



The impact of resettlement

From 2005 to the present, almost 29,000 refugees have left for resettlement, a majority of them to the USA. A recent survey conducted by the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced People in Thailand (CCSDPT) indicates that during 2007/8, over 50% of the most skilled refugee workers in the camps will leave for resettlement.

These people have been crucial in the maintenance of camp services from the health and education sector, through the leadership of community based organisations. TBBC works directly with local partners in the delivery of its programme and services. Camp residents with skills hold positions that falls under camp management, including camp committees, warehouse workers, accountants, population monitoring workers and CAN (Community Agriculture and Nutrition) workers.

An estimated 50% of the total camp populations along the border have shown interest in resettling in a third country – yet, the number of persons who will actually leave remains to be seen. In Ban Kwai/ Nai Soi, a camp in northern Thailand with almost 19'000 residents, 11 camp management staff set off to a new country in June alone. In the same camp, 100 camp staff have applied for resettlement to the USA.

Camp Committees are in the process of recruiting a “back up roster” of people for leading positions to be able to fill in for lost staff.

Another skilled worker leaves

Saw K used to be a math teacher in Mae Ra Ma Luang camp. He left with his family earlier this year to start a new life in Toronto, Canada.

“I want my children to have a future, so our family applied to go for resettlement. I don't expect to be able to work as a teacher in Canada. I hope my children will have an education and that our family will be able to move freely”.

As for the people the family leaves behind in the camp, Saw K says: I hope they can fill my position as a teacher. It is important for the community to have teachers and schools.

**Saw K is a fictive name*

Saw K and his family outside their house in Mae Ra Ma Luang camp before they left to Canada.

Community based organisations are also working together with camp committees to find replacement for lost staff. Karenni Refugee Committee in Ban Kwai/ Nai Soi camp states that recruiting new staff is a difficult process that will require much time and effort.

TBBC plays a facilitating role in the capacity building of new camp workers. When experienced stipend workers announce that they will leave, efforts are being made to recruit new persons in an early stage, to be able to have a period of mentoring and training for new staff. TBBC is also working closely with Karen Refugee Committee to find new staff for the supply chain (such as warehouse and monitoring staff).

Together with other agencies working with the refugees along the border, TBBC is actively working to find coping strategies to the drainage of skilled staff.

Population in camps along the border (based on TBBC's feeding figure)

As of August 31, 2008

The total feeding population in August for all camps in Thailand was **135,802**.

For more detailed information, please visit TBBC's updated [population map](#)

Resettlement

As of August 31st, 2008 – Source IOM

1979 individuals from camps border wide left for resettlement during July. Since January 2008 up to date, **14,175** individuals have left for resettlement to the following countries: USA (11,858); Australia (1,456) ; Finland (270) Canada (386); Netherlands (113) ; U.K (29); Norway (33); New Zealand (24), Sweden (5), Denmark (1).



New arrivals continue to enter Thailand

– some forced to return

On July 17th, a group of 75 new arrivals including students from Mae La Oon and Mae Ra Ma Luang camps were sent back to Burma by Thai authorities. Currently, there is no system in place to determine refugee status in Thailand. The father of one of the families that was sent back explained why they had to leave their home in Karen state to seek shelter in Mae Ra Ma Luang camp.

“Our village was surrounded by different armed forces and there were often skirmishes near the village. The armed groups often harassed the villagers: they had to work for the soldiers and if the villagers couldn’t work they had to pay money. Beatings of villagers were common as well as destruction and theft of food. In December 2007 during one skirmish between armed groups bullets were fired in to the village and one child was shot and killed. A girl aged about 12-13 years was raped the same year”.

The violent situation became unsustainable for the family; both Burmese and Karen armed forces recruited soldiers and the family was asked for their oldest son. The father had to pay them for not taking the son.

The family says that they understand the Thai Authorities position in not wanting more people to come into Thailand. “But right now, it is very difficult to go back” the man says. The family was put on a boat on the Salween River back to Burma on July 17th.

No further forced deportations have been reported since July.



Refugees were put on boats back to Burma from Mae Ra Ma Luang camp (Mae Hong Son province)

Staff introduction

Michel Grattini – logistician

Michel joined TBBC in August. Michel has 30 years experience in humanitarian logistics, mainly in African countries but also in Thailand, where he worked four years with Khmer refugees. Michel is out in the field actively observing the current food supply chain process and will bring forth recommendations for strengthening the efficiency of the programme.

Support the refugees from Burma

From basic food rations, shelter and household necessities to giving refugees skills to earn an income - your gift can make a difference. Our goal is to provide not only humanitarian aid but also to support long-term self-reliance of the refugees. Find out more about how you can contribute by visiting [TBBC's gift catalogue](#)

TBBC work closely with the refugee communities to preserve their self-reliance and dignity. Refugee committees administer TBBC's support to the camps. Community workers distribute food and non-food items through The Relief Programme. The picture shows a warehouse management training in a refugee camp.

Resource: TBBC 6 Month programme report Jan-June 2008

To download the report, please click [here](#).

Please send an e-mail to request a hard copy:

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Related links

The Irrawaddy:

[Karen Refugees Forced to Return](#)

International Herald Tribune:

[US First Lady Laura Bush meets Myanmar refugees](#)

YouTube clip (produced by Washington Post):

[Nightmare in East Burma](#)

