanitarian assistance (shelter, water/sanitation, nutrition, and health care).¹⁹

Health and nutrition data is easy to collect in the camps. IRC has identified a number of indicators, such as “improved quality of R/CH services in camps” which are clear and easy to track over time. Indicators show that the camps are at a similar level to the surrounding Thai communities. In Karenni camps the infant mortality rate is 29 deaths/1,000 live births compared with 25/1,000 in Thai populations and 78/1,000 in Burma.²⁰ Malnutrition (children under 5 weighing less than 80 percent of the median for their height) is under 2 percent in all camps. This is well under Sphere thresholds which suggest that

¹⁸ Immunizations were for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), measles, mumps, rubella, tuberculosis, and polio.

¹⁹ For more information see Sphere website at <http://www.sphereproject.org/>

²⁰ UNICEF Child Mortality End of Decade Database. <http://www.childinfo.org/cmr/revi/db1.htm>

malnutrition over 10 percent is an emergency. IRC reports a sustained reduction in mortality and morbidity in camps over time.

3.1.2 IRC Community Development Activities and Results

A. Background and Evolution

IRC's long-term strategy is to hand over operations to the Karenni refugees where possible. In order to strengthen the capacity of people to meet their own needs, IRC set up the Community Development Program (CDP) in 1996. This program has seen significant changes over the last few years. With increased financial and human resources available, the CDP has been able to increase its reach further in the refugee community. IRC is one of the few programs working in capacity building along the border.²¹

IRC gradually began to focus on the needs outside the camps. They realized that sub-grants would be a good way to extend their reach and the number and variety of people served. Also, they felt that it would be a good way to try to improve local civil organization's ability to provide services. IRC recognizes that different sizes of organizations have different needs and operates a sub-grant program to larger organizations and a small sub-grant program hand in hand with capacity development support to newer, smaller organizations.

B. Activities

Through direct implementation, the CDP has continued to support both official camp organizations (KnHD, KnRC, KnED etc) and those set up by the community (KnWO, KnYO, KCEDG, and many others.) The focus has necessarily been broad, focusing on skills training, financial support, and materials provision.

CDP's support of the Karenni Health Department (KnHD) encompassed clarification of the KnHD structure, associated health worker job descriptions and the provision of management and supervisory training. The CDP has also been extensively involved in supporting camp based CBO's such as the Karenni Woman's Organization (KnWO). When the KnWO wanted to educate women about HIV/AIDs, IRC was able to offer health educators for the training.

IRC administers sub-grants in health, education, food-security, and capacity building. Typically, IRC assistance focuses on setting up clearer program goals and objectives, activities and outputs and informal training on proposal/report writing, monitoring, and accounting for funds. Sub-grant recipients include groups inside and outside the camp, and represent a variety of ethnicities. The sub-grant program has the largest budget of IRC's USAID funded programs.

C. Results:

IRC community development activities are significantly contributing to the IRC goal of increasing capacity. Results of IRC's community development program include increasing the capacity of local staff, Karenni Refugee and Health camp committees, and community based organizations. After a proposal writing training, 34 organizations submitted proposals through IRC's sub-grant program, and 10 were funded.

The IRC sub-grant program is significantly contributing to IRC's goals of improving capacity, health, education and food security. Highlights of the sub-grant program include the following: increasing Camp Committees' ability to use creative methods to meet the needs in their community; increasing opportunities for youth to learn how to lead to eventually become the next generation of camp leaders; providing medical services to refugees inside Burma where medical needs are overwhelming and help is scarce; increasing tolerance by encouraging a local CBO to advance communication between various

²¹ Other programs do exist, though they tend to be limited in resources, and thus in scope. For example, programs tend to be sector-specific (record keeping for camp-based schools) or gender specific (organizational development training to women's groups).

ethnic groups; and increasing refugee agricultural and nutrition skills. A more detailed look at how IRC programs are contributing to IRC community development and sub-grant goals follows.

a) Capacity

Goal 4:

To increase capacity, as well as organizational and management skills of national NGOs and refugee community leadership providing basic food, shelter and health services to the target population.

Staff

Over time, CDP Karenni staff have increased their capacity to provide community development training with moderate supervision needs. This enables IRC to maintain CDP activities in the camps while at the same time focus on expanding support to other refugee focused organizations along the border.

Traditional Leadership Structures

CDP is actively supporting KnRC's goal of self-leadership through capacity building activities. With CDP support, KnRC members designed, approved and implemented job descriptions for all key positions. Three camp committees (40 people) received 180 hours of management training over 10 months. To facilitate communication, 40 camp committee staff also received 180 hours of Thai/English Language Training. Camp leaders who participated in the trainings reported that they are now able to organize camp activities more smoothly and efficiently. INGO expatriate staff have remarked on the improvement of communication with camp leaders who have taken IRC sponsored English lessons.

After community members attended an IRC Project Development Training which covered project planning and proposal writing, 34 groups submitted project proposals. Of those, 10 were funded through IRC's sub-grant program. KnRC camp leaders were involved in the grant evaluation process and encouraged to use the approach to find and meet community needs in the future.

Highlights of IRC sub-grant program include a proposal by the KnRC in Camp Two to do battery recharging. Previously, the service cost twice as much and was a two-hour walk away. With no electricity in the camps, children benefit from the batteries by being able to study at night. One third of the income pays for the gas to run the generator, one-third pays the cost of labor, and one-third is reserved for the KnRC fund for the poor. While they only recharge about 30 batteries each month, it is a sign that the KnRC are thinking of creative ways to meet the needs in their community.

CBOs in camps

A camp based CBO, The Karenni Youth Organization (KnYO), recently completed a Library and Learning Center with funding through an IRC sub-grant. When visited, the center had about twenty youth reading and talking. Youth reported that there were few other places to go in the camp where they could be with their friends. They have ambitious plans for future activities and represent a new generation of camp leaders.

b) Health

Goal 1:

To improve access to quality basic preventative and primary health care

Health

Recognizing IRC's expertise in health, the largest number of sub-grantees are in the health area. Through health sub-grants, IRC funds a variety of health projects including Emergency Medical Referrals for Pro-Democracy Students Border Wide (approximately 100 referrals in 2001), to Primary Health Care Training at Dr. Cynthia's Mae Tao Clinic (a health assistant training of 40 students is currently underway.) An IRC small health sub-grant funds Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment's (WEAVE)

production of health education materials in Mon, Shan, Burmese and Karen languages. Last year over 25,000 health education materials were designed, produced and distributed border wide.

Using sub-grants, IRC is able to reach refugees inside of Burma. The Pha Hite Clinic in Karen State is a recipient of an IRC health sub-grant. IRC helps to provide medicines and clinical supplies, TBA trainings, health education materials and health awareness activities. The Clinic medics and mobile team reach a beneficiary population of approximately 7,000 living in 28 villages (mainly ethnic Karen living in the hills). This population is highly mobile due to SPDC presence in the area, however for the past 18 months the Clinic has remained secure enough to allow health workers to focus on both preventative and curative health care. The clinic saw more than 10,000 patients last year. In the last six months they report a notable increase in the number of people who come to the clinic before their illness/disease becomes severe and/or chronic. Health workers estimate that the infant and maternal mortality rate is over 100 per 1000 live births in Burma. To decrease this rate, the Clinic trained over 80 TBAs last year. The Clinic works with the Mae Tao Clinic, Backpack Health Worker Team and, for security reasons, the Karen National Union (KNU). This is one of the few health programs that accesses internally displaced persons along the Burmese border, where medical needs are overwhelming and help is scarce.

c) Education

Goal 2:

To improve access to educational services and resources.

Education

A typical small education sub-grant is between \$1000-\$5000 and covers the purchase of a variety of educational items from blackboards to computers. An education sub-grant helps the Karen Teachers Working Group to operate a Mobile Teacher Training Program that accesses refugee populations inside Burma. Another educational sub-grantee is Children's Light Publication Group (CLPG). Based outside camps in Mae Sot, this local NGO is comprised of teachers and artists who design and develop a monthly cartoon book in Burmese to encourage children living in refugee camps and along the border to enjoy reading and to exchange ideas through art. With the help of IRC, CLPG has increased magazine distribution to 5,000 copies per month in and out of Karen and Karenni camps along the Thai-Burma border. It was encouraging to hear CLPG artists speak of having to broaden their ethnic representations due to reader response. Students of all ethnicities are encouraged to send in their art and to read the magazine.

d) Food Security

Goal 3:

To improve nutrition and food security

Food Security

IRC has funded a few food security and nutrition sub-grants. Currently, IRC is working with the BBC and Consortium to help the Karenni Community Agriculture and Nutrition program (CAN) to implement Phase I of their sub-grant proposal by providing technical assistance. Phase I of CAN is the training of trainers in agriculture and nutrition. IRC is funding Phase II and III of CAN through a sub-grant. In Phase II, trainers go out into their communities and share their knowledge and skills. In Phase III the project will be evaluated. While still early in the project, there is considerable interest among NGOs to help camp dwellers to diversify their diet as BBC has found that food rations are marginally deficient in certain areas. Program partners are working together to help CAN to develop a strong program which will benefit many camp residents both now and when they return to Burma.

The CAN project aims to help community members achieve sustainable increases in food production using local resources and to educate people about how to get the most nutrition out of their food. For example, CAN encourages camp dwellers to create vertical gardens with plants such as papaya which

contain vitamin A. Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children and raises the risk of disease and death from severe infections.²² CAN also promotes alternatives to the traditional slash and burn farming, promoting sustainable soil conservation techniques which can be used when refugees return to Burma.

D. Program Monitoring

Program monitoring of community development activities and sub-grants is a continual challenge. This is because the sub-grantees are often unfamiliar with monitoring and reporting requirements. Thus, IRC staff have a very time consuming task of trying to educate grant recipients of the role and importance of monitoring, while also helping recipients to fulfill their program goals.

IRC faces the challenge of explaining to sub-grantees why their standards are more exacting than other donors, including many religious groups, who do not have USAID reporting requirements. IRC requires sub-grantees to submit quarterly reports. Until recently IRC withheld 10 percent of the grant amount until all reports were turned in. While this encouraged the completion of reports, it often led to a cash flow problem in smaller organizations. Recognizing this burden, IRC has recently changed their requirements and has eliminated the 10 percent withholding. This illustrates the effort IRC is making to improve and strengthen their sub-grant program. Currently, time spent with financial and implementation monitoring leaves little time for IRC to measure impact of sub-grant programs. Measuring impact is especially difficult with programs carried out inside of Burma as it can be dangerous for local staff to even attempt to travel there.

E. Indicators

Current measurements capture the output level of activities. While the number of people attending trainings can easily be measured, it is much more challenging to try to evaluate trainees competence in finance, planning, monitoring, implementing and reporting once they return to their organizations. A top-down style of leadership persists in camp organizations, hindering the speed of change.

3.2 World Education/ World Learning Consortium Activities

World Education/World Learning Consortium (AEP-G-00-99-00024-00)

Grant Period: 6/24/1999 – 4/23/2001

Life of Project Period: 6/24/1999 – 9/30/2002

Since 1999, World Education/ World Learning Consortium (Consortium) has worked in collaboration with other NGOs to support the development of a viable and sustainable education system which would be transferable when refugees from Burma feel safe enough to return to their homeland. In the six refugee camps where the Consortium is working, the project develops and supports the production of education materials for use by schools, provides training for school administrators and teachers, and assists teachers and administrators with curriculum development. In all 10 refugee camps, the Consortium contributes to the payment of stipends for 1,045 refugee teachers. Consortium also is piloting a small out-of-camp program implementing Integrated Pest Management education in local Thai schools at the request of local and national Thai officials.

Consortium Program Goals:

1. To develop the capacity of refugees to define and manage their own educational and social systems, in preparation for returning to their homeland
2. To prepare school principals for an active management and educational role in their schools
3. To support refugee teachers in planning and delivering effective lessons
4. To develop reading materials reflecting the refugees' culture and interests

²² <http://www.who.int/nut/vad.htm>

5. To provide practical pre-service teacher training and supplemental in-service teacher training, as needed or requested

Program beneficiaries:

Consortium staff is on-site in Mae La, Umphiem Mai and Nupo Camps as well as the 3 refugee camps in Mae Hong Son province. Program beneficiaries include 60,000 students in camps border wide. There is a small but growing group of external refugees around Mae Sot who are benefiting from Consortium's Border Communities Program.

Partners

Consortium collaborators include:

- Camp Refugee Committees, including Camp Health and Education Sub-committees
- INGOs and NGOs including Jesuit Refugee Society (JRS), ZOA Refugee Care/ Australian Baptist World Aid (ABWAid), Taipei Overseas Peace Service (TOPS), Handicap International (HI), Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Aide Medicale Internationale (AMI), Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA), International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment (WEAVE).

3.2.1 Consortium Education Activities and Results

A. Background and Evolution

Consortium began investigating ways in which it could help meet the education needs of refugees from Burma in 1998. Consortium formally began operating in 1999 in Mae Sot and Mae La, and in 2000 in the Mae Hong Son area in Umphiem Mai and Nupo Camps. Under the CCSDPT umbrella, Consortium works to complement education programs already running in camps and makes the establishment of good relationships with other organizations working along the border a high priority. Consortium's programs have expanded from pre-service training, materials development and school director training, into a more formal Teacher Preparation Course (Tak Province) and Teacher Training College (Mae Hong Son Province). Reacting to changing needs and opportunities, they have also begun programs in special education, adult literacy and curriculum development.

Recognizing the high levels of need and reacting to pressure from local government officials, Consortium recently started a small out-of-camp program implementing Integrated Pest Management education in local schools. A premise of this program is that change can happen through children.

B. Activities

Consortium works to strengthen the educational structure of each camp they work in. This means that they work through the Karenni Education Department (KnED) in Karenni Camps and the Karen Education Department (KED) in Karen Camps. Each local camp also has its own education committee and set group of NGOs to work with. Therefore, Consortium programs necessarily vary from camp to camp.

Consortium works in coordination and collaboration with Jesuit Refugee Society (JRS) in the Karenni camps. Recent Consortium activities include a *Survey of Karenni Schools on the Thai-Burma Border*, the development of primary school curricula in math, geography, social studies and English, and the establishment of a Teacher Training College. In the Karen camps, Consortium works with ZOA, TOPS, and HI, among other organizations, to meet the needs of each individual camp. Activities include provision of teacher stipends, teacher training and support, school director training, material development, adult literacy and special education. Creation of a Teacher Preparation Course is underway.

Currently, school director training is one of the main Consortium activities. The year-long school director training course covers over 30 topics and provides each participant with 180 hours of training. Over the year, participants come together once a month for four days of instruction. After completion of the

certificate, Consortium also provides 20 hours of follow-up training over the school break. JRS uses Consortium's school director course materials to hold school director training in the Karenni camps.

C. Results

Consortium education activities are significantly contributing to the Consortium goal of increasing educational capacity. Results of Consortium's education programs include increasing the capacity of local staff, camp education committees, school directors and teachers. Highlights of the education program include the following: increasing NGO coordination through the creation of an education newsletter; school director training for over 70 participants which is increasing the ability of school directors to evaluate their own school programs to come up with suggestions for improvement and also is developing a new generation of camp leaders; teacher preparation and training course for over 100 people which is increasing the number of trained teachers in camps; special education programs which are increasing the community's recognition of the value and dignity of all people; adult literacy classes which are training over 150 students in seven languages and helping to change attitudes about the value of education among parents; material development which is increasing the ability of teachers to engage students; teacher support and in service which is increasing the knowledge, skills and abilities of teachers in the classroom; and Integrated Pest Management Program for 130 students representing 8 ethnicities which is increasing agricultural knowledge and skills to reduce farming costs and improve the environment. A more detailed look at how Consortium programs are contributing to Consortium education goals follows.

a) Capacity

Goal 1:

To develop the capacity of refugees to define and manage their own educational and social systems, in preparation for returning to their homeland.

Staff

Training of local staff is a Consortium priority. Recently, a Consortium employee left to take a higher paying job. While this was a setback in their goal of turning the program over to local staff, Consortium was pleased that their training helped the individual to grow and develop skills as the former employee continues to work to improve the community in their new position. Consortium is currently identifying new local staff who can be trained to take over the program.

Traditional Leadership Structure

After extensive discussions with Consortium and Handicap International, the Karen Education Department (KED) included special education as part of their organizational structure and included this on their organizational chart. This was a first step toward the KED's recognition of the value and dignity of all people in society. Though more work can be done to support diversity, this also symbolized a move away from elitism when the KED recognized that all people have the right to education. It should be noted that the KED is the education branch of the Karen Government in exile. This means that in addition to representing the 100,000 Karen in camps, the KED also claims to represent over four million Karen inside Burma. Therefore, the impact of this recognition is potentially far reaching.

NGO Coordination

Consortium is chairing the CCSDPT educational sub-committee this year and has taken the lead in creating a newsletter to share information among education NGOs. In the four months since 30 copies of the first issue of the CCSDPT newsletter were produced and distributed by the Consortium director, requests for copies now exceed 300 copies per month. Five NGOs and the KRC have contributed to the newsletter and at least 4 NGOs have reported that articles have been useful in their work.

b) School Directors

Goal 2:

School Directors

To date, approximately 70 school directors and assistant directors have taken Consortium's School Director training course to receive a certificate. Seventeen other participants attended trainings on an irregular basis. Last year, 32 participants attended follow-up trainings over school break. This year, 34 participants have signed up for the same training and 100 percent (all 32) of last year's school directors stated that they are encouraging their teachers to attend Consortium's school-break trainings for teachers.

During interviews with the assessment team, trainers indicated that they observe an improvement in the ability of participants to express themselves and to work together effectively in a group as school director training progresses. Participants also report feeling more confident. They report an increased ability to evaluate their own school programs and come up with suggestions for improvement. A school director who had difficulty with a large number of absent teachers cited how empowering the concept of delegation was to him. He realized that he could still have power without having to do all the work himself. By giving meaningful tasks to his staff and listening to their ideas, staff attendance improved.

Community

As many school directors are young, they have great potential to be the next generation of camp leaders.²³ Karen school directors overwhelmingly cite the lack of understanding by the Karen educational leadership as the biggest road-block to the development of better schools in the camps. The school directors leave the Consortium training empowered to initiate change in their schools, but they are not provided as many opportunities to do this as they would like. This is because the camp leadership has a very top down structure. Although school directors are trained in participatory management, they themselves are under an Education Department and Committee that does not use this style of management. It is hoped that over time young school directors will move into camp leadership positions and thus change the leadership style in the camps.

e) Teachers

Goal 3:

To support refugee teachers in planning and delivering effective lessons

Curriculum Development

Consortium designed and managed an eight-step curriculum design process which enabled the KnED and local educators to develop a new English, math and geography curriculum for Karenni elementary students. Approximately 6,000 students are now using this new curriculum. Consortium encouraged Karenni educators to form a curriculum committee and go through the following steps for developing curriculum: 1) determine aims; 2) evaluate existing material; 3) select an appropriate format; 4) produce materials; 5) field test materials to evaluate; 6) make changes to new materials; 7) implement new materials; 8) evaluate and revise.

Many textbooks in use in Karenni camps were based on books dated before 1942 from the British Colonial Period in Burma. The curriculum development committee looked at materials in use in Karen camps and at Thai government textbooks. Consortium also provided international examples such as an assortment of textbooks from Australia. When deciding what to include in the math curriculum, for example, the committee worked to choose between analogue and digital time, metric and English customary units and how to deal with money. They decided to teach analogue time, metric units and to

²³ Consortium's *Survey of Karenni Schools on the Thai-Burma border* (page 41) states that 58% of Karenni head teachers are under age 30. Similar percentages can be expected from Karen camps.

not include a unit on money. Language also proved to be a contentious issue.²⁴ In the end, Consortium produced textbooks, workbooks and teacher manuals in English. Teachers and students report that they are pleased with the new curriculum and new textbooks as they are more conducive to a student-centered learning approach.

Teacher Preparation Course (TPC)/ Teacher Training Course

Recognizing both the need for trained teachers and the need to offer continued education opportunities to recent graduates, Consortium responded to the request of the KED by piloting a 2-year teacher-training course in Mae La. In year 1, students focus on upgrading their subject knowledge and in year 2, students focus on teacher skill development, with student teaching opportunities. In 2000, Consortium offered instruction to 38 students leaving high school. In 2001, there were 35 Year 1 students and 26 Year 2 students in the Mae La pilot program. The first class graduated in March 2002. TPC are being planned for Umphiem Mai and Nupo camps starting in June, 2002. Camp leaders stressed the need for a TPC in each camp to not only offer opportunities to students leaving school, but also to help increase the number of trained teachers in each camp. One TPC student reported that she had thought hitting students was the way to encourage students to learn. So she was very glad to learn ways to encourage students without intimidation and violence in TPC training.

JRS and Consortium jointly sponsor a one-year teacher-training course in the Mae Hong Son camps. Planning began in early 2001 with instruction beginning in May with 30 participants. Initially, many participants were less than enthusiastic about teaching. Many were in the course only because they were not accepted in the medic training or special English courses. However, after student teaching, the level of enthusiasm of the participants greatly increased. All 30 students are now busy making materials to use when they graduate and become teachers in June. Upon completion of the course all participants are contracted to teach in the camp schools for two years, thus helping the KnED meet their goal of providing quality education to all camp children. There have been positive responses from supervising practicum teachers and a strong interest to secure student teachers for their own schools upon graduation.

School Break Training

During a visit to a camp school, the assessment team observed a third grade class with 30 students. All eyes were on the drawing of the banana at the front of the class. When the teacher asked if it was an apple, the students gleefully told her “no, it is a banana.” The teacher trainer watching nearby smiled as she pointed out that the teacher had made great effort to use child-centered teaching methods in her class after attending a Consortium school-break training. Consortium offers a certificate to all those who attend training. A second certificate is offered to those teachers who invite Consortium trainers to come see them teach in their school and evaluate them on a variety of teaching competencies.

²⁴ It is interesting to note how and why English was chosen as the language of instruction. It brings up the wider issue of the need of a broader consensus among donors on how to best address linguistic issues. This is not an isolated case, but also experienced by IRC and by other groups working with Karenni, Karen and other refugees along the Thai-Burma border. Consortium’s *Survey of Karenni Schools on the Thai-Burma border* (page 17) reports that 81% of camp residents find speaking Karenni easy. However, residents report a division in which of the three Karenni scripts they know: Camp Karenni (53%), Romanized Karenni (31%) and Karen-like Karenni (15%). Thus, without agreement on a Karenni script, the curriculum committee decided not to develop new textbooks in Karenni. And while 43% of the residents report speaking Burmese is easy, the committee also rejected Burmese as the ‘language of the oppressor.’ Only 19% report speaking Karen is easy and it, too was rejected. English was chosen even though only 2% of the residents reported that speaking it is easy because it is seen as an international language. There are certainly many benefits to using English, such as the availability of a wide variety of supplementary materials and the ability of graduates to communicate with the international community. Yet, as only 10% of Karenni teachers in camps report that it is easy to speak English, this suggests the need for a dialog to develop a broader consensus among the donors on how to best address these types of linguistic issues.

Special Education

While only 3 percent of Consortium's USAID budget, special education is an area where Consortium is pioneering new and innovative activities in the camps. These activities are leading to a growing recognition by camp residents of the value and dignity of all people. Several children with severe disabilities are attending mainstream school for the first time. The deaf population have formed their own group and are working to develop Karen sign language. This has led to educational opportunities, group identity and community acceptance and awareness of people with disabilities. The parents of children with disabilities now believe that their child can develop and are encouraging them to reach their full potential. (See Appendix F for more complete description.)

Adult Literacy

Consortium supports adult literacy community classes in seven different languages: Sgaw Karen, P'wo Karen, Burmese, Urdu, Arabic, English and Thai. Consortium held a training of trainers for 4 trainers who then trained adult literacy teachers in 3 refugee camps. Currently there are over 150 students attending these adult literacy classes, including a group of Muslims in Nupo.

The atmosphere of the adult literacy classes in camps is welcoming. While the vast majority of participants are female, the interview team spoke with a man who was learning Karen in Nupo. He said that he hopes to send all five of his children to school and he would like to be able to follow their progress so he decided to take an adult literacy class, even though he was the only man in the class. His reason for taking an adult literacy class was similar to many women whom the team interviewed. Participants told of a changing attitude among many camp parents who initially did not see the value of education for themselves or for their children. Consortium, along with other education NGOs, have worked to improve schools and to encourage camp residents to value education.

d) Materials

Goal 4:

To develop reading materials reflecting the refugees' culture and interests

Material Development

Consortium has developed and produced a variety of teaching aid prototypes using simple materials that would be available to teachers upon their return to Burma. Big Books, used in kindergarten for a variety of competencies such as word identification and predicting stories, have proven so popular that other organizations have expressed interest in how to make and use them. Consortium has produced a series of videos to demonstrate the use of Big Books and is distributing them to other education NGOs in Thailand.

e) Supplemental

Goal 5:

To provide practical pre-service teacher training and supplemental in-service teacher training, as needed or requested

Teacher Support

In addition to pre-service and school break trainings, Consortium is on the ground in all camps it works in to be able to provide follow-up support for teachers year around. Consortium and its partners staff and run drop-in centers where teachers can get supplies and help in designing materials after school. Now, many teachers draw and use games in class as they see that students respond well to these activities.

Border Communities Project

While still in the early stages of the project, Consortium has assisted 19 schools outside of camps in nearby Thai villages as of December 2001. This includes the building of toilets, water systems and

classrooms, as well as the provision of agricultural tools and seeds as well as fish and poultry. School improvements in Mae Usu benefit the children and teachers, as well as village adults who use the school for their night language classes run by the local temple. Consortium has taught IPM curriculum to over 130 students representing 8 ethnicities which is increasing agricultural knowledge and skills to reduce farming costs and improve the environment. Other NGOs have expressed interest in the project and have requested data Consortium collected in their village surveys.

D. Performance Monitoring

For students participating in Consortium teacher training there is a monitoring system in place for awarding certificates. There is also a certificate two process in which teachers who have participated in basic trainings can earn a second certificate by inviting Consortium representatives to observe their classes to verify they are using what they learned in training. Consortium uses questionnaires to monitor and follow-up school director trainings. The KnED and the KED monitor teachers in schools. Consortium staff monitor special education and adult literacy classes as well as IPM activities.

E. Indicators

Indicators for education in camps is still a work in progress. The current situation is difficult to assess. Currently, only quantitative indicators exist. This is a new program and time is needed to develop qualitative indicators. The KnED is working with Consortium and other education NGOs to develop and ratify teacher competencies.

With the completion of the Karenni camps survey, tracking changes over time will become easier. An update to a three-year old ZOA education survey in the Karen camps later this year will also help to monitor changes.

Border wide certain indicators show improvement. For example, school attendance by students and teachers has improved in the camps. However, this data does not capture any change in the quality of the educational experience. Using data such as percentage of students who pass is also inaccurate as the tests themselves have changed over time. The problem remains that the goal of education in the camps is to prepare the population with the knowledge and skills needed once they return to their homeland, yet it is unknown when they will be able to return to Burma. And there is nothing for the majority of graduates to do in camp once they complete class 10.

4.0 EMERGING ISSUES

The assessment team found that the current needs of refugees inside and outside the camps are different. Inside camps, the most pressing issue is that of the “idle youth”, while outside of camps refugees need access to primary health care, water and sanitation and basic education. Assuming that the USG will continue to make the same amount of funds available under the Burma earmark., it is important to consider the implications of funding priorities as they relate to both refugees in and out of camps.

4.1. Current/Future Needs

This assessment looked at the current needs of refugees from Burma, both in camps and outside of camps. For the purpose of this evaluation, it is assumed that current needs will continue into the near future.²⁵

4.1.1 Camps

The greatest challenge in the camps is the lack of activities for “**idle youth.**” One-third of the refugees in camps are school aged, that is between the ages of 5 and 15. Each year, over 1000 youth leave school in camps and find they have nowhere to go and nothing to do. They join a camp “workforce” in which nearly three quarters of families have no income at all.²⁶ Programs to address this need must take into

²⁵ See 1.2 Assumptions

²⁶ Consortium’s *Survey of Karenni Schools on the Thai-Burma border*, page 15. Similar numbers can be expected from Karen camps.

consideration Thai government restraints, including restricted movement outside camps, capped education levels and prohibition of income generation activities. Another consideration is the division of work camp by camp by NGOs going through the MOI mandated CCSDPT process.

Discussions highlighted that the need for **teacher training**²⁷ and **health worker training** will continue into the near future. There is still an unmet need for trained educators and health workers in the camps. There is also a need for follow-up trainings as it takes time and effort to change attitudes and practices.

There is also a need for more **vocational training** in the camps. The Thai government recently lessened their restrictions on vocational training in the camps. However, the ban on income generation activities remains. The NGOs have communicated their vocational training plans and these are being coordinated through CCSDPT. Part of the process will be to also determine vocational training efforts that have been taking place or are planned by camp-based organizations. (See Education Matrix and Notes on Vocational Training in Camps in Appendix G.)

Harmonization of trainings to enable students to be employed upon return to Burma is also an issue of concern. Distance Education Program (DEP), an IRC sub-grantee, is piloting a third country certification of current trainings as one way of approaching this issue. Experience in other refugee situations, such as Cambodian refugees in Thai camps, has shown that there is a possibility that once the refugees return to their own country, the trainings they received in camps are not recognized. As the goal of USAID funded education and health worker trainings is both short and long term, this is an area that should not be overlooked.

4.1.2 Mixed (In and Out of Camps)

The **sub-grants** program is an effective way to **access diverse communities**, as people know their own assets and needs best.

The sub-grants program has evolved over time. **Past problems** include issues such as bureaucracy, accounting, funding cycle, philosophical differences, culture clashes. The **interaction** between IRC and Sub-grantees has strengthened the sub-grant program and problems are being addressed. Consortium, with the support of IRC, has also expressed interest in taking a more active role in education related sub-grants in the near future. Now is a good opportunity for USAID to **re-think** the goals and structure of the sub-grant program to address issues such as size and expertise of partners. Is there a way to make the process easier for smaller organizations to access the sub-grant program without laborious grant writing and reporting requirements? An issue of note is how to use sub-grants in the future to encourage groups to seek new opportunities to improve inter-ethnic coordination and cooperation.

4.1.3 Outside Camps (in Thailand and Burma)

Due mainly to Thai government restrictions, refugees in Thailand outside the camps are currently receiving few if any services. Therefore the gap between refugees living in camps and outside camps is growing. There is overwhelming **awareness** of the high level of unmet need outside camps. Discussions with INGOs, CBOs, Camp Committee members, IRC, and Consortium all list needs of communities outside the camps as the most pressing refugee concern. This includes needs of IDPs inside of Burma as

²⁷ In the *Survey of Karenni Schools on the Thai-Burma Border*, over 60% of teachers report having less than 8 years of formal education. Only 13% of teachers report that they had experience teaching before coming to the refugee camps. These figures make clear the need for teacher training in the camps. And while 93% of teachers report having attended at least one training offered by JRS or Consortium, only 45% of those teachers report that they changed their teaching practices after they had attended training and received necessary materials. A staggering 98% of teachers reported that they felt the need for more training and support to use new teaching methods in the classroom. While the survey was of Karenni camps, it can be assumed that similar results can be found in Karen camps.

well as the needs of external refugees in Thailand. These highly vulnerable out-of-camp refugees need access to some level of subsistence income, primary health care and basic education.

There is a slow but growing **acknowledgement** of external migrant needs by certain Thai authorities (especially by local officials working in the health sector.) The greatest **challenge** for donors and implementing agencies is how to identify and reach these external populations. IRC sub-grantees and Consortium's BCP are good first attempts to meet this need. But they are only a small first step.

4.2. Funding Levels

This assessment assumes that the USG will continue to make the same amount of funds available under the Burma earmark.²⁸ Current IRC and Consortium programs are focused inside camps, with small efforts outside camps. Recognizing a fixed level of funding, it is important to consider the implications for camp refugees if large amounts of resources are shifted to programs outside camps. Equally important is recognizing the implications for external refugees of the status quo.

4.2.1 Implications of large-scale decreases of assistance to refugees inside camps

There are still many **unmet needs** in the camps. First, there is a gradual shift away from basic relief, to more long-term **capacity development** related needs. It is important to have realistic expectations, remembering that the majority of refugees in camps come from remote, farming villages and have little or no formal education. Secondly, there is a need for **standardization** of services among camps. Not all camps currently have access to all programs, such as teacher-training schools. Thirdly, there is a need to upgrade and **harmonize** current trainees' skills to enable them to work once they return to Burma. Fourthly, there is a need for refresher training for teachers and health workers to **follow up** and strengthen new skills.

Additionally, it is important to recognize that refugees in the camp are **dependent** on donors and have few other options available to them. Current USAID partners would need significant **lead-time** to find other funding or discontinue programs. It is important not to undervalue the time and energy current USAID partners have spent in building **relationships** with camp members and other NGOs. It would take a long time for new organizations to build similar relationships.²⁹

4.2.2 Implication of current funding levels on external refugees (outside camps):

Currently, there is a high level of **unmet needs** among refugees living outside the camps. This external refugee **population is increasing** in Thailand. The living and working conditions of these refugees is worsening **relative** to camps. There is also a great unmet need among many ethnic groups (i.e. Shan) who are not in the current refugee camps.

There are relatively **few donors** addressing needs outside of camps. And the assistance and coordination is not as strong as inside camps. (CCSDPT does not coordinate those working with refugees outside camps.) The greatest **challenge** for donors and implementing agencies is how to identify and reach these external populations.

²⁸ See 1.2 Assumptions

²⁹ Agreements in place between the KRC, KnRC and CCSDPT members require that any organization planning activities along the border must do the following: a) the proposal needs to be discussed with the relevant refugee committee authorities to get their approval for the project; b) the proposal needs to be presented to the CCSDPT and the relevant sub-committee for review, to determine whether the proposal would duplicate the work of others. Sub-committee members vote to accept or reject the proposal or refer it back to the organization to make changes; c) if accepted, the proposal is forwarded to MOI with a recommendation that MOI approve the project. MOI then conducts its own review of the project and only then will MOI issue project staff with camp passes, facilitate visas, etc. Project proposals of all existing NGOs go through this same process in October of each year.

5.0 LESSONS LEARNED

5.1 Best Practices:

In reviewing activities and results, it becomes clear that IRC and Consortium share certain philosophies in their work:

- working themselves out of a job (an ‘**extinction philosophy**’)
- working with **traditional leadership structures** (camp committees) to assess and meet community needs
- working with **community-based organizations** (CBOs) in activity implementation
- working to increase **local staff capacity** to turn programs over to them in the future
- working to encourage the **next generation** of leaders in all fields

5.2 Findings

The following are ten findings from this assessment:

- 1) Program constraints due to Thai and US **policies and definitions**
- 2) Relatively high levels of NGO coordination can lead to **niches** that can be an effective use of limited funds
- 3) **Evolution** of assistance from relief to capacity development
- 4) Both IRC and Consortium seek to **work themselves out of the job** (ownership, human capacity & civil society building, and sustainability)
- 5) “**Idle Youth**” in camps have few options (vocationally training and certification logical programmatic approach to current and future needs. However, niches and Thai government restrictions hinder new programs in these areas)
- 6) USAID **sub-grant** program good but could be improved
- 7) Growing recognition of unmet **needs outside camps**, but challenges and obstacles of how to access/address (current efforts a drop in the bucket)
- 8) Large-scale **decrease** of in-camp assistance could have problematic effects
- 9) Framework of current aid does little to address the need for **tolerance**/ multi-ethnic harmony of future Burma
- 10) Donor-wide, much more **assistance** is needed for programs outside camps

Appendix A

List of Abbreviations Used in Paper

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
ABWAid	Australian Baptist World Aid
AMI	Aide Medicale Internationale
ARC	American Refugee Committee International
BBC	Burmese Border Consortium
BMA	Burma Medical Association
CAN	Karenni Community Agriculture and Nutrition Program
CCSDPT	Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand
CDP	IRC's Community Development Program
CLPG	Children's Light Publication Group
CONSORTIUM	World Education/World Learning Consortium-Thailand
COERR	Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees
CT	World Education/World Learning Consortium-Thailand
DEP	Distance Education Programme
HI	Handicap International
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ICS-ASIA	Internationaal Christelijk Steunfonds Asia
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service –Asia Pacific
KCEDG	Karenni Computer Education Development Group
KED	Karen Education Department
KRC	Karen Refugee Committee
KnED	Karenni Education Department
KnHD	Karenni Health Department
KnRC	Karenni Refugee Committee
KnWo	Karenni Woman's Organization
KnYo	Karenni Youth Organization
KTWG	Karen Teachers Working Group
MHD	Malteser-Hilfsdienst Auslandsdienst E.V. (Germany)
MOI	Thai Ministry of Interior
MSF-F	Medecins Sans Frontieres – (France)
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid (Norway)
NLD	National League for Democracy (NLD)
R/CH	IRC's Reproductive and Child Health Care Program
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SVA	Shanti Volunteer Association (Japan)
TBA	traditional birth attendant
TOPS	Taipei Overseas Peace Service (Taiwan)
TPC	Teacher Preparation Course (Tak Province)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WEAVE	Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment
WHO	World Health Organization
ZOA	Zuid Oost Azie Refugee Care (Netherlands)

Appendix B

Overview of Schedule

In the **first week** the team started in Bangkok discussing the refugee issue with various INGOs, including UNHCR and the WHO. Then we traveled to Mae Hong Son to visit the **Karenni camps**. We traveled to camps 2 and 3 and met with camp residents, leaders, sub-grantees and IRC/Consortium staff. We also met other NGOs working in the camps, including the Jesuit Refugee Society (JRS).

In the **second week** we traveled to Chiang Mai and met with sub-grantees and NGOs including WEAVE and Distance Education Program (DEP). Then the team broke up and part of the team went to Nupo camp to meet with **Karen camp** residents, camp leaders and NGOs, including ARC. The other team members met with Open Society Institute (OSI) and Internews as well as traveling to Mae Sot to meet with sub-grantees including Dr. Cynthia's clinic. The team came back together to visit two Karen camps, Mae La and Umphiem Mai camps. In addition to meeting with camp leaders, we visited special education programs and saw Consortium's out of camp activities. We also met with possible sub-grantees who work outside of the camp.

In the **third week**, the team reported to IRC and Consortium staff in a **briefing** in Bangkok and then flew to Phnom Penh to present their findings to the USAID Cambodian staff.

Full Schedule FINAL – Jan 18, 02

Schedule
USAID Assessment Team
January 19-February 5, 2002
Thailand

Monday, January 21

Bangkok

JoEllen Gorg, Lois Bradshaw, Tom Elam

9.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. (including lunch)

International Rescue Committee (IRC) Tel: 66-2-716-7310/5, Fax: 66-2-310-0364

- 9.00 a.m. Lori Bell, IRC Country Director
- Overview and introduction to IRC Thailand/schedule
- 10.00 a.m. Michele Barnes, IRC Sub-Grants Coordinator
- Overview of sub-grants
- 11.00 a.m. Karn Sermchaiwong, IRC Protection Program manager
- IRC Protection Program
- Legal situation of refugees in Thailand
- 11.30 a.m. Fern Tilakamonkul, IRC Bangkok Refugee Program
- 2.00 p.m. Jack Dunford
Director
Burmese Border Consortium (BBC)
12/5 Convent Road, Silom
Tel: 02-238-5027/8

- 3.15 p.m.** Farooq Azam
Chief of Mission
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Kasemkit building (8th floor)
Tel: 02-266-7632
- 4.15 p.m.** Phil Robertson
Country Representative
American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS)
Kasemkit building (4th floor)
Tel: 02-238-5335
- 6.00 p.m.** Gary Dahl
Thailand Country Director & Southeast Asia Representative
ARC (American Refugee Committee) International
Meet at the Regent Hotel
Tel: 01-846-3548

Tuesday, January 22 Bangkok, Mae Hong Son

JoEllen Gorg, Lois Bradshaw, Tom Elam

- 9.00 a.m.** Janvier de Riedmatten
Deputy Regional Representative
UNHCR
Tel: 02-288-1854
- 11.00 a.m.** Dr. Bjorn Melgaard
Representative to Thailand
WHO
Permanent Secretary Bldg. 3, 4th Floor
Ministry of Public Health
Tel: 02-590-1515
- Evening** Informal meal/briefing at hotel in Mae Hong Son
- Ian Clarke, IRC Field Coordinator
 - Lori Bell, IRC
 - Helen Stannard, Consortium

Wednesday, January 23 Mae Hong Son

JoEllen Gorg, Joom

- Morning** IRC-MHS office, introduction to IRC staff.
Observe Effective Communication training by CD Program staff for “displaced persons” groups based in MHS.
- Afternoon** Travel to camp 3 to meet
- KnRC (SGAP) and CAN Project
 - KCEDG Computer Training Project
 - KnYO Library & Learning Centre Project, and
 - Other SGAP Projects funded by Subgrants in camp 3/2

Thursday, January 24 Mae Hong Son

JoEllen Gorg, Joom

- Morning** Camp 2/3 CONSORTIUM
(Possibly including Teachers Training College, KnED)
- Afternoon** Go to camp 3 to observe Health Training Program and meet training staff.
- Observe RCH training in camp 2 and meet RCH Program staff.
 - Meet with camp 2 committee members.

Friday, January 25 Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai

JoEllen Gorg, Joom

- Morning** (CONSORTIUM– in MHS town)

Afternoon Meet with Subgrantees (CLPG, Pa-O Women's Committee, Pa-O Youth Democracy Organization)

Saturday, January 26 Chiang Mai/Mae Sot (JoEllen, Joom)

JoEllen Gorg, Thomas Buck, Tom Elam, Louis Bradshaw
With Jae from IRC

8.00 a.m. Pippa Curwen, BRC Briefing on Shan situation
Breakfast Meet at the Royal Princess Hotel
Pippa: 053-278-226 (Off), 053-278-152 (Res)

10.30 – 11.45 a.m. WEAVE Programs at WEAVE office

1.15 – 2.30 p.m. DEP Programs at DEP office

Note: Mae Sot full programs for JoEllen, Joom together with Fred Ligon and Connie Woodberry of Consortium are on the 2 last pages.

Monday, January 28 Chiang Mai, Mae Sot

Christine Wegman, Cheryl Anderson, Tom Elam meet up with Louis Bradshaw and Thomas Buck.

8.30 a.m. OSI staff meets at the Royal Princess to take the team to OSI Office.

9.00 a.m. Shona Kirkwood/Open Society Institute (OSI)
Tel: 053-216-356

Afternoon Alison Campbell/Internews Network
Tel: 053-215-532/277-925

Tuesday, January 29 Mae Sot

Thomas Buck, Christine Wegman, Cheryl Anderson, Lois Bradshaw

Morning with Michelle from IRC

9.00 – 10.15 a.m. Mae Tao Clinic Programs at the Mae Tao Clinic

10.30 – 11.45 a.m. KTWG Programs at the IRC Mae Sot Office

Lunch Bai Fern Restaurant
Meet up with other members of the team coming back from Umphang

12.45 a.m. Travel to Mae La camp (50 minutes)
Overview of Project Activities from the Site Coordinator, Kelle Rivers

1.30 p.m. Brief tour of Zone C; observe project activities: teacher training, special education

2.00 p.m. Meeting with Charles Tada, education coordinator in Mae La

2.30 p.m. At Consortium office with Site Coordinator, Project Assistant, Chauwat Pramongkit and Field Assistants, Cho Tay Sienlaplaingprai and Nisarat Kongkebdee (and possibly other refugee education staff)

3.30 p.m. Visit Zone A; observe special education activities with Special Education Field Coordinator, Nattachai Pramongkit; discussions with Jacqui Reeves and Field Assistant, Somchat Ochalumtarn, about Early Intervention; possible visit to a blind student's home with a home tutor

4.30 p.m. Visit Zone B Education Center; observe teacher support activities

Evening: Dinner at the "Princess" restaurant with IRC and Consortium education staff

Wednesday, January 30 Mae Sot

8.00 a.m. Travel to Phob Phra Border Community Program sites; overview of program activities from BCP Coordinator, Jacob Thomson and Field Assistants, Jarifya Pien-ngam and Tatu Raksaiskutawee.

- 1.00 p.m. Travel to Umphiem Mai camp; overview of program activities with the Site Coordinator, Greg Antoa; meet with Project Assistant: Jutamart Sompoppisamai and Field Assistants/Translators, Papue Shangnopwahn, Maphai Tarachankard and Nawjeat Yotyping-aphiriram; visit Special Education Center in Zone B. [A refugee education meeting may be scheduled for that day as well]
- 2.00 p.m. Meeting with Say Naw, education coordinator in Umphiem Mai (and possibly other education leaders)
- 4.00 p.m. Observe adult literacy (English) classes in Zone A.

Thursday, January 31

- Morning** Meetings with: ZOA Refugee Care, TOPS, Karen Refugee Committee
- Afternoon** Meet with Lily Pyu of the Burma Migrant Workers Education Committee; meet with Saw Law Say; visit a migrant school. Visit Consortium office; view a short video (allowing for time/interest); wrap-up

Monday, February 4

- 9.00 a.m. Debrief at IRC Bangkok Office
USAID/Consortium/IRC

Tuesday, February 5

- 9.00 a.m. Debrief at US Embassy in Cambodia with USAID Phnom Penh staff

===== ***Mae Sot Full Program*** =====

JoEllen Gorg, Joom

Sunday, January 27

JoEllen Gorg, Joom together with Fred Ligon and Connie Woodberry, Consortium home office

- 1.30 p.m. Meet at Consortium Office, Travel to Umphang with brief stops at Pracharoen Waterfall and Umphiem Mai (4 hours)

Monday, January 28

- 7.30 a.m. Drive to Nupo (2 hours)
Overview of project activities from the Site Coordinator; arrival formalities
- 10.00 a.m. Observe project activities: school director training, teacher training, adult literacy, special education, word processing training
- Lunch: At Consortium office with School Director Training coordinator, James Hicks and Field Assistant, Panu Sukekayawnpari
- 1.00 p.m. Meeting with David KhaKha, education coordinator; Meeting with camp leader and committee members
- 2.00 p.m. Visit Muslim Community Center and adult literacy classes; informal discussions with Muslim community leaders
- 3.00 p.m. Meeting with Julie Paloma - Lindstrom and Field Assistant, Rungnaph Howharkhunatam and other staff
- 4.30 p.m. Return to Umphang
- Evening Dinner at an Umphang restaurant with Consortium staff

Tuesday, January 29

- 7.45 a.m. Travel from Umphang to Mae Sot
- Lunch at Bai Fern Restaurant meet up with the other members of the team

Appendix C

Questions for Burma Assessment

General questions:

1. What have you done? -results
2. What have you learned? –(Have Goals been met? How? Have they changed over time? Why?)
3. Where are gaps that need filling? How do you envision filling those gaps?
4. What do you see as your future role?

Questions to IRC/World Education/OSI/Internews/BBC/IOM:

1. What are your current Goals?
2. How have your Goals changed over time?
3. What have you achieved? (Camps built, people housed, fed, given health care, schools built, enrollments achieved, teachers trained, NGO staff trained, newspapers circulated, models developed/replicated, etc. Ask to list as many types of results. Especially quantifiable results.
4. Who do you work through and with? Do you have any contact with local Thai government i.e. through health or education field workers etc?
5. How do you address the needs of refugees outside the camps? What are you doing to address the equity gap now and once they return to Burma?
6. What types of projects have been more successful? Why? What has been less successful? Why?
7. What do you see as current gaps in program areas?
8. What programs/ areas do you foresee working on in the near future?
9. What evidence (if any) is there of wider impact in terms of strengthening of civil society/ democracy?
10. What USAID-funded work was innovative? Have other donors adopted these innovations in any way?

Questions for Camp Leaders

1. How has assistance helped you to meet needs of your community?
2. How long have you received support and what has it enabled you to do in your community?
3. What were you doing before coming here? What are your goals for the future? What do you plan on doing once you return to Burma?
4. Have you participated in any leadership development activities? Capacity building?
5. How did USAID-funded activities help you meet your communities needs in terms of health, sanitation, food, education, etc?
6. What quantifiable results were obtained under USAID-funded activities?
7. What benefits do you see so far from participating in USAID funded activities? What benefits did the project bring to the community?
8. What changes in the activities would you like to see in the future?
9. What types of contributions did you or your community make in order to achieve results? How much over how long a period? Labor etc.
10. How would you like to address the needs of people outside of the camp?
11. What mechanisms are in place for community involvement in decision making? Do you feel that your people feel that each household has an equal contribution?
12. What is the composition of community organizations and what is the extent of female participation? Is someone from each household at each meeting? How often are meetings held? Are they elected representatives? Can people articulate a vision or goal for their group?
13. Are you aware of instances where other communities, donors, or government agencies have sought to learn from USAID-funded innovations or activities and replicate these models elsewhere? (I.e. solution to camp problem that worked elsewhere?)

Questions for recipients of aid – camp dwellers

1. How has assistance helped you?
2. How long have you received support and what has it enabled you to do?
3. What were you doing before coming here? What are your goals for the future/ when you return to Burma?
4. What support do you need now to achieve that goal? I.e.. Agricultural skill development etc.
5. How have camp activities met your needs in health, sanitation, food, education, etc?
6. What changes in the activities would you like to see in the future?
7. What types of contributions did you make in order to achieve results? How much/ time period.
8. Do you feel that all camp programs are accessible to everyone? Do people feel that each household has had an equal contribution?
9. What type of involvement do you have in decision making in the community? Can you give me an example of a suggestion that you made that resulted in a change?

Appendix D

Persons and Organizations Contacted in addition to IRC and Consortium Staff

INGOs/NGOs

American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS)
Phil Robertson, Country Representative

American Refugee Committee International (ARC)
Gary Dahl, Thailand Country Director & Southeast Asia Representative,
Charles Schumacher, Nupo Field Coordinator

Burmese Border Consortium (BBC)
Jack Dunford, Director
Sally Thompson, Deputy Director-Programme

Distance Education Programme (DEP)
Richard Sproat, Executive Officer,
Dr. Lian Thang, Primary Health Care Training Course, DEP

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Farooq Azam, Chief of Mission,
Lance Bonneau, Senior Programme Development Officer
Ricardo Cordero, Programme Development Officer

Internews Network
Alison Campbell

Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS)
Sr. Maureen, Mae Hong Son

Swinburne University of Technology, Australia (DEP contractor)
Ros Washington, English Language and Learning Services,
Taipei Overseas Peace Service (TOPS)

Open Society Institute (OSI)
Shona Kirkwood

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Janvier de Riedmatten, Deputy Regional Representative

World Health Organization, Ministry of Public Health
Dr. Bjorn Melgaard, Representative to Thailand
Elisabeth Emerson, Border Health Program Officer

ZOA Refugee Care (Netherlands)

Karenni Camp Committees

Karenni Refugee Committee (KnRC) and
Karenni Computer Education Training Project (KCEDG)
Karenni Youth Organization Library & Learning Centre Project (KnYO)
Karenni Education Department (KnED)
Kaw Lah Lah, education director
Man Saw, education minister
Augustino, education leader

Karen Camp Committees

Karen Education Committee (KED)
David KhaKha, education coordinator Nupo
Charles Tada, education leader in Mae La
Say Naw, education coordinator in Umphiem Mai
Muslim community leaders (Nupo)

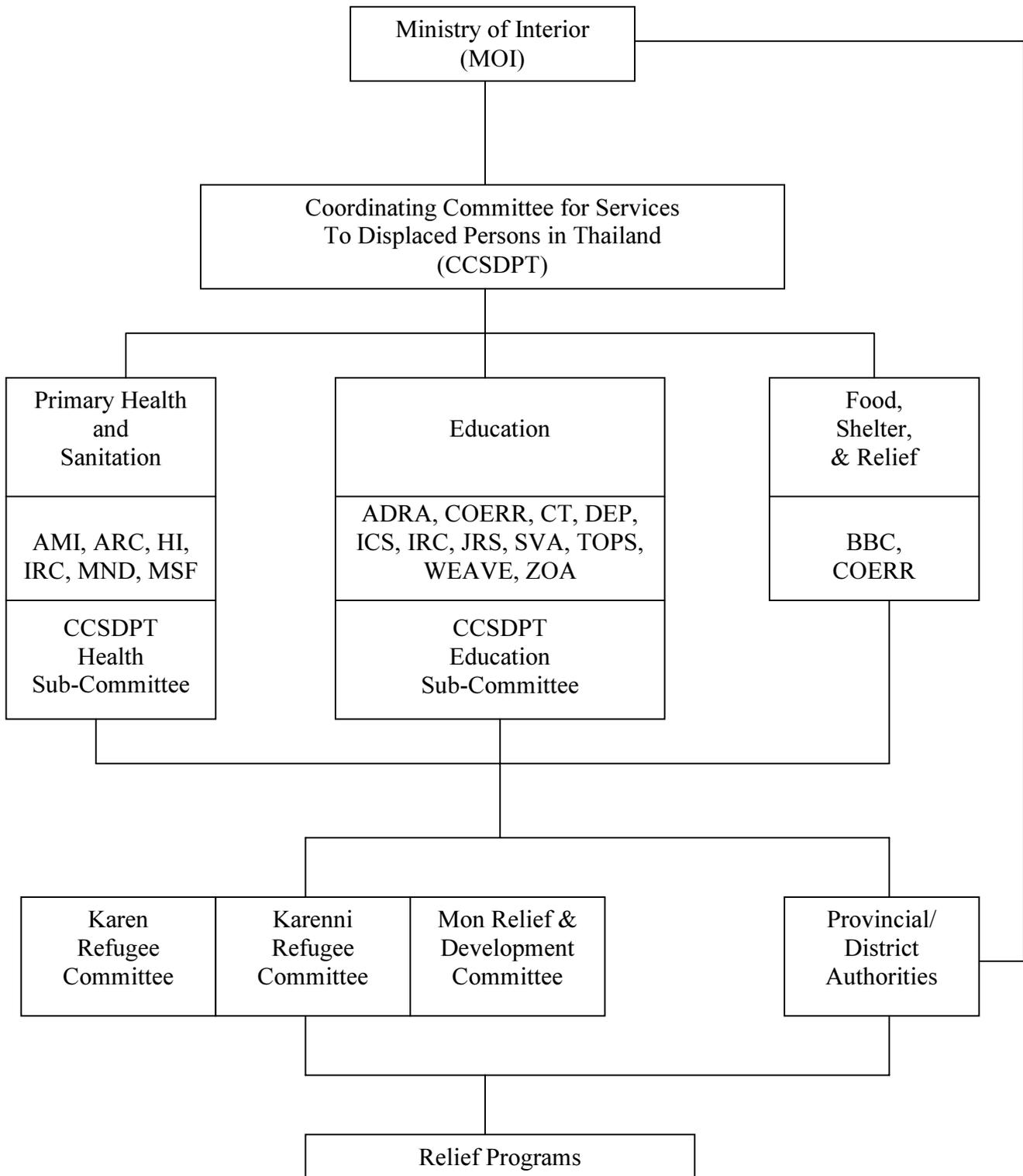
Sub-grantees (current and future)

Burma Migrant Workers Education Committee (Lily Pyu)
Burmese Relief Center (BRC) (Pippa Curwen)
Children's Light Publication Group (CLPG)
Community Agriculture and Nutrition (CAN) Project
Distance Education Program (DEP)

Dr. Cynthia's Mae Tao Clinic
Karen Teachers Working Group (KTWG)
Pa-O Women's Committee
Pa-O Youth Democratic Organization
Woman's Education for Advancement and Employment (WEAVE)

Appendix E

NGOs and Key Partners—Structure of Relief Assistance



Source: Burma Border Consortium

CCSDPT Registered Relief Assistance Organizations

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AMI	Aide Medicale Internationale <i>(Health Messenger Magazine Project)</i>
ARC	American Refugee Committee International
BBC	Burmese Border Consortium
CONSORTIUM	World Education/World Learning Consortium-Thailand
COERR	Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees
DEP	Distance Education Programme
HI	Handicap International
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ICS-ASIA	Internationaal Christelijk Steunfonds Asia
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service –Asia Pacific
MHD	Malteser-Hilfsdienst Auslandsdienst E.V. (Germany)
MSF-F	Medecins Sans Frontieres – (France)
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid (Norway)
SVA	Shanti Volunteer Association (Japan)
TOPS	Taipei Overseas Peace Service (Taiwan)
WEAVE	Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment (Thai)
ZOA	Zuid Oost Azie Refugee Care (Netherlands)

The Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT) was formed in 1975 as a communications network for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who met on a regular basis to exchange information and to discuss their work. CCSDPT coordinated their efforts and assisted in representing the membership's interests to the Royal Thai Government, international organizations and embassies.

Annually, the CCSDPT members elect a chairperson and an executive committee to represent them. A small office with a part-time secretary assists the executive committee to follow-up on issues raised by the membership. The executive committee facilitates monthly meetings, which serve as a source of information on the current refugee situation as well as the coordinating point for refugee services and the exchange of technical viewpoints.

Contributions from the membership and subscriptions from international organizations and embassies fund the CCSDPT. At its peak in 1981, CCSDPT membership included 52 agencies all serving refugees from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Current membership is 19 and activities are now focused on refugees from Burma.

Source: CCSDPT 2001 Directory

Appendix F

Special Education

While only 3 percent of Consortium's USAID budget, special education is an area where Consortium is pioneering new and innovative activities in the camps. These activities are leading to a growing recognition by camp residents of the value and dignity of all people.

Evolution

WHO estimates that between 7 percent and 10 percent of the world's population lives with disabilities.³⁰ Handicapped International (HI) conducted a survey and found similar levels of disabled in the Karen camps surveyed. They also identified the need for educational services for people with special needs. As educational services are not in HI's mandate for work in the camps, HI approached the CCSDPT education committee with their survey results. They asked if any organization was interested in working to meet special education needs in the camps. After consulting with Connie Woodberry in World Education headquarters, Fred Ligon volunteered Consortium Thailand's services to work to meet the needs in the Karen camps. Consortium wrote special education into their MOI proposal and discussed the funding with USAID.

In 2000, HI invited Consortium to join them at their annual meeting with all camp leaders in each camp. HI updated the leadership on what they had done in the past year, and then Consortium gave a presentation about special education possibilities. As most camp leaders were focusing their attention on the upper levels of education, there was little knowledge about special education.

Consortium had been implementing education activities for the deaf and blind and wanted to update the camp leaders about what was being done to promote documentation and development of Karen sign language and Karen Braille. The camp leaders expressed satisfaction and even pride that Karen Braille and sign were being developed. Some camp leaders asked if the Consortium could also help with "slow learners" in the classrooms as teachers did not think they had the knowledge or skills to deal with their special needs.

Activities

Consortium has trained 40 Karen to be **special education teachers** to work with the deaf and blind students as well as approximately 80 other special needs students. They created 80 teacher guides and 80 practice writing books. Consortium holds daily classes for the deaf and children with Down Syndrome. Due to logistical challenges of moving about the camp, Consortium holds home visit classes for the blind and children with cerebral palsy.

Researching **Karen sign language**, Consortium found that though there were a number of users, it was an undocumented language. So Consortium is working with 47 deaf people in the camps to document and develop this "new" language. Using activities and games in small groups, an artist would write down the sign. Currently over 600 signs

³⁰ <http://www.who.int/inf-pr-2000/en/note2000-16.html>

have been documented and Consortium has produced and distributed over 140 copies of Karen sign language books.

Initially, Consortium also believed that **Karen Braille** would have to be documented and developed in the camp. But, by networking with other organizations, Consortium learned that the Burmese Education Center for the Blind in Rangoon had documentation of Karen Braille. A trainer from Rangoon was able to transmit the knowledge and now 35 blind students in the camps are learning Karen Braille. To date, Consortium has created 130 Braille books, 20 Brailon books and 220 copies of talking books.

As Consortium did not have a special education expert on staff to work with children with special learning needs, they were pleased to be able to have the services of a VSO volunteer who specializes in **early intervention** activities and training in Mae La. Through teacher and medical referrals, a team visits student's homes and helps to assess the student's needs. They then develop an individual education plan, covering six areas, and provide follow-up support.

Results

Individual level

Several children with severe disabilities are attending mainstream school for the first time. The deaf population have formed their own group and are working to develop Karen sign language. This has led to educational opportunities, group identity and community acceptance and awareness of people with disabilities. The parents of children with disabilities now believe that their child can develop and are encouraging them to reach their full potential.

The mother of a four year old girl with cerebral palsy is excited about Consortium's early intervention project. In the last four months since weekly home visits have begun, she has seen improvement in her daughter's ability to interact socially. Her daughter is now trying to talk and is also working to feed herself. Her mother welcomes this move towards more **independence**. She also is happy to meet other parents of children with special disabilities in Consortium sponsored events. Before she felt lonely, but now she has people she can talk to and she feels hope for the future. She also has noticed a change in attitude in the community about disabilities. Before, although people often spoke of the local children, no one ever asked the mother about her child. But now, neighbors ask about her daughter. It is her hope that her daughter will one day be able to attend a mainstream school.

Community level

Consortium was delighted when the Karen Education Department (KED) included special education in their organizational chart. This symbolized the recognition of the KED of the **value and dignity of all people** in society. It also symbolized a move away from elitism when the KED recognized that all people have the right to education. It should be noted that the KED is the education branch of the Karen Government in exile. This means that in addition to representing the Karen in camps, the KED also represents Karen in Karen State, inside Burma. Therefore, the impact of this is potentially far reaching.

Appendix G

Education Matrix

TEACHER TRAINING

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

	CAMP	Nursery	KG	Primary	Middle	High	Dir.	Spec.	Lit.	Eng.Lang	Envi.	Ag.	Sewing	Typing	Weaving	MISC.	Org
								Ed.	Prog								Dev
K A R E N N I	Camp#2	WEAVE	CON JRS	CON JRS IRC-H.Ed	CON JRS	CON JRS	CON JRS			CON JRS IRC DEP	COERR	IRC	COSFEB				WEAVE IRC
	Camp#3	WEAVE	CON JRS	CON JRS IRC-H.Ed	CON JRS	CON JRS	CON JRS			CON JRS IRC DEP OSI post X	COERR	IRC					WEAVE IRC DEP
	Camp #5	WEAVE	CON JRS	CON IRC-H.Ed	CON JRS	CON JRS	CON JRS			CON JRS IRC DEP	COERR	IRC	COSFEB				
K A R E N	MaeKhongKha	COSEFEB		ZOA IRC-KTWG	ZOA IRC-KTWG	ZOA IRC-KTWG				DEP	COERR	ZOA	COSFEB ZOA	ZOA	ZOA		WEAVE DEP
	MaeRaMaLuang	WEAVE		ZOA IRC-KTWG	ZOA IRC-KTWG	ZOA IRC-KTWG				WEAVE DEP	COERR	ZOA	WEAVE ZOA	ZOA	WEAVE ZOA	WEAVE (embroid)	WEAVE DEP
	MaeLa	TOPS	CON	ZOA CON TOPS	ZOA CON	ZOA CON	CON	CON	CON	CON OSI post X DEP	COERR	ZOA	WEAVE COERR ZOA	ZOA	WEAVE ZOA	WEAVE (embroid) CON (library) CON (comp.)	WEAVE DEP
	Umpiem Mai	TOPS	CON	ZOA CON	ZOA CON	ZOA CON	CON	CON	CON	CON OSI post X DEP	COERR	ZOA	WEAVE ZOA	ZOA	WEAVE ZOA	WEAVE (embroid) CON (library) CON (comp.)	WEAVE DEP
	NuPo	TOPS	CON	ZOA CON	ZOA CON	ZOA CON	CON	CON		CON	COERR	ZOA	WEAVE ZOA	ZOA	ZOA	CON (comp.)	WEAVE DEP
	Ban Don Yang			ZOA	ZOA	ZOA				DEP	COERR	ZOA	ZOA	ZOA	ZOA		DEP
	Tham Hin	BI	BI	ZOA BI	ZOA BI	ZOA BI				BI DEP	COERR BI-poultry, organic gard.	ZOA BI	ZOA	ZOA	ZOA	BI-music, drawing, carpentry WEAVE (embroid)	

Organizations

- BI Burma Issues
- COERR Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees
- CON World Education/World Learning Consortium
- DEP Distance Education Program
- IRC International Rescue Committee
- JRS Jesuit Refugee Society
- KTWG Karen Teacher's Working Group (IRC subgrantee)
- OSI Open Society Institute
- TOPS Taipei Overseas Peace Service (Taiwan)
- WEAVE Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment

ZOA

Zuid Oost Azie Refugee Care (Netherlands)

Source: Matrix created by Fred Ligon of Consortium

Appendix G continued

Notes on Vocational Training in Camps

Past attempts in the camps for vocational training programs seem to have met with limited success. Notwithstanding the Thai government limitations on education in the camps, camp residents and leaders seem to have a **low perceived value** of vocational training in comparison to academic education in the camps.

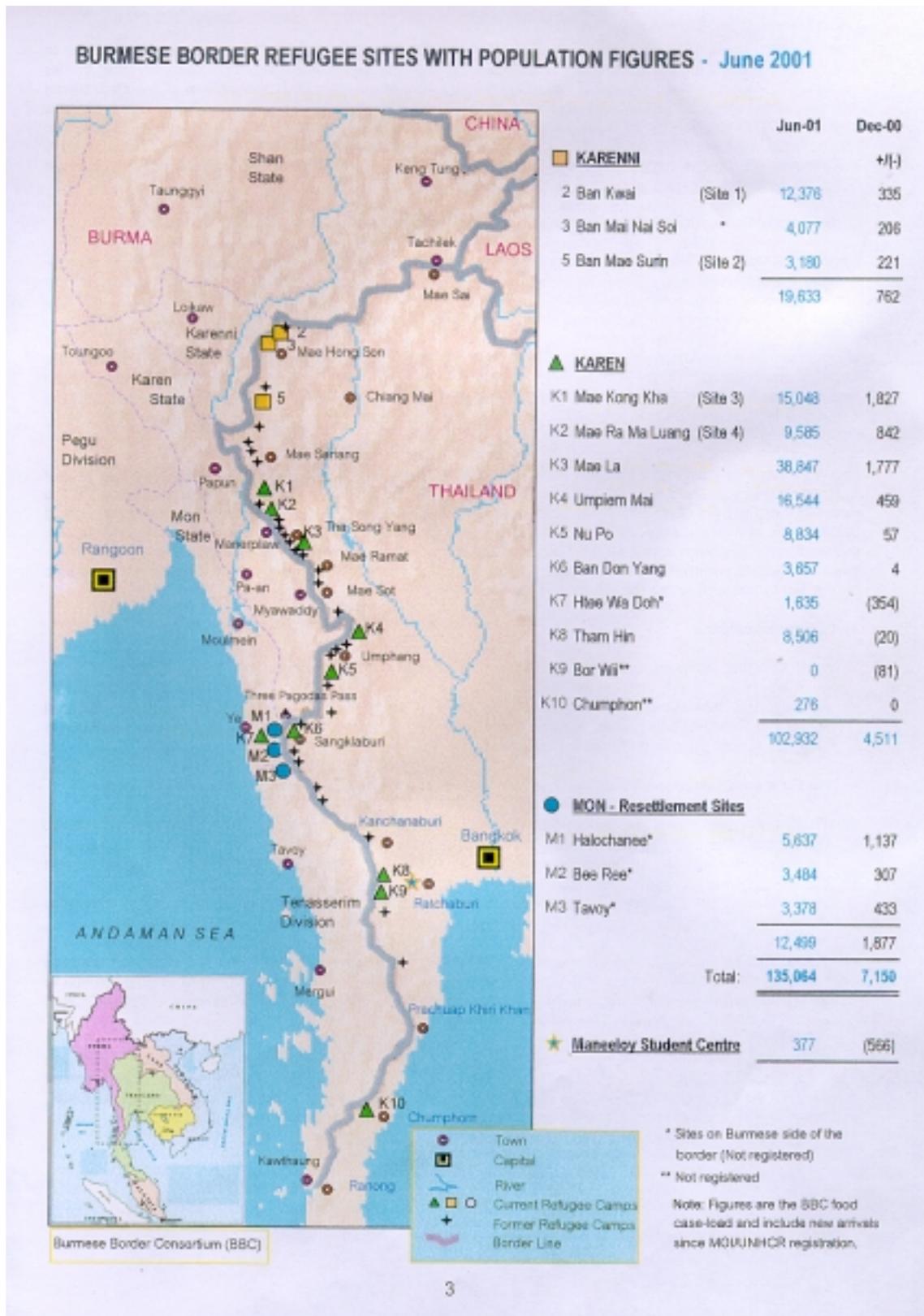
The reality is that most youth come from farming families and expect to return to farming upon return to Burma. In Consortium's December 2001, *Survey of Karenni Schools on the Thai-Burma Border*, of 602 Karenni families (15 percent of the population) surveyed, 78 percent expected to become farmers or agricultural laborers upon return to Burma. Similar numbers can be expected from Karen in camps.

There is no doubt that the current educational climate in the camps is geared away from agriculture or vocational training and toward academic achievement. This is because **current job opportunities** in the camp are for people who can speak English and who have high levels of education. People see that NGOs working in the camps hire people with academic achievement. Also, one of the only ways to leave the camp is to receive one of the coveted scholarships for advanced education.

Vocational training programs in the camps face **logistical difficulties** as well. While space and supplies may be provided in trainings, the students have nowhere to work once the training has finished. Therefore, they can not use the skills they recently learned. Over time the lessons from training are forgotten.

Some trainings, such as candle making, failed because it was simply cheaper to buy candles than to buy the materials for residents to make their own candles. Other trainings succeeded in training barbers, but the capacity for their community to employ barbers in the camps is limited, and so many participants ended up wanting to take another training class to pass the time. Agriculture training is an area of interest. A few small-scale programs are being conducted, some with IRC sub-grant assistance. However, finding land on which to implement training techniques is a problem. The challenge is to find vocational training opportunities that both interest participants and that will be of use to participants now and when they eventually return to Burma.

Appendix H Map



Source: Burma Border Consortium