

**USAID/BURMA**  
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## Burma Annual Report

### Part III: Performance Narrative

#### A. Challenges

Conditions in Burma continue to reflect the State Peace and Development Council's (SPDC) struggle for political and military control of the country. It is unclear if ongoing talks with the main opposition party will lead to eventual transition to civilian rule. The army continues to scour homelands for resistance and to forcibly relocate entire villages in its efforts to eliminate armed resistance. Extrajudicial killings, torture, forced labor, rape, and other abuses commonly occur in most ethnic states.

Economic policies pursued by the Burmese Government have resulted in a deteriorating social and economic situation. As a result of ethnic fighting and deteriorating economic conditions in Burma, more than 1.6 million people have fled Burma and an estimated 1.5 million more remain inside Burma as internally displaced people. Of the population that fled Burma, approximately 155,000 reside in refugee camps in Thailand and Bangladesh and more than 800,000 live as illegal migrant workers in Thailand, Bangladesh, India, China, and Malaysia.

Currently, USAID humanitarian support to refugees is concentrated in refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. Thai government policy significantly limits education and livelihood opportunities for the refugee community. Restrictions on refugee travel impede efforts to standardize training activities and limit the opportunity to conduct joint training programs for refugees from various camps, which could provide opportunities to break down tensions and suspicions between ethnic groups in different camps. USAID will continue to emphasize the importance of inter-ethnic cooperation, and seek new opportunities to improve inter-ethnic coordination and cooperation.

While needs in the camp continue, USAID anticipates shifting some efforts to address humanitarian needs of the growing population of Burmese refugees that live outside officially designated camps in Thailand. The challenge is how to identify and reach this growing external refugee population.

#### B. Program Performance

##### *482-002: Democracy and Humanitarian Assistance*

Overall, performance under this SO met expectations in FY 2001. Funds support activities in Burma, humanitarian activities along the Burma-Thailand border, and Burmese student groups and other organizations located outside Burma. To date, these program activities have supported training and advocacy for a transition to a democratic government in Burma as well as humanitarian assistance to refugees living along the Thai-Burma border. Humanitarian activities have improved the access to primary healthcare, helped maintain nutrition and food security of the refugee population, and improved the quality of education being provided to refugee children.

## Achievements

Health programs emphasize the need for developing both preventative and curative health care capacity. Programs managed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) are increasing the capacity of the Karenni Health Department to provide quality primary health care to approximately 20,000 Karenni refugees in camps as well training medics to provide health care to internally displaced villagers in Karenni State. By the end of May 2002, approximately 30 medics will have completed the yearlong course, bringing the total in the camps to 67, an increase of over 300% from their 1998 level of 15 medics (permanently based in the camps.) All medics trained by IRC agree to work for the the Darenni Health Department for five years. Additionally, IRC has created seven related medical training manuals in English and Burmese. These manuals are becoming the standard that is being adopted in other medical training, such as the Mae Tao Clinic.

IRC's Reproductive and Child Health Care 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 health workers in clinics and within the community. IRC created a training book for traditional birth attendants which was used in ten, seven-day training courses. A total of 100 traditional birth attendants were trained in the camps. This led to a reported 98.7% of deliveries in camp attended by a trained birth attendant in 2001. Community understanding of the importance of reproductive and child health can be seen in 2001 reports of 100% attendance of registered pregnant women at weekly anti-natal clinics and of reports that 99% of children in camp received immunizations. This results in maintained levels of maternal and child survival in camps on par with the surrounding Thai community. In Karenni camps the infant mortality rate is 25 deaths/1,000 live births compared with 11/1,000 in Thai populations and 105/1,000 in Burma.

Education: Programs support the development of a viable and sustainable education system that would be recognized in Burma and transferable to Burma when refugees feel safe enough to return to their homeland. In all 10 refugee camps, Consortium (comprised of World Education and World Learning) contributes to the payment of stipends for 1,045 refugee teachers, serving over 60,000 students. Consortium is chairing a border wide educational coordinating sub-committee this year and has taken the lead in creating a newsletter with a distribution of over 100 copies to share information among local education NGOs.

In 2001, the Consortium has developed and supported the production of education materials for use by schools in six refugee camps, provided 180 hours of training for 32 school administrators, and established teacher training schools which currently enroll over 100 students. Upon completion, the new teachers agree to teach in camp schools for two years, thus helping the camp education departments 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.

Consortium also assisted teachers and administrators with the development of primary school curricula in math, geography, social studies and English and began piloting a small out-of-camp program implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) education to over 130 students

representing 8 ethnicities in local Thai schools. While only 3% of Consortium's USAID budget, special education 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.

IRC funds sub-grants to improve nutrition and food security. In 2001, IRC worked with Consortium and other organizations to help the Karenni Community Agriculture and Nutrition Organization (CAN) 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. Phase I is the training of trainers in agriculture and nutrition. In Phase II, trainers go out into their communities and share their knowledge and skills. While still early in the program, there is considerable interest among the 20,000 Karenni camp dwellers to diversify their diet. Project 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.

Capacity Building: IRC has developed a community development program to increase capacity, as well as organizational and management skills of refugee community. In 2001, IRC assisted the Karenni Refugee Committee with the design, approval and implementation of job descriptions for key positions. IRC provided 10 months of training to three camp committees (40 people) in the foundations of management. To facilitate communication, 40 camp committee staff also received 180 hours of Thai and English Language Training. Camp leaders who participated in the training reported that they are now able to organize camp activities more smoothly and efficiently.

IRC also 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. 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. Camp leaders were involved in the grant evaluation process and encouraged to use the approach to find and meet community needs in the future.

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

Democracy: To support pro-democracy efforts, OSI grants scholarships to Burmese refugee students who have fled Burma and wish to continue their studies. Priority is given to students who are willing to return to Burma to work for the democratic and economic rebirth of the country. While students must meet strict academic and financial criteria, many students are regranted every year as they progress from undergraduate to graduate programs. Since 1994, over 1000 undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. Burmese students have received help with their

schooling. In 2001, USAID funds supported 95 Burmese students in Asia and Australia and 50 Burmese students in Europe and North America.

The Internews program supports pro-democracy activities through its work with Burmese journalists along the Thai-Burma border. Internews provides training in four areas: 1) basic journalism (what is newsworthy, how to gather news, who is the audience, and how to write with accuracy, clarity and credibility); 2) management (organisational systems, revenue generation, marketing, fundraising); 3) editorial processes (developing a news agenda, managing a newsroom); and 4) layout and design. Working with seven ethnic newsgroups and five newspapers, Internews training has resulted in wider news coverage, more accurate reporting with a higher frequency of attribution to reliable sources, improved appearance of publications, increased circulation, and an increase in ethnic news stories quoted by other news sources.