

STRENGTHENING PROTECTION CAPACITY PROJECT

LIVELIHOODS COMPONENT

Phase One

MAE HONG SON PROVINCE



**A report prepared by Prungchit Phanawathanawong
on the potential for increasing opportunities
for self-reliance and income generation
on the Thai-Myanmar border**

Collaboration between ILO and UNHCR

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

CCSDPT	Committee for the Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand
CD	Community Development Office
CoC	Chamber of Commerce (Mae Hong Son Province)
COERR	Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees
DARE	Drug Alcohol Recovery Education
HI	Handicap International- Thailand
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IPC 1	Industrial Promotion Center Region 1
JRS	Jesuit Rescue Service
KED	Karen Education Department
KDD	Karen Development Department
KESAN	Karen Environmental and Social Action Network
KHD	Karen Health Department
KnDD	Karenni Development Department
KnED	Karenni Educational Department
KnEN	Karenni Environmental Department
KnHD	Karenni Health Department
KnRC	Karenni Refugee Committee
KnWO	Karenni Women Organization
KnYO	Karenni Youth Organization
KRC	Karen Refugee Committee
KWO	Karen Women's Organization
KYO	Karen Youth Organization
MI	Maltiser International organization
MOAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOE	Ministry of Education [Thailand]
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOI	Ministry of Interior [Thailand]
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
NFE	Non Formal Education Office
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NSC	National Security Council
ONFEC	the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission
RTG	Royal Thai Government
SVA	Shanti Volunteer Association
TAO	Tambon Administrative Organization
TBBC	Thai Burma Border Consortium
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WEAVE	Women's Education for Advancement and Empowerment
ZOA	ZOA Vluchtelingen zorg (ZOA Refugee Care)

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of the study

This study was initiated by UNHCR, in partnership with the ILO and the Committee for the Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT). The joint initiative is a response to recent policy developments of the Royal Thai Government (RTG) towards improving livelihood opportunities for refugees, through expanded vocational training, income-generation projects, and the possibility of legal employment. This study analyzed the impact of expanding refugee opportunities for self-reliance on Thai Society and gathered information that would be used to develop a successful livelihood strategy to increase refugee self-reliance and income generating opportunities.

As part of UNHCR's Strengthening Protection and Capacity Project in Thailand (SPCP), the study was conducted according to the terms of reference for the Livelihoods Consultants (see Appendix 1). The livelihoods initiative is intended to build on existing NGO work, and draw on the technical expertise of the ILO with the aim of producing a comprehensive strategy to improve refugee livelihoods while maximizing benefits to hosting communities.

This part of the study focuses on four refugee camps in Mae Hong Son province - Ban Mai Nai Soi (BMN), Ban Mae Surin (BMS), Mae La Oon (MLO) and Mae Ra Ma Luang (MRM) - and took place from February through May 2007.

1.2 Methodology

- Focus groups discussion in all four camps (with the participation of Camp Committee members, members of refugee community based organizations and occupation based group) and 11 hosting communities (with the participation of village committee, representatives of youth and women groups, villagers representatives)
- Meetings with NGOs, camp committee, government agencies, business sector and service providers i.e. Coordinators of JRS, IRC and COERR, Camp Committee members, BMN camp commander, Director of Mae Hong Son Chamber of Commerce (CoC), Director of Non Formal Education Office in Khun Yuam District and Directors of Mae Hong Son and Mae Sariang Vocational Training Colleges.
- Information gathering through informal discussion with children, women and men
- Documentary research

1.3 Definitions

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) refer to refugee organizations within the camps which work alongside NGOs and UNHCR to provide services to refugees and help ensure their protection. These include KnDD, KnED, KnEN, KnHD, KnWO, KnYO, KDD, KED, KEN, KHD, KWO, KYO.

Incentive workers refer to refugees who are employed by NGOs to be responsible for different tasks related to service provision, and who receive stipends from NGOs for this work (which enable them to buy vegetables, fruits, meat, clothes, etc.)

Income generation refers to the situation where income is earned and wealth is created as a result of adding value to a good or providing a service.

Livelihood is defined as the means of living, or of supporting oneself.

Livelihoods strategy refers to ways or approaches to improve living conditions of refugees in a sustainable way.

Self-reliance is defined as the ability to rely on one's self, or each other in the case of a community or group, to sustain an acceptable minimum quality of life.

1.4 The Strengthening Protection Capacity Thailand Project (SPCP-T)

UNHCR introduced the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project to Thailand in July 2006. The SPCP is supported by financial contributions from the Governments of Australia and The United States. The key objective of this project is to identify gaps in refugee protection capacity, and to facilitate the development, funding, and implementation of projects to fill those gaps. In order to achieve its objective, the SPCP collaborates with the Royal Thai Government (RTG), NGO partners, donors and refugees communities using a consultative methodology involving a range of stakeholders at each stage of the process.¹

Some of the major protection gaps being identified include: the precarious legal status of any refugees caught outside the camps and obstacles to refugees becoming self-reliant in Thailand. In response to these gaps, a package of projects cover a range of sectors including sexual gender based violence prevention and response, child protection, health and psychosocial services, education (from primary to post 10 levels), and the development of income generating activities.

A number of projects that have been identified as necessary in the collaborative process are already being implemented through the SPCP process. Firstly, the SPCP is funding the provision of ID cards for 80,000 camp-based Myanmar refugees. This project is being implemented by the Royal Thai Government. Distribution of the ID cards began in April 2007.

In addition, a selection of SPCP projects have recently been approved for funding as part of the High Commissioner's initiative to provide additional funding for special projects in the areas of health, nutrition and SGBV in 2007. These projects will provide improved SGBV prevention and response mechanisms, health education and access to reproductive health for refugee children and adolescents, activities for refugee children living in boarding-houses, and the empowerment of refugee women through agricultural activities.

While the above projects will bring significant improvements, further strengthening of refugee protection in Thailand remains essential. Fundraising for the remaining SPCP projects will therefore continue in 2007, in cooperation with NGO and governmental partners.

¹ SPCP- Thailand, update March 2007. See <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/43d644142.html>

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

2.1 Thailand and Refugees

Although Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, the Royal Thai Government (RTG) has hosted refugees from neighbouring countries since 1965. In the early years, the majority of refugees were from Indochina. The total number of Indochina refugees who lived temporarily in Thailand was 758,199.²

In the case of Myanmar, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) had invited NGOs working with Indochinese refugees in Thailand to start providing emergency assistance to around 6,000 Karen refugees in 1984.³

The MOI has undertaken the overall responsibility concerning refugees and temporary shelters in accordance with National Security Council (NSC) policy. The registration of the refugee family households was also done with the support of UNHCR. However, the provincial authorities, in collaboration with the military and relevant government agencies at provincial level, were responsible for identifying the areas to be used as temporary shelters, and appointing officials to be responsible for each shelters.⁴

The MOI defined the status of people who fled from Myanmar as a result of the on-going instability and human rights violations as “displaced persons fleeing fighting”, and viewed them as having illegally entered the country. Thus, they are considered to be subject to the Immigration Act of B.E 2522 (1979). There have not been any Cabinet resolutions to endorse their temporary stay in Thailand, as required by Article 17 of the Act, but rather a Resolution of the National Security Council with executive discretion. So, those who leave the camps are subjected to arrest and charge for illegal entry.⁵

Due to the facts that those living in the temporarily shelters are not recognized by the RTG as refugees, their rights as refugees are not fully protected: for example, the right to most favorable treatment in terms of engaging in wage-earning employment and programs of labour recruitment or under immigration schemes (as enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention).⁶

At present, there are about 140,000 Myanmar refugees living in nine border camps in Thailand, many of them have been there for up to 20 years.⁷ These refugees, under the protection of

² www.moi.go.th/refugee.htm

³ Pornpimol Trichot, *A Journey of Ethnic Minority*, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2005, p 149

⁴ From now on this report will use the word “camps” instead of temporarily shelters.

⁵ Pornpimol Trichote, *op. cit.*, p. 128. Article 17 stated that “In certain special cases, the Minister, by the Cabinet approval, may permit any alien or any group of aliens to stay in the Kingdom under certain conditions, or many conditions, or may consider exemption from being conformity with this Act. In addition, according to article 22 of the Immigration Act B.E 2522, those are caught will be fine not exceed 20,000 baht and imprisoned not more than two years or both.

⁶ 1951 Convention Relation to the Status of Refugees, Articles 17, 18, 19

⁷ UNHCR Briefing Notes: Myanmar Refugees in Thailand, 23 May 2006

UNHCR, are dependent on subsistence-level humanitarian assistance provided by various NGOs under the agreement of the RTG. (see list of NGOs in Appendix 2).

This humanitarian assistance has been provided to the refugees under various restrictions. The overcrowded housing conditions as a result of camp consolidation and increasing population numbers has led to deterioration of the camp environment, resulting in increasing waste, pollution, disease and inadequate access to clean water. Long term confinement in this kind of environment, the lack of space for recreational and educational purposes, restriction on mobility, limited access to employment and higher education have had a significant negative impact on refugees' potential for development and their psychology. This often results, in turn, in increasingly serious levels of mental health problems and violence.

Within this environment, there is a special need to address the health, physical and social requirements of youth and adolescents, who are increasingly prone to drugs, alcohol and violence.⁸

Not only are these refugees unable to fully give effect to their rights, in fact they have fewer rights, in practice, than 'migrant workers' (many of whom are from Myanmar), who are permitted to register and legally work in Thailand.

Thailand is now hosting more than two million migrant workers, of whom at least 80 percent are thought to be from Myanmar.⁹ The registration began in 2001 and those registered received one-year work permits. In addition to free mobility, they would also have access to Thai health services and their children would have access to education.

Since April 2005, UNHCR and the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced People in Thailand (CCSDPT) have been advocating with the Thai authorities for a more comprehensive approach to improve refugee situations. A UNHCR participatory assessment from 2005 revealed that refugees' highest concerns are mainly related to protection, education and livelihoods. Some of the responses to these concerns proposed by refugees included vocational training and income generating activities.¹⁰

During 15-17 December, 2005 the MOI hosted a workshop for improving the lives of refugees with the participation of concerned NGOs, UNHCR, and diplomats from the European Union, Norway, and the United States. The recommendations from the workshop were as follows:¹¹

- Improving education for the refugees, especially in Thai and English language classes;
- Consider allowing refugees to work outside the camps;
- Growing vegetables and bananas to improve refugees' diet and generate income; and
- Improving health programs for the benefit of local Thai communities as well as refugees.

⁸ CCSDPT/UNHCR, "A draft comprehensive plan addressing the needs of displaced persons on the Thailand/Myanmar (Burma) border in 2006", p 1

⁹ TBBC "Programme Report : July to December 2006", p 6

¹⁰ UNHCR, "Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming: Facilitators' Evaluation Note on Participatory Assessments in Thailand", 21-30 November 2005

¹¹ UNHCR Briefing Notes: "Myanmar refugees in Thailand", 23 May 2006

Again in November, 2006, the MOI organized a seminar in Mae Sot (Tak Province) aiming at exchanging views on the issue of allowing the refugees to engage in work activities inside the refugee camps. Participants included representatives from the RTG, local business, and NGOs.¹² The recommendations were as follows:

- A committee within each refugee camp must be set up to administer the new programme of refugees' activities and develop its own terms of reference.
- The committee would gauge the impact on local Thai communities, set limitations and ensure equitable access to all income-generating opportunities offered to refugees.
- Refugees must be issued with an Identity Card (ID) and Camp Pass allowing them to work outside the refugee camp.
- This committee would verify employer requests for labour and determine the conditions under which employers would engage and be responsible for them.
- Employers should specify the numbers needed, the duration, the conditions package and the location (s).
- Skills training be provided and a pool of skilled people established.
- A grant should be made to a cooperative to commence selected micro enterprises.
- Training in design should be provided to ensure products meet contemporary markets.
- Training in market needs research prior to any grants being awarded.

In the same year, there was considerable progress made in relation to employment and education, as the Non Formal Education Department, Ministry of Education (MOE) came up with a proposal to provide broad educational services to refugees, including Thai and English languages, occupational skills and educational materials such as computers and textbooks. The MOI, on the other hand, gave approval for Thai language training and for NGOs to expand occupational training with income generation possibilities and agreed to issue ID cards to the refugees in the camps.¹³

The hope of stakeholders was that, after issuing the ID cards (see 1.4, above), the RTG will move ahead to permit refugees to move freely outside the camp to work legally. This hope reflects also statements made by the Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanond, who expressed his sympathy towards the refugees, and stated upon assuming office in 2006 that his third priority was improving the living conditions and standards in the refugee camps. These steps were to be in line with accepted standards and would also meet the genuine needs of Thailand's growing economy for a bigger workforce.¹⁴

¹² For further details of this seminar, see the section of this report pertaining to Tak Province (at section 1.3.2).

¹³ Country Operations Plan 2006, UNHCR Thailand. Both projects are supported by UNHCR and the issue of ID cards to approximately 8,000 refugees aged 12 and over has already started in BMN and MLO.

¹⁴ UNHCR Briefing Notes: UNHCR encouraged by new administration's commitments on Myanmar camp conditions, 17 October 2006

2.2 Governing structure of camps

2.2.1 RTG structure ¹⁵

At the national level, there are three ministries and one office that is responsible for the refugee affairs. They are Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and NSC. The administration of each province is under the provincial governor and respective district chief, both of whom have to follow the Ministry of Interior policy. The RTG Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) is responsible for the administration of camps at the field level, on behalf of MOI.

The Third Regional Army of the MOD is responsible for peace and security along the Thai-Myanmar border including safety outside of the camps in Mae Hong Son and Tak. The MONRE, especially the Royal Forest Department (RFD), is responsible for the camps located in national park, forest reserve and wild life sanctuary.

At the provincial level, there is a set regulation for the operation of refugee camps according to the provincial order no 949/1998 dated 17 July, 1998 as follows:

The district chief is the head of the camp and a high-ranked official of the district is appointed, on a rotation basis, to control the displaced persons fleeing from war and be responsible for the following tasks (see Appendix 3 for details of Thai administration in each camp): ¹⁶

- a. Facilitate and monitor the staff according to existing regulations, resolution and government policies ;
- b. Facilitate and support the task force in preventing those who flee from war from causing any harms to national security and effects to international relations ;
- c. Issue measures to prevent the displaced persons to escape from camps ;
- d. Operate the camp in accordance to MOI regulations ;
- e. Request for concerned agencies when in need ; and
- f. Facilitate and monitor NGOs working in the camps.

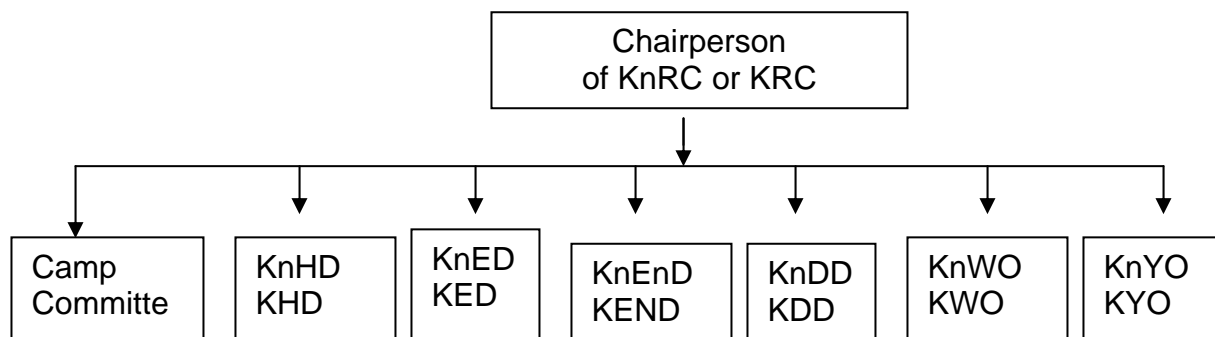
At the local level, all four camps are located in the areas governed by specific Tambon Administration Office (TAO) including TAO Pang Moo, Sop Moei, Khun Yuam and Mae Samlap. However the TAO has never taken part in any decisions regarding the refugee camps.

2.2.2 Refugee structure

The daily administration of the BMN and BMS camps is carried out by the Karenni Refugees Committee (KnRC) while those refugees living in MLO and MRM are under the administration of Karen refugees Committee (KRC). The administrative structure is as follows:

¹⁵ See more details in Pornpimol, ob.cit., 2005, p 128- 146

¹⁶ The high-ranked district official who is assigned to be a camp commander in charge of all the tasks is the deputy district chief (or Palat).



In each camp, the administrative structure composes of the Camp Committee and the section leaders (all refugees) who are elected by the camp population for a two-year-term or a three-year-term depending on the positions. The camp committee will deal with internal and external matters and manages the day to day affairs of the camp while the section leaders will deal with only internal matters. The member of comp committee also includes focal points for social welfare, food supply, special security, educational coordinator, health coordinator, treasurer, and auditor.

At present, the camp leadership is dominated by men. As of early 2006, as revealed in a report by the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), only 22% of positions on Camp Committees, and 10% of section committees, are held by women. In some camps, quotas were introduced in camp elections during 2006 to increase the representation of women.¹⁷

Besides the Camp Committee, there are other sub-committees who deal with certain camp matters such as the education committee, health committee etc. and CBOs such as KnWO/KWO, KnYO/KYO, elder's advisory groups and mechanisms for specific tasks such as the KnED or KED or Vocational Training Committee (VTC) responsible for education, vocational training and work opportunities,.

These CBOs work closely with the NGOs in various aspects and receive stipends and supplies, training, etc. from them. The examples of collaboration between CBOs and NGOs are as follows:

- TBBC supports the Camp Committee in the area of capacity building on camp management and implementation of CAN project through KnDD or KDD.
- IRC supports KnHD in the areas of health and sanitation services similar to the support of MI to KHD. IRC also works with other CBO such as KnDD on income generation activities and managing of market place in BMN.
- JRS and ZOA support KnED or KED in education from primary level to secondary level and vocational training services.
- WEAVE supports KNWO and KWO in the area of nursery school, nursery teacher training and training for upgrading skills.

¹⁷ UNHCR Analysis of Gaps in Refugee Protection Capacity-Thailand, November 2006, p 26

However, these CBOs are under-resourced and require capacity-building. Training as well as financial and material resources are required to make camp management more efficient and transparent.¹⁸

The CBOs, for example, Karen Women's Organization (KWO) and Karenni Women's Organization (KnWO) in all four camps complained that they have worked for their people in the camps so they should be able to receive some stipends as well. At the moment, there are only the cloth weavers and the nursery teachers who are under KnWO and KWO that could earn some stipends. The cloth weavers who produce longyi for the refugees receive 27 baht per piece from TBBC. The nursery teachers receive some stipends from WEAVE.

The KWO has already requested the KRC to allocate some stipends for them so they can fully concentrate on working for the organizations. Otherwise, they have to make a living for supplementary diets and clothes, so they have to engage in other works and therefore cannot fully contribute to the organization as a whole.



(Mae La Oon camp, Mae Hong Son province)

¹⁸ UNHCR, *ibid.*

SECTION 3: FINDINGS

3.1 General description of the target population and hosting areas

In Mae Hong Son, the refugees who are residing in the four camps are mainly from Karenni and Karen States. Those who are from Karenni State are residing in BMN and BMS while those who are from Karen State are in MLO and MRM.

All four camps are located in various districts; BMN is in Muang District, BMS is in Khun Yuam district, MLO and MRM are in Sop Moei district. (see Appendix 5 for camp profiles). Since the camps are located within the national parks and/or wildlife sanctuary and/or forest reserve, the refugees are prohibited from exploiting the natural resources.

3.1.1 Target population

As of March 9, 2007 the total population of all four camps is 52,191 and 13,165 households including those pending the consideration of Provincial Admissions Boards (PABs).¹⁹ BMN Camp, having almost 20,000 inhabitants, is the biggest camp while BMS is the smallest with almost 4,000 people.

Table 1: Camp population and households breakdown by camps

Camp	F	M	Total	Households
BMN	9,452	10,026	19,478	5,030
BMS	1,776	1,875	3,651	997
MLO	6,915	7,521	14,436	3,694
MRM	7,208	7,418	14,626	3,444
Total			52,191	13,165

Source : UNHCR Bangkok Thailand : Statistics by camp as of 9 March 2007

For detailed information on population breakdown by households, age group, those classified as registered (active) and those awaiting the Provincial Admissions Boards (PABs) approval (hold), see Appendix 4.

Half of refugees are children and adolescents. Many of them were born in camps and have never experienced living outside the camp. Children grow up in confined conditions and this seriously impacts the development of their skills, talents and vision. Their parents, on the other hand, have to struggle to earn some extra income for their family to supplement the family diet with meat, vegetables and fruit that are not distributed in the monthly rations. They are also required to provide their clothes and school fees. The amount of fee ranges from

¹⁹ Persons pending consideration by the PABs are not eligible for resettlement submission.

25-50 baht per student and is collected by school teachers to be spent on school administration costs, i.e. school maintenance, teachers' lunch during school examination, meetings, etc.²⁰

Except for BMN, the rest of the camps are very difficult to access because of their location in the mountainous areas and the bad condition of the access roads. The time to travel to these camps averages about 1.30 – 2.30 hr from Mae Hong Son and Mae Sariang. In the rainy season, access to all camps, especially BMS is almost impossible. Rations are therefore stocked in the camps prior to the beginning of the rainy season.

In general, electricity generated by solar panels and mini-hydro generators is only available to the hospitals and MOI offices. Those refugees who can afford it, can have access to electricity by paying for the service to generator owner.

Basic education and health care facilities are available within the camps. Various vocational training and Thai language courses are also provided to refugees without any educational requirement. Refugees can also access to free medical services in the camp and are transferred by camp clinics to district hospitals for serious sickness.

The total number of students in four camps from nursery to post 10 is 23,044. The breakdown is as in Table 2.

Table 2 : Number of students in 2006 breakdown by camps

Camp	Nursery	Primary	Secondary	High school	Post 10 Leadership/ Teacher training	Total
BMN	1,627	3,432	2,046	382	143	7,630
BMS	286	694	672	100	-*	1,752
MLO	621	505	4,530**	430	103	6,189
MRM	1,326	3,696	1,365	860	226	7,473
Total	3,860	8,327	8,613	1,772	472	23,044

* About 20 students are now studying at Post 10 level in BMN.

** This figure includes students in primary and secondary schools.

Currently, most graduates of post-Grade 10 education are able to get jobs by replacing the refugees who have been offered resettlement in the third country. These jobs are in the areas of education, health and sanitation services.

3.1.2 Hosting areas

Mae Hong Son, which is about 924 km from Bangkok by road, is one of Thailand's poorest provinces, lagging behind the rest of the country in many areas of development.²¹

²⁰ Information from Camp Committee members in MRM and BMS.

The province covers an area of 12,681.3 sq km or 7,925,812 rai. The governing structure is divided to seven Districts; Muang, Khun Yuam, Mae La Noi, Sariang, Sop Moei, Pang Mapha, and Pai, 45 Sub-districts, 413 villages and 42 Tambon Administrative Organizations (TAO).²² All districts border Myanmar. As of December 2006, the registered population according to the Department of Provincial Administration was 255,174 persons. This population is composed of various ethnic groups: the Shan (or Tai Yai) which is the largest group living in the main agricultural plain. The balance of 63 percent of the population is hill tribes including Karen, Hmong, Lisu, Lahu, Akha, Mien (Yao). The hill-tribe population is dependent on forest areas, which cover 90 percent of the provincial area, for their livelihood through forest products collection, food, and herbal plant sources.

A little over 10 percent of Mae Hong Son population were registered without Thai nationality, including those displaced from Myanmar arriving before March 9, 1976, migrant workers from Myanmar arriving before March 9, 1976, hill tribe groups and refugees living in border camps, among others.

The provincial economy is based on agriculture and this activity is found only in the confined plains. The principle crops of the province are rice, garlic, soy bean and cabbage. Non-agricultural production consists mostly of trade (27 percent), much of which is linked to tourism. The provincial minimum wage is 145 baht.²³

Strengths/opportunities and weakness/challenges for Mae Hong Son were identified in the Provincial Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 as follows:

Strengths/opportunities:

- High potential for expanding eco-tourism
- Healthy and clean environment
- Distinctive and diverse cultural composition of population
- Abundant forest cover and bio-diversity
- Mountainous landscapes with beautiful natural settings
- Life and property security

Weakness/challenges:

- Communication/linkage network constrained by the mountainous terrain that causes settlements to be far apart and difficult to access and communicate with
- Air quality deterioration from forest fires and use of wood products in household cooking and heating
- Limited agricultural area that accounts for only 3.4 percent of the total area
- Low per capita income and uneven income distribution
- Lower completion rates of secondary and high school
- Limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation

²¹ Office of the NESDB and United Nations Country Team in Thailand, Mae Hong Son provincial Millennium Development Goals report 2005, Bangkok, 2005, p 1-3

²² Information from the Department of Provincial Administration website

²³ Mae Hong Son Provincial Millennium Development Goal Report 2005, p 3

- Many highland areas lack access to basic services and income generation opportunities
- Political instability in Myanmar and fighting along the Thai-Myanmar border forces refugees to seek safety in Thailand
- Limited participation of key sectors such as women in representative positions and highland groups in development planning

There is neither big industry nor agro-business within the Mae Hong Son province. The Chamber of Commerce (CoC) of Mae Hong Son is under the governing structure of Chiang Mai CoC. Its 144 members cover various businesses such as groceries, spare parts for vehicles, hotels, resorts, guests, restaurants, agricultural products, tourist services and building construction work.²⁴

3.1.3 Hosting communities

There are 11 hosting communities surrounding the refugee camps being surveyed.²⁵ These are described in detail at Appendix 6. The hosting communities being surveyed are shown in the following table.

Table 3: Hosting community breakdown by camps

Camp	BMN	BMS	MLO	MRM
Hosting Communities	Ban Nai Soi	Ban Mae Sa Pe	Ban Mae Toh La	Ban MLML
	Ban Mai Sa Pe	Ban Doi Saeng	Ban Huay Fan	Ban Klo Koh
		Ban Klang	Ban Kaen Fa	Ban Le Koh

The population of these communities is relatively small with less than five hundred people. The exception is Ban Nai Soi which has 1,800 people making it the biggest community.

Table 4: Numbers of population in each hosting community

Hosting communities	F	M	Total	Households
Ban Nai Soi	790	1,010	1,800	375
Ban Mai Sa Pe	245	238	483	93
Ban Doi Saeng	110	115	225	50
Ban Mae Sa Pe Tai	236	291	527	96
Ban Huay Fan	228	267	495	88
Ban Klang	113	123	236	72
Ban Kaen Fa	163	182	345	113
Ban MLML	232	218	450	89

²⁴ Website of Provincial Administration Office

²⁵ These are Ban Nai Soi, Ban Mai Sa Pe, Ban Doi Saeng, Ban Mae Sa Pe Tai, Ban Huay Fan, Ban Klang, Ban Kaen Fa, Ban Mae La Ma Luang (Ban MLML), Ban Leh Koh and Ban Mae Toh La. They are within walking distance of 1- 3 hours from camps.

Ban Klo Koh	137	134	271	55
Ban Leh Koh	189	208	397	92
Ban Mae Toh La	n/a	n/a	430	105
Total			5,659	1,228

The ethnicity of villagers in hosting communities are the same as the majority population of camp residents exception of Ban Nai Soi whose majority of population is a mixture of Shan and Karenni and Ban Klang and Ban Kaen Fa whose population is Shan. Ban Mae Sa Pe Tai and Ban Huay Fan are Christian and the balance of hosting communities are Buddhist, some of whom also practice spirit worship.

Table 5: Refugee camps and hosting communities: breakdown by ethnicity and religion

Camp	Ethnicity	Religion	Hosting communities	Ethnicity	Religion
BMN	Karenni, Shan	Animist/ Christian/ Baptist	Ban Nai Soi	Shan, Karenni	Buddhist/ Christian
			Ban Mai Sa Pe	Karenni	Buddist/ Animist
			Ban Doi Saeng	Karenni	Buddist/ Animist
BMS	Karenni, Karen	Baptist/ Catholic/ Buddhist/ Animist	Ban Mae Sa Pe Tai	Karenni	Christian
			Ban Huay Fan	Karenni	Christian
			Ban Klang	Shan	Buddhist
			Ban Kaen Fa	Shan	Buddhis
MLO	Karen	Baptist/ Buddhist/ Catholic/ Animist	Ban Mae Toh La	Karen	Buddhist/ Animist
MRM	Karen	Baptist/ Buddhist/ Animist	Ban MLML	Karen	Buddhist/ Animist
			Ban Klo Koh		
			Ban Le Koh		

Most of the hosting communities grow highland rice, chilli, soy bean and garlic as their main crops. A limited numbers of families also grow paddy as they have cultivation plot in the low land area. The agricultural practices among the Karen communities are based on traditional methods of rotation cultivation depending on rainfall.

The production of rice, which is the main staple food, is usually enough for an annual consumption. However, those who have a smaller piece of land will have to decide whether they will grow rice or chilli as they do not have enough land to do both at the same time.

Ban Nai Soi is the most affluent community in terms of living standards and economy. They have more low land cultivation areas and better infrastructure than other communities including electricity, secondary schools and health care facilities. There are about 600 motorcycles and 38 pick-ups 24 of which are used in transporting goods to BMN. Their

affluence is best described by a reflection of one refugee in BMN “the villagers (in Ban Nai Soi) are now four times richer after the camp is established”.²⁶

The majority of the communities being surveyed are identified as targeted poor villages by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB).²⁷ Those with Karenni and Karen population are considered to face more difficulties in making a living compared to the Shan communities. By living in the highland areas they face limited access to basic services and income generation opportunities, limited agricultural area, limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation, have low income and low completion rates of secondary and high school.

Relations with local communities

As the refugees share the same indigenous traditions of forest with the local villagers, they know how to collect and make use of forest products and therefore compete with local villagers in collecting wild honey and animals, bamboo shoots, fish, crabs, etc.

Many of villagers also have relatives in the camps. There are also cases of inter-marriage among refugees and villagers. In addition, all of the hosting communities benefit from the camps as they can arrange for seasonal labour to work in their fields.

Needs of local communities

The support which the hosting communities receive from the government agencies include loans, blankets, solar panels,²⁸ trainings for self-sufficiency such as organic fertilizer, making of liquid detergent and liquid dish washing, and coffee growing, and for some income generation such as pig raising.

The support provided by NGOs working in the camps such as TBBC, COERR, IRC, JRS and ZOA are limited to basic necessities such as blankets, soap, toothpaste, rice, clothes, construction material for hanging bridge, school supplies and uniforms, sport equipments, water pump and road maintenance.

From the perspective of the local communities, they need support in terms of:

- In education, needed supports include school uniforms and supplies, sport equipments for youth, vegetable seeds for school lunch and scholarships for secondary schools
- For basic necessities, needed supports include road maintenance, waterworks improvement, first aid kits, warm clothes, water filter tanks, toilets, mosquito nets, public telephone, supports of elders and disability

²⁶ Bandit Kraivijit, The Life of Diaspora : Karenni Diaspora in Mae Hong Son, Masters Degree thesis, Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, Thammasat University, 2006

²⁷ See NESDB website – www.nesdb.go.th. The exemptions are Ban Klo Koh and Ban Sa Pe Tai which, to the knowledge of this study, should have been included.

²⁸ According to the information from customer services of MHS Electricity Authority, 10,000 sets of solar panels were distributed by the Thai government through the MHS Electricity Authority to install at the Thai households in the remote villages. Each household would have to pay monthly 50 baht to their TAO - otherwise each TAO has to allocate their budget for maintenance cost.

- For income generation, needs include: trainings on efficient charcoal making, biogas, access to market for their produces, weaving by wider loom, product design for their cloths, and off-farm jobs.

3.2 Degree of access to the labour market, including the informal sector

There are three studies which cover the labour market issue and focus on refugees in one of the four camps. These are;

- (i) UNHCR “Mobility and Protection Risks: A Study of Ban Mai Nai Soi Refugee Camp”²⁹,
- (ii) IRC “Assessment of the Labour Market and Labour Activities in the Ban Kwai/Ban Tractor Refugee Camp and the Surrounding Environs” and
- (iii) Bandit Kraivijit’s “Life of Diaspora: Karenni Diaspora in Mae Hong Son”.³⁰

The first two studies touched on employment and labour market issues directly while the third focused on life in the camp in general.

The UNHCR study shows that males in BMN were more likely to leave the camp than females with the intention to work for cash income. Separated children aged 15-18 who had worked generally went outside of camp during school break. They usually go to places nearby including Ban Nai Soi, Mae Hong Son town or other Thai villages near the camp and the jungle surrounding the camp. The majority of refugees work in agriculture (94%) and most earn 41-60 baht per day. Males often get 60 baht a day in agriculture work while females receive 50 baht for the same work Only three percent stated that they had worked in construction. Approximately nine percent indicated they worked in a variety of other fields such as tourism, chicken factory and work for civil and political groups.

IRC’s study shows that 58% of the refugee population in Ban Kwai/Ban Tractor is involved in income-generating activities, mostly in agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts. The income earned from agricultural work is between 41-70 baht and is most frequently reported to be 50 baht per day. Most of the work takes place inside the camp (58%), while 42% occurs in the area around the camp and in nearby villages. The agricultural work is seasonal. Animal husbandry provides the least amount of income, 10 baht or less; the health-related work is 40 baht per day and teaching-related work was somewhat less at 25 baht a day.

Although these studies focused only in BMN camp, their findings are similar to what were found from the survey of hosting communities nearby BMN and other camps which was carried out in the context of the present study. The common conclusion is that refugees are illegally engaged in seasonal agricultural work in nearby communities, while refugee youth also work during their vacation.³¹

²⁹ UNHCR study was carried out by Sheema Chandra, based in Mae Hong Son, and completed in September 2006.

³⁰ Ban Nai Soi and Ban Kwai/Ban Tractor is the same camp. Although Bandit did not clarify which Karenni Diaspora in Mae Hong Son is but it is very likely that he referred to BMN.

³¹ Villagers in Ban Kaen Fa reported that they employed youth as well.

The focus group discussion revealed that numbers of seasonal labourers supplied by the camps were ranging from 100 to 1,000 people and the daily wage ranged from 40-60 baht. Among four camps, MLO supplied the least number of seasonal labourers and BMN supplied the most.

With regard to the daily wage, it should be noted that the research conducted by Friends of the Earth in 2001 showed that the refugees earned around 50 baht per day.³² This means that the wage given to refugees has remained almost the same for at least six years.

On the demand side, it is reported that the actual number of seasonal labourers generally working in hosting communities ranged from 20-1,000 with Ban Nai Soi having the most demand while Ban Mae Toh La the least number.

Table 6: Comparison of demand and supply of seasonal labours

Camp	No. of seasonal labours *	No. of actual seasonal labours**	Daily wage
BMN	500-1,000	1,230	50-60
BMS	300-1,000	700	45-50
MLO	100+	20	40
MRM	300-800	220	40-50

* as reported by four camp committees ** as reported by hosting committees

Bandit's study shows that the number of refugees from BMN alone could range between 2,500-4000.³³

The figures on seasonal labourers reported by both the camp and hosting communities may be underestimated because the camp committees were reluctant to reveal the real figure. They are aware that it is illegal to leave the camps and many of refugees may have left without informing them.

On the demand side, the figure is likely to be based on different perception of how to calculate the numbers of workers. In practice, the seasonal labourers did not show up all at one time. As a result some communities gave the actual number of labourers who showed up and some gave the figure of labourers rotating to work with different households during the cultivation season.

Most of the villagers stated that they gave the same wage to both women and men. However, the wage also varies depending on type of work.³⁴

³² Friends of the Earth, Taking shelter under trees : Displaced peoples and Forest Conservation, Watershed, Vol 7, No 2, November 2001 – February 2002, p 39

³³ During harvesting season, Thai villagers assessed the maximum and the minimum numbers of refugees who walked daily back and forth from the camp to work on farm.

³⁴ For example, the wage for picking chilli is 30 - 50 baht for one bucket of seven kg or 10 baht per kg and picking corn is about 1 baht each. For harder work such as digging pitch holes, preparing the foundation for house construction, drying and hanging garlic, carrying rice and charcoal, the wage is based on negotiation which could be up to 100-150 baht per day and refugees could work as a team of 2-3 people. The work for planting rice in four rais could cost about 1,000 baht for four persons and could be completed in three days.

Both sides were satisfied with the sub-contract kind of agreement as the refugees could earn more money per day and the employers could get their work done quicker.

The majority of refugees were reported to work for two-three days or even longer to finish their work. Some prior to finishing went back to the camp for their ration and returned later to complete the tasks. They either stayed at their employees' shelters in the fields or at their employee's houses.

Seasonal labour is usually needed as follows: March – April for harvesting garlic, July – August – growing paddy, November for rice harvesting, December – March – growing garlic. The seasonal work usually lasts for six months and is very competitive. Bandit's study³⁵ showed that the refugees had to wake up very early in the morning to prepare their food and walk to the communities to contact their former employers or wandered around the communities to look for jobs. Some of them had to wake up as early as midnight to prepare food. Since they woke up so early the section leader had to prohibit them not to cook their rice before 4 am as it would disturb their neighbours who live so closed to them and were still asleep. Some NGO staff also reported seeing many refugees walking out of BMN with their torches as early as 5 in the morning.

However, there are also periods when local villagers needed workers but could not find any and so go to the camps to look for labourers. In some cases they ask the MOI camp guards or Camp Section leaders to help out.

The hosting communities were unsure whether the refugees who left the camps to work for them had asked for permission from camp authorities, or left camp without any permission.

A UNHCR study found that 65 percent of refugees leaving camp had asked permission, primarily from internal camp governance bodies. When permission to leave the camp was sought, it was most commonly requested of the section leader (52%). A total of nine percent of people requested permission from MOI camp guards, while eight percent asked the camp committee. Refugees who leave the camp without specific authorisation may have their rations stopped by the Camp Committee while they are absent, reducing the total rations provided to their family.

Bandit's study found this to be a common practice. Those who wanted to leave had to ask permission from the section leader who will then issue the permit to be shown to the MOI camp guards at the checkpoint. On their way back they had to show their permit again and they had to be back by 6 pm. The refugees whose rations would be cut were those who remained out of the camp for a longer period of time, rather than the seasonal labourers.

In terms of treatment to refugees who worked out side the camp, both UNHCR and IRC's studies found incidents of mistreatment or labour exploitation. The UNHCR study shows that 55% of the people who left the camp to work had been exploited in at least one way: including mistreatment by employers (19%), being underpaid by the employers (12%), and not being

³⁵ Bandit Kraivijit, 2006, *op. cit.*

paid at all by an employer (12%). Many people reported that they were exploited by their employer in more than one way. In addition, 80 percent of the total number of non-Karen people who work outside of the camp had faced labour exploitation.

The IRC assessment found mistreatment including failure to pay workers the agreed upon wages, having workers work more than eight hours a day and hiring under-aged workers in construction, agriculture and tourism (lodging and restaurant) work and most incidents occurring in Mae Hong Son.³⁶

There is no report of labour exploitation and mistreatment in this study in which covered 11 hosting communities. This is understandable as employers were not likely to report their mistreatment of employees. However, despite the complaints of local villagers about having their produce stolen and problems in competing with refugees for natural resources, they generally expressed their sympathy towards the refugees who are of the same ethnic group and have been helping them in various ways with the labour.

3.3 Existing related programs initiated by UNHCR and other actors

3.3.1 Vocational training in Karen camps

In January 2003, ZOA Refugee Care launched its project “Vocational Training for Karen Refugees along the Thai-Burmese Border”, with the support of UNHCR.³⁷

During 2003-2005, there were 4,926 students enrolled in Phase I of ZOA vocational courses. Those courses were sewing, baking/cooking, music, auto mechanic, computer, agriculture, typing, knitting, radio mechanic, tinsmith, first aid, basket weaving, stove making, weaving, blacksmith, carpentry, goat raising and handicraft. The evaluation of ZOA VT courses showed that sewing, baking/cooking, music, auto mechanic, computer and agriculture courses were best attended.³⁸

In 2006, UNHCR continued its support to ZOA’s vocational training project in three additional areas including foreign language courses (Non Formal Education), establishment of solar/diesel hybrid systems and educational support to PABs (which was limited to refugees in Ban Don Yang, Umpiem and Nu Po camps). The phase II vocational training courses were the same as those of the phase I, with the exception of typing, first aid and handicrafts.

The concrete goal of vocational training is to provide refugees, especially the youth, with employable vocational skills to prepare them for their repatriation to Myanmar, resettlement in third countries and for income generation opportunities in Thailand. The courses cover three main areas including agriculture, home economics and technical skills. The target group

³⁶ International Rescue Committee, “Assessment of the Labour Market and Labour Activities in the Ban Kwai/Ban Tractor Refugee Camp and the Surrounding Environs”, September 2005

³⁷ ZOA Refugee Care, Vocational Training for Karen Refugees along the Thai-Burmese Border Baseline Data, July 2003 prepared by Thai Education Foundation, p 5

³⁸ Ibid, p 19

includes post 10 students, school dropouts, young adults and the disabled. For the English course, the main objective is to provide refugees who do not have equitable access to training and those who will be resettled to third countries. This was especially so in 2007 when a sizable number of refugees are expected to leave. The objectives for the establishment of Solar/diesel Hybrid Systems included diversifying the power supply from a diesel-only system to a solar and diesel “hybrid” system. This was to provide power for computer training centers in camps, provide hands-on practical and classroom training for engineering students and computer service workers. Training was also provided for generator caretakers including an extended maintenance and system training. ³⁹ The total numbers of trainees from 2003 to 2006 in MRM and MLO camps in ZOA courses was 1,434. The breakdown by courses is in Table 7 below. ⁴⁰

Table 7: Numbers of trainees attending ZOA courses by camp

Courses	MRM 2003		MLO 2004		MRM 2004		MLO 2005		MRM 2005		MLO 2006		MRM 2006	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Agriculture	-	-	12	29	12	29	8	39	-	-	13	21	-	-
Auto	-	20	-	18	-	15	35	47	-	24	-	32	-	9
Mechanics														
Blacksmith	-	10	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	14	-	-	-	5
Cloth weaving	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	8
Computer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	23	9	12
Cooking & Bakery	10	10	22	8	33	9	19	10	13	4	15	14	9	1
Goat raising	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-	-	-
Music	6	6	-	-	-	14	-	-	3	15	57	26	4	7
NFE English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	33	32	31
Sewing	2	18	70	1	20	19	15	91	32	11	40	5	27	4
Basket weaving	9	9	-	-	-	19	-	-	1	38	-	-	-	10
Tin Box making/Tinsmith	5	5	-	-	-	20	-	23	1	20	-	20	1	9
Tying	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	17	12	9				
Stove Making	9	9	-	-	9	8	-	-	1	6	3	21	2	7
Total	41	87	104	56	74	148	84	227	63	141	204	195	101	103
Grand Total	128		160		222		211		204		305		204	

Note: In MLO, ZOA worked with Camp VT Committee, KYO and KWO. In MRM, ZOA worked with Camp VT Committee, KYO, KWO, DARE, HI and high schools.

It is noted that the stove making course is part of ZOA’s contribution to promoting environment-friendly production methods and materials; the clay stoves produced from this course would contribute to the reduction of charcoal consumption of each household.

³⁹ ZOA Refugee Care, Support to Vocational Training and Non-Formal Education in Refugee Camps, End-Year Sub-Project Monitoring Report 2006, February 2007

⁴⁰ Summary from ZOA documents provided by ZOA Mae Sariang office.

Besides providing vocational training courses, ZOA also provides opportunities for their ex-trainees to practice their skills and engage in small-scale income generation activities. In both MLO and MRM, ZOA runs a shop selling products of their trainees attending sewing, weaving, basket weaving, tinsmithing and blacksmith courses. In addition, ZOA provides services for repairing motorbikes and boat engines and sharpening agricultural tools. Stoves made in MRM are also sold to TBBC to be distributed to refugees.

3.3.2 Vocational training in Karenni camps

Following a 2005 assessment of vocational training/non formal education needs in Ban Tractor/Ban Kwai and Ban Mae Surin in 2005,⁴¹ Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) launched its Vocational Training (VT) programme in BMN in early 2006. A total of 22 vocational training courses were provided in BMN covering agriculture, animal husbandry, nutrition & snack making, energy, infrastructure, blacksmith/welding, tinsmith, electrical/ mechanic repair, recycling, hair-cutting, basic sewing, advanced sewing, embroidery/knitting/ crochet, traditional weaving, reflexology/massage, first aids, herbal medicine, music, arts, computer hardware, computer software, small business, while adult literacy is being determined by the VT survey. Most of the courses offer three months of training.

The VT programme in BMS was established and implemented in mind-2006. With the exception of motorcycle repair and computer hardware, similar courses except were organized - 111 trainees attended. Thai, Burmese and English language courses were also open at the BMS VT center having 139, 13 and 43 trainees attended respectively.

3.3.3 Thai language training

Towards the end of 2006, the Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission, Ministry of Education (ONFEC) under the support of UNHCR started Thai language training in eight camps.⁴² The basic Thai language course was provided during September 25 - December 22, 2006 with the focus on speaking and listening following by reading and writing. In 2007, the course focuses on intermediate and advanced levels.⁴³

Four teachers were assigned to work in each camp. They could also speak either Karen or Karenni. These teachers were trained to understand the concept of Thai Language training, adult psychology, Thai language curriculum, lesson planning, teaching method and learning activities development. The teaching has been organized on a session by session basis.

The initial plan for Thai language course was to enroll 500 students with a minimum age of 15 from each camp. However this has not been achieved. The NFE director in Khun Yuam district stated that the target for 500 students was too ambitious for BMS because the camp population was less than 3,000. The refugees need more than 200 hrs to learn Thai and this was also inefficient as those trained did not have much chance to practice it as they were restricted

⁴¹ This assessment was carried out by KnED and JRS

⁴² Which include all four camps in MHS, three camps in Tak and one camp in Kanchanaburi

⁴³ ONFEC, Thai Language Training in Myanmar Refugee Camps Year Book, 2006

to camp environment.⁴⁴ The NFE trainers in BMS confirmed this impression and reported that the numbers of enrolled students were higher than the actual students because many of them registered only to receive NFE text book and stationary. After receiving such items, they did not show up. As an alternative the Thai NFE trainers allowed school-aged children to attend Thai language course after their normal school attendance.⁴⁵

As of early 2007, the total numbers of refugees enrolled in this course in the four camps in question, was 2375.

Table 8: Number of Enrolment in Thai language course breakdown by camps

Categories	BMN	BMS*	MRM	MLO
No. of enrolled students	597	479	605	694

* **source** : Thai NFE trainers in BMN, BMS, MRM and MLO

During the training period, directors of the Provincial and District level ONFEC of Mae Hong Son closely monitored the progress of the course. In two months, some trainees could speak and listen to basic Thai. Most of trainees have enjoyed the class and want to go for further with the Thai language course. In 2007, ONFEC will provide intermediate and advanced courses of Thai Language to enable trainees to speak, listen, read and write more fluently.

3.3.4 Programmes for vulnerable groups

Also in 2006, COERR organized several activities and training for 'Extremely Vulnerable Individuals' (EVI), a group which comprises adults, the elderly and youth groups. These activities include candle and soap making, environmental protection, healing of memory and organic agriculture.⁴⁶ The breakdown of EVIs in each camp is indicated in Table 9 and the breakdown of trainees attending various activities and trainings are in Table 10.

Table 9: No. of trainees attended the trainings breakdown by age groups and camps

Training provided to	BMN	BMS	MLO	MRM
1. Adult group	607	508	60	38
2. Elder group	1,245	521	28	33
3. Youth group	252	143	39	33
Total	2,104	1,172	127	104

The training for adult groups included community building, religious activities, peace and harmony, conflict management, friendship and love. Besides focusing on religion, peace and harmony, the training for the youth group had also added the content of unity in diversity, youth and life goal, and stress coping into its course.

Table 10: Numbers of trainees attending COERR activities and trainings

⁴⁴ Interviews with Mr Suthat Kantama at NFE Khun Yuam Office, 21 February, 2007

⁴⁵ Interviews with NFE trainers in BMS dated 22 February 2007

⁴⁶ Summary of COERR documents provided by COERR Mae Hong Son office.

Activities/ Trainings	BMN		BMS		MLO		MRM	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Candle making	1,655	1,033	800	452	1,180	417	1,111	1,023
Environment Protection	5	51	5	35	84	107	77	208
Healing of Memory	12	25	7	16	60	44	72	57
Organic Agriculture	26	61	13	37	37	43	21	49
Soap Making	1108	587	406	107	263	86	389	586
Total	3,961	2,706	1,869	1,181	1,683	765	1,736	1,961

In addition, 35 BMN and BMS trainees and 37 MLO and MRM trainees received training to become community social workers. The content of this training included case management, stress and trauma, child & family counselling, child right & child protection, and separated children care. Apart from this, 955 families from BMN and 716 families from BMS received seeds distribution from COERR.

3.3.5 CAN Project

TBBC's Community Agriculture and Nutrition Project (CAN) commenced implementation in 2000.⁴⁷ Its short-term goals are to improve refugees diet in camp and to assist community members achieve sustainable increases in food production using local resources. Its long-term goals are to improve coping strategies for eventual repatriation and to help develop appropriate and essential skills needed to achieve future long-term food security. CAN activities include training on agricultural vocational training and animal raising, distribution of fencing, tools (one hoe, a small spade, a bucket and watering can), seed, trees and livestock. Types of training include CAN Basic Training, Agricultural Vocational Training, IDP CAN training, and Bio-gas/Solar Cooker Training. The beneficiaries of the agricultural vocational training were 837 people in seven camps.

In BMN and BMS, TBBC works with IRC in joint funding and project monitoring of the KnDD CAN and collaborates with JRS to provide CAN trainers for vocational agricultural programme. In MLO, TBBC coordinates with ZOA in VTC programmes and in MRM, TBBC works with Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN).

In 2006, 20,430 seedlings of edible tree species were distributed in MLO and MRM. Regarding animal raising, TBBC has not been successful in expanding its pig-breeding project in MLO, MRM and Site 2 due in part to disease and lack of community follow up. During the second half of 2006, a total of 60,000 meters of fencing was provided to 1,800 households in all four camps. The schools and households in MRM and MLO also received tool kits. In addition, in collaboration with ZOA's VCT programmes, TBBC could increase seed distribution during the second half of 2006 in MLO and MRM.

⁴⁷ TBBC Programme Report : July to December 2006, p 24-25

3.4 Economic coping strategies of refugees and communities in hosting areas

The refugee coping strategies to improve their livelihoods include self-employment and micro-enterprise, incentive workers, waged labour, informal employment and informal arrangement.

Self-employment and micro-enterprises

Some poor families who have no supplementary income but want to have different kinds of food have been selling some of their basic rations including soy beans, rice, charcoal and bamboo to grocers inside the camps or to nearby communities and in Mae Hong Son. Rice is also processed to produce rice wine for sale in the camp. In addition, the owners of groceries in BMN camp were reported to be taking goods on credit from local Thai business people in BMN village and selling on a consignment basis.⁴⁸

In BMN camp, there is a case of one Thai man married to a refugee living in camp. They provide a power-generating service to the camp residents. The service runs from early morning till 9 pm for 50 baht per month. There are also many VCD renting shops in BMN and BMS camps offering Burmese movies. In BMS, there are four private businesses which run the water turbines to generate electricity through batteries. This business functions during January to June because the water level is too high during the rest of the year.



(Water turbine in BMS camp)

In MRM, there are also four private businesses providing similar service to at least 120 households. In MLO, there are 14 private boat taxis that run between the camp and Mae Sam

⁴⁸ Bandit, ob. cit., p 74 According to Bandit, soy bean could be sold to grocers in the camp for 4 baht per tinned can.

Lap during rainy season. Each boat can accommodate up to 15 passengers for 200 baht each per trip.



(Boat taxis, MLO camp)

There are also a lot of Karen women in BMS, MLO, and MRM who carry out cloth-weaving to earn supplementary income. The estimated numbers of households involving in pig and poultry raising, leaf roof making, bamboo basket weaving, and groceries/shops in each camp is indicated in Table 11.

Table 11: Estimated figures of households engaging in economic activities

Economic activities	BMN	BMS	MRM	MLO
Pig raising	4,000+	600+	2,000+	1,000+
Poultry raising	3,000+	800+	2,500+	2,000+
Leaves roof making		500+	100+	
Bamboo Weaving	3,500+	1,000+	150+	20+
Groceries/shops	140	20+	133	140

Pigs raised inside the camps are usually sold to local villagers. In BMN, at least 4,000 pigs are raised.⁴⁹

Many refugees in BMS are engaged in leaf roof making especially during February to April. During this time of the year, at least, one or two family members of each households will leave their houses around 3 p.m. to stay overnight in the forest and collect fresh leaves as early as possible in the morning. They then carry them back home in their bamboo basket. The leaf rooves are made and sold to the middlemen in camp who will stock them in one place awaiting to be sold to traders from outside the camp.

⁴⁹ Information from Mr. Poe Byar Shay Reh, KnRC Chairperson, 9 April 2007



(Thatch roof weaving)

The bamboo weaving products from MRM have been wholesaled to ZOA shop in the camp as well as to middlemen from Ban Le Koh who display and sell them as Mae Hong Son “One Tambon One Product”⁵⁰ (OTOP) items at Ban Le Koh Wisdom and Learning center not so far from the camp.



(Ban Le Koh OTOP display shop)

⁵⁰ **OTOP** Project is one of the Royal Thai Government's urgent policies encouraging Thai communities to make use of Thai knowledge and skills. Its aims to strengthen local communities to be self-dependant, and to create jobs and income for community members. Local knowledge and resources, therefore, have been employed to develop quality products and service with their own advantages and value added. While maintaining Thai culture and way of life, the products also meet the needs of the domestic and international markets.
www.otop5star.com/about.php

The bamboo weaving baskets from BMN and handicraft products are wholesaled to the long neck refugees living in the section which becomes a market place for overseas tourists especially during tourist high season.

IRC has promoted income generating activities on radio/ electrical repair shop in BMN. ZOA has established a handicraft shop: cloth weaving products, basketry weaving products in MRM as well as selling stoves to TBBC for distribution.

Incentive workers ⁵¹

There are 3,733 incentive workers in all four camps and BMN has the highest numbers.

Table 12: Number of incentive workers breakdown by gender, camp and employees

Employees	BMN		BMS		MLO		MRM		Total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
COERR	9	19	5	9	12	18	13	13	98
DARE	2	8	-	-	4	6	2	7	29
HI	3	12	2	2	6	3	5	9	42
IRC	152	112	44	29	-	-	-	-	337
JRS (teachers)	260	241	84	35	-	-	-	-	620
JRS (VT)	9	25	7	11	-	-	-	-	52
KNWO, KWO*	81	-	21	-	81	-	119	-	302
KWO Adult lit	-	-	-	-	12	-	10	-	22
KNYO, KYO*	6	16	3	8	-	87	67	70	257
MI	-	-	-	-	31	68	95	65	259
PPAT	-	-	-	-	16	7	14	7	44
SVA	-	-	-	-	8	1	11	-	20
TBBC	61	341	12	46	34	79	39	218	830
KNWO, KWO	32	-	8	-	18	-	21	-	79
Weavers									
WEAVE/ KnWO, KWO (Nursery teachers)	81	-	19	-	-	-	71	-	171
ZOA (teachers)	-	-	-	-	146	140	123	94	503
ZOA (TOT)	-	-	-	-	3	6	5	6	20
ZOA (VT)	-	-	-	-	9	17	2	20	48
Total	696	774	205	140	380	432	597	509	3,733

Source: Information from camp committees and relevant NGOs as of April 2007

A total of 559 workers from KnWO/KWO and KnYO/KYO have worked as volunteers without any stipends (notwithstanding that some might have been working as school teachers). Therefore, there are only 3,174 workers who have received stipends. The monthly stipend

⁵¹ In BMS, the camp committee divides the incentive workers into three groups based on monthly income. The good income is earning 700 – 1000 baht, the moderate income is 300-700 baht and the small income is 100-300 baht.

given to incentive workers varies according to the NGOs. COERR workers receive about 750-900 baht while their only supervisor in each camp receives 1,200 baht. HI workers receive an average of 700 baht while supervisor receives 1,800 baht. ZOA VT Center staff receive 500-1,000 baht. JRS and ZOA primary to secondary school teachers receive 500-650 baht. IRC medical staff receive 750 to 1,800 baht. The Camp Committee members receive 400-2,000 Baht.

Waged labour

Various studies confirmed that refugees are illegally employed in seasonal work outside camps and in other places. See more details in 3.2

Informal employment

There are at least two cases of refugees being employed to teach English in the hosting communities. Both are in Ban Mae Tor La. One is employed as an English teacher in Ban Mae Tor La primary school.⁵² The other is employed by a foreign businessman to teach the children of his employees.

About 12 refugee families have been hired to work in a lychee orchard administered by the Royal Project - Nai Soi Center near BMN. These families have lived there for many years and bring back their quota of lychee to sell in the camp after harvesting. The Royal Project also employs approximately 10 refugees to work temporarily in digging and cleaning ditches and other odd jobs to assist at the site. These temporary workers earn 60 baht daily.⁵³ Refugees are also employed by some NGOs in the camps to do road repair and maintenance.

Informal Arrangement

There are reports of an informal business operating in BMN which sells housing space to refugees who would like to expand their houses. A space the size of one room could cost 3,500 baht. The poor who face difficulties may have to sell their space to those who have more money.⁵⁴ Refugees who are leaving for resettlement can also sell their house for 5,000 baht.

3.5 Skill level among refugees

According to information provided to UNHCR at registration, a majority of refugee households have family members with farming skills.⁵⁵ A range of other useful skills mentioned include: teaching (both in primary and secondary schools), health care, social work, weaving/knitting, basketry and brush making.

⁵² There is a regulation to allow an employment of a villager to work as an assistant teacher in primary school. So, the school director takes this opportunity to employ a refugee.

⁵³ Interview with Sergeant Major Akaraphon Eiam-anong of the Royal Project

⁵⁴ Bandit, op.cit., p 68-69

⁵⁵ The numbers of respondents for no occupation were 1011 in BMN, 251 in BMS, 1138 in MLO and 1061 in MRM.

There were also refugees who had experience working as traditional leaders and in religious professions. The breakdown of background occupation by camp is indicated in Table 13.

Table 13: Background occupations prior to arrival in camps including pending PAB consideration

Background occupations	BMN/hh	BMS/hh	MLO/hh	MRM/hh
1.Farmer	3210	542	1972	1851
2.Primary school teacher	89	20	47	45
3.Secondary school teacher	51	8	66	37
4.Medical assistant/medical doctor	64	23	35	24
5.Traditional leaders/village head	29	12	25	28
6.Religious professionals	26	14	42	34
7.Social work professionals	29	9	17	27
8.Weavers/knitters	14	4	32	32
9.Basketry weavers/brush makers	12	5	21	31

Source: UNHCR Bangkok, Thailand: Statistics by camp as of 9 March 2007

Besides the skills obtained prior to living in the camp and from attending vocational training courses, refugees also acquire skills through working inside the camps as NGO incentive workers in the fields of: paramedic, teacher, trainer, community social work, erosion prevention, basic construction and maintenance, environmental protection, etc. projects.

However, many of the skilled refugees who work as incentive workers are leaving for resettlement, and the skill levels among the refugees in general are still not sufficient to enable significant income generation. According to ZOA, only a few graduates from their vocational training courses were able to obtain employment and a few graduates could earn additional income from their VT skills, e.g stove making, sewing. ⁵⁶

In order to improve skill level among refugees, ZOA recommended the following:

1. NGOs to stimulate vocational work by providing seed capital, transporting materials, and marketing the products in the Thai marketplace.
2. Expose selected VT trainers and committee to the market, workplace and small business in the local areas in order to develop their vision, course contents, skills retention programmes and income generating opportunities.
3. Collaborate with local Thai agencies and institutions to review their various income generating projects and short vocational courses and adapt these to meet the needs of the camp population and improve the development of VT courses with a shorter duration.
4. Collaborate and coordinate with local Thai Government agencies to coach or train VT trainers to broaden their horizon.
5. Increase collaboration and communication with other agencies in camps and with external agencies, RTG, and private sectors to support the VT program.

⁵⁶ ZOA Refugee Care, Mid Term Review of the Vocational Training for the Burmese Displaced Persons, 2006, prepared by Thai Education Foundation, p 4

In addition, ZOA recognized that the VT committee should be strengthened so they could take ownership of the program. This would entail: increasing their involvement in curriculum development, in assisting with monitoring course implementation, and in creating an opportunity for KED members to perform certain aspects of the VT program to expose them to outside world, markets, training, etc.

Another recommendation for increasing refugee skills is to have a market inside the camp and small grant projects to assist refugees who complete VT to utilize their skills.⁵⁷

3.6 Environmental conditions in the camps and hosting areas:

Both the camps and the majority of hosting communities are located in very remote areas deep in the forest with bumpy unimproved roads or trails and no communication link.

Water supply in the camps and hosting communities is provided by catchments in higher areas. Domestic water in four camps is sufficient for the whole year, except in some areas where water is released at specific time during dry season. However, there are only two out of 11 host communities being surveyed (Ban Nai Soi and Ban Mae Tor La) which face no problems of water shortage during dry season. The rest of the hosting communities have problems with contamination of dirt in their drinking water during rainy season due to the lack of water filter tanks.

Pressure on natural resources in the forests surrounding the hosting communities and camps has increased due the increasing numbers of forest dependent population. The National Park, forest reserve, wildlife sanctuary and establishment of refugee camps had encroached on the cultivation areas of the majority of hosting communities and resulted in the reduction of cultivation areas and access to forest products.

The consolidation of smaller camps into larger camps had increased pressure on soil and water sources. BMS and MRM are still facing problems of soil and river bank erosion. In BMS, gabion boxes were installed by COERR on a portion of the river bank to prevent further soil erosion. In MRM, 1,000 pineapple seedlings were also distributed to new arrivals in May 2006 and planted to control soil erosion and be a food source for them. In addition, COERR has implemented road construction in MLO to prevent soil erosion, as well as integrated grass planting along the roadsides.

During March to April each year, fields are burned by the villagers in preparation for planting. The forest areas are also burned to allow edible mushroom to grow for their consumption and to produce new grass which attracts wild animals which they hunt. This causes heavy air pollution throughout Mae Hong Son Province affecting the health of all who live there. Another reason for this pollution is that local villagers along both the Thai and Myanmar border also clear planting areas by burning off fields.

⁵⁷ UNHCR, Mobility and protection risks, ob.cit., 2006, p 28

On the way to MRM, BMS and MLO, fire and smoke could be obviously seen on mountainous areas. There is a high risk of accident from falling trees for vehicles and passengers on the way in and out of camps. In BMS, the refugees could not collect wild leaves to make roof products.

During the rainy season, particularly in September and October of each year, there are landslides in BMN and MLO, flooding along BMS and MRM riversides and retracting of riverbanks and high risk in driving through the muddy and mountainous roadway caused by the problems of soil erosion and landslides. There is also the risk and effects of water influx to BMS river in the afternoon, while stand alone old trees as well as bamboo trees could fall down during heavy storms.

The overcrowded living conditions in camps cause a series of environmental difficulties: problems of water shortage in the dry season, as well as air and water pollution from animal manure (particularly in BMN where at least 4,000 pigs are raised). Most of the refugees raise pigs in their house compound, which contributes to the deterioration of their health. Moreover, water sources are contaminated by pig manure. The Karenni Camp Chairperson has proposed that they build a common piggery nearby their section along the camp.

3.7 Skills that should be developed to enhance self-reliance of refugees:

3.7.1 Skills training: preferences of refugees

The recent survey of Karen Refugees Committee (KRC) in all Karen refugee camps showed that preferred occupation of refugees in MRM and MLO are as shown in Table 14.⁵⁸

Table 14 : Preferred occupations in MRM and MLO

No.	Preferred occupation	MRM	MLO
1	Work permit outside camp	1162	382
2	Animal, frog & fish raising	370	454
3	Sewing	382	47
4	Shop and food shop	117	144
5	Shoe making and repair	200	6
6	Weaving	77	49
7	Driver training	74	125
8	Medical training	72	40
9	Handicrafts	70	32
10	Thatch making	100	1
11	Agriculture	27	54
12	Teachers & medics	9	66
13	Trading livestock	39	29
14	Battery making	53	6
15	NGOs and CBOs workers	37	18
16	Movie theatre	34	28

⁵⁸ The survey was conducted in March 2007 by KRC.

17	Basic Mechanic	31	26
18	Mechanical /automotive training	31	18
19	Mushroom growing	30	24
20	Construction work	28	5
21	Hydro power	20	6

Source : KRC survey in March 2007

The survey showed that the number of refugees who would want to get permission to work outside the camps, was very high at 1,162 people.

In addition, the coordinator of KnED Vocational Training School Programme proposed skills which should be developed for three groups of people: CBO workers; unemployed adults, and youth and students as follows:

CBOs	Adults with no job	Youth and Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries for clinics and schools • Expert Health training • TOT on math and science • Advanced computer and internet usage • Book-keeping and accountancy • Economics (statistics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public library • Food processing • Handicraft and household recycling • Livestock raising • Barbers and hair-dressing • Advanced electric and mechanic engineering • Advanced carpentry work • Advance cooking and bakery • Pottery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer • Sewing, weaving, embroidery, handicraft • Household recycling • Advanced cooking and bakery • Livestock raising • Packaging • Advanced paper and card making • Pottery

In BMS, there is a proposal for skills development to enhance self-reliance and income generation, for three purposes, as follows:

Living in the camp	Resettlement	Repatriation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All skills in VT centers • Curriculum development for all subjects of VT and exposure trip to Thai VT college • Manual Typing • Embroidery • Charcoal briquette • Soy bean preserved sheet • Group management • Marketing • Small enterprise management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural orientation • English as a second language • Bread-making • Driving • Computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving • The same as living in the camp

3.7.2 Skills development for potential labour market

The potential labour market for seasonal labourers as indicated in 3.2 is considered to be quite high, in line with the IRC survey.⁵⁹ However, since the local employees were already satisfied with the refugee workers, there seems to be no pressing need for skill development needed in this sector. For the youth who have grown up in the camp environment, however, there could be a need for some skill development in agriculture.

Besides the seasonal labours, there is also a shortage of labourers in other sectors, with limited skilled labour available. IRC found that 43 percent of small businesses and organizations (ranging from an electronic repair shop, bakery shops, factories, educational facilities and farming operations) were planning to hire workers. The majority cited that they planned to hire between 1 to 10 employees.

The Chairperson of the Mae Hong Son Chamber of Commerce stated that Mae Hong Son needed labour in construction works and service sector such as domestic workers, waiter/waitress and sales persons in micro enterprises. The skills which would be beneficial for construction work would be carpentry and masonry. Refugees could also produce wood carvings from dead wood and bamboo products such as chicken cage and tea leaves dryer.⁶⁰

TAO Sop Moei showed an interest in employing refugees to teach English in their 14 schools. To begin with, one teacher each could be employed to work in Ban Le Koh and Ban Mae Ka Tuan. They also showed an interest in employing refugee to teach English to their staff at their office. Accommodation would be provided for these teachers.⁶¹

According to the IRC study, two products with income-generating potential include woven bamboo (that is made into panels for walls), and the production of knives/farming implements from the steel of discarded car springs. The training in producing the panels would not require much effort as many of the refugees are skilled in bamboo weaving already. A number of refugees are skilled blacksmiths, but there is a need for some capital to start such a venture and a marketing specialist to identify the specific items needed in the marketplace.⁶²

3.8 Possible relationship and impact of livelihoods strategy in hosting communities and potential cooperation

As ethnic minorities, living in very remote areas with inadequate transportation and communication links, hosting communities face to a certain extent similar obstacles in making their living, as the refugees: very limited access to education, life-long learning, health care facilities and income generation activities. Moreover, a majority of them also face language barrier in an effort to get basic services.

⁵⁹ International Rescue Committee, “Assessment of the Labour Market and Labour Activities in the Ban Kwai/Ban Tractor Refugee Camp and the Surrounding Environs”, September 2005

⁶⁰ Interviewed Mr Poonsak Suthonpanichkij, dated February, 2007

⁶¹ Interviewed TAO Sop Moei, Mr. Suripho Kamondeeyiem, dated 20 February 2007

⁶² IRC 2005, ob.cit., p 19

In the areas studied, the refugees in camps are related to the majority of the local population in terms of traditions, culture and language. They are also dependent on the same natural resources for their livelihoods.

There are complaints by local communities regarding some negative impacts of the refugee community's presence. These relate to: the loss of home garden produce (i.e. vegetable, banana, papaya); the reduction of available cultivation area as the camps are located in their former cultivation plots; reduced availability of water for consumption and cultivation; and depletion of natural resources.

Nevertheless, the hosting communities recognise that refugees, as seasonal labourers, have significantly contributed to their agricultural production, and that this provides the hosting communities with a better standard of living.⁶³

Hosting communities gain other benefits by having the refugee camps nearby. The hosting communities' trade and barter with the refugees - especially during rainy season when they have a lot of vegetables and fruit.⁶⁴



(A salesman from Ban Huay Fan village selling vegetables to refugees in Ban Mae Surin camp)

⁶³ Early this year, 2-3 refugee families were found to illegally cultivate their relatives plot of land not as seasonal labours but with the consent of their relatives. So, they had to pay a fine of 30 tin buckets of paddy rice at the end of harvesting season and would not be allowed to work on that land any more.

⁶⁴ For example, charcoal costs 60 baht per bag of 20 kg, and cooking oil, the most popular item, which costs about 27-28 baht could be exchanged for 4-5 raw jackfruit or 4-5 hands of banana, 1 kg of bean is 16 baht and 1 bag of salt (half kg) is 5 baht.

Many of the local villagers also expressed their satisfaction for the medical services they receive in the camps, where they are warmly welcomed and taken care of. The patients who have to stay overnight were also invited to stay inside the camp. Some elders from local communities, who could hardly communicate in Thai, are more comfortable seeing medics in camp as they can communicate in their own language. In addition, a number of young people from the local communities were reported to attend English classes in camp and a small number learned music in Karen language with religious group in camp.

The hosting communities also receive assistance from various NGOs. For example, 105 families of Ban Tor Lah have been receiving four sacks of rice per family and blankets for all family members annually from TBBC in compensation for the partial loss of their cultivation plots to MLO. In addition, some schools in hosting communities received supplies and sport equipment from COERR, JRS and ZOA.

Potential cooperation

The hosting communities would like to trade more with the refugees by bringing goods to sell inside the camps. They also want to sell their produce - such as chilli, garlic and soy-bean - to TBBC. With regard to the educational opportunities, local villagers who are not involved in any of the vocational training courses in camps would like to receive similar training as the refugees.

The local villagers in Ban Mae Tor La and Ban Le Ko, for example, are interested in shampoo making, bakery, biogas from pig manure and efficient charcoal.⁶⁵ The village chief of Ban Mae Tor La also expressed an interest in learning about how to make sugar-cane bar from the refugees in the camp who have expertise in this field.⁶⁶

Of course, the cooperation between refugee and hosting communities can also be in terms of cultural and sport exchange. One interest with the cultural element was having an expert dancer from BMS for a week to teach Karen dances with the aim to preserve Karen culture. There is already an invitation from Ban Klang for the refugees to join their festivals and youth sport tournament.

Besides the cooperation at the local level there are other possibilities for cooperation. The Chairperson of Mae Hong Son Chamber of Commerce (CoC) expressed his willingness to help the refugees by starting a pilot project to employ 200 refugees to work with CoC members in Mae Hong Son town. TAO Sop Moei also needs English teachers. The Director of Royal Folk Art Center has expressed willingness to provide space in their souvenir shop for the refugees products.

⁶⁵ In February 2007, the provincial governor had mentioned about the possibility to organize training for villagers on how to make efficient charcoal and biogas from pigs manure taking an example of the refugee camp.

⁶⁶ A group of villagers in Mae Ra Ma Luang have already generated some income from producing sugar cane bar.

3.9 The availability of (i) local training providers, (ii) local micro-finance institutions and (iii) local business advisory services that partnerships can be developed with to provide sustainable support.

(i) Local training providers.

Agriculture Office

The Agriculture Office, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), has offices in all districts. Their aims are to increase the production efficiency, enhance the value added from the production process, increase a competitive competency level and strengthen the root economies.

The Mae Hong Son Agriculture Office offers agricultural extension work, promoting development of agricultural produces, group work promotion and agricultural development in food processing, adding value to agricultural produce. The Office also provides mobile clinic to reach villagers in their community and provide information related to crop, soil and animals issues.

Mae Hong Son Cooperative Office

The Mae Hong Son Cooperative Office, under the MOAC, has opened one cooperative shop in Mae Hong Son town for their cooperative members to sell their produce, products and handicrafts. The Office's mandates are to develop administrative and organizational skills for effective services, to strengthen cooperative groups in administration, promote and develop cooperatives/ agricultural groups' capacity for self-reliance and sustainability.

Community Development Office

The Community Development (CD) Office, under the MOI has offices in all districts. Their aims are to gather baseline information of every household, to improve the living conditions of the village level through group formation, group work, revolving funds, and to provide support in improving design and skills in basket-weaving, etc. A number of products are recognized as OTOP. One CD shop is open in Mae Hong Son town for all OTOP products.

Table 15: OTOP products breakdown by Tambon and District

District	Tambon	OTOP products
Muang	Pang Moo	Chemical free sesame oil, Shan desert, crispy rice, Shan traditional dress
Pang Ma Pha	Pang Ma Pha	Shan traditional dress, sesame oil, organic vegetables
Pai	Mae Hee	Natural dyed Karen cloth, brown rice, Karen basketry weaving
Khun Yuam	Mae Ngao	Sesame oil, mulberry paper, bird, Shan and Novice puppets, peacock sculpture
Sop moei	Sop Moei	Basket weaving, Karen cloth products, Karen chilli
Mea Sring	Ban Kas	Karen cloth weaving products, wood sculpture, basket weaving products,

Mae La Noi	Mae La	Lawa cloth- weaving products, silver works, Lawa dolls,
	Luang	Lawa basket weaving products

Source: Mae Hong Son Community Development Office : OTOP leaflet

The Industrial Promotion Center Region 1 (IPC 1)

IPC 1 is an agency under the Department of Industrial Promotion, Ministry of Industry.⁶⁷ Its mandate is to develop and promote regional enterprises and industrial businesses' capacity-building for sustainable management and competitiveness, through the provision of various support in upper northern provinces. 8 provinces are the focus of this initiative: Chiang Mai, Lumphoon, Lampang, Chiang Rai, Phayao, Phrae, Nan, and Mae Hong Son. IPC 1 renders various types of practical and useful services to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the northern region as follows:

- Consultancy Service on production sectors; business management; human resources development; product design, and packaging improvement.
- Training and Seminars in technical fields to develop capacity of existing entrepreneurs and increase new entrepreneurs as well as support business set-up.
- Community-based Enterprise Development through increasing value addition and expanding new market opportunities to meet domestic and international demands.
- Revolving Fund for cottage and handicraft industries; matching grant under the consultancy fund and training fund for improving businesses, developing entrepreneurial competencies and building personnel's capabilities.
- Business Opportunity Center (BOC) Service: information service center, business matching service, technical consultancy service, and referral service.
- Skill Training for cottage and handicraft industries in rural areas by supporting lecturers for advanced courses of special projects and the King's Project.
- Study Mission Service: arranging domestic and overseas study visits of entrepreneur groups for business linkages, exposure to modern technology and new knowledge as well as participation in international exhibitions and trade fairs.
- Marketing Promotion Services: to disseminate the center activities and to promote marketing opportunities and exhibitions including contests for handicraft products.
- Special Projects:
 - One Tambon One Product (OTOP) Project
 - Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Project
 - New Business Creation (NEC) Project
 - Rural Industrial Development Project
 - Industrial Village Project
 - Networks of Service Providers
 - Product Development Project
 - Support of Rural Industrial Development Project (SRID)
 - Royal Initiated Project
 - Entrepreneurship Development Project

Non Formal Education Center

⁶⁷ www.dip.go.th/HTML/Interco/IPC1.doc

The Non-Formal Education Center, under the MOE, has an office in all districts. Their aims are to promote literacy, life skills, skill training, and to provide informal knowledge through a provincial learning center (known as a 'provincial library').

In 2007 the NFE of Muang District in Mae Hong Son has provided life skills and skills training to villagers in their communities as in **Table 16**.

Table 16: NFE Life skills and skill training courses, subjects and duration.

	Course	Subjects	Duration
Life skills	Natural recourses and environment	Existing of community resources, conservation, environmental knowledge, saved energy, reforestation.	5 days or 30 hours
	Traffic rules	Value and advantages of traffic, Good result from learning and following the traffic rules, meanings of traffic signs, test on traffic rules, and driving practice on the road.	5 days or 20 hours
	Solar panel maintenance	Basic knowledge on solar panel, battery maintenance, charging battery, safety measures for using solar power at home, connecting electric lines in house, and repair.	2 days or 8 hours
	First Aid	Meaning and importance of first aid, first-aid kits, basic medicines, child safety, how to assist patients with broken bone, choking, nosebleeds, burns, sprained joint, and ear problem.	1 day or 6 hours
	HIV/AIDS Prevention	Situation, knowledge and understanding on HIV/AIDS, sex education, sexual transmitted disease, organized exhibition, learning activities in community.	5 days or 30 hours
Skill training	Organic agriculture	Group formation on organic farm, expansion of micro-organism, fruit hormone making, crop hormone making, dry micro-organism making, water micro-organism making, rice water formula, insect chasing formula, compost making, animal manure making, bio-compost making	4 days or 20 hours
	Barber	How to use hair cut tools, male and female hair cutting, tools maintenance.	4 days
	Broom making	How to cut grass, broom making, quality control, pricing and distributing.	5 days
	Basketry weaving	Material selection, model designs, weaving, applied products for house decoration, products painting.	3 days or 15 hours
	Catfish raising	Design the fish pond, proportion of catfish and the pond size, water level and water changing, pond digging, feeding, source of fishes, pricing.	4 days or 20 hours

Source: summary from trainers' reports of NFE of Muang District in Mae Hong Son

Skills Development Center

The Skills Development Center in Mae Hong Son is under the Ministry of Labour (MOL). They offer various training courses in response to market labour demand. Trainees are also provided with boarding. Although there is no training fee trainees are required to take care of

their own meals. The training courses are composed of basic and upgraded skills as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Skills training courses provided by the Skill Development Center

Skill level	Course	Duration
Basic courses	Electrical line work	8 months
	Air conditioner repair	8 months
	Information technology work	8 months
	Electronic work	8 months
	Sewing	6 months
	Motorcycle repair	8 months
	Engine repair	8 months
	Welding	7 months
Upgraded courses	Air conditioner repair and electric line work	60 hours
	Amplifier work	60 hours
	Artificial garland from fragrant soil	60 hours
	Herbal processing products	60 hours
	Ceramic, brick and cement work	60 hours
	Thai Massage and face massage with herb	60 hours
	Foot Massage and oil massage for health	60 hours
	Basic car maintenance	30 hours
	Barber	30 hours
	Iron screen welding	30 hours
	Impressive service technique	18 hours
	Scientific frame making and mirror work	12 hours
	Basic computer Ms Word, Ms Excel, Ms Access	30 hours

Source: Summary from announcement of Mae Hong Son Skill Development Center dated 7 Nov. 2006

The above training courses are provided at the center or at the work places to Thai citizens with an ID card and household registration. The Skill Development Center also has link with employers in other provinces.

Vocational Training College

The VTC offers courses in accounting, electrical power, electronics, construction, auto-repair and computers for business. In addition, they provide short courses on nutrition & snack making, blacksmith and welding, electrical and mechanical repair, motorbike repair, hair cutting, sewing, massage, construction, art works, leather works, and ice cream making.

The Director of Mae Hong Son and Mae Sariang Colleges are willing to work with NGOs and UNHCR in improving the quality of curriculum, training of the trainers, equipment and to provide joint certificates for refugee trainees.

Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Training Center Mae Hong Son

The Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Training Center was officially established in 1984. This center provides training in silk and cotton weaving, wicker and bamboo furniture weaving and gold and silver work. The Center arranges the instructors to help and teach villagers to improve the quality of their products which could be sold at the Center. At present, there are more than 100 members in Mae Hong Son. The villagers have to set up their groups in order for their products to be supplied to the Center.

The sales manager is willing to have refugee camp products displayed and sold at the Center.

Nai Soi community learning Center (NSCLC)

The NSCLC was founded in 2005 in Ban Nai Soi. The center provides English and Burmese language, organic farming and community development courses to high school aged children living in remote areas of MHS. With the cooperation of the provincial non-formal education office, students who complete three years of study at the center will have to pass an examination in order to receive a Thai High School certificate, which will enable them to further their studies in a Thai university. Students are entitled to work for one hour per day on the ongoing construction of the buildings or tending the gardens. This center is open for foreign volunteers to teach English language, internet, and project writing, etc., depending on the expertise of the volunteers.

The NSCLC is also open to local villagers to participate in their projects such as mud brick making, English and typing lessons and community development project.

ii) Local micro-finance institutions.

The Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives provides financial assistance in order to promote agriculture as an occupation for farmers and farming institutions, to help them increase their productivity and income and to offer deposit services throughout the country similar to those offered by commercial banks. The Community Development Office provides a revolving fund to the villagers through the TAOs who also have their own revolving fund to provide to some of the villages.

There is at present no local micro-finance institution available to the refugees. However, WEAVE plans to launch the revolving fund in MRM in mid-2007.

(iii) Local business advisory services.

There is no local business advisory service available for the refugees.

3.10 Summary of Gaps and Opportunities for Livelihoods and Self-reliance

Gaps

There is a huge demand for seasonal labour, and a recognition of refugees' contribution to the local economy, yet no legalization or regularization of these labourers.

Inside the camps, there are a lot of workers available but a limited amount of land suitable for cultivation. A large number of this workforce has undertaken various training courses. Many of them are skilled in embroidery, basketry weaving, Karen cloth weaving, used tire sandals making, charcoal briquette making, appropriate technology (including biogas, water turbine, solar panel maintenance) and sewing.

These trainees need apprenticeship and micro finance to start up their business so as to retain and practice their skills and knowledge. A lot of students work outside the camp to earn some money for their personal expenses during vacation. Although they are at risk of arrest and deportation they still prefer to escape out of the camp to seek ad hoc paid work. During March to mid April, the refugees cannot earn much income, as it is during this period that Thai villagers burn their cultivation land.

It is also the case that ongoing resettlement leads to a brain drain crisis and affects the staff development of CBOs. In addition, there is a significant need to train new people to replace those leaving for third countries.

Opportunities

The chairperson of Mae Hong Son CoC and TAO of Sop Moei are willing to provide employment opportunities for the refugees.

The Directors of Vocational Training Center of the Ministry of Education in Mae Hong Son and Mae Sariang are interested in working with NGOs to improve the vocational training curriculum for refugees, and providing certification to those refugees who meet the levels of competency expected of their Thai students.

The NFE Thai language course could benefit those who will work with the local Thais outside the camp, and be adapted to suit various circumstances facing refugees in obtaining employment opportunities.

Some hosting communities already have some interest in social and cultural exchanges. The road repair and construction of the access road to the camps could also create employment opportunities for both local population and refugees.

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

There are 10 main areas that need to be concerned and recommended within the livelihood strategy framework. All recommendations are based on known practices that will provide greater mutual benefits from the expansion of opportunities to improve livelihoods, self sufficiency, self reliance and income generating activities through better systems and organization that promotes mutual understanding and work between the refugee camps and hosting communities. The recommendations are as follows:

4.1 Seasonal labour and agriculture

It is very clear that the main labour market is found in the agricultural sector in hosting communities nearby the camps, and that a large number of refugees in four camps have been working as illegal seasonal labours in these communities for many years. This labour force includes not only the adults but also the youth who usually work during their vacation.

As seasonal labourers the refugees can earn income during the six-month cultivation and harvesting seasons on a daily basis or upon negotiation for more strenuous jobs. Although the adult refugees generally do not need to improve their skills in agriculture and are able to earn supplementary income to support their families, their daily wage (which ranges from 40-60 baht) has remained at almost the same at least for the last six years and is less than half the minimum wage in Mae Hong Son (145 Baht).

There is a well-known acceptance that refugees have contributed significantly to the local economy; therefore their labour should be recognized, legalized and regularized. The RTG and the MOI's concern for greater benefits to hosting communities can be fulfilled, and refugees would also benefit. At present, both parties are at risk of being arrested for involving in illegal employment. The refugees, in particular, are also at risk of deportation and have to compete with each other in search for jobs, which make their lives even more difficult.

The recommendation is that the refugees be allowed by the MOI to work outside the camp, and are provided with official camp passes to enable them to receive a legal work permit to work in specific areas.

4.2 Employment in the services sector

Besides seasonal labour, a smaller number of refugees are also employed in the service sector in Mae Hong Son; they perform construction and domestic work, etc. In the construction trades in particular there is a need for skills development in carpentry and masonry. There is also a shortage of English teachers in local Thai primary schools, and there are qualified refugees who could perform this task.

In this regard, two pilot projects are recommended. One is to work with the Mae Hong Son Chamber of Commerce for access to employment with their members. The second recommended project is to work with the TAO of Sop Moei to engage refugees in English teaching in their schools.

4.3 Livelihoods Management Committee

A Livelihoods Management Committee at the local level should also be set up to manage refugee employment outside the camps. The committee would comprise members of the village committee, camp committee, representatives of seasonal labourers, TAO and representatives of potential employers, the camp commander, UNHCR and CCSDPT. Their responsibilities would include management of the labour force demand and supply, negotiating agreement on working hours, wages for various types of works, job placement, skill development and provision of a transparent system to solve grievances.

The Committee would also look into the possibility for ensuring access to health care facilities and education similar to those provided for registered migrant workers. The Committee would seek to build sustainable relationship between hosting communities and refugees in order for both sides to have mutual understanding and benefit. This could be done by organizing cultural and sport exchanges, and, for example, sharing information on ways to preserve and improve traditional knowledge on agriculture.

By using the Registered Migrant Workers framework for provision of services and a Livelihood Management committee system, both local Thai communities and refugees benefit from increased mutual understanding leading to economic gain for all stakeholders.

4.4 Strengthen Vocational Training

There are over a thousand people being trained in various fields. In order to help the ex-trainees to have their knowledge and skills recognized, and to have more opportunities to utilize, retain and improve what they learned, they should be exposed to up-to-date facilities, machines, equipment and teaching materials,. A pilot project on skill development in collaboration with Vocational Training College such as the Vocational Training Colleges in Mae Hong and Mae Sariang and concerned Government Offices (as indicated in 3.9) is recommended.

This would support and improve income generating projects, short vocational courses and additional coaching or training for VT instructors thus increasing their effectiveness. It is also recommended that training on the formation and management of self employment groups, cooperatives, revolving funds or credit schemes could be organized and integrated with vocational training prior to implementing income generation activities. The target population for this training should be the youth and women. In order to strengthen the new self

employment groups, study trips to expose the target groups to good practices from successful villages in the north of Thailand should be authorized by MOI.

The skills that should be developed in response to labour markets include: agricultural skills for youth, industrial sewing, English teaching, husbandry and handicraft, carpentry and masonry.

In addition, the relationships between refugees and hosting communities could be strengthened, by allowing the hosting communities to attend similar vocational training in camps.

4.5 Sub-contract work inside the camps

Sub-contracts from Thai business should be explored. Raw materials could be brought into camps to create jobs for refugees living there.

One of the examples is chilli products. TAO of Sop Moei has huge supplies of chilli that could be processed as chilli sauce, chilli powder, and chilli paste within the camps. A pilot project is recommended to assess the possibilities of producing and marketing chilli products in camps. Training for chilli processing and packaging should be introduced to several income generating groups.

The Industrial Promotion Center Region 1 (IPC 1), under the Ministry of Industry in Chiang Mai as well as the Skill Development Center, under Ministry of Labour, in Mae Hong Son are sources for sub-contracted work.

4.6 Micro-finance

Seed capital or microfinance should be provided to assist ex-trainees and potential income generating groups to set up businesses or income generating activities using their skills and thereby earning income to support their families. Opportunities to explore and learn credit fund or revolving fund regulations, best practices and lessons learned from various GOs and NGOs in Thai villages should be expanded.

4.7 Use of existing (ILO) materials

There are many manuals produced by the ILO to promote job creation and micro enterprise development. These include: "Start and Improve Your Business," "Women's Entrepreneurship Development: GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise Training Package and Resource Kit". These should be used to train potential implementing partners and potential target groups both in the camps and hosting communities.

4.8 Appropriate technology

Most of the hosting communities use solar panels to generate electricity and they need skills to be able to maintain the system. A quota for participation in training on appropriate technology such as solar panel maintenance should be given to local villagers so they could improve their capacity to maintain their own system. Access to training could be extended to other appropriate technology like mini-hydro power, or other eco-friendly technology such as biogas and efficient charcoal-making, so that local villagers could apply good practices within their own environment.

4.9 Engage Thai villagers in in-camp service provision

The Thai villagers in hosting communities often use health care facilities within camps. This group should be given opportunities to participate in hands-on training in routine health care matters in the camps in order to allow the medics to handle cases that need their expertise and gain basic meaningful skills in health care. Many youth in hosting communities, who do not have many opportunities to access to higher education, could be usefully engaged in this activity.

4.10 Promote agricultural activities

Most refugees have tried to earn some supplementary income to be able to buy more fruit, vegetables and meat for a healthier diet. Therefore, agricultural activities in the camps and in villages nearby the camps that would expand the supply of healthy food should be promoted.

Training should be provided to both Thai and refugee stakeholders based on the principle of group organization and technical practices related to organic agriculture. Both Thai and refugee farmers should have a system by which they are able to exchange traditional knowledge and practices in agriculture. Technical support should be supplied from both internal and external experts to assist in agricultural activities. Integrated Pest Management practices should be introduced to both refugees and Thai villagers.

Agricultural products resulting from these efforts could be shared in a number of ways according to the organizing principles of the group involved. For example, some could be equally distributed to working group members and the surplus could be sold for the group income and generate more income for expansion of agricultural activities. A spin-off might be the ability to produce small quantities of food products for sale by cooperatives or other groups.

Technical support should be sought from both internal (existing NGOs in the camps that provide self reliance on agricultural activities) and external experts (Mae Hong Son Agriculture Office) to assist in agricultural activities. The agricultural products should be equally distributed to group members and the surplus could be sold to refugees in the camp.

4.11 Incorporate vocational skills into school curriculum

The numbers of refugee students attending school are quite high in each of the four camps studied. It is recommended that organization and management of cooperatives and group activities be introduced as part of the high school curriculum.

Students, and the refugee community more broadly, would benefit from savings at a student-run school cooperative. Additionally, good agricultural practices can be integrated through science, math and social studies in all grades by incorporating Integrated Pest Management activities.

It is also recommended that scholarship for at least two post 10 graduates per camp continue to further their education in Thai university particularly in Chiang Mai.

4.12 Strengthen adult literacy programmes

Many middle-aged refugees are illiterate. It is clear that while the illiterate population forms the represents the vast majority of the poorest people, they are not involved in the skill training programmes because they cannot meet the minimum basic mathematic standards. As a result a high percentage of illiterate people are excluded.

There is a need to strengthen their capacity by providing adult literacy in Karen or Karenni in order to integrate them in to livelihoods activities. This group should not be neglected. They should be able to participate in self-employed groups as well.

APPENDIXES

Appendix One: Terms of Reference - Livelihoods Consultant

Context

There have been encouraging signs in recent years of an interest on the part of the Royal Thai Government (RTG) to work in cooperation with UNHCR and other partners in improving the situation of refugees in Thailand. In particular, the RTG appears increasingly open to the possibility of vocational training, income-generation projects, and legal employment for refugees in Thailand.

UNHCR and partners feel it is essential to support and inform these welcome policy developments by implementing a livelihood project. This project will build on existing NGO work in this area, and will draw on the technical expertise of the ILO with the aim of producing a comprehensive strategy for facilitating refugee self-reliance while maximizing the benefits to Thai society.

Methodology

UNHCR, with support from ILO, will secure a livelihoods consultant for 3 to 6 months. The consultant will be tasked with analyzing the impact of an expansion of self-reliance opportunities on Thai society; developing a comprehensive package of projects and activities that will comprehensively address the gaps identified in this area with particular consideration to opportunities for youth and women, and initiating a series of vocational training activities.

The livelihoods consultant will focus his/her work on four refugee camps in northern Thailand: Ban Mai Nai Soi, Ban Mae Surin, Mae Ra Maluang, and Mae La Oon. The consultancy will require considerable time to be spent in refugee camp locations and surrounding communities, including the towns of Mae Hong Son and Mae Sariang where UNHCR maintains field offices.

Under the supervision of the UNHCR Representative in Thailand, and with technical support of UNHCR's Peace building Livelihoods and Partnership Section (PBLPS), the ILO consultant will carry out the following specific tasks:

Research and preparation of a written report comprising: a) summary of the current gaps and opportunities for livelihoods and self-reliance in the demarcated geographic area (see above) where refugees and other persons from Myanmar are residing along the border between Thailand and Myanmar, and b) proposed project opportunities as part of a comprehensive livelihoods strategy.

The main points to be reflected in the strategy will include:

- General description of target population and hosting areas;
 - The degree to which refugees are able to access the labour market, including the informal sector;
 - Mapping of existing related initiatives by UNHCR and other actors;
 - Economic coping strategies (agriculture, fisheries, labour, etc) of refugees and communities in hosting areas;
 - Skills level among refugees;
 - Environmental conditions in camps and hosting areas;
 - Skills that should be developed to enhance self-reliance of refugees;
 - Possible relationship and impact of livelihoods strategy in local communities and potential cooperation;
 - The availability of local training providers, local micro-finance institutes and local business advice services with whom partnerships can be developed to provide sustainable support to those engaged in income generating activities;
 - Summary of gaps and opportunities for livelihoods and self-reliance.
-
- Opportunities for diversification of skills and vocational training;
 - Possible use of existing employment programs as a potential entry point into the labour market;
 - Identification of local employment opportunities;
 - Opportunities for small-business development;
 - Developing and/or strengthening micro-finance initiatives;
 - Vocational training activities
 - Local capacity (public and private sector) to facilitate and address issues related to access to economic opportunities by refugees;
 - Determine linkages and opportunities for joint programming with ILO.
 - Developing linkages and partnerships for the different projects identified and seeking support by other actors throughout the process.

Moreover, a resource mobilization strategy will be recommended including a series of workshops and presentations of the strategy to key stakeholders both at local and national level.

Output

A detailed and empirically supported livelihood strategy will be developed and will include specific projects designed to expand opportunities for self-reliance among refugee populations and provide benefits to hosting communities.

The consultative methodology will enhance cooperation between international and national NGOs, and with other UN partners. It will also serve to forge closer links with the Royal Thai Government, and establish new links with some governmental departments not usually involved in refugee matters.

Appendix Two: list of NGOs working with MOI in providing assistance to displaced persons along Thai-Myanmar border

NGOS	Project Name	Province
AMI (Aide Medicale International)	1. Medical project	Tak, Mae Hong Son
	2. Health Messenger Magazine dissemination	Tak, Mae Hong Son, Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi
IRC (INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE)	1. Medical and sanitation project	Mae Hong Son Nakhon Pranom, Rathaburi, Tak, kanchanaburi
	2. Basic optical health	Ratchburi
COERR (CATHOLIC OFFICE EMERGENCY RELIEF AND REFUGEE)	1. Supply distribution	Tak, Mae Hong Son and Kanchanari
	2. Sport and educational supplies distribution	Ratchaburi
	3. English teaching and skill training	Ratchaburi
	4. Natural Resource Conservation	Tak, Mae Hong Son, Kanchanaburi and Ratchaburi
	5. Social work for Extremely Vulnerable individual	Tak, Kanchanaburi, Mae Hong Son, and Ratchburi
ARC (AMERICAN REFUGEE COMMITTEE)	Medical and Sanitation project	Tak and Kanchanaburi
ZOA REFUGEE CARE (NETHERLANDS)	Educational, Vocational and husbandry project	Tak, Kanchanaburi, Mae Hong Son Ratchaburi
HI (HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL)	1. Provision of prostheses, and Physiotherapy treatments.	Mae Hong Son , Tak, and Ratchburi
	2. Awareness Raising on Land Mine	Mae Hong Son , Tak, and Ratchburi
BBC (BURMESE BORDER CONSORTIUM)	Ration Distribution	Mae Hong Son , Tak, Ratchburi, and Kanchanaburi
MSF (MEDECINS SANS	Medical project	Tak, Kanchanaburi and

FRONTIERES		Ratchaburi
ICS (INTERNATIONAL CHRISTELIJK STEUNFONDS)	School Supplies Distribution	Tak
TOPS (TEIPEI OVERSEAS PEACESERVICE)	1.Educational Project 2. Extremely Vulnerable Individuals	Tak
JRS (JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE)	Educational Project	Mae Hong Son
MHD (MALTESER HILFSDIENST AUSLANDDIENST E.V.)	Medical Assistance	Mae Hong son
DEP (DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME)	Postal Educational Project	Tak, Kanchanaburi, Mae Hong Son and Ratchaburi
WEAVE (WOMEN 'S EDUCATION FOR ADVANCEMENT)	Nursery school project	Mae Hong Son
SVA (SHANTI VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION)	Library for children project	Mae Hong Son
CONSORTIUM - Thailand	Educational Advisory Project	Tak, and Mae Hong son
Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University	Malaria Research Study	Tak
PPAT (Plan Parenthood Association of Thailand)	Reproductive Health and Family Planning	Tak
ADRA - Thailand (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)	Secondary school project	Tak

Source: Operations Center for Displaced Persons, Foreign Affairs Division, Office Of Permanent Secretary of Interior

Appendix Three: Thai Administration

Thai Authorities

Ministry of Interior (MOI)

MOI is in charge of internal camp management and security. The local MOI authorities include:

- Mr. Direk Konkleeb, Governor of Mae Hong Son Province
- Mr. Decha Sathapol, Muang District Officer is Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp Director
- Mr. Vachira Chotirossenraanee, Muang Dep. District Officer is Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp Commander
- Ms. Sukon Seeorn, Ban Mai Nai Soi Assistant Camp Commander
- Mr. Samrit Swamipak, Khun Yuam District officer is Ban Mae Surin Camp Director
- Mr. Manit Inpong, Deputy Khun Yuam District officer is Ban Mae Surin Camp Commander
- Ms. Pranee Chai-amnard, Ban Mae Surin Assistant Camp Commander
- Mr. Ronnarong Nakhonchinda, District officer is Mae La Oon Camp Director
- Mr. Palat Samreng Sudsawad, Deputy District officer is Mae La Oon Camp Commander.
- Mr. Chamnong Vong-ai, Mae La Oon assistant camp commander
- Mr. Ronnarong Nakhonchinda, Sobmoei District Officer is Mae Ra Ma Luang camp Director
- Palat Charoon, Deputy District Officer is Mae Ra Ma Luang camp commander
- Ms. Phikulthong Rakrien, Mae Ra Ma Luang Assistant Camp Commander.

7th Infantry Regiment bases in MHS (Army)

The army is responsible for security external to the camp. The military officers in charge include:

- Col. Suthas Jarumane, Commander of 7th Infantry Regiment (BNS)
- Col. Somporn Phuangbangpho, Deputy Commander of 7th Infantry Regiment (BNS)
- Col. Surachet Chaivong, Commander of 7th Infantry Regiment. (MSR, MLO,MRML)
- Col. Ukrit, Deputy Commander.(MSR,MLO,MRML)

Ranger Department No. 36 (bases in Mae Sariang)

Ranger Department No. 36 is operating in Mae Hong Son under the command of 7th Infantry Regiment to do external to MLO and MRML camps

Col. Apichet Suesat is Commander for Ranger Department No. 36

National Security Council (NSC, bases in MHS).

NSC is the Thai National Security Authority, collecting national security information, making national security assessment needs and delivering national security policy. There is a sub-office in Mae Hong Son. The in-charge of NSC in Mae Hong Son is:

- Col. Vachara is Head of Sub-office in Mae Hong Son.

Border Patrol Police (BPP)

Border Patrol Police, under the command of 7th Infantry Regiment, is also implementing the Thai national border security policy.

- Pol. Major Aphichat Rakphong, Head of BPP No. 336.

Immigration Office

- Pol. Lt. Col. Prai, Head of Mae Hong Son Immigration Office.

Immigration (Mae Sariang)

The Immigration Unit in Mae Sariang is operating under direct supervision from its Headquarters in Bangkok.. The in-charge of the immigration office in Mae Sariang is:

- Pol. Capt. Phoonsak Keoseekhao, Head of Immigration Office for Mae Sariang.

Surveillance on Myanmar refugees

Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Refugees Convention or the 1967 Protocol but the Royal Thai Government (RTG) has hosted refugees from its neighboring countries since 1965. In the early years, the majority of refugees were from Indochina. The total number of Indochina refugees who lived temporarily in Thailand was 758,199. This included 359,930 Laotians, 160,239 Vietnamese and 238,039 Cambodians. The number of refugees resettled in the third countries was 705,114. ⁶⁸

In the case of Myanmar⁶⁹, the MOI has undertaken the overall responsibility concerning refugees and temporary shelters in accordance to National Security Council (NSC) policy.

The MOI defined the status of people who fled from Myanmar as a result of the on-going fighting between ethnic minorities and government troops as “displaced persons fleeing fighting” and illegally entered the country. The policy provides for ‘temporary shelter’ for them to wait for repatriation when situation in Myanmar has peace.

At present, there are approximately 140,000 Myanmar refugees living in nine temporary shelters (TS) in Rajchaburi (one TS), Kanchanaburi(one TS) , Tak (three TSs) and Mae Hong Son (four TSs).

GO Provincial and District Offices are responsible for the peace and security. The Camp Commander who is the Deputy District Chief, will closely supervise the TS with the assistance of MOI camp guards while NGOs are responsible for public health, education and basic ration distribution.

Main policy is to supervise systematically and prevent refugees from being outside the TS.

⁶⁸ www.moi.go.th/refugee.htm

⁶⁹ Thai documents from Mae Hong Song Muang District.

Educational system

The NSC assigned Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Interior (MOI) to be directly responsible for the education, especially Thai language training in order to enable the refugees to communicate with GO Officials.

Vocational Training

The study on existing skills needs to be conducted in response to strengthening refugee's skill development for their repatriation and self reliance.

Public Health and Sanitation

Public health is considered to be crucial so the Royal Thai Government (RTG) has authorized medical doctors and nurses to stay overnight at the TS in case there is an epidemic. The patients could also be referred to the hospital outside the TSs.

Resettlement in the third country

At present, the RTG gives permission for the refugees on a humanitarian basis to be able to resettle in the third country.

Hosting communities nearby the TS

All NGOs that provide services in the TSs, should have Thai project to support the Thai villagers in order to improve their living conditions along with those of the refugees and to create friendly relationship among them in the long term.

Identification Card (ID)

- The ID card project is being implemented by the RTG, with the aims to be able to identify individual and examine with the other illegal migrant groups.
- The ID will be issued for refugees aged over 12 years old.

Refugee works

The resolution from the meeting of the sub-committee on refugees dated 14 February 2006, agreed for refugees to do sub-contracted work inside the TSs. The coordination with entrepreneurs would be made in order to bring jobs into the TS with reasonable payment. This would enable the refugees to develop their skills and improve their capacity for resettlement in the third country or for repatriation.

With regard to working outside the TSs, most of the stakeholders participated in the consultation meeting organized by the MOI at Wattana Village Hotel, Mae Sot District, Tak Province on 16 November 2006 agreed that no permission should be granted to the refugees yet taking into account the present circumstances. It was considered to be more suitable for the refugees to work inside the TSs as it would be easier for the MOI to control them. The refugees

fled to Thailand for political reasons therefore they may face dangers outside the TSs and it would be difficult to provide safety and security. In addition, allowing them to work outside the TSs may affect the relationship between the RTG and the Myanmar government.

Processing Center

Wat Tham Kabok in Saraburi Province was designated as a refugee processing center. The draft design for the Wat Tham Krabok Refugee Processing Center (WTKRPC) will be done by lecturers from the King Mongkut Institute of Technology who are IOM consultants. This processing center will be able to accommodate 5,000 refugees in 57 rais. The IOM representative had informed the committee that their policy is to allow each household to cook their own food and the IOM will train them on hygiene and sanitation and other related knowledge i.e cultural orientation and language training in preparation for their resettlement in third country.

Provincial Admission Board (PAB)

There is PAB in all provinces that have TSs. The PAB committee is composed of the Governor who is the Chairperson, representatives from civil, police, military and UNHCR and the provincial prevention officer acts as its secretary. The main criteria for status determination includes 1) the persons will be determined as “person fleeing fighting” if they could prove that they fled from Myanmar at time of fighting. 2) the persons will be determined as “displaced persons” if they could prove that they fled from Myanmar for fear of persecution and could not return to their country of origin.

Legal Assistant Center (LAC)

The chairperson of the sub-committee on refugees had appointed an Advisory Board to the pilot project of LAC including the Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs who is appointed as chairperson of the board, and representatives from various agencies i.e. the National Security Council and UNHCR as its members. The representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs is the secretary while the representative of IRC is the assistant secretary.

The responsibilities of this advisory board are as follows :

1. Approve annual work plan;
2. Give recommendation for the development of manual on provision of legal advice and training to be used as guidelines for the staff of LAC. In addition, the board will give recommendation on organizing various workshops, set agenda and scope of the trainings and identify speakers to be invited from various government agencies;
3. Monitor and advise LAC staff in project implement in line with the set objectives;
4. Monitor and cross-check research works and reports which deals with the TSs along Thai-Myanmar borders;
5. Assess the project at the end of project duration in 2006 and give recommendation for improvement as well as approve work plan for the year 2007 and its five-year plan; and
6. Report the work of the board to the sub-committee on refugees.

Some of the resolution made by the Advisory Board at the meeting dated 8 August, 2007, were highlighted as follows :

1. IRC was asked to organize meetings with relevant officers at provincial and district levels to introduce and seek their comments on LAC.
2. The Board approved the preparation for the establishment of seven LACs; 2 in Ban Mai Nai Soi, 1 in Ban Mae Surin and 4 in Ban Mae la and reiterated that LAC would not solve legal matters but focused on providing legal advice. The selection criteria for the staff included knowledge on Thai laws, human rights and rights and obligations and ability to provide clear and correct advice.

At the third meeting of the Advisory Board dated 6 December 2006, the Board had decided to postpone the opening of LAC in Ban Mae La until prior measures were taken including the production of legal resource books and submission of list and profile of trainees, and progress report on data and statistics compilation to the Board. The Board also acknowledged the change of Legal Aid Center to Legal Assistant Center.

Resettlement

The RTG had given authorization for persons fleeing fighting living in nine TSs in four provinces (4 in Mae Hong Son, 3 in Tak, 1 in Rajchaburi and 1 in Kanchanaburi) to be resettled in third country upon requests of the Embassy and UNHCR on ground of family reunion and humanitarian basis. In this regard, the MOI would permit them to secretly leave the country in accordance to Immigrant Acts B.E. 2522 with the NSC agreement on case by case basis. Until now, 1,472 persons fleeing fighting have been resettled in third country with the NSC approval on ground of family reunion.

For those who lived in Ban Tham Hin in Ratchaburi, the RTG had granted the embassy permission to settle all of them in the USA. There were 3,000 persons who had gone through the medical check-up and interview and the first group of persons resettled in the USA left the country on 16 August 2006. Until now 172 persons have been resettled in the USA.

2,582 persons of concern in three TSs including Tham Hin in Ratchaburi, Ban Thon Yang in Kanchanaburi and Ban Nupo in Tak have been resettled on ground of family reunion.

Since June 2004, 14,847 Hmong living in Wat Tham Krabok have been resettled in the USA (12,962) and Australia (1,885). At present, there are 703 more Hmong awaiting for resettlement in these two countries.

Appendix Four: Registered Refugee Population (as of 31st March 2007)

Name of location	Origin	Female						Male						Grand total
		0-4	5-11	12-17	18-59	60 and over	Total (c)	0-4	5-11	12-17	18-59	60 and over	Total (c)	
Ban Don Yang	MYA	273	316	296	840	63	1,788	289	335	325	685	61	1,695	3,483
Ban Mae Surin	MYA	188	249	183	619	41	1,280	179	280	148	657	62	1,326	2,606
Mae La	MYA	3,194	4,257	3,490	10,929	936	22,806	3,317	4,542	3,635	11,176	795	23,465	46,271
Mae La Oon	MYA	845	1,069	898	2,659	222	5,693	934	1,191	936	2,746	237	6,044	11,737
Mae Ra Ma Luang	MYA	721	1,003	795	2,279	209	5,007	743	1,086	834	2,335	243	5,241	10,248
Mai Nai Soi	MYA	1,430	1,652	1,282	4,065	398	8,827	1,599	1,563	1,264	4,279	412	9,117	17,944
Nu Po	MYA	920	1,123	1,015	3,193	230	6,481	939	1,168	1,077	3,463	198	6,845	13,326
Tham Hin	MYA	565	693	621	1,642	166	3,687	609	676	614	1,582	147	3,628	7,315
Umpium	MYA	1,231	1,684	1,460	4,813	341	9,529	1,338	1,692	1,637	4,997	276	9,940	19,469
		9,367	12,046	10,040	31,039	2,606	65,098	9,947	12,533	10,470	31,920	2,431	67,301	132,399

PAB Population

Name of location	Origin	Female						Male						Grand total
		0-4	5-11	12-17	18-59	60 and over	Total (c)	0-4	5-11	12-17	18-59	60 and over	Total (c)	
Ban Don Yang	MYA	12	23	23	39	7	104	6	23	16	73	5	123	227
Ban Mae Surin	MYA	65	90	140	251	15	561	68	93	128	292	21	602	1,163
Mae La Oon	MYA	141	207	270	554	51	1,223	151	223	336	719	50	1,479	2,702
Mae Ra Ma Luang	MYA	352	468	556	981	87	2,444	343	507	560	999	77	2,486	4,930
Mai Nai Soi	MYA	104	80	98	399	40	721	96	84	117	661	30	988	1,709
Tham Hin	MYA	1	1	1	6		9	1	2	1	22		26	35
		675	869	1,088	2,230	200	5,062	665	932	1,158	2,766	183	5,704	10,766

Appendix Five: Brief description of refugee camps

Ban Mai Nai Soi camp (BMN)

Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp is located on two former sites known as Ban Pang Kwai, formerly used to rest water buffaloes imported from Myanmar and awaiting importing license prior to transport to destinations in Thailand, and Ban Pang Tractor, formerly a place to keep tractors for constructing logging roads between Mae Hong Son and the Thai-Myanmar border. While often referred to as Ban Pang Kwai/Ban Pang Tractor camp, the camp's official name is Ban Mai Nai Soi which is located in Mae Hong Son province, Tambon Pang Moo, Muang District, a distance from Myanmar border of approximately 2 kms. The Thai Shan and Karenni village of Ban Nai Soi is located 6 kms away on the north from the camp. The camp is situated 25 kms from Mae Hong Son but it takes one hour of driving due to the mountainous and bumping way. The camp is surrounded by thick forest. The camp size is approximately 4 kilometres long x 1 kilometres wide equivalent to 2500 rais or 400 hectares (1 rai = 0.16 hectare or 1 hectare = 10,000 square meters).

Camp History

The camp was initially opened in 1996 to accommodate some 1,800 refugees who were relocated from Pangyon (former camp 1) and Huaybok (former camp 2) camps which were situated right on the Thai-Myanmar border north of the present camp. Thereafter, more and more newcomers arrived in the camp due to the ongoing fighting and human rights abuses on the other side.

Following complaints from neighboring Thai villagers against refugees, Ban Nai Soi camp (ex-camp 3) in July 2002, the Thai authorities decided to relocate the camp and incorporate it into Ban Mai Nai Soi camp. The relocation operation was completed on 1 January 2003, except section 6 (the "Longneck" section, with a population of some 197 persons). The majority of the camp population is Karenni, mainly from Shadau township of Karenni State, and they are mostly farmers.

BMN Camp Population as of March 2007

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total		Total
Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	
1398	1563	2898	2802	4021	4260	397	408	8714	9033	17,747

Provincial Admission Board (PAB) cases (unregistered camp residents) ⁷⁰

⁷⁰ It is the accumulated figure of new arrivals that have arrived in the camp since the Provincial Admission Board (PAB) stopped to function in July 2000. Persons pending consideration by the Provincial Admissions Boards (PABs) are not eligible for resettlement submission

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total		Total
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
109	95	184	205	405	663	40	30	738	993	1,731

The camp population is 94 % Kayah/Karenni, broken down into various sub-groups which speak different dialects. Non-Karenni groups are Karen 3%, Shan 3% ,Burman 1%, Kachin 1%, and Mon 1%. 48%, 42% and 10% of population are Animist, Christian and Buddhist respectively.

Ban Mae Surin camp (BMS)

Ban Mae Surin Camp was previously called Karenni Camp 5 is located in Mae Hong Son province, Tambon Khun Yuam, Khun Yuam District, a distance from Myanmar border of approximately about 8 kms. The camp is located as isolated camp and very far away from the main road no.108. The camp is surrounded by thick forest. The camp size is about 190 *rais* or 30.4 hectares. The camp is situated 82 kms from Mae Hong Son to Khun Yuam and to the camp. It takes two hours and a half of driving on mountainous, steep and bumping way. During rainy season, the high level of Huay Mae Surin river could make access impossible. All supplies and rations need to be delivered to the camp in advance for the period of June to August. The Thai Karen villages of Ban Huay Fan and Ban Mae Sa Pe Tai are located 8 kms (one and a half hours of walking) and 17 kms (five hours of walking) respectively away from the camp.

Most of population in the camp are Karen and speak Karen though this camp is under the government of Karenni with the reason that the Karen people in this camp used to live in Karenni State. Burmese language is utilized as media among Karen and Karenni refugees. English language has been inserted to the camp school curriculum while Thai language has been also taught in communities through the Non Formal Education program funded by UNHCR.

Camp History

Ban Mae Surin Camp was established in 1992 to accommodate some 150 refugee families who fled fighting from Myanmar. Following the camp consolidation policy of the Royal Thai Government, there were numbers of Karenni relocated from former camp 6 and former camp 4 to Ban Mae Surin in 1996. The camp population has been increasing by births and new arrivals. The number of new arrivals is small because the camp is naturally fenced off by a rugged mountainous border, which is difficult for the new arrivals to cross through.

Camp Population

Camp population stands at 3,648 persons. Most of the population is from Pasaung and Mawchi townships of Karenni State, and they are mostly farmers.

BMS Camp Population as of March 2007

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total		Total
Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	
177	171	431	428	619	658	42	63	1269	1320	2589

Provincial Admission Board (PAB) Cases-Unregistered camp residents as of March 2007

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total		Total
Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	Femal e	Male	
52	55	213	207	229	275	13	18	507	555	1062

The ethnic camp population is 54% Paku/Karen, 20 % Kayah/Karenni and the rest is broken down into various sub-groups which speak different dialects. Majority speaks Karen language and the teaching language is Karen. 67% of population is Baptist while 18% is Catholic and the rest is Buddhist and Animist.

Karenni Refugee Structures

Karenni Refugee Committee (KnRC)

The Karenni Refugee Committee (KnRC) was formed in March 1997 to be the central coordinating body for both internal and external relations in support of refugee assistance. The current KnRC committee members were elected in January 2006 by the refugees for a three-year term.

Karenni Refugee Committee (KnRC) for BMN and Ban Mae Surin Chairman is Mr. Poe Beer and secretary 1 and 2 are Mr. Thay Law Secretary and Ms. Margaret Minyo respectively.

BMN Camp Committee

The camp administrative structure is composed of the Camp Committee and 19 section leaders who are elected by the camp population for a three-year term. There are other camp sub-committees such as educational committee, health committee, etc. The camp committee deals with both internal and external matters while the section leaders are responsible for all matters within their sections.

Section 11 has two sub-sections; Section 11A accommodates some 150 Shan and section 11B accommodates some 160 members (includes their family members) of All Burmese Students Democratic Front (ABSDF).

The current BMN Camp Committee was elected in January 2006 and they will have completed their three-year term in January 2009.

BMN Judiciary Committee

Law and Social Order Committee (LSOC) was formed in 2002. Based in BMN it covers both Karenni camps (BMN and Ban Mae Surin). LSOC comprises 10 committee members (M-6, F-4) who were nominated by the Karenni Ministry of Justice for a four-year term. There are three functional levels such as township level (first instance level or at individual camp level), district level (appeal level or combined camp level) and central level (final appeal level or ministry of justice level).

BMS Camp Committee

The camp is under the authority of the District Office of Khun Yuam. The deputy district officer is camp commander. The camp is divided into 4 sections. The camp structure is composed of camp committee and its four section leaders who are elected by the camp population for a two-year term on the positions. There are other sub-committees who are to handle certain matters such education and health committees.

The current BMS Camp Committee was elected in January 2003 and they will complete their three-year term in January 2006.

BMS Judiciary Committee

There is no judiciary committee in this camp. When needed, a panel of camp key persons includes the camp chairman, deputy camp chairman, camp security head and some other camp elders will be formed on an ad hoc basis to deal with problem taking place in the camp. When the problem cannot be resolved, it will be referred to the Law and Social Order Committee (LSOC) in Ban Mai Nai Soi camp.

Mae La Oon camp (MLO)

Mae La Oon is located in Huay Sam Lap Sub-district, Sob Mei District, Mae Hong Son Province, a distance from Myanmar border of approximately about 3 kms. The camp is located as isolated camp and very far away from the black top road approximately 53 kms and plus 25 kms of black top road for arriving in Mae Sarieng. It takes two hours and a half to three hours of driving on mountainous, steep and bumping way for a one way trip to the camp. During rainy season, the high level of Sob Moei river could make access impossible. The closest Thai village is situated 3.5 kms away and called Ban Mae Tor.

Mae La Oon camp was chosen as the site for the relocation. The initial area was 1 KM away from the border and that in the past KNU and their family members lived in the area. NGOs and UNHCR expressed the security concerns on the proposed site for relocation. In an effort to response to the concerns, the government decided to shift the site slightly by bringing it to 3 kms away from the border. There are some parts of concreted road constructed in the camp by employed camp refugees through COERR/UNHCR. There are some concreted road in this camp The camp size is 800 rais or 128 hectares (1 rai = 0.16 hectare or 1 hectare = 10,000 square meters).

The site is located at some 2.5 kms west of Mae Ra Ma Luang camp and 3.5 kms south of the Thai Karen village of Ban Mae Tor La. All supplies and rations need to be delivered to the camp in advance before the rainy season for the period of June to August.

Most of population in the camp are Karen and speak Karen both at home and school. English language has been inserted to the camp school curriculum while Thai language has been also taught in communities through the Non Formal Education program funded by UNHCR.

Camp History

In July 2003, the Thai Prime Minister, Mr. Thaksin Shinawatt, ordered for the relocation of Mae Kongkha camp. The reasons given were the fact that Mae Kongkha camp was located in Salaween National Park where there were allegations that refugees were involved in illegal logging. Also, the camp had been hit by series of natural disasters (flash flood in September 2002 that killed 26 refugees and destroyed some 800 houses; a less serious flood in the first week of October 2002 and a storm in March 2003 that damaged more than 250 houses).

The relocation movements started on 20 December 2003 and completed on 20 March 2004.

Camp Population as of March 2007

The camp population was first registered by MOI-UNHCR in April 1999 in former camp, Mae Kongkha, and there has been regularly registration updating ever since. The population currently stands at 13,614. Most of the refugees are from Pa-pun township of Karen State and most of whom are farmers.

MLO Camp Population as of March 2007

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total		Total
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
797	883	1862	2015	2540	2573	214	230	5413	5701	11114

Provincial Admission Board (PAB) Cases-Unregistered camp residents as of March 2007

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total		Total
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
191	201	581	671	671	891	59	57	1502	1820	3322

The ethnic camp population is 80% Sgaw Karen and 17% Pwo Karen and the rest is broken down into Non Karen group : Pa-o 1% and Burman 2%. Most of Pwo Karen can speak Sgaw Karen but few Sgaw Karen can speak Pwo Karen.

64%, 8% and 1% of population are Baptist, Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist while 24% , 3% and 1% are Buddhist, Animist and Anglican respectively.

Mae Ra Ma Luang camp (MRM)

Mae Ra Ma Luang camp is located in Sob Mei Sub-district and Sub Mei District, Mae hong son Province, a distance from Myanmar border of approximately about 10 kms. The camp is most

remote of all the camps. It is situated in south Sob Moei District and is 80 kms from Mae Sariang District where NGOs are based. It is reachable by two roads: one goes through Sob Moei District and the other one goes through Mae Samlab. It takes a minimum of 2-3 hours to reach the camp from Mae Sariang on mountainous, steep and bumping way. In the rainy season it may take over 4 hours. It is also reachable by boat during June - January from Mae Samlab with some 1½ hour. It can also be unreachable for small periods of time in the rainy season. The closest Thai villages are situated in different directions approximately 4-5 kms away and are called Ban Mae Tor Lan, Ban Ma La Ma Luang and Ban Klo Koh.

The camp size is 5 kilometers long x 1 kilometer wide equivalent to 3,125 rai or 500 hectares. (1 rai = 0.16 hectare or 1 hectare = 10,000 square meters).

All supplies and rations need to be delivered to the camp in advance before the rainy season for the period of June to August.

Camp History

The camp was opened in 1995 soon after the fall of Manerplaw, the stronghold of KNU in Karen State, to receive the influx of Karen refugees. It is the only camp which is located on a provincial border (section 1-6 and 7B are on Mae Hong Son side of the border and section 7A locates on Tak side of the border). However, the entire camp is under supervision of Mae Hong Son authorities.

The majority of the population of the camp is from Pa-pun Township of Karen State. Most are farmers.

MRM Camp Population as of March 2007

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
718	742	1799	1902	2279	2336	209	243	10246

Provincial Admission Board (PAB) Cases-Unregistered camp residents as of March 2007

0-4		5-17		18-59		60+		Total
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
325	323	890	907	911	875	77	72	4380

The camp population composes of two sub-groups known as Sgaw Karen numbering some 70% and Pwo Karen numbering some 30% of the population. The two groups have different dialects. Most of Pwo Karen can speak Sgaw but very few Sgaw Karen can speak Pwo. 70% and 15% of population is Baptist and Buddhist and the rest of population is Seven Day Adventist, Animist, Catholic, Anglican and Muslim.

Refugee Structures

Karen Refugee Committee (KRC)

KRC's Headquarters is based in Mae Sot. However, KRC has a sub-office with two KRC representatives based in Mae Sariang who act as coordinators in support of refugee assistance to Karen camps in Mae Hong Son. The KRC representative for Mae La Oon camp is Mr. Tana. The KRC representative who is in charge of Mae Ra Ma Luang is Mr. Tu Tu.

MLO Camp Committee

The camp is under the authority of Sobmoei District Office. The camp is divided into 15 sections. The camp administrative structure is composed of the camp committee and 15 section leaders who are elected by the camp refugees for a two-year term on the positions. There are other administrative committees such as judicial, educational and health committees. The camp committee deals with both internal and external relations while the section leaders are responsible for general affairs within the sections.

There is a unique section (section 13) for All Burmese Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) with the number of population of some 480 persons (It is a mixture community of ABSDF and Karen who have inter-marriages). The ABSDF has formed its own refugee community committee to oversee the group population.

The current MLO camp committee was elected on 1 March 2005. The committee will be on a two-year term and is under the authority of KRC. There are 15 committee members (M-12, F-3).

MLO Judiciary Committee

There's a camp judiciary committee composed of seven committee members who were appointed by the camp committee. The committee was established in 2000. Initially there were 5 committee members but it has been increased to 7 members in March 2005. The functional structure of the committee composed of two levels; first level has three persons who act as Judges of appeal court, second level with three others acts as Judges of first instance court and another member acts as secretary to both levels. The committee members of both levels were appointed from those who can read, write and are well familiar with the Karen tradition, ages are not over 60. There's a justice administrative guidance written by KRC applicable to all Karen camps along the border.

Each section, when needed, will form a panel composed of section leader, section secretary, section social welfare, section security and section food distributor on an ad hoc basis, function similar to judiciary committees. This committee will deal with offences committed in the section. When the offences cannot be concluded at section level, the cases will be brought to the camp judiciary committee.

MRM Camp Committee

The camp is under the authority of Sob Moei District Office of which the Deputy District Officer (Palat) is camp commander. The camp is divided into 10 sections. The camp administrative structure composed of the camp committee and the section leaders who are elected by the camp population for a two-year-term on the positions. There are other sub-

committees who deal with certain camp matters such as education committee, health committee and etc.

MRM camp committee was elected in February 2006. Following is the key members of MRM camp committee:

MRM Judiciary Committee

There's no judiciary committee made in place in this camp. When needed, a panel of elders will be formed on an ad hoc basis to deal with the offences taking place in the camp. The camp social welfare officer is the focal person of the formulation of the group. The panel will be abolished after a solution is found to the offence.

Appendix Five: Description of hosting communities

1. Local Communities nearby BMN

i). Ban Nai Soi

Population :	1,800 people and 375 households
Ethnicity :	Shan 50%, Karenni 50% (no birth control), Chinese Haw 6 households, local Thai 15 households.
Religion :	Buddhist/Christian
Distance from camp :	about 5-8 km. east of BMN
Infrastructure :	one primary school, one secondary school

Background :

The village is under the administration of the Shan authorities. The main crops are paddy, sesame, highland rice, garlic and soy bean. Besides, the villagers earn supplementary income from working as waged earners and weaving (2-3 families making Shan traditional hat). About 150 households raised 2-3 pigs each and 2-3 households also raised buffaloes. A group of villagers also raise fighting cocks and there is cock fighting in the village once a month.

There are 380 students in the primary school and the majority are female. Out of this total numbers, 20 students are from Ban Doi Saeng. About 30 students are studying grade 10-12 in MHS town.

In the village, there are about 600 motorcycles, 38 pick-ups, two big groceries, 13 small groceries, five noodle shops, one rice and curry shop, one beauty salon, one motorcycle repair shop and two barbers. The only co-op shop in the village was closed almost 20 years ago.

Four years ago, the villagers blocked the road to BMN in order to prevent the suppliers to transport goods into the camp. They could finally negotiate with TBBC to allow them to transport goods into BMN instead of letting it be monopolized by the suppliers. 30 pick-up owners benefit from this negotiation, 24 of which transported rice. The owners of good-conditioned pick-up could transport goods for three trips a day for 500 baht each trip. A new pick-up owner who would like to benefit from transporting goods into the camp had to pay 50,000 – 60,000 baht to the pioneer pick-up owners.

There were 29 families whose annual income is less than 20,000 baht the rest of the families could earn 100,000 baht up.

The time schedule for transportation of goods is as follows : 10th-15th of each month – rice; 15th – 18th - chilli, salt, charcoal and bean; 15th - not beyond 22nd - charcoal, cooking oil and chilli.

The seasonal labours are needed as follows : March – April for harvesting garlic, July – August – growing paddy, November for rice harvesting., December – March – growing garlic. The wage for female labours ranges from 50-60 baht while for male labours the range is 60-70 baht. They usually work from 8 - 4 pm with one hour lunch break. This rate does not include food.

The works that women usually do including growing paddy and clearing weed. The works that both women and men could do including rice and garlic harvesting. The works that men usually do including tying and carrying garlic. Last year, villagers could sell fresh garlic for 10-15 baht per kg.

Supports from Government :

1. Villagers received trainings on soy bean processing from the Rapid Rural Development Office, and on organic fertilizer from the Agricultural Extension Office.
2. TAO provided blankets for poor families and provided vaccination for cats and dogs.

Supports from NGOs :

1. IRC provided water pump and sport equipments.

Impacts from Camp :

1. Bamboos are depleting because the refugees cut them to make bamboo panel. These bamboo panels are transported out of camp to be sold in Chiang Mai every two months.
2. Loss of clothes, motorbike and bicycle.

Benefits from camp :

1. 30 pick-up owners earned income from transporting goods to the camp.
2. Availability of seasonal labours
3. Availability of cheap products including charcoal (60 baht per sack of 20 kg), cooking oil (20 baht for one bottle) and bean (16-17 baht per kg). Traders usually sold charcoal for 100 baht per sack and bean for 23-25 baht per kg.)

Needs of supports :

1. There is a need for road repair as there is flooding every year. And it is better to construct concrete road which will need around 1 million baht.
2. Since there is inadequate water, there is a need of highland waterworks and a bigger tank to store water. At present, water is released two times a day during 5 am-11 am and 3 - 8 pm.
3. One water pump costs 60,000 baht is needed to get water from the creek and store it in the tank.
4. Need of sport equipments for youth.
5. Need blankets and sweaters for the elders and 57 poor families.

Recommendations :

1. TBBC should buy soy bean and vegetables including cabbage and water melon from the villagers.
2. There should be a system in camp to monitor the seasonal labours leaving and returning to camp.
3. The refugee minors should be accompanied by adults to prevent them from stealing.

ii) Ban Mai Sa Pe

Population : 483 people and 93 households; male 238; female 245

adults aged 15 up - male : 168, female 189; elders aged 60 up - 23; children male 70, female (according to 2005 baseline survey - Jor Por Thor).

The other adjacent community which is about 4 km away has 10 households.

Ethnicity : Karenni

Religion : Majority are Buddhists/animist - 10 families are Christian

Distance from camp : About 3 hrs walk to BNS camp (about 8 km). The villagers could see new

arrivals coming to the camp as they walk pass by the village.

Infrastructure : one public telephone which is out of order, one satellite, one primary school

(from kindergarten to grade 6 with 89 students (male 47 female 42), 4 teachers and 1 janitor

Background :

Sa Pe is the name of one kind of fruit tree and it is located to the north of BNS camp. Out of the total population 73 people have blue identity card including 41 males and 32 females. The average size of household is 5-6 people in one family.

The villagers main crops are rice, sesame, garlic and chilli. Their annual income ranges from 2-3,000 - less than 20,000 baht per year per household.

More than half of the population cannot speak Thai. Only those who are less than 35 years old do. There are two rice mills. Women do not do weaving and elders make traditional baskets only to serve the demand of villagers in the village. Villagers also buy goods from BMN. Each families have about 20 rais but there is no land title. The villagers earn supplementary income from selling pigs for 50-60 baht per kg. More than 10 people, both men and women, went out to work in MHS for a minimum wage of 140-150 baht a day. The majority of population have enough rice for their annual consumption except 2-3 families. Youth over 20 years old do not have motivation to work.

There is one volunteer working as representative of livestock department in taking care of animal vaccination in the village.

The seasonal workers are needed during harvesting seasons which is from Oct-Nov. Weed cutting is during June - July and the refugees usually came out for one week and went back. After that the new group may come or the old group returned. Working hrs is from 8 am -4 pm and the wage is 50 - 60 baht a day with food. The refugees could sleep in the employers' hut in the field or at their homes. In general, each families will employ about 3-4 workers. In order to come out to work, the villagers think that the refugees have to ask their leaders for permission or just smuggling out of the camp. When in need, the villagers also go to the camp to look for workers themselves.

Supports from Government :

The villagers received loan from one million baht scheme; 280,000 baht from Dept of community development; 100,000 baht and from TAO revolving fund. They received training on organic or bio fertilizer by the Internal Security Task Force (Kor Or Ror Mor Nor). In Jan 2007, 67 families received blankets from BMN camp commander.

Supports from NGOs :

COERR provided sport equipment to school. One teacher and some students attended land mine awareness raising workshop organized by UNICEF as part of Asian Disaster Preparedness Center training program. The Thai - Saitama Friendships Association, Japan contributed for a construction cost of a classroom building in February 2006.

Impacts from camp :

- Loss of home garden produces including banana, papaya, chilli which is very expensive. This kind of cases was reported to the camp authorities.
- Early this year, 2-3 refugee families were found to illegally cultivate their relatives plot of land for their own with the consent of their relatives. So, they were requested to pay a fine of 30 tin buckets of paddy at the end of this harvesting season and have to refrain from working the land.
- Loss of food sources from the forest including vegetables and wild animals.

Benefits from camps :

- Availability of cheap labours leading to an increasing of income and expansion of cultivation from two tin buckets of seeds to 5 buckets.
- Having access to health care facilities in camp.
- Three men from the villager got job as security guard (Or Sor) in camp
- Trading and bartering with refugees : 1 bottle of cooking oil (1 liter) for 4-5 raw jackfruit or 4-5 hands of banana; 1 kg of bean is 16 baht; 1 bag of salt (half kg) is 5 baht and 1 kg of pork is 120 baht

iii) Ban Doi Saeng

Population : 225 people and 50 households : males : 115 females 110; Minors under 15 : 50
Ethnicity : Karenni
Religion : Buddhist/animist
Distance from camp : about 1 hr walk north of BMN
Infrastructure : no electricity although the electrical polls were installed in the village about 11 years ago; only 10 families have toilet

Background :

Ban Doi Saeng was relocated from the former site close to the border. It is also under the Development Project of Security and border rangers usually visit the village because it is close to the border which is about 2.30 km.s or 1 hr walk.

A limited number of villagers could speak Thai about 10 years ago. There is no primary school in the village but one villager was employed as a NFE temporary employee using TAO budget to teach them basic Thai language in preparation for their schooling.

The villagers main crops are highland rice, sesame, soy bean, chilli, banana, taro, cassava, vegetables and eggplant. They also raise chicken, pig (about 150) and buffaloes (50-60). Each families has an average of about 5-6 rai of land. The bigger piece of land is about 10 rai. The villagers practice traditional rotating cultivation. The planting season starts in May while harvesting season is during October to November. Only 15 households have an annual income of 20,000 – 30,000 baht. The rest of the families earned around 3-4,000 baht. (according to baseline survey – Jor Por Thor)

Youth go out to work in MHS and Chiang Mai. They earn around 3-4,000 baht per month if they live with the employers. For those who live on their own may earn around 5,000-6,000 baht. Men tend to go further away and receive the minimum wage. The skilled workers could get around 200 baht. There are about 30 villagers (10 women and 20 men) who work as seasonal workers in Ban Nai Soi for a daily wage of around 50-60 baht which is the same rate as what the refugees are earning. They are picked up by a truck to go to work at around 6 o'clock. They walked to their field and started working around 8 o'clock. They returned back to Ban Nai Soi around 4 pm and arrived home around 6 pm. The employers in Ban Nai Soi prefer to employ workers from the village because the refugees may be arrested if they are checked.

The villagers also employed refugees to work for them for 50 baht with lunch and 60 baht without. They usually work about 3-4 days and go back to camp.

Supplementary Income is from selling pork for 50 baht per kg and buffaloes which is about 14,000 baht for 3-4 years old ones.

There is one health volunteer in the village who has the duty to collect blood from the villagers for malaria checking at Ban Nai Soi. In general, there are about 10 cases of malaria patients in rainy season.

Supports from Government :

- Villagers received grant from the Miyazawa plan for the construction of fish pond (20 m. in width and 38 m. in length). But, there is no more fish. Other loans provided by the government include one million baht scheme, one hundred thousand baht scheme, 250,000 SML scheme baht
- The Royal project provided weaving training to 20 people. The products were sent to MHS by the chairperson of the group. After weaving for 3-4 years, the project was stopped and no more thread was given. The villager would get 40 baht per meter but it took about 4-5 months to get the money.
- One big solar panel was given to the village by MOI about 5-6 years ago but it could no longer work so does the only public telephone in the village.
- District Health Office provided blankets to 50 households.

Supports from NGO :

Two amputees received prosthesis from HI about 5-6 years ago. COERR provided books and pencils to students.

Impacts from camp :

- Having to compete with refugees for seasonal works resulting in having less work, less income and decreasing of wage from around 80-90 baht for female and 100 baht for male to 50-60 baht only.
- Depleting of natural food sources including fish, bamboo, hard wood, edible vegetables; annual loss of produces including chilli, corn, cucumber, etc. In addition, the villagers could not leave their field more than 4-5 days because ripe chilli might be stolen. Prior to the relocation of the camp, they could earn about 8,000 baht per year now only 3-4,000 baht. So, some villagers did not want the camp to exist. The incidents of robbery were reported to the camp.

Benefits from camp :

1. Availability of cheap labours (around 30 persons were needed).

Needs of supports :

- Need water filter tank to prevent dirt contamination in drinking water during rainy season. Normally, there is one villager who was trained to maintain the waterworks by taking sediment out every 3-4 days and each household has to pay 10 baht a month.
- not enough water for consumption and use during dry season
- need of clothes
- first aid medicine three times a year
- inadequate mosquito nets because some households have many children.
- need financial support to employ labours to leverage common ground to be used for traditional rituals. Site is already available.
- Road and solar cell repairs
- Funding for construction of more toilets (about 500 baht each)
- Needs fish to be raised for supplementary income.
- Rice seeds which produce more yields. The village chief suggested that rice varieties he saw in Pang Ma Pa district grown by Yunnanese (Chinese How) is good.
- One male and female aged over 70 has no household registration so cannot obtain any services
- No support for 10 handicapped who could not walk or speak.

2. Local communities nearby BMS

i) Ban Huay Fan

Population : 200 people and 64 households ; female 93, male 107
Ethnicity : Karenni
Religion : Christian
Infrastructure : Electrification from solar panel

Background :

There are about 25 people aged 18-40 who go out of the village to work in MHS and other provinces. The villagers annual income range from 2,000 – 10,000 baht. However, those who are members of TAO could earn up to 50,000 baht per year because of the salary they receive in addition to they income from agriculture. Most of the people do not have any income after harvesting season. There are about 10 students who got loans from the government in order to continue their studying in the vocational schools.

The main crops include highland rice, corn, soy bean and sesame. Last year, the villagers could sell corn for 4 baht per 1 kg of corn, 22 baht per 1 kg of sesame an 12 baht per 1 kg of soy bean. They have to buy corn seed every year for 90 baht per kg and bean for 200 baht per bucket of 15 kg.

The villagers also raised buffaloes (altogether there are 80), pigs (2 for each household) and chicken (5 for each household).

Mostly the seasonal labours are women. They get about 50-60 baht per day. When in need, villagers will tell the Or Sor or section leader to find labours for them. About 75% of the villagers are indebted to the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperative (BAAC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE), one million baht fund, and private creditor for their children education and agricultural production.

Supports from government :

1. Received training on how to make detergent, dish washing liquid and shampoo from the military task force.
2. The district agriculture office provided training on organic fertilizer but the villagers could not utilize the knowledge gained from the training because they do not have money to buy the equipment.
3. Other trainings provided at the district office included sufficiency economy, home garden and pig raising.

Supports from NGOs :

In November 2006, TBBC gave rice and clothes to villagers. Four – five years ago COERR provided materials for building hanging bridge. Last year they provided vegetable seeds, toys, candies, pencils and books to school and rice to one elder.

Impacts from camp :

1. Depletion of natural resources.

Benefits from camp :

1. Availability of seasonal labours resulting in more produces.
2. Could trade with the refugees. There are two pick-up from Huay Fan that bring goods to sell in front of the camp
3. The pick-up owner (there are 7 pick-ups in the village) could occasionally earn income from transporting rice and charcoal to the camps.
4. The son of village chief studies English in the camp.

Needs of supports :

1. Would like to get gabion to prevent river bank erosion because paddy field is near the river bank.
2. The villagers would like to benefit from transporting goods to BMS without problem with the supplier. Besides being threatened by the supplier, the pick-up owners did not receive the money for their work and the remuneration for transporting goods to camp has been decreasing from 70 satang to 50 satang per kg.
3. Need road repair.
4. Lack of water. The water pipe is filled up.
5. Need of vegetable seeds to support school lunch program (there are 34 students but there is enough budget for only 13 of them for 150 baht per day).
6. The villagers would like to be able to bring goods and produces on their motorcycles to sell inside the camp because they could get more customers. If they sell outside the camp those who live further inside will not know that they come.
7. need rice, tooth brush, toothpaste and education materials for students
8. need two English teachers to teach at school.
9. need trainings inside the village on auto mechanic, biogas and charcoal making, wood carving, wooden utencils making and basketry (for the elders).
10. need market for their weaving products. There is a plan to create a weaving group this year from the seed fund of 75,000 baht provided by the TAO.

ii) Ban Sa Pe Tai

Population : 21 elders aged 60 and over ; 11 males and 10 females.
Ethnicity : Karenni
Religion : Christian
Distance from camp : 3 hrs. walk or 1 hr by car

Background :

Villagers grow highland rice, paddy, sesame, garlic, shallots, chilli and soy bean. There are less than 30 families that grew garlic. Villagers use chemical inputs which were bought from Khun Yuam district for garlic and soy bean. The average size of land per household is smaller than 1 rai. There are about one thirds of population that have land in the low land area.

Last year the soy bean was 120 baht per one bucket of 20 liters while sesame was 200 baht per bucket. Garlic was 8 baht per kg which was less than the product cost. The villagers debt ranged from 5,000 – 70,000 baht. Some villagers also go to Khun Yuam to do construction work for a minimum wage of 135 baht per day. For seasonal work, the women would get 80 baht while men got 100 baht per day. In order to go to work, they either drove their own motorbike or went by pick-up which costed 50 baht for round trip. Villagers also raised two – three pigs per family and chicken for their own consumption. There is one family which raise buffalo and two families raising cows. The average annual income is 7-8,000 baht. A few people could earn up to 20,000 baht as they received salary from working as TAO members.

The villagers have a plan to invite one teacher to teach “Paligu” dance to the children next year in order to preserve Karen culture. With the support of Christian Church in Chiang Mai, five months ago, the villagers could employ one villager to teach Karen literacy to children aged 6-12 years old for one hour per day and other teacher to teach Burmese language.

Villagers would like to have supplementary income during December – February and August to October.

There are 4-5 people who received Bachelor degree and worked in the urban area.

Supports from government :

1. Receiving blankets from the Thai Red Cross and Tambon Administration Office (TAO).
2. Some villagers received training on organic agriculture at the Agricultural Extension Office in the district.
3. Every household received solar panel to generate power for electricity.

Supports from NGOs :

1. TBBC provided rice, soaps and toothpaste.

Impacts from camps :

1. Depleting of natural resources including crab, honey, fish, wild chicken, squirrel, wild animals, etc. In the past, villagers could get 10 bottles of honey nowadays they could get only 2-3 bottles.
2. The road is in bad condition. The drivers also drive very fast.
3. Robbery. Solar panel was once stolen but villagers could get it back.

Benefits from camp :

1. About 2-3 youth aged about 15 years old could study English, music and to a lesser extent Karen language for two to three weeks in the camp during their vacation. Up till now, almost 10 children benefited.
2. Besides, English, there is also expertise in herbal medicine in the camp.
3. Four to five families could employ seasonal labours for their cultivation for 50-60 baht a day. They employed not more than three of them in one time.

Needs of supports :

1. Need thread so elder women could do weaving.
2. Blankets.
3. water filter tank
4. Lack of clean drinking water in dry season.
5. Training on growing mushroom, frog raising, wood craving and sewing.

Recommendations :

1. The camp should become a learning center for the public, for example, from Chiang Mai.
2. There should be some kind of Thai project whereby NGOs could help local communities.

iii) Ban Kaen Fa

Population : 236 people and 72 households
Ethnicity : Shan

Religion : Buddhist
Distance from Camp : about 3 hr walk
Infrastructure : one primary school

Background :

The majority of villagers have land rights. Their main crops are rice, soy bean, garlic, red onion, corn and sesame. They use chemical inputs in their production. The villagers also raise pigs and one group of villagers raise 20 cows. Their average annual income is 20,000 baht per year/families.

There are more youth working than continuing their study. At present, there are about 30 - 40 youth working in Lamphun Industrial Estate and Bangkok. Some villagers would start raising 100 pigs in March as the BAAC and Livestock Department will find market for them. The debt of villagers ranges from about 10,000 baht to 400,000 baht. The loan is used for agriculture and animal raising.

The demand for about 100 seasonal labours is usually during November, March and April with the wage of 60 baht a day without food. Women will get only 50 baht. There is not enough labours within the village. The working hours is from 8.30-16.30. For garlic cultivation, there will be negotiation for the wage and it usually bases on the size of garlic in 11 or 12 kg of bucket. The wage for planting smaller size of garlic will be more expensive than the bigger ones because it will take more time to finish it.

The wage for planting smaller size of garlic is 100 baht per bucket and 60-70 baht for bigger size. The wage for picking garlic and harvesting rice is 60 baht, carrying garlic is 70 baht for males, 100 baht for loading rice into the rice ban or on the truck. (depending on distance).

The youth aged about 15-16 also work as labours during their vacation. The seasonal labours are most needed during March - April. The work includes picking garlic and soy bean, tie and hang garlic which is 10 baht per hour. The highest numbers of refugees needed could be 60-70.

Some households could employ 40-50 refugees in one day to pick and hang garlic because they grow more than 100 bucks of garlic seeds. The refugees usually work for 7-10 days and go back to camp or they return to camp at the end of the month to receive ration or attend the meeting and go back to work again. Food is given or not depending on the employee but, usually after picking garlic, the employers will treat them food.

Impacts from camp :

1. Still have problems of loss of produces
2. Three years ago, 2-3 villagers were arrested for employing refugees to work for them.
3. The refugees have malaria or become sick and employees have to send them to the hospital.

Benefits from camp :

1. Availability of seasonal workers
2. Local youth could experience Christmas celebration in the camp.

Needs of supports :

1. Training on traditional tin and wood craving. At least there are four people who already have some skills and 50 elders who could be trained.
2. No market for the produces.

Recommendations :

1. IRC should employ local villagers to work for them
2. Supply for refugees such as garlic and red onion should be bought from the village.
3. The refugee mobility should be strictly monitored. They should have permit to work outside camp so they do not get in trouble with the Thai authorities when they come out to work as seasonal labours. In addition, they need to have some kind of ID and have to report to the village leader how long they would be staying in the village. This is because there are strangers wandering around the village and no one knows who they are. The purposed measures could also help the village leader to identify the wrong doer if problems arise. .
4. The new road to BMS through Ban Kaenfa and Ban Klang should be constructed.
5. There should be sport tournament between youths in the village and BMS. And the refugees should be able to join the village cultural festivals.

iv) Ban Klang

Population : 236 population and 72 households ; 123 males and 113 females

Ethnicity : Shan

Religion : Buddhist

Infrastructure : Electricity, one primary school

Background :

The village is about 50 km from Mae Hong Son. The majority of villagers grow rice, garlic and soy bean and a small number of villagers grow sesame. The annual income ranges from 5,000 – 60,000 baht. They usually need about 150 seasonal labours to pick, tie and hang garlic.

The common problems found among the villagers include a lack of market for their produces, less garlic production, inadequate water supply, high cost of inputs and low price for their produces.

There are about 60 households that need seasonal labours. The number of seasonal labours ranges from 2-50 persons. During the garlic harvesting season, about 500 shifts of labours or about 150 labours are needed to pick, tie and hang garlic. The wage is about 50-60 baht per day.

Supports from NGOs :

No NGOs provides any assistance.

Negative impacts :

1. Loss of produces
2. One buffalo was killed but the case was settled by the buffalo owner received the compensation.

Benefits from Camp :

1. Trade and barter with the refugees. Cooking oil costs 27-28 baht could be bartered with fermented bean and fermented fish could be bartered with jackfruit, pamelos or mangoes.

Need of support :

1. blanket (do not need any training if there is no market)

3. Local communities nearby MRM**i) Ban Mae La Ma Luang**

Population : 450 people : 232 females and 218 males/ All villagers have id card.
Ethnicity : Karen
Religion : Buddhist
Distance from camp : about 30 mn walk or 10 mn by motorcycle
Infrastructure : two public telephones but cannot call in, solar panel electrification

Background :

The villagers are subsistence farmers. They grow highland rice, chilli and vegetables. Their annual income range from 5,000 - 60,000 baht. Those who have little children have difficulties in making a living as their wife will have to look after the children leading to inadequate labour force. Five-six years ago, a group of six families started growing sugar cane and they could earn good income from the sale of sugar cane bar which is 17 baht per kg. The wholesale price of 1,000 kg up is 15 baht per kg. The idea of producing sugar cane bar was introduced to them by a Karen from Burma. This person also told the villagers to buy a sugar cane juicer which they later bought from Burma for 60,000 baht. The machine was transported from Burma through Mae Sot then to their village. Their earning from the first year yield could already cover their investment. This year the production is not enough.

The seasonal labours get 50 baht per day for both male and female. They pick chilli, grow rice and corn and clear weed for the villagers. During harvesting season, about 10-20 refugees were employed. The refugees usually worked for 2-3 days or one week and returned to the camp. They did not go out to work during weekend.

Supports from government :

1. In 2006, the agricultural extension office promoted coffee growing and 10 families started to do it.
2. In 2006, the community development office trained villagers in pig raising in the hog. And two families already started.
3. In 2006, the MOI provided solar panel to every household.

Supports from NGOs :

1. COERR provided rice to 10 elders two years ago.

2. TBBC provided blankets this year.

Impacts from camp :

1. depletion of forest area
2. depletion of small crabs and fish

Benefits from camp :

1. barter with refugees i.e a bottle of cooking oil which cost 25 baht could be barter with 5 kg of cassava, 200 grams of chilli,
2. availability of seasonal labours

Needs of supports :

1. During rainy season, water source usually fills with dirt so there is a need for water filter tank.
2. Water is also inadequate for consumption and use during dry season.

ii) Ban Kloh Koh

Population : 250 people and 55 households (No details figure for males and females is available at time of focus group discussion.)

Ethnicity : Karen

Religion : Buddhist/ 3 Christian families

Distance from camp : about 7-8 kms from MRML/ 30 mns by motorcycle

Infrastructure : no public telephone, electricity is generated by solar panel, one primary school (from kindergarten to grade 6) with a total of 62 students, and four teachers.

Background :

Ban Kloh Koh was established about 23 years ago. The name Kloh Koh means one kind of bamboo that used to be abundant in the past. In September 2006, the national park was declared and villagers had to give one of their rotating plots to the Park authorities. The villagers do not have land title deed. The villagers practice shifting cultivation. They grow rice, chilli, corn and vegetables. This year villagers could earn more income from chilli because the price of dry chilli is very high. They can sell it for 200 baht per kg and 100 baht per kg for fresh chilli to traders from within the village and from other places.

The villagers also raise pigs, chicken, buffaloes and cows. Their annual income range from 3-4,000 baht to 30-40,000 baht. Some families do not have any income if they don't grow chilli.

There are 3-4 villagers who produce bamboo baskets for a foreigner in Mae Toh Lah village. Government loans were provided and villagers used them to buy cows and employing the refugees to work for them, among others. There are about four elephants in the village.

About 20-30 elders do not receive monthly stipend and about 20 families do not have enough rice for annual consumption. The cultivation is of traditional practice. This year, the RFD does not allow villagers to collect leaves.

They sleep either in the field or in employer's houses. (mainly in the field). About 2-3 persons are hired to collect chilli.

There are about 10 families that employ seasonal labours. The daily wage ranges from 50-60 baht for both women and men. They are employed to pick chilli, carrying rice, clearing weed and building houses. The wage for carrying rice and building houses could be negotiable. For example, carrying 100 buckets of rice could cost 4-500 baht for 4-5 labours in 2 days. One skilled house builder could earn 1,500 - 20,000 baht for total wage of a house construction which takes about 10-20 days. Some seasonal labours take water melon or sesame instead of wage. In addition, the refugees could be employed to make thatch roof (80 satang - 1 baht each).

The village has a potential to become a tourist site because the National Park authorities had already built two bungalows for tourists. The implementation of a joint project between the Royal project and the National Park authorities which is planned to start in March 2007 will also cover Ban Kloh Ko. So, there is a possibility for more budget in the area of road maintenance and income generating activities, as well as 20-30 possible employment for workers to work in tree nursery.

Supports from government :

Solar panel

Support from NGOs :

COERR provided 15 kg of rice to 10 elders a month during 2005-2006.

Impacts from camp :

1. loss of natural resources such as bamboo, wild animals, fish and trees.

Benefits from Camps :

1. Availability of seasonal labours during rainy season for 50-60 baht per day.
2. Access to health care facilities
3. Villagers also buy food and chicken in camp and trade as well as barter for cooking oil.

Needs of supports :

1. Lack of water for consumption and use during dry season from Feb - April.
2. The highland waterworks system needs repairs as water pipe falls apart and broken.
3. market for vegetables
4. public telephone
5. road repairs
6. training on electrical mechanic and auto mechanic in the village
7. 62 school uniforms size 32-39 for students aged 5-12

iii) Ban Leh Koh

Population : 397 populations (208 males and 189 females) and 92 households.
All of the population have ID card.

Ethnicity : Karen

Religion : Majority of population are Buddhists and only six families are Christian.

Distance from camp : about 1.30-2 hrs walk and 30 mn by motorcycle

Infrastructure : one primary school from kindergarten to grade 6, one health clinic, four grocers, one motorcycle repairs shop and two rice mills.

Background :

Ban Leh Koh was established over 100 years ago and is located in forest reserve area. The village is considered to have better infrastructure comparing to Ban Kloh Koh and Ban Mae La Ma Luang. There is one primary school with 120 students and 7 teachers (no details of sex and age is available).

In 2005, a women group was set up with 32 members to trade chilli. But, they just received a revolving fund of 40,000 baht from Mae Hong Son agricultural co-operative to buy chilli at the end of Jan 2007 which was too late. So, the group will start buying chilli using this fund next year.

The villagers still practice traditional agricultural practice without using chemical fertilizer nor pesticide. They grow rice, chilli, corn and vegetables. They also have paddy field. Besides cultivation, they raise pigs, chicken, cow and buffaloes. There are about 150 cows, 200 pigs and 200- 300 buffaloes in the village.

The main cash income is from chilli which is sold to trader from the sub-district and Mae Sariang. According to the Sob Moei TAO, Ban Le Koh could harvest about 1,000 tons of chilli a year during November and December and the price for dry chilli is about 150 – 180 baht per kg.

Majority of villagers are indebted to the BAAC, one million baht per village scheme, poverty reduction fund and Khor Kor Jor revolving fund. The debt which is ranged from 10,000 – 250,000 baht was accumulation from the investment in buying cows and pigs. But, last year, 10 cows died. The annual income of the villagers ranges from 10,000 – 50,000 baht.

There is also a mutual help system within the village. The local villagers are hired at the rate of 70 baht per day with food while the camp residents are hired for 50 baht without food.

There is a need for about 100-200 shift of labour (or 20-30 people) during rainy season. The range of labour in need is 1-5 persons per family. The wage for harder works such as pitch digging, leverage the land for house construction and carry fire wood is about 100 -150 baht per day. The wage for picking chilli is 30 baht per one container or 10 baht per kg. The wage for growing rice in 4 rai, for example, is about 1,000 baht for four persons which could be completed in three days. The labour sleeps in the field or at the employer's home. The villagers noted that during the past two years there were more people coming out of camp to work in the village and stay longer. This year, they don't show up as many and as before and polices also show up in the village.

A small number of villagers could not produce enough rice for consumption. For those who have smaller pieces of land they usually have to grow chilli instead of rice because they could get cash to buy their necessities and rice.

Before the cultivation areas were under the control of the RFD, the villager had five plots of land for their five year rotating cycle. It was last year that the land was reduced to four plots because the RFD limited their agriculture area. The size of each plot is around 2-13 rais. Mostly, the family members will do their own cultivation except when there is not enough labour so they employ their neighbors but mainly they employ the refugees.

There are about 10 villagers who earn supplementary income from basketry which is part of the OTOP products from Le Koh. This OTOP products also comes from basket weaver from nearby villages and are sold at the OTOP fair in Bangkok.

Supports from government :

Villagers received training on organic fertilizer and cash crops such as coffee was introduced. Every household received solar panel to generate power for electricity.

Supports from NGOs :

1. During 2005-2006, COERR provided blankets and rice to the elders.
2. TBBC provided 100 sacks of rice about three - four years ago.

Impacts from camp :

1. The road which is the only means to go to the district is dusty and not in good condition.
2. There still problems of police coming to the village to arrest the refugees who are out of camp.

Benefits from camp :

1. Access to health care facilities. Villagers go to the clinic in camp when they get sick because it is closer and the medic takes good care of them. Those who tend to go more are those who could not communicate well in Thai. The patients are also invite to stay in the camp when they need longer treatment.
2. Villagers also buy pigs and chicken from them besides trading and bartering for cooking oil.
3. Availability of seasonal labours

Needs of supports s :

1. sport materials such as volleyball, football and ping pong for youth and students
2. Similar trainings provided to camp residents such as weaving with wider and longer loom instead of traditional back strap, making of efficient stove, soap, candle and dish washer liquid.
3. Water container for temple which has insufficient water .
4. Villagers are also interested in receiving training in making new products from the traditional cloth they weave.

4. Local communities nearby MLO

i) Ban Mae Tor La

Population : 310 people and 70 households
The other two sub-villages including Ban Huay Ma O and Huay Sum Yuam have 30 households 96 people and 5 households 24 people respectively

Ethnicity : Karen

Religion : Buddhist/animist

Distance from camp : 1 hr walk from MLO

Background :

The villagers make a living by growing rice, corn once a year during rainy season and they also grow vegetables. Out of the total households only 10 have paddy field. Most of the villagers have only one plot of land for annual cultivation. They all practice shifting cultivation in four swidden cycle and the cultivation is still organic. No villagers use chemical fertilizer nor pesticide. For those who have only one plot of land, they grow rice, corn and vegetables in one place while those who have three plots of land such as the village chief could grow, corn rice and chilli in each plot. One household started to grow sugar cane last year.

During harvesting season about 20 refugees are hired for 40 baht per day to work for the villagers. The rate for picking up corn is about 1 baht each and for chilli, it is about 40-50 baht for a bucket of 7 kgs.

It is noted that the villagers are reluctant to answer this question as they are afraid of getting in trouble with the camp security volunteers who would arrest those who illegally come out of camp.

There is no volunteer veterinarian in the village to help when there is problems with the animals they raise. The only channel to get help is at the district veterinarian office.

Supports from government :

There is very limited assistance from the government agencies. The only agency that villagers could recall is the military development office (Kor Ror Por Klang) which provided training on making liquid fertilizer.

Supports from NGOs :

TBBC has been providing four sacks of rice and blankets to each household for the past three years. At the beginning of this year, ZOA Refugee Care provided students uniforms. The villagers also receive small amount of corn seeds from COERR office in the camp upon request.

Impacts from camp :

1. Decreasing of cultivation plot - Mae La Oon Camp was part of villager's cultivation area. The establishment of the camp had reduced villagers' cultivation area from five shifting plots to four.

2. Depleting of bamboo shoot - Last year many families do not have enough rice for annual consumption because of rice disease. Traditionally the villagers use herbicide made by chopped fermented bamboo shoot which they put in bamboo container or sack. But, bamboo shoots are depleting because the refugees also collect them.
3. Depleting of natural resources such as wild vegetables
4. Inadequate water - Water in Mae La Ma Luang stream is drying up because the refugees also use water from this source.

Benefits from camp :

- Trade and barter with the refugees especially during rainy seasons when the villagers have a lot of produces from their home gardens.
- Access to health care facilities in camp
- Availability of seasonal labours.
- Some villagers could have extra income from renting houses to NGOs.

Needs of supports :

1. Funding for each households to make pig hog so manure could be easily kept. The usual practice is letting them wandering for food all over the places.
2. Bigger pipe for better distribution of water for use and consumption. Houses located further on the hill have limited access to water because of low pressure of water. New water filter tank may have to be built in higher level to ensure water flow.
3. Improve of waterworks so as to bring water supply from the river to farm land to increase the production.
4. Scholarships for students to further their education after grade 9. This year four students will be finishing grade 9 and next year there will be three more.
5. Maintenance of road as it's very dusty and difficult to travel during rainy season. This road is used by all concerned parties working in camp.
6. Training on making soap and shampoo as well as bakery as provided in camp.
7. Training on sugar cane bar production. A group of villagers in Ban Mae La Ma Luang already started this business and there is an expertise in the camp.
8. Training on efficient charcoal making and biogas. In February 2007, the provincial governor had mentioned about the possibility to organize training for villagers on how to make efficient charcoal and biogas from pigs manure taking an example of the refugee camp.