

4881326824: MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

KEY WORDS: KAREN REFUGEES ALONG THAI-BURMA BORDER/
CURRENT EDUCATION IN THE CAMP/ HIGHER EDUCATION/ COUNTRY
RECONSTRUCTURE. DEMOCRACY IN BURMA

ARAYAN KENGKUNCHORN: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION OF KAREN REFUGEES ALONG THE THAI-
MYANMAR BORDER: A CASE OF NU PO CAMP: PORNPI MOL
TRICHOT, PP. 125

Education for refugees is almost as important as meeting their physical needs for food, water, shelter and health. Refugee education is the process of providing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for survival, improving their quality of life, adapting to their changing world, and preparing for eventual return to their country. Ethnic conflict and human rights violations in Burma have created mass outflows of refugees, internally displaced people and migrants to neighboring countries. Thailand has received hundreds of thousands of Burmese refugees since the mid 1980s. Currently there are 9 Burmese refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. This study looks at the scale of the problem, assessment for existing education and quality, and the range of higher education opportunities that are potentially available for refugees outside the camp. In addition, the paper investigates the systems and policies of NGOs, UNHCR and the Royal Thai Government with regard to the higher educational opportunities of Karen refugees. This study is derived from quantitative and qualitative research, using a combination of documentary research and field data collection. Within the documentary research, theoretical data are collected through a review of the existing literature, field data was collected through in-depth interviews, group discussions, questionnaires observations and as well as reviewing existing information published by NGOs. The key informants including in this study were Karen refugees in the camp, CBOs, NGOs, institutions, the Ministry Of Interior (MOI) and Ministry Of Education (MOE). The study reveals that there is basic education, such as primary, secondary and post secondary levels, available in the refugee camps. The Karen Education Department (KED) and NGOs are responsible for education management. This study shows that there is a need for higher education to be accessible to the refugees for their future development. The study shows that the current education system does not meet the needs of the Karen refugees and is not very helpful for when they go back to Burma. Higher education can be accessed only with the cooperation and assistance of NGOs, CBOs and RTG. There is a stated need for the international community, NGOs and the Royal Thai Government to increase awareness about higher education for refugees, as well as the extend the provision of current education quality to the refugees. This study also looks at the role of the international community in ensuring comprehensive provision of higher education for all refugees, and refugees' right to higher education and freedom to choose education throughout the Karen refugee camps.

Field of Study International Development Student's Signature: *Aranya*

Academic year 2006, Advisor's Signature: *Pornpi Mol Trichot*