



SURVEY OF INCLUSION
VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS (VSO)
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VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS (VSO)

VSO is an international development organisation established in 1958 with Federation Members in the UK, Canada, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Ireland and Kenya. VSO works through volunteers to build the capacity of local people and organisations to bring about positive change for poor and disadvantaged people. VSO has programmes in more than 30 countries.

Currently VSO is implementing the Education for All programme funded by the European Commission. The programme's overall objective is to increase access to, and retention in, good quality, formally recognised primary education for all children living in and around the refugee camps. This involves building the capacity of education providers in a variety of settings and raising the awareness of local communities as to the importance of providing quality education to all children. VSO believes that good quality education should be inclusive of all children, regardless of their ability, status or background. The context in the camps and in the communities around them is challenging and VSO is working to try to ensure that, despite this, children in these communities can receive good quality education.

VSO would like to thank the European Commission for their support for this important work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMWEC	Burmese Migrant Workers' Education Committee
BDY	Ban Don Yang Refugee Camp
CBO	Community Based Organisation
GFC	Good Friend Center
HI	Handicap International
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IE	Inclusive education
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
KED	Karen Education Department
KnED	Karenni Education Department
KRC	Karen Refugee Committee
KWO	Karen Women's Organisation
ML	Mae La Refugee Camp
MLO	Mae La Oon Refugee Camp
MLC	Migrant Learning Centre
MOE	Thailand Ministry of Education
MOI	Thailand Ministry of Interior
MRM	Mae Ra Moo Refugee Camp
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NP	Nu Poe Refugee Camp
PAB	Provincial Admissions Board
RTG	Royal Thai Government
SE	Special Education
SEC	Special Education Centre
SEU	Special Education Unit
Tak ESA2	Tak Province Educational Service Area 2
TH	Tham Hin Refugee Camp
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPC	Teacher Preparation Course
UP	Umpiem Mai Refugee Camp
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
UNESCO	United Nations Education Cultural and Scientific Organisation
WE	World Education
ZOA	ZOA Refugee Care

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Survey of Inclusion is part of the VSO Thailand-Burma Project to build the capacity of education providers to deliver inclusive education, and to generate proactive support for this action among key community stakeholders. It was undertaken in the nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border, Tak Province, Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs) and Tak Province Educational Service Area 2 (Tak ESA2) Thai schools between November 2008 and March 2009.

The participants in this survey comprised of VSO Thailand-Burma partner organisations; education managers and personnel in the three contexts involved at government, Non Government Organisation (NGO) and Community Based Organisation (CBO) levels and, students and families.

The research asked the question: *“How inclusive is primary education in the nine refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, Migrant Learning Centres in Tak province, and Thai schools in Tak ESA2?”*

In order to answer the research question, the survey conducted interviews in access of 300 participants in over 40 locations. The questionnaires were constructed so that each topic contained key *yes/no* questions and so that the answers could be quantified within and across target groups. The *yes/no* questions in each section of the questionnaires were followed by open-ended questions for a more in-depth discussion that generated qualitative data.

The partner organisations participated in the planning of the survey. The question sheets for the interviews were developed based on the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) categories of quality education.

The findings of this research are reported according to adapted INEE categories, but starts with an added category of inclusive education awareness:

1. Inclusive education awareness
2. Access and learning environment
3. Teaching and learning
4. Teachers and other educational personnel

It discusses inclusion issues, gaps, and needs in all three contexts in a topic-by-topic fashion, with recommendations offered at the end of each topic discussion. The findings summarised below are combined for the three contexts (Thai schools, refugee camp schools, and MLC’s), unless specified otherwise. The findings chapter provides a more detailed, context-by-context discussion.

Section 8.1 in the findings chapter talks about inclusion awareness among the different target groups participating in the survey and explores a variety of local definitions of inclusive education.

The research finds that most participants are aware of the importance of inclusive education (IE), but many are not very clear on what exactly it means. We found that IE is a contentious concept that is very difficult to translate, and contextualised definitions, provided by participants, vary significantly.

Section 8.2 in the findings chapter talks about access to primary education and can be summarised according to the following topics:

- *Ability of primary school-aged children to enrol in, and attend, any kind of school.* The following influencing factors were identified: economic, parents’ employment, legal, linguistic, transportation, culture, religion, health impairments and age.
- *Children likely to be excluded.* The following categories were identified: working children (domestic or other work); children of parents without stable year-round employment; children who live in either remote areas or a long distance from school and there is not transportation available; children from families that feel that the local school(s) propagates a different culture or religion and, children with impairments.

- *Drop out.* Main factors identified were: age (children are likely to drop out after they are 8-10 years old), parents' employment (parents have to move around for seasonal employment and take children out of school), security concerns (families have to go into hiding if communities are raided) and, resettlement where many families in refugee camps are resettling to the third countries.
- *How safe and nurturing is the learning environment?* We found that the top-down education system is prevalent in all three concepts explored and results in a great deal of pressure put on students through stringent exam systems, a lot of homework and memorizing. We also found blame being placed on the students for any failure that occurs in the system and labelling students as 'lazy' or 'slow learners.' Child beating was also found. All these factors detract from the emotional safety of the learning environment and make it less nurturing.
- *Physical and psychosocial risks and vulnerable children.* Most participants reported that the schools are safe and no groups of children were explicitly marked as vulnerable. However, we have identified a range of categories of vulnerable children, using the UNICEF definitions and guidelines: children with disabilities; children who do not understand the language used in school; children living in camp without camp registration; unaccompanied children and children living in dormitories; children who have to commute to school over large distance unaccompanied; all undocumented children. Some specific risks that we identified were security, low standards of care in dormitories, unsafe transportation.
- *Facilities.* The situation is very different across the three contexts; however, all lack any Special Education (SE) facilities. Otherwise, Thai schools have reasonable teaching facilities with nice, and clean buildings, small-size classes, and many teaching aides. Refugee camp schools are at the other end of the spectrum, with extremely basic buildings and furniture, very large classes, very noisy environment, and a lack of teaching resources. MLC's fall between that of the Thai and refugee camp schools, with some centres having quite reasonable facilities, while others (mostly in rural areas) are quite basic.

Section 8.3 of the findings chapter explores a wide range of issues surrounding quality of education for those children who are enrolled in school, to what extent are they able to engage with and benefit from the classroom activities.

- *Curriculum.* All three contexts have different curriculum arrangements. Most 'non-inclusive' qualities of the varied curricula that we explored can be listed as: not sufficiently contextualised, not relevant to the interests and needs of the learners, language not always appropriate for the learners, lack of supplementary learning materials, practical projects and, some subjects and textbooks are too advanced for the level of the students.
- *Language of instruction.* Many children do not understand the language of instruction and/or the language in the textbooks.
- *Decision makers.* In the Karen refugee camps decisions are made by Karen Education Department (KED)/ZOA; in the MLC's, decisions are made school by school or by individual teachers; while in Thai schools, most decisions are centralised, but some are made at school level.
- *Children likely to be excluded from the learning process while being physically present in the classroom.* These are identified as children who do not fully understand the language, children labelled as 'slow learners', children too old for their grade level, SE children, children who feel excluded on cultural/religious basis, and other children with special needs.
- *Struggling or under-achieving children.* Children most likely to experience difficulties were identified as SE students or other children with special needs, students who do not understand the language, students whose parents do not understand the language used at school and are therefore unable to help with homework, very poor children, working children, children who do not have facilities to do homework i.e. a relatively quiet space, electricity or money for candles.
- *Subjects and levels.* It was reported that there are too many language subjects

in the curriculum (up to four languages) and no specialized bilingual education materials or curricula. Some of the subjects were particularly referred to as difficult.

- *Teaching methods.* Teaching methods are predominantly teacher-centred.
- *SE children in and out of the mainstream classroom.* Not many SE children are able to access the mainstream classroom. There are insufficient numbers of SE teachers available (and that only in camp context) to assist SE children in the mainstream classroom. Not enough SE students are allowed in mainstream schools. Others, especially the most severe cases, are not able to attend Special Education Centres (SECs). Mainstream schools do not have any special provisions for SE children. In the refugee camps, SEC staff report that it is difficult to communicate with the camp education authorities and personnel, and that school directors and teachers are not sufficiently aware or supportive of the needs and rights of SE children.
- *Teacher training.* While in Thai schools teachers have standard qualifications (apart from temporary, locally hired teachers) most of teachers in MLC are not properly trained (but usually they have some training). The situation in the refugee camps is becoming more and more difficult, with most trained and experienced teachers resettling without leaving sufficient time for new teachers to be trained or have proper hand-over periods.
- *Student assessment.* Assessment is predominantly exam-based and favours students taking exams in their first language, those who have undertaken extra tuition classes or those who can afford to buy candles to be able to study at night.

Section 8.4 of the findings chapter talks about education and school management issues:

- *Teacher recruitment.* In Thai context most teachers are allocated by Thailand Ministry of Education (MOE), while MLC's recruit teachers informally mostly by word of mouth. They are usually able to recruit sufficient numbers of teachers, depending on funding availability. The current situation in refugee camps is that the only candidates available are high school graduates without any training or experience, or new arrivals from Burma, who often do not speak Karen (dominant language of the education system in most camps) or are discouraged from applying for teaching jobs as they are viewed as outsiders by the refugee camp community.
- *Teacher motivation* is affected by lack of choice and commitment in Thai schools; everyday hardships of life as unregistered migrants in Thailand (MLC's); and, humiliatingly low salaries and resettlement in refugee camp schools.
- *Teacher remuneration:* For Thai schools this appeared adequate. Among MLCs, this depends on schools but mostly on the low side but acceptable, depending on what other type of support is available. Refugee camp it is seem insufficient
- *Resettlement.* Resettlement has a detrimental effect on the whole of the refugee camp education system with most trained and experienced teachers, trainers, and leaders resettling, and everybody being distracted from studying by the 'resettlement fever'. Often children who are about to resettle stop coming to school, or if they come, cannot focus on studying and distract other learners. Teacher motivation is falling.

The summary of findings and recommendations (section 8.5) provides answers to the following sub-questions to the research question:

1. How do the target communities define inclusive education?

The following is a brief selection of collected IE definitions from the respondents:

- "Everyone is included in education programme regardless of their religion, language, health, and physical disability."
- "Everyone should study as long as they are mentally capable."
- "Education system that everyone can access."

2. What are the gaps in the inclusiveness of primary education in the target communities?

The following categories briefly summarize gaps in the inclusiveness:

- Language difficulties
- Lack of access for children with impairments
- Increasing dropout rates for children over 8-10 years of age
- Poverty preventing children from accessing education
- Children too old for their grade level
- Education for minority groups, particularly Muslim and Hindu

3. What are the needs of the target communities in regards to achieving more inclusive primary education?

The following is a brief list of needs based on findings:

- More suitable curriculum
- Training for teachers and SE teachers
- Access to health services for SE children
- Funding for facilities and training to use them
- Security and stability for communities
- Awareness about inclusive education among all stakeholders

4. How aware are the target communities, including partners and stakeholders, of what inclusive education is and its importance?

All appear aware that it is important, but most, especially families do not fully understand what it means. Most think it is education, any education. Most stakeholders believe that as long as children are in the classroom, any classroom, they are included. Most respondents were aware that there should not be discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, sex, poverty, and language. Some indicated that SE should be included and very few mentioned age. While most explicitly mention these inclusion categories, whether there are strategies in place to make sure that inclusion happens, is another question.

5. How motivated are the teachers to be inclusive and what factors affect their motivation?

Almost all teachers claim they are motivated, however in different context there are strong factors affecting their motivation:

- Refugee camps: dismal salaries, resettlement and lack of training
- Migrant Learning Centres: low salaries, lack of training and hardships of migrant life included security issue and making ends meet for family
- Thai schools: teachers have little choice where they are placed, school directors are not always supportive, change frequently, and, a lack of commitment

2. INTRODUCTION AND REPORT ORGANIZATION

The Survey of Inclusion is part of the VSO Thailand/Burma Project to build the capacity of education providers to deliver inclusive education, and to generate proactive support for this action among key community stakeholders.

The Survey of Inclusion was undertaken in the nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border, MLC's and Thai schools in Mae Sot, Phopra and Mae Ramat districts of Tak Province between November 2008 and March 2009.

VSO defines inclusive education as “the full participation of all children, including children with impairments, in their local schools, increasing access and retention in good quality primary education”. Recognizing, however, that inclusive education is a poorly understood and/or contested concept, the research also elicited from each target group their own understanding of inclusive education.

UNESCO defines inclusive education as:

“Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.”¹

A revised UNESCO definition from the Dakar Framework for Education for All (2000) states that:

“Inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to, and within, the learning environment. The overall goal of inclusive education, is thus the realization of a school (or any organized educational provision) where all learners are participating and treated equally, and which also proactively seeks and reaches out to any learner who is left behind.”²

The report starts with an executive summary that provides a preview of the report, focusing on findings and recommendations. The introduction chapter briefly explains how the report is organized. The background chapter that briefly explains the three contexts in which the research is set and outlines the education provisions available in each context follows it.

The objectives chapter outlines the objective of the report, followed by participants and research question chapters, introducing the participants and the research question respectively, and the methodology chapter details how the research was structured and what methods were used, including how data was analyzed.

The findings and recommendations chapter of this report is organized according to adapted INEE categories (based on the structure of the question sheets used in the collection of the data) and provides a detailed discussion of issues, gaps, and needs in all three contexts in a topic-by-topic fashion, with recommendations offered at the end of each topic discussion.

The summary of findings and recommendations chapter (section 8.5) explains how the findings, reported in the findings chapter, answer the research question and the sub-questions. Finally, recommendations for further research are offered.

The charts throughout the report offer a quantifiable aspect of the data collected from the 300+ participants in eight target groups.

After the conclusion, additional notes are provided as updates of recent changes in the education situation of the three contexts involved that occurred during the time of the study.

3. BACKGROUND

In recent years, many NGOs and CBOs working in refugee camps and migrant communities on the Thai-Burma border have undertaken work with the broad aim of improving the quality of education for refugees and migrants from Burma. Most of these activities and projects (such as setting up of special education programs, minority schools, awareness raising activities among educators and the community, surveys, etc.) can be categorized as working towards the UN “Education for All” agenda, which is part of the millennium development goal, articulated in several international standards³.

1 Retrieved from <http://www.unescobkk.org/education/appeal/programme-themes/inclusive-education/> on 10/05/09

2 Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals> on 10/05/09

Such activities and projects have gone under a variety of banners, 'Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies,' 'Rights Based Education,' and 'Child Friendly Schools' to name a few. All of these are related to the concept of inclusive education, even though this might not be the term that is in fact used on the ground. It is expected that each community would have their unique understanding of what inclusive education stands for and how it is defined. This research proposes to explore these definitions and their implications as applied to primary education in the target communities.

Education exclusion happens at various levels. Most education exclusion of migrant and refugee children on macro level (Thailand-wide) is a rights-based issue (UNESCO, 2004). The Royal Thai Government (RTG) is not a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees (Haikin, 2006), and therefore not obliged to offer any education provisions to refugees. Most refugees and migrants are thus excluded from the Thai education system. The official legal provisions for undocumented (refugee or migrant) children accessing primary education in Thailand, and the debate surrounding these provisions are discussed in detailed in a VSO paper *Migrant Schools: a human rights perspective Inclusive education for Burmese migrants on the Thailand/ Burma border* (2009).

It can be said that any education in refugee camps promotes inclusion at a broader level, as it offers education opportunities to those, who are not able to access mainstream education in Thailand.

While the ZOA position paper 'Having Their Say' (2007) discusses the micro level of inclusion/exclusion within the refugee education, this research looks at the broader picture, incorporating migrant education and Thai schools in Tak province.

This research takes place in three contexts of the education, within the refugee camps, Migrant Communities (Migrant Learning Centres) and, Thai schools. It is therefore appropriate to outline the background to each of the contexts:

Refugee camp setting: There are currently nine officially recognized refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, located in Ratchaburi, Sangklaburi, Tak, and Mae Hong Son Provinces. The total population of the refugee camps is estimated at 135,000 (TBBC, 2009).

Seven of the refugee camps are commonly referred to as Karen. However, it is important to realize that these refugee camps (Mae La, Umpiem Mai, Nu Poe, Mae Ra Moo, Mae La Oon, Tham Hin, and Ban Don Yang) are not exclusively Karen and the demographics are changing fast now due to resettlement process and influx of new arrivals into the refugee camps (especially Mae La, Umpiem, and Nu Poe). While it is mostly Karen families that are leaving for resettlement, there are large numbers of non-Karen or at least non-Sgaw Karen speaking people who are entering these refugee camps as new arrivals. The refugee camps are now becoming increasingly mixed in ethnic, linguistic, and religious composition.

The two Northern-most refugee camps in Mae Hong Son Province are commonly referred to as Karenni. However, Karenni is not a single ethnic group, but used as an umbrella term for a number of ethnic minorities mostly from Karenni State (R. Sproat, 2004). The dominant ethnic group among Karenni is Kayah. Other ethnic groups in the Karenni refugee camps include Kayan, Kayaw, Pa-O, Shan, Karen, and some others. All these groups speak different languages. Therefore, 'Karenni' is a rather diverse multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and religiously diverse group that poses a range of challenges in terms of education provisions for them.

In Karen refugee camps, education provision is organized by the Karen Education Department (KED) with facilitation and financial backing from ZOA Refugee

Care (ZOA). The KED/ZOA curriculum is used and instruction is predominantly in Karen with a number of schools in some refugee camps (ML, UP, NP, MLO) that use Burmese language instruction. However, the textbooks they use are in Karen, apart from Burmese, Thai, and English language subjects.

In the two Karenni refugee camps, education provision is organized by Karenni Education Department (KnED) with facilitation and financial backing by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). The KnED/JRS curriculum is used and instruction and textbooks are predominantly in Burmese. This means that the overwhelming majority of children are attending school in a second language.

The total number of schools in Karen refugee camps, as reported by KED is 43 with an estimated 15,000+ students. There are 11 schools in Karenni refugee camps. In addition, there are 8 Special Education Centres.

Graduates of refugee camp schools receive graduation certificates issued by KED or KnED, respectively. These certificates are not honoured by MOE or any other state or government entity. These graduates are not able to continue their education outside the refugee camps or get skilled employment due to lack of legal status and official education qualifications.

Migrant setting: Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs) are informal schools (informal in a sense that they do not issue any officially recognized qualifications and are not standardized by any official coordinating body) that offer free education to migrant children from Burma, mainly in Burmese language. There is a small number of Karen or other ethnic (i.e. Mon) schools that offer instruction in their specific ethnic language. All MLCs are community-based and run mostly on private donations, in addition to some assistance that some of the schools get from organisations such as Burmese Migrant Workers' Education Committee (BMWEC).

In Tak Province, there are over 60 MLCs, some of which are listed with MOE, although this does not mean, however, that they are officially recognized, with new centres opening up all the time. There are many more MLC's in other provinces, that were not included as part of this survey.

Most of the MLC's are affiliated with one of the communities or a NGO-based coordinating body. The most prominent, but not the only, coordinating body is BMWEC. Such organisations might provide or assist in securing funding for the schools or facilitate teacher training. World Education (WE) also organizes teacher training for many of MLCs,

Thai setting: Tak Education Service Area 2 (TAK ESA2) provides primary and secondary state education for children in the 5 districts of Mae Sot, Tha Song Yang, Mae Ramat, Popra and Umpang. As in all areas, the schools vary greatly in size with more rural areas of the Province having branch schools that are affiliated with the larger schools.

The students are predominantly Thai, however, in many schools children from Burma have enrolled and are now attending class. Children with special education needs (SEN) are either educated at the SEN centre attached to Mae Tow school in Mae Sot, or at local schools throughout the 5 districts. There are 133 schools under Tak ESA2, with 51,286 students. (MOE, 2009).

4. OBJECTIVES

This research had several complementary objectives:

- To inform implementation of VSO's Education for All project
- To assist participating NGOs, CBOs and Thai state education authorities in Tak to raise awareness of the importance of inclusive education among the Thai-Burma border communities and educators

- To provide an evidence base for advocacy purposes
- To generate data that is useful to participating organisations in evaluating and adjusting some of their existing activities related to inclusive education as well as planning new ones

5. PARTICIPANTS: VSO AND PARTNERS; KEY STAKEHOLDERS; BENEFICIARIES

According to the EC proposal and the TOR, the participants in this research have been identified according to Table 1:

TABLE 1: PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND BENEFICIARIES

Partners	Key stakeholders	Beneficiaries
Thai government agencies: Tak Education Service Area 2 Tak Special Education Centre	Education managers at district level, school principals, teachers, and students, and parents Special Education Programme managers; special education trainers and teachers; broader community	All children of primary school age in the target communities but particularly those who are typically excluded from education (e.g. because of disability, gender, religion, ethnicity, poverty, etc.); schools; parents; and broader community
International NGOs: Zoa Refugee Care; World Education (WE); Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS); Handicap International (HI)	Camp-based staff such as teacher trainers and special education trainers and staff liaising with camp education committees; community outreach staff	
CBOs and education management organisations: Burmese Migrant Workers' Education Committee (BMWEC); Karen Women's Organization (KWO); Karen Education Department (KED); Karen Refugee Committee (KRC); KnED	Specialist staff; teacher trainers; special education trainers and teachers; camp-level and section-level education committee coordinators and members; principals; teachers; students and parents; broader community	

PROJECT PARTNERS

The following is a list of partners for this project:

- Burmese Migrant Workers' Education Committee (BMWEC)
- Handicap International
- Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)
- Karen Education Department (KED) – *not currently a VSO partner but designated as an important stakeholder for this project*
- Karenni Education Department (KnED)
- Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) - *not currently a VSO partner but designated as an important stakeholder for this project*
- Karen Women's Organization
- Tak Education Service Area 2
- Tak Special Education Centre
- World Education (WE)
- ZOA Refugee Care

All these partners were invited to participate in the consultations at the outset of the project. We had tried to organize the consultations (and any other partner-involving activities in this research) so that they did not overburden the partner organisations (especially in the case of CBOs) and took into consideration the partners' needs and conditions.

As part of the consultation and planning stage of the research, the following were discussed:

1. The definition/s of inclusive education that are relevant to the local partners and the target community
2. The values and/or positions of partner organisations that have influenced their Programme or thematic vision and implementation approach in inclusive education.
3. The rationale and objectives for the survey from the local partners' perspective
4. The methods to be used in the survey (a provisional draft of the methods proposed is outlined in the 6.2)
5. The sample selection (working from the draft in Appendix 1)
6. The extent and conditions of the partners' involvement in the project

For a full list of participants in the data collection process, see appendix

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research answers the following question: *“How inclusive is primary education in the 9 refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, migrant learning centres in Tak province, and Thai schools in Tak ESA2 area?”*

This question is further unpacked as:

1. *How do the target communities define inclusive education?*
2. *What are the gaps in the inclusiveness of primary education in the target communities?*
3. *What are the needs of the target communities in regards to achieving more inclusive primary education?*
4. *How aware are the target communities, including partners and stakeholders, of what inclusive education is and its importance?*
5. *How motivated are the teachers to be inclusive and what factors affect their motivation?*

The following four key Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) categories are explored:

1. *Access & learning environment*
2. *Teaching & learning*
3. *Teachers & other education personnel*
4. *Education policy and coordination*

In order to collect information that would help answer all the questions above, interview questions were developed based on the research questions and the INEE categories. The last 2 categories were combined into one for developing interview questions.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1. OVERVIEW

This research is mostly qualitative. It strives to be a participatory research as much as possible, taking into consideration time constraints and geographical scope, and to focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged groups of the target community and learners.

It is hoped that apart from simply assessing the current level of inclusiveness in primary schools in the target areas, this research will also help raise awareness in the community about the issues surrounding inclusiveness as well as exclusion and possibly help the participants and stakeholders reflect on their own inclusive or exclusive practices.

Along with qualitative, this research also provides a minor quantitative aspect, as the target area is quite extensive and large numbers of participants are involved at different levels. It is hoped that the quantifiable results of this survey will be of use in informing the strategies and activities of VSO and/or other NGOs and CBOs.

7.2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research used interviews, focus groups, and direct observations of schools and the learning environment. Some informal interviews and written comments have also been used. Eight question sheets have been developed for the 8 different target groups, as shown in Appendix II.

A combination of these methods was used with the different categories of participants, according to Table 2 in the sample selection section.

In order to answer the research question, the survey conducted interviews with over 300 participants in over 40 locations. The questionnaires were constructed so that each topic contained key *yes/no* questions and so that the answers could be quantified within and across target groups. The *yes/no* questions in each section of the questionnaires were followed by open-ended questions for a more in-depth discussion that generated qualitative data.

This research also included some action research aspects. The first stage of the project involved planning consultations with all partners to ensure their genuine participation and inclusion of their agenda.

In addition to primary data, some secondary data has also been incorporated as a number of the partner organisations have recently conducted similar surveys in the target communities. Those organisations have been specifically consulted on their approach to conducting these surveys and raw data and questionnaire samples were studied and used in planning this survey.

This research protects the confidentiality of all participants and does not disclose any personal names.

7.3 OVERALL STRUCTURE AND TIMEFRAME

TABLE 2: STRUCTURE AND TIMEFRAME

Stage of research	Activity	Timeframe
Stage 1. Planning	Consult with partners to design a detailed plan for Stage 2 In the process, plan to raise awareness on inclusive education	November – December 2008
Stage 2. Fieldwork	Collect data according to the plan designed in Stage 1	January – February 2009
Stage 3. Data analysis and reporting	Analyze both qualitative and quantitative the data collected in Stage 2 (with partners' participation) and write a report with recommendations. Disseminate the report; discuss any potential follow up activities with partners.	March – April 2009

7.4. THE SCOPE

This research covers the 7 refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border commonly referred to as Karen, as well as a range of MLCs and Thai schools in Mae Sot and 2 neighbouring Districts (Phopra and Mae Ramat). Only an abridged version of the survey was conducted in the 2 Karenni refugee camps in Mae Hong Son Province at the request of the community. It is expected roughly 50% of people in refugee camps are to resettle within the coming year with the situation changing. Any data collected would no longer be valid. Interviews, however, were completed with a range of stakeholders in order to get a general overview of the situation.

VSO recognizes that the selected geographical scope will not provide a comprehensive overview of education provisions for refugees and migrants. The current research can be considered as a pilot project, based on the VSO's current contact area base and it is hoped that future studies will help fill the gap. This study only focuses on primary education.

As only 5 Thai schools under Tak ESA2 were selected in the sample, we recognize that it is not enough to talk about all dimensions of inclusion. Therefore, for Thai primary education in the scope of this research we only talk about inclusion issues for migrant children and SE children.

7.5. SAMPLE SELECTION

Sample selection for this research is based on the key stakeholders and beneficiaries, as listed in Table 1. The sample has been selected by category and by geographical area, aiming for random sampling within each category to ensure a balanced representation.

In the refugee camp context, schools were selected to include a variety of types of schools such as 'mainstream' or KED schools, schools with religious affiliation, or other schools with an affiliation to a specific community (i.e. Provincial Admissions Board schools).

In the MLC context, we made sure that we included Centres from urban (Mae Sot) and from agricultural areas. The reason behind this was that parents' employment (stable factory jobs in the city, as opposed to seasonal employment in agricultural sector) strongly affects the education opportunities for children, as will be discussed in the findings chapter. We also included a variety of MLCs according to religious affiliation, language of instruction and other factors, in order to represent the diversity of MLCs.

Only 5 Thai schools were included in the study, and they were selected based on their geographical location (city vs. countryside) and student population (predominantly migrant, vs. predominantly hill tribe, vs. predominantly Thai). For a full list of surveyed schools and organisations, see Appendix II.

7.6 RESEARCH TEAM

The research team comprised the researcher and 10 research assistants. The research assistants started out by translating the question sheets into Thai, Karen, and Burmese languages, then carried out most of the interviews, and finally, translated the interview scripts back into English. Some of the research assistants also had responsibility for liaising with local communities in certain areas of the research and organizing the logistics. They also assisted with data entry.

7.7 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

As part of the research, the members of the research team (in groups of 2-4 people, with or without the researcher) visited the schools and organisations

listed in appendix II. They observed the facilities and the teaching (informally) and interviewed a selected number of stakeholders from the target groups. The school principals were interviewed individually where possible, while teachers, students, and parents were interviewed in small groups of 2-4.

The researcher attended about 60% of sites and conducted interviews with the participants who were able to speak English. A VSO volunteer assisted with observations on a number of visits to MLC's and the Thai schools.

7.8 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

7.8.1 SCOPE

The geographical and social scope of this survey was very wide, 40+ schools in three contexts across 4 provinces, and was determined by the current scope of VSO projects. However, we believe it would have been possible to get more in-depth information if we had been able to spend more time in fewer locations. If the project only included one context it would have been possible to design more specific questionnaires and interview guides to target the particular issues relevant to each of the contexts.

Meanwhile, the scope of the survey can also be said to be insufficient (especially for migrant and Thai contexts), as it only covered Mae Sot and 2 other Districts in Tak Province. There are sprawling migrant communities in a number of other provinces (Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Ranong, etc.) where there are thousands of migrant children with insufficient education provisions.

7.8.2. TIME

As mentioned above, the survey would have benefited from spending more time in each location to carry out in-depth and greater participatory research.

7.8.3. VALIDITY AND BIAS

This research led us to believe that the process of formal interviews of strangers by strangers (in the contexts given) does not yield the most genuine results. In other words, we think that in many cases, respondents in our study were trying to second-guess the 'correct' answer, rather than giving their true opinion on the topic.

This happens for a variety of reasons: even though we assure confidentiality of participants, some people might be worried about possible repercussions if they criticize their leaders or the system they live and work in. Culturally, people prioritize saving face and therefore avoid saying things that sound too negative. Some of the target groups (i.e. school directors or other officials) might be biased towards presenting overly optimistic pictures, as they feel it might reflect more positively on them.

We found that during informal discussions with stakeholders there was a tendency to get more frank opinions, than from the structured interviews, particularly from teachers and students.

7.8.4. TRANSLATION

Throughout the preparation stage of the research, we discussed the translation of terms such as 'inclusive education' and other pertinent expressions into the relevant languages. However, interviewers experienced difficulties explaining the inclusive education-related concepts to most participants. Despite these discussions, a number of the questions were misunderstood and the interviewers were unable to gain meaningful answers to some of the questions even after additional explanations.

The immediate problem causing the misunderstanding described above was translation, but it is more about the huge difference in cultural approaches to education and the difference in expectations, terms and concepts related to education and especially inclusive education.

Again, participants, especially parents, when asked about the importance of inclusive education just talked about importance of education.

8. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is organized around the order of the questions as they appear on the question sheets, which are, in turn, are based on the INEE inclusive education categories. There is a certain amount of overlap between discussions within different categories, as many topics, especially those related to teaching, training, instruction, and curriculum, as well as learning environment and language, are strongly interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation.

8.1. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AWARENESS. (BASED ON PART A OF THE QUESTION SHEETS)

What is inclusive education? Whether it is important, and why?

All respondents (100%) in all three contexts agreed that inclusive education is important; however we encountered a wide variety of interpretations of what is inclusive education where typical 'definitions' collected from the participants included:

- "If we have education, we are polite in speaking and in everything, behaviour and education..."
- "All children study together without any discrimination in terms of ethnicity, religion, age, physical impairment, health, mental illness. Every single child has equal rights to education."
- "Everyone is included in education Programme regardless of their religion, language, health, and physical disability."
- "All children should have a right to education, including naughty and disabled ones."
- "Inclusive education means cooperating with KED"
- "No discrimination between national, religion, level or class, poor, big, small, normal people, people with HIV, or SE students."
- "Everyone should study as long as they are mentally capable."
- "Education system that everyone can access."
- "Stability of teachers students and parents."

Respondents brought up a variety of reasons for why inclusive education, according to the definition they offered, is important. Examples include:

- "If we don't have children from Burma side, the government will close this school."
- "The students can exchange their language and knowledge with each other."
- "It is important that all the kids know how to read and write and make friends."
- "I want my children to have education so they don't have to work like us."
- "For SE students, though they may be a bit slower, they should experience what it is like to be at school and able to read and write too."
- "Because some kids could not choose to be born, so we should give an opportunity for them as much as we can."
- "We must accept all people to study."
- "Discrimination brings no benefit."
- "Because everyone has a right to study."
- "Inclusive education is necessary in this community. Parents are poor and they cannot do anything for their kids. The school is the only choice for them."
- "It drives to unity of all ethnic people of Burma."

The majority of school and MLC principals, education managers, and teachers seemed to be familiar with the concept of inclusive education to some extent, though their interpretations varied significantly, as represented above. Significantly, the majority of parents were not familiar with the concept and the interviewers spent some time discussing the idea with them.

The majority of the respondents, in all target groups, believe that their schools or the schools their children attend are inclusive, or on the way to being inclusive, according to their own definitions. However, according to the UNESCO definition and that adopted by VSO, those schools might not qualify as inclusive schools. We found the following general 'exclusive' attributes in some of the schools from the perspective of the UNESCO definition:

- Schools that do not enrol special needs or disabled students
- Schools that require legal status in Thailand, refugee camp registration, or have other legal requirements for children to enrol
- Schools with a strong religious affiliation to a particular religion that expects all students to participate in religious activities as part of school activities

The most common exclusion factor we encountered was denying access to education to children with special needs i.e. children with physical or mental impairments, or any kind of learning disabilities. These children are interchangeably referred to in this report as special education (SE) children, children with impairments or disabilities, or children with special needs.

We found it hard to grade the schools' inclusiveness on any kind of a scale, as the same schools that might have some exclusive policies or practices, might have other inclusive qualities. For example, they might provide some form of bilingual education or support for students from diverse linguistic background, or cater to a specific religious minority that might otherwise be excluded from mainstream schools.

It is important to realize that inclusion is multi-faceted and should be considered with the understanding of the local context.

We found that inclusive education awareness has a lot to do with expectations. For example, most stakeholders, including parents, do not expect children with severe impairments would be able to, or should attend school; therefore, they do not identify the lack of such students in the classroom as lack of inclusiveness.

Another example of such expectations could be repeating grades. Many teachers and school directors expect that a certain number of students would be held back every year. They do not view this as a problem or as a lack of inclusiveness.

ALL THREE CONTEXTS

General recommendation:

Work with all the stakeholders (principals, teachers, students, and parents) on inclusive education awareness to help them understand what are the gaps and priorities as far as inclusive education is concerned within their own contexts.

8.2. ACCESS AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. (BASED ON PART B OF THE QUESTION SHEETS)

8.2.1 ACCESS

Who can't access? Who is excluded? Who is likely to drop out?

Few schools or MLC's participating in this survey were found to have any explicitly stated exclusive policies. Examples of the few that we found are:

- Some Thai schools, but not all, require legal status in Thailand for enrolment

- Some MLC's and refugee camp schools have rules about the types of disabled students they are not prepared to accept
- All schools require a parent or guardian to accompany students on registration day, therefore making it very difficult for unaccompanied children to access education
- Some refugee camp schools require refugee camp registration to enrol students or do not accept students in the middle of the school year, therefore some new arrivals might find it difficult to access school

Apart from school policies, we found a great range of factors that affects primary school aged children access to education and these can be grouped as:

- Economic
- Legal
- Linguistic
- Geographical
- Cultural
- Health (including physical and/or mental impairments)

These factors are likely to occur in the 3 contexts explored in this survey as shown in Table 3. This table discusses exclusion factors that prevent children from attending schools. Factors that affect their success and engagement with the curriculum are discussed in Table 4 (section 8.3.1).

TABLE 3: EXCLUSION FACTORS (ACCESS)

Factors	Refugee Camps	Migrant Learning Centres	Thai Schools
Economic	Some parents send children out to participate in economic activities inside or outside of the refugee camp. This varies dependent upon opportunities and is more common in ML, UP, NP	This is much more of a factor. Children work in factories, collect rubbish/beg on the streets, stay home to do housework/ look after younger siblings while parents work, etc. to contribute to the family budget. They might value education, but the family can't survive without this income	As for MLC's
Parents' Employment	Not a significant factor in camps as most families live in camps permanently	Parents' have to move for seasonal work, especially in the agricultural sector, or they just don't have stable work (most stable types of work seems to be factory work), so children have to move with them and have to drop out of school	As for MLC's
Legal	In some camps new arrivals find it difficult to enrol their children in school if they don't have UN registration	Because families don't have legal status in Thailand, travelling from home to school and back might be dangerous for children, parents are afraid to send their children to school	Many schools do not accept undocumented children
Linguistic	Children usually attend whatever school is available, but experience difficulties. Some children, especially Muslim, or new arrivals are deterred from attending because they expect they won't be able to understand	This was not found to be a strong factor, except in some situations there might not be the appropriate language Karen/Burmese MLC in the vicinity according to a particular family's need.	Children who do not speak Thai might not be able to go to Thai school

Factors	Refugee Camp	Migrant Learning Centres	Thai Schools
Geographic location and/or transportation	Not a factor except for students with physical impairments who are not able to walk	This is especially relevant in rural areas. If a MLC does not provide transportation or families are not able to pay for it, children living in remote areas will not gain access to education.	As for MLC's
Cultural	Cultural differences prevent minority families, especially Muslim or Hindu, from sending their children to school or encouraging them to stay there. There is often a perception, that Muslim families are only interested in business, not in education therefore there is little outreach towards these groups. Overall, there is lack of understanding and communication between school and families, especially minority families.	As reported by teachers and principals, many parents from Burma do not prioritize education. However, this is only their perception. In fact, there seems to be a lack of communication between school and families (though some schools have worked on this and have built up quite strong relationships with the whole community.	Those families, who are in a position to send their children to a Thai school, usually prioritize education. Yet, there is still lack of communication between school and families especially in cases where parents do not speak Thai.
Age	Some older students with lower education level feel discouraged or embarrassed to sit in class with much younger children. This is particularly a factor for students recently from IDP areas or students who do not speak Karen and have to stay behind because of language difficulties.	As with Refugee Camp Schools	As with Refugee Camp Schools
Health impairments	Numerous SE children attend SEC's run by KWO, however the majority are unable to access SECs because they live too far away, cannot walk, too big to be carried, hills too steep and there is no mobility equipment. Lack of awareness and stigma attached to disability or impairments	Very few students with impairments are able to access regular education because of access, transportation and issues relating to facilities. There is lack of support for SE students in schools, lack of awareness by parents, as well as stigma attached to disability, especially related to mental impairments. Some SE children are visited by World Education (WE) staff in their homes. Some students with minor impairments do attend MLC's and appear to be made welcome.	Some SE students attend the SE unit at Mae Tao school. However, the existence of this unit means that other schools are reluctant to accept any students with impairments as they are expected to attend the SE unit.

There is overlap between the factors above, for example: SE students who live in urban Mae Sot, are more likely to access some kind of education activities, as there are more schools and other services in the city. MLC's in the city tend to have better resources, including transportation. Additionally, in the city, there are greater employment opportunities allowing families are able to stay in one place for longer periods without taking their children out of education.

In the migrant context, the family situation is the critical factor for MLC access. Economic, geographic, and health affect the situation, but importantly it is about parents' (or guardians') attitude towards education. A lot of teachers, principals, and CBO and NGO workers have commented that working closely with parents and community is the highest priority in improving migrant education. Migrant families are reluctant to send their children to school, see details at Table 3, primarily because they, allegedly:

- Do not see any "value" in the education compared to having children bring an income or provide domestic help
- Are afraid for their children's safety, children being arrested or trafficked on the way to/from school or at school
- For other cultural or economic reasons, for example the school available in the area is affiliated with a different religion

School directors reported that through work with families and communities, school enrolment has increased with numerous parents changing their attitude towards their children's education and towards schools and Migrant Learning Centres. Parents are beginning to see that their children are safe at schools, are more familiar with the teachers and school directors, becoming more involved therefore more willing to send their children to school. Despite this positive change in attitudes, there are still an unknown number of children who do not receive formal education at school or MLC's.

An interesting phenomenon occurs in a number of rural Thai schools located near the border, where they transport students from Burma every day to attend their school. This happens in order to maintain the desired enrolment rates in those schools otherwise they would be in danger of being closed down due to low numbers of students. This would cause a problem for the students the surrounding villages, as they would have to commute to a different school far away.

DROP OUT SEEMS TO BE QUITE A STRONG FACTOR IN ALL THREE CONTEXTS EXPLORED, AS CAN BE SEEN IN FIGURE 1.

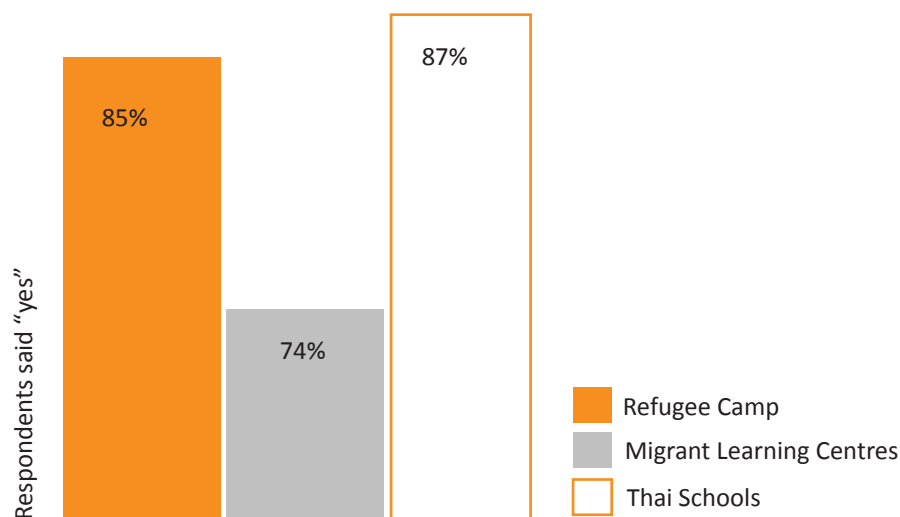


Figure 1 : is drop out a concern?

In the MLC's and Thai schools drop out is mostly due to family and economic factors such as parents moving in search of employment, and children dropping out of education to contribute to the family income.

In the refugee camps dropout rates are increasing due to the resettlement process, and are expected to increase as more and more families leave the refugee camps to resettle in a third country.

It was found that class sizes generally reduce 2-4 times between grades 2 and 5 mainly within the MLC's and in some refugee camp schools. This means that for example, there might be up to 50 children in the nursery class, 40 in the kindergarten class, 30-20 in first and second grades, and then going down to 10 or less after third grade, depending on the particular school. This means that parents are most likely to send younger children to school (up to about 6-8 years old) when they are at an age when they need to be looked after throughout the day and are too young to participate in economic activities. After the age of 8-10, there is a sharp decline in enrolment rates.

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendations for VSO:

- Continue working with the refugee camp education authorities, education committees, principals and teachers to:
 - Improve their awareness of education needs and rights of SE students
 - Integrate SE students into mainstream education, with whatever support is available from SECs
 - Support SECs in their work with the mainstream education sector
- Support camp authorities and SECs to improve their effectiveness at working together to actively search out and identify students with impairments in the camps who are not yet currently integrated into mainstream education.

General recommendations:

- Improve minority representation in the camp leadership in order to improve their involvement in decision-making and their children's access to education. Specifically target outreach to the isolated communities within the refugee camps including the Muslim and Hindu communities.
- CBO's and particularly NGO's should strive for diversity among their staff that should include linguistic, religious, and ethnic minority representatives on their staff.
- Support local education authorities in working with families that are not able to send children to school for economic reasons, find alternative possibilities for those families.
- Find funding for school uniforms or work with camp authorities to overturn the school uniform policy altogether.
- Advocate with camp and Thai authorities to open school enrolment to unregistered refugee camp residents.
- Liaise with health services for correct diagnosing of children's health issues that might be affecting their learning.

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

Recommendations for VSO:

- Establish an on-going relationship with the parents and communities to allow consultation with parents for identification of what would enable them to send their children to school in addition to raising their awareness about importance of education, especially at primary level. Identify any concerns they might have about security and safety at travelling to/from school and at school. Language approach, language of instruction, language support for children who do speak language used, religious affiliation and any religious activities the school might organize

General recommendations:

- Start a SEC for migrant sector
- Assist schools in securing funding and open more boarding houses so that children can stay there while their parents have to move for work
- Develop 'mobile teaching units' to access isolated or remote areas where there are no schools or children are not able to travel to school
- Develop vocational training as part of schooling, so that children can learn useful work skills and possibly combine work and study
- Develop more Programme for working children along the lines of what World Vision Programme for street children and some night schools are doing
- Liaise with health services to help diagnose health issues for SE or other children. As many impaired children registered with or identified by World Education (WE) have never been seen by a medically trained person, nurse, medic, or doctor.

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM**General recommendations:**

- Work with MOE to monitor the implementation of the regulation of provisions for undocumented students to receive certificates for completion of up to 9 years of Thai education.
- Support local schools and MOE in their community outreach to inform families who might be able to send their children to Thai schools
- Improve Thai as a second language Programme in local Thai schools
- Create bilingual materials to help integrate Burmese children into Thai school context

8.2.2. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Is the learning environment safe? Does it promote mental and emotional wellbeing of learners?

Before discussing the details of each context, it is important to note that whenever child protection and child well-being issues are concerned, that for migrant and refugee children most risks and vulnerabilities stem from their lack of legal status.

The majority of schools in all 3 contexts responded that the school environment is safe for children, that there were not any particularly vulnerable children, and that there were not any serious risks to the students apart from occasional accidents related to playing on the road.

Although the stakeholders did not identify any children as particularly vulnerable, the following categories of children fall under the UNICEF (2008) definition of vulnerable children under their Child Protection from Violence, Abuse, and Exploitation Programme:

- Children with disabilities
- Children who do not understand the language used in school or the language that their classmates speak
- Children living in the camp without camp registration
- Unaccompanied children and children living in dormitories
- Children who have to commute to school over large distance unaccompanied
- All undocumented children in the migrant context

In a number of MLC's on the day visited, there were only about half the students attending due to security concerns primarily due to their community having been raided by police and many families were in hiding at the time. One school and the adjacent community, was raided during the course of our survey, people's houses were destroyed, families were separated, and a large

number of children had to sleep in the school building while they were waiting for their parents to come out of hiding. During this difficult time, education was interrupted. This indicates the increased vulnerability of the migrant communities, how precarious is their existence and any provisions for education they might organise.

There are no such risks associated with Thai schools, or in refugee camps. However, we found other sets of physical and psychosocial safety concerns in these contexts.

Our findings show that in terms of psychosocial well being of children, MLC's may in fact be offering a more nurturing learning environment. This statement is based on indirect evidence only, through analyzing the language used by the research participants in describing the role and experience of children in the schools.

For example, in the refugee camp context, the occurrence of such words and phrases as 'lazy', 'not/try hard', and 'obedient/obedience' occur nearly twice as often as in migrant context. We did not find this language in the Thai schools context; however, we did hear reports of child beating in all three contexts.

Although this is indirect evidence it does however, give an indication about the high expectations and pressure put on children involved in the refugee camp education system. More importantly, this language indicates a traditional, top-down, teacher-centred education system, where the only role the student is allowed is being receptacles of information passed down from the teacher. This language is also associated with other frequently occurring phrases pointing to a strong teacher-centred approach, such as 'memorize', 'punish/punishment', 'beat', 'lecture', etc.

We found a much higher frequency of the word 'fun' while interviewing children in Thai schools context although it did appear in the migrant and refugee camp context, but much less so, and only in reference to playing with friends outside class.

Other psychosocial factors identified that might be affecting children:

- In the refugee camp context more children are repeating grades than in NLC's or Thai schools
- There seems to be a very strong focus on centralised and standardized assessment in refugee camp schools that puts a lot of pressure on the students.
- We found mention of child beating in all 3 contexts.

When asked directly about their feelings about school, nearly 100% of surveyed children respond that they are happy at school with very few negative experiences. It is very possible that children would not want to reveal any such information to interviewers who are not familiar to them and, especially when interviews take place at school.

At the same time, most children said they were happy at school because they had a lot of friends to play with, or that they wanted to be educated, while hardly anyone said, they enjoyed learning or that they found the lessons interesting.

We have heard many comments such as 'our children are not like Western children, if we don't beat or punish them, they don't listen' or 'children are used to shouting, if we don't shout, they won't obey'.

A number of "Out of school" children in refugee camps when interviewed indicated that they were bored at school and found the teachers to be hostile. Those children said it was their choice to stay out of school.

In the refugee camps, resettlement is strongly affecting everyone's emotional state: the teachers', the children's and all families. Children are losing their

friends and teachers they are used to, families are being separated, children who have been approved for resettlement stop coming to school or they attend school being disruptive and affecting the learning of the other children. Resettlement adversely affects everyone's motivation.

There are a large number of children from the IDP areas inside Burma who remain in the refugee camp, during the school year, to enable them to attend school and many of these children stay in the dormitories, where conditions are extremely poor. There is no proper care given, insufficient food, blankets, clothes, other supplies. Younger children are often unhappy at being separated from their parents. We heard one report of a suicide by a dormitory student. Children also often feel guilty that they are in they are in school instead of helping their families survive.

Other IDP students stay with relatives or other families in the refugee camp. In these instances, there is a heavy emotional burden on them because they feel guilt that other people have to provide for them.

In the Thai schools context we found more cases of children mentioning 'fun' in connection with studying or particular subjects, and generally with school. There was also less 'negative' language by teachers towards children. However, in this context, more teachers expressed an opinion that SE children should study separately, because they do not have time to take care of them.

It is interesting to note that the survey participants did not volunteer any explicit information about any particular group of children's vulnerability or safety concerns beyond only the most trivial ones. At the same time we discovered, through observation, informal discussions, and analysis of implicit statements, a whole set of problems related to safety and vulnerability, as discussed above therefore making it an 'invisible problem.'

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendations for VSO:

- Continue to raise awareness of education managers, teachers, and parents about child rights and current child development and learning theories. It is particularly important to work simultaneously with all categories of stakeholders
- Educate teachers and education managers about different learning styles and learner types and how to adjust teaching practice to make sure they are included

General recommendations:

- Set up systems to identify vulnerable children
- Look for funding and raise boarding house standards of care

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

Recommendations for VSO:

- Continue to raise awareness of education managers, teachers, and parents about child rights and current child development and learning theories. It is particularly important to work simultaneously with all three categories of stakeholders
- Educate teachers and education managers about different learning styles and learner types and how to adjust teaching practice to make sure they are included.

General recommendations:

- Set up systems to identify vulnerable children
- Look for funding and raise boarding house standards of care
- Improve transportation safety

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendations for VSO:

- Continue to raise awareness of education managers, teachers, and parents about child rights and current child development and learning theories. It is particularly important to work simultaneously with all three categories of stakeholders
- Educate teachers and education managers about different learning styles and learner types and how to adjust teaching practice to make sure they are included.

General recommendation:

- Set up systems to identify vulnerable children

8.2.3. FACILITIES

Do education facilities support the wellbeing of all learners?

None of the schools we visited in all 3 contexts had any special facilities for SE students, except for the SECs in the refugee camps. The general education facilities at all the surveyed schools varied widely.

In the camp context, the situation is relatively uniform with overcrowded conditions, insufficient teaching aides and dirt floors in the classrooms. Most classrooms have just bamboo benches and desks that are fixed to the floor and cannot be re-arranged. In some instances, there was no classroom furniture.

School buildings are mostly in disrepair. Children run the risk of injury from nails sticking out and splinters from desks and benches. In the “Wet Season”, the classrooms and all inside get wet. There are no noise dividers, so each class can hear all the other classes in the building, and everybody finds it hard to concentrate. There is no space for any outside activities. In some classrooms there is also not enough light. Schools complain of inadequate, insufficient, or lacking toilet facilities with insufficient water for basic hygiene and no access to drinking water for children.

In the migrant MLC context, some of the larger schools located in Mae Sot have excellent facilities with good playgrounds, proper buildings, posters on the walls in the classrooms, computer classrooms, etc., while other schools, particularly those in rural areas far from Mae Sot, have very little in the way of facilities. Some schools have only the most basic buildings and not enough classrooms. We noticed that in every MLC visited there is access to drinking water and functioning, if bare, toilets.

In the Thai context, all schools surveyed had excellent facilities with small class sizes, an abundance of educational materials in a range of languages, visual aids on walls, airy well-lit classrooms and large grounds.

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendations for VSO:

- Train teachers and teacher trainers to develop their own teaching aides and, how to use them in the learning process
- Provide the teachers and trainers with the materials and facilities in which to make their own training aids
- Improve the learning environment management strategies in line with existing resources, human and material, by looking at alternative learning sites, community, outdoor, education centres and breaking up the school day so that ‘soft’ subjects can be taught outside (physical education, music, dance, art, drama etc.)

General recommendations:

- Develop improved cooperation between KED, ZOA and other NGOs working in the refugee camps context to develop appropriate strategies from locally available or other cheap materials that can improve facilities and the learning experience, i.e. sound insulation between classrooms
- Introduce two-shift teaching schedule to alleviate overcrowded conditions in the schools
- Work with all stakeholders to utilize local knowledge to brainstorm locally viable solutions

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK**Recommendation for VSO:**

- Help schools develop fund-raising capacities so that they are able to improve their facilities to meet the needs of the learners

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM**General recommendations:**

- Improve SE student access facilities
- Train teachers to use all the available facilities and resources

8.3 TEACHING AND LEARNING (BASED ON PART C OF THE QUESTION SHEETS)

8.3.1 CURRICULUM

Do the schools provide culturally, socially, and linguistically relevant curricula for primary school students?

The 3 contexts surveyed all have different curriculum arrangements but all curricula had a strong impact on the inclusiveness of the education provided.

In the refugee camp context the curriculum for the 7 Karen refugee camps, approved by KED and facilitated by ZOA, is Karen language based and focused on Karen as an ethnic group. As mentioned in the background section, these refugee camps are becoming increasingly mixed in ethnic, linguistic, and religious composition where KED has commented that this is a very strong and sensitive political issue for the Karen community and leadership, including the refugee camp leadership. KED claims that change is slowly taking place, as there are now independent schools, including Burmese-languages schools, in the refugee camps, as opposed to an earlier KED policy, under which all schools in the 7 refugee camps had to teach only in Karen. However, KED feels strongly that it is not appropriate to force too much change in this area.

Despite the curriculum used in the refugee camps having been developed and continuously updated by ZOA/KED for over 10 years many stakeholders still find it needing improvement in many areas. The areas of improvement include:

- Many subjects are too difficult, with very little attention given to art, music, dance, drama and physical education, along with personal/emotional curriculum
- There are too many languages, with confusion over language of instruction (Burmese, English, Karen, and Karenni in Karenni camps)
- There are too many languages and the level is too high (Karen, Burmese, English, and Thai as compulsory subjects)

- There are not enough practical resources (teaching aides)
- Teaching materials are not sufficiently contextualised
- There is a lack of teachers' manuals
- The language of curriculum (and textbooks) does not suit a large proportion of students (and teachers)
- There is a lack of practical components in the curriculum

The majority of schools, in the 7 camps commonly referred to as Karen, are 'mainstream' schools under KED, where instruction is all in Karen language and all the textbooks used are in Karen, except for the Burmese and English language textbooks. There are also other categories 'independent' schools, as identified by KED. These can be schools with a religious affiliation (Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist) referred to by KED as Mission schools. Some of these schools are just Burmese language schools set up by various non-Karen speaking communities in the camps.

KED informed us that the independent schools are free to follow any curriculum they choose but they all have to take the standardized board exam (translated into Burmese for Burmese language schools) except for some Mission schools that have their own curriculum and do not take the board exam. All the schools surveyed showed that they are in fact using the KED curriculum (textbooks in Karen).

The way we understood the situation, but not confirmed, is that the schools have a choice, whether to use the KED curriculum or their own curriculum and materials. However, if they choose not to use KED curriculum, they are not supported by KED/ZOA, which including teacher stipends and other funding that KED schools receive.

For the non-Karen language, a school using the KED curriculum means that the teachers need to translate the textbooks from Karen into Burmese for the students as they teach, and therefore must be fluent in Karen. This means a lot of class time is spent on translation of the textbook and not much time (if any) is left for actual learning. Most teachers are not specifically trained in bilingual education methods and there is not bilingual education curriculum in place.

This situation puts non-Karen speaking children, and teachers, at a disadvantage. In the meantime, due to resettlement, there is an ever-worsening shortage of Karen speaking teachers in the refugee camps. There are a significant number of educated Burmese speakers, belonging to a variety of ethnic groups, in the refugee camps who are willing to become teachers, however, they might lack camp registration and their situation in the camps is precarious. Additionally, they are not familiar with the KED curriculum and are not able to translate Karen textbooks for their Burmese-speaking students. In addition, high numbers of non-Sgaw Karen speaking children go to mainstream schools where all instruction is in Karen and they, the children, have to rely on the teacher to be able to translate into Burmese for them. This puts an additional strain on the teachers, as they have to teach in at least 2 languages.

As a result there are large numbers of students in the camps who are unable to understand the language used in the classroom and in the textbooks and are therefore excluded from the learning process.

According to information collected for all 3 contexts, most children said they understood the teacher and/or the textbook. However, there were many comments from children, as well as teachers, that many more children do not understand the teacher or the textbook, especially in migrant context, as shown in figures 2 and 3.

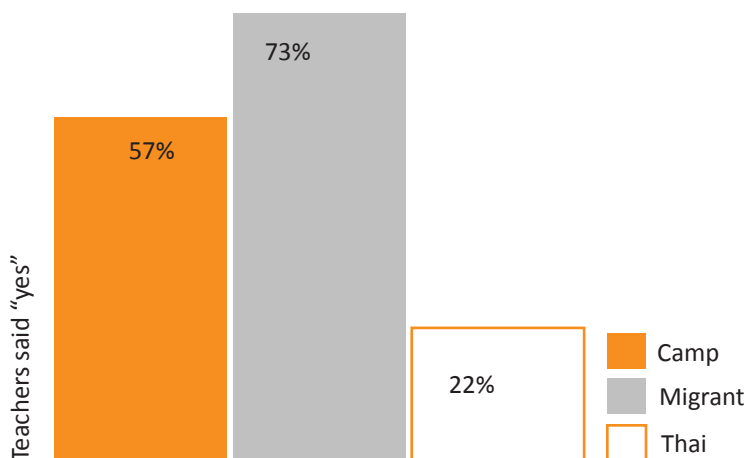


Figure 2 : Can all the children understand the teacher?

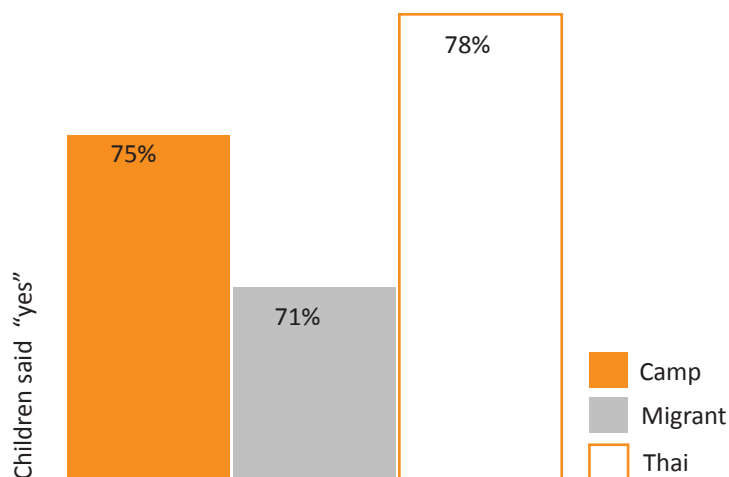


Figure 3 : Can all your classmates understand the text book?

Other issues related to curriculum in camp context that have been identified through this research can be described as follows:

- **Subjects.** It was mostly language subjects that were referred to as the most difficult, however social studies was another subject commonly mentioned as one of the most difficult ones. The textbook was criticised as having ‘too long passages that are difficult to memorize’. These comments not only indicate the difficulty level of the textbook, but importantly, about the rote memorization teaching methods commonly used.
- **Languages.** Difficulties are associated with too many languages in the curriculum both as the language of instruction but also as subjects. Children complain that they find foreign language subjects (Karen/Burmese/English/Thai whichever one is foreign for them) very difficult, and if the teacher is unable explain in the students’ language, they say they cannot understand that teacher (for example foreign/Thai teacher). A lot of teachers and Karen speaking students commented particularly that the Burmese language curriculum is too difficult. Similarly, social studies, the passages and paragraphs were often referred to as too long.

Solving this particular problem starts with recognizing that in many cases it is a number of the principals, not teachers, who initially say, that all children in their class or school understand the language in the classroom. However, when an indirect question was asked, i.e. what types of students have difficulties? They admit that it is mostly children who speak a different language at home. There is no policy or an organized strategy in place to support these children, other than just relying on the teacher to provide translation, extra instruction, or relying on other children for help.

One suggestion proposed was that some languages in the curriculum could be made optional, or their introduction delayed. KED has not agreed to support this suggestion and it is still under discussion.

- Teaching aides and practical activities. Some reports recently collected by ZOA informed that teachers find it difficult to keep students engaged because of lack of instructional material. Students also said that they would like to more practical activities both inside and outside of the classroom.

Within the refugee camp context the curriculum has a very strong academic focus where complaints made to ZOA by the students were that they do not learn anything about life and things around them. They live in a refugee camp and never get to see life outside. Their environment is very limited.

Within the migrant context, MLC's do not have a standardized curriculum and it was left for each school or teacher to decide. We found that most migrant schools use Burmese curriculum (textbooks from Burma in Burmese language). Schools that cooperate with World Education (WE) follow a combination of WE curriculum (English, Math, Science) and other materials, including elements of Burmese curriculum.

Most teachers from Burma find Burmese curriculum easy to use, as it is familiar and fits well with the traditional teaching style, therefore requiring no change in teaching approach.

The WE curriculum is much more student-centred and developed specifically to suit the social, cultural, and political context of migrant education. However, teachers find the new teaching methods proposed in this curriculum unfamiliar and difficult to implement.

While Burmese curriculum is easy for the teachers to use, it is less inclusive as it does not cater to a variety of learning styles. WE curriculum is much more student-centred, but requires more training and commitment to change on the part of the teachers.

Some MLCs focus strongly on following, where possible, the Thai curriculum and teaching Thai language intensively. Their ultimate goals are to prepare and place as many children as possible in Thai schools, and, potentially obtain accreditation for their curriculum from MOE. This can be considered an inclusive goal as this will allow children to be included in the mainstream of Thai education system. However, it is important that children are thoroughly prepared and proficient in Thai before they enter Thai schools, as otherwise they are at risk of being excluded from full participation in the classroom and failing.

There also appears to be a lack of communication between the different CBOs/NGOs that coordinate MLCs. Schools that focus on the Thai curriculum, organize Thai trainers for their teachers, however, some teachers commented that they find that there is a lack of cultural understanding between the Thai trainers and Burmese teachers.

In the Thai School context, all the Thai schools surveyed use the standard MOE curriculum. MOE expects school to follow the official MOE curriculum for 70% of the school curriculum and allows up to 30% of the curriculum to come from the local perspective.

The majority (93%) of teachers interviewed in Thai schools responded that the MOE curriculum needs a lot of improvement, particularly making it more relevant to the local perspective. It is recognised that any change in Thai curriculum would have to come from the highest level of MOE. If VSO were to have any impact on any of the curriculum issues, they would have to work with the central MOE in Bangkok rather than the local MOE Offices.

A greater number of children admitting they do not understand the textbook. We believe that this might be partly because in some Thai schools we specifically requested to interview weaker students in order to make up with a lot of ‘top’ students that the teachers sent to us to be interviewed in both migrant and refugee camp contexts.

We found that in the Thai context, teachers are less happy with the curriculum, or at least they were more open about it. Many teachers commented that it needs a lot of improvement, is not suitable to a lot of students and is not contextualised enough. They suggested that the curriculum needs more local content.

Table 4 summarizes exclusion factors identified by this research. Exclusion here is defined as being physically present in the classroom but being disadvantaged in their learning through one or a combination of the following factors:

TABLE 4: EXCLUSION FACTORS (QUALITY)

	Refugee Camp	Migrant Learning Centres	Thai Schools
Language	Non-Sgaw Karen speaking children experience significant difficulties in Karen language schools. In Burmese language schools they are not able to access textbooks in their own language for most subjects if the school is using KED curriculum	Most migrant children can speak Burmese and most MLC’s teach in Burmese. There are also some Karen-language schools for Karen speakers. However, it is not known how many children are excluded as their local school does not teach in their language.	In some schools, Burmese-speaking children are segregated into separate classes. It would need more in-depth exploration to decide whether there are more advantages or more disadvantages to this.
Family education background	Children whose parents/guardians are illiterate/have very low education level are at a disadvantage because they are not able to get help with schoolwork or encouragement at home	As for the refugee camp context	As for the refugee camp and MLC contexts, exacerbated by the fact that migrant parents often don’t speak any Thai, so can’t help their children with any school work or talk to Thai teachers
‘Slow learners’	Some learners are identified as ‘slow’ or ‘lazy’. This seems to be a single categorisation for anyone with a different learning style	There was significantly less labelling of students as ‘slow learners.’	We did not hear any significant amount of mention of ‘slow learners’
Age	Children who are too old for their grade level don’t do as well as children at the right grade level for their age	Same, but more of those children who are too old for their grade level just don’t go to school at all	Children who are too old for their grade level do not usually end up in Thai schools at all. Those who do might be held back years and some drop out because of this

Financial	Some families cannot afford school uniforms, children become embarrassed and discouraged at school. Similarly, they cannot provide candles for children to do homework at night or pay for extra tutors, as a result these children are often labelled as 'lazy' or not interested in education.	More children are excluded from education because of financial reasons	Teachers explained that the school can provide the school uniform and lunch, but many migrant families are not aware of this and/or afraid to approach the Thai schools
Resettlement	This is a problem for everyone. Children who are about to resettle can't focus on their studies and distract other children from studying	Less of an issue for migrant context	Not an issue here
Religion	Majority of education leaders are Christian and while officially the mainstream KED schools do not have a religious affiliation, some of them do hold religious events such as weekly or daily devotions or others.	Some MLC's have an implicit or explicit religious affiliation (Christian, Buddhist, or Muslim). There is a wide diversity of schools and teachers often do not represent the same group as the majority of students in any particular school.	All Thai schools observe Buddhist holidays. Non-Buddhist students are not obliged to participate, but they might feel excluded if they do not participate.

Figures 4, 5 and 6 represent the educational personnel's (teachers, principals, and NGOs and CBOs, as well as MOE's representatives') perceptions regarding how appropriate they felt was the curriculum being used.

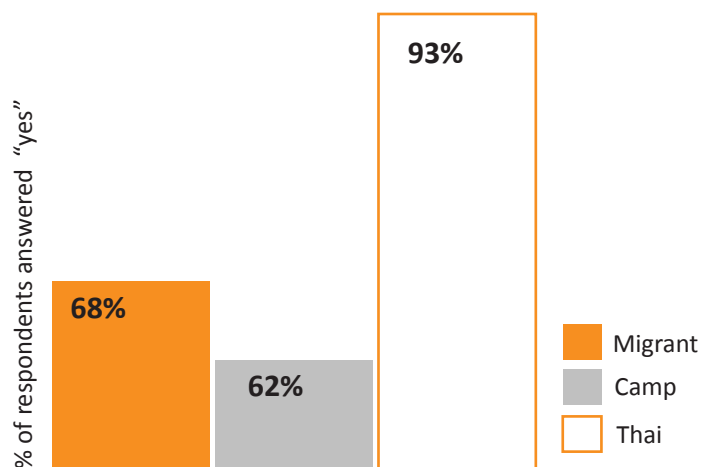


Figure 4 : Does the curriculum need any improvement

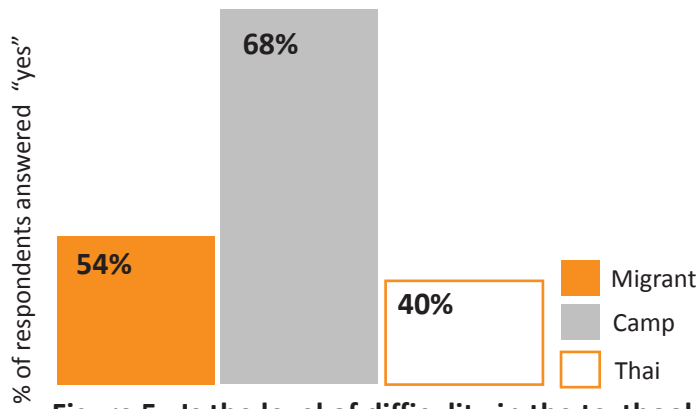


Figure 5 : Is the level of difficulty in the textbooks appropriate for all students?

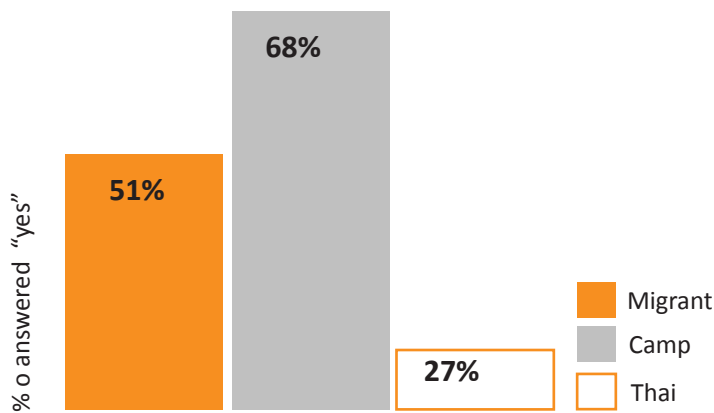


Figure 6 : Can all the children understand the language in the class room?

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendation for VSO:

- Support KED and ZOA in continuing their work to improve and simplify the curriculum and textbooks and include topics that are of higher interest to students

General recommendations:

- Support KED and ZOA in translating the curriculum into Burmese language for the schools that teach in Burmese
- Support KED and ZOA in developing a bilingual education curriculum and training teachers in bilingual education methods
- Support KED in improving community/diversity representation in education-related decision making, including bodies to represent teachers, parents and students in a meaningful way

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

Recommendation for VSO:

- Continue supporting WE and CBOs involved in education, for example BMWEC, in their curriculum development and teacher training efforts with a particular focus on training follow-ups and on-going support for teachers piloting new curriculum

General recommendations:

- Liaise with Thai trainers to brief them in cultural issues pertaining to training Burmese teachers
- Develop more local Burmese trainers
- Make sure that if the MOE curriculum is adopted, it is adequately contextualised and fitted to the local context and the actual level and needs of the students

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

General recommendations:

- Improve the Thai curriculum
- Provide teachers in Thai schools with strategies to teach children with Thai as a second language
- Make the curriculum more locally relevant
- Develop context-specific materials to teach Thai as a second language

8.3.2 TRAINING

Do the teachers receive regular and structured training according to need and circumstances?

Figure 7 demonstrates, from a self-assessment, carried out with teachers and school directors of how trained they feel are as teachers.

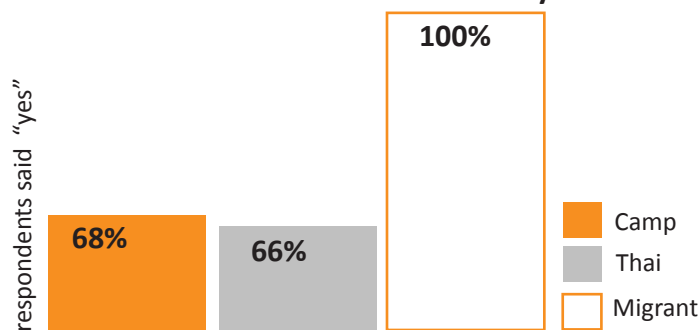


Figure 7 : Are the teachers trained?

In the refugee camp context, the resettlement process has decimated the teacher training system. A number of Teacher Preparation Courses (TPC) have closed due to the lack of trainers. Teachers are leaving so fast, there is no time to train replacements and graduates fresh out of high school often start teaching without any teacher training.

New arrivals, who may be teacher trained, experienced or otherwise educated, are not necessarily being encouraged or allowed to become teachers in the camp because; they do not speak Sgaw Karen, do not have camp registration or, they are perceived as outsiders. The effects of the resettlement process is not adequately managed in terms of substitute teachers, cover for absent teachers and there is no system to support new teachers. For example, new teachers could start working alongside resettling teachers helping them learn and providing continuity for students.

In MLC context, WE, BMWEC, GFC, and some other organisations offer a variety of pre- and in-service training. WE offer and deliver sequential training awarding certificates to those who have completed at least 3 sets of training. All teachers reported they would like more training.

In the Thai school context teacher training is standardized. All teachers have to have a recognized university degree in education. MOE also organizes some on-going training for teachers, 3-5 days a year on average. Teachers comment that they are interested in more training. Some teachers said they had to learn Karen or Burmese in order to be able to communicate with their migrant students. Some schools that find the number of teachers allocated by MOE insufficient hire additional teachers locally on temporary basis. The majority of these temporary teachers do not have the standard teaching qualifications.

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendation for VSO:

- Improve training for SE teachers working at SECs (i.e. make it compulsory for all SE teachers to be qualified as regular teachers)

General recommendations:

- Support KED/ZOA in setting up a workable system of dealing with the effects of resettlement on refugee camp education
- Support KED/ZOA in finding acceptable strategies for using all educated/qualified new arrivals in the refugee camps to replace the resettled teachers and teacher trainers as appropriate
- Standardize a pre-service training course
- Develop a teaching apprenticeship system where new/young teachers start teaching under the leadership of a more experienced teacher, who may be going through the resettlement process
- Develop a set of training for all teachers on how to deal with SE students in a mainstream classroom.

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

Recommendations for VSO:

- Support WE (and other organisations on the ground) in offering and maintaining regular and consistent follow-up training and support on the job (co-teaching, demo teaching, etc.) that will help the teachers not only grasp the new teaching concepts but also apply them in their real teaching situation
- Look into finding a strategy to improve communication and cooperation between the different organisations involved in teacher training for migrant teachers
- Work with school directors to raise their awareness of student-centred teaching methods in order for them to be better able to support and encourage teachers
- Develop a set of training for all teachers on how to deal with SE students in a mainstream classroom

General recommendations:

- Some of the recommendations listed after the curriculum sub-section are also applicable
- Use local (from Burma) trainers as much as possible when training teachers from Burma;

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendations for VSO:

- Develop a set of training for all teachers on how to deal with SE students in a mainstream classroom.
- Improve training for SE teachers
- Some of the recommendations listed after the curriculum sub-section are also applicable

8.3.3 INSTRUCTION

Is instruction learner-centred, participatory and inclusive?

We found instruction to be teacher-centred in most cases. There seems to be a great deal of pressure on the students, particularly in the refugee camp context, with strong judgmental comments expressed by teachers and parents about children (i.e. 'lazy', 'not trying hard', etc.). There is a great deal of labelling some students as 'slow learners' when frequently students with mental impairments or learning disabilities are included in this category together with students who are perceived as lazy.

Teachers, school directors, and education managers appear to blame failure on the students. For example, when asked 'What kinds of students fail exams', responses from many of the educational personnel responded: 'Lazy students, those who do not try hard, dull students, slow learners'.

Nevertheless, teachers often realize that certain students need more help and they are often motivated to offer such help. In all 3 contexts, the answer to any student difficulties seemed to be the same "More instruction." This is sometimes extra classes after school or on the weekend, or extra tuition at the teachers' house (paid or unpaid we were never able to determine). Yet it all seemed like 'more of the same', rather than trying to change something in the existing system to make it more accessible to everyone and more inclusive.

In the refugee camp context, this concept of extra tuition is mentioned frequently by teachers, children, and parents. It is reminiscing of what happens in Burma (Lwin, 2007; HRDU, 2007). We do not know if parents have to pay for it. If yes, this puts poorer students at a disadvantage. Yet, it is hard to imagine, that teachers who are paid 500THB a month (as discussed in a later section) would be willing to spend extra time tutoring their students at night in their own home.

Family support has been mentioned as one of the most important factors affecting children's performance at school in all 3 contexts. It is known that children who are supported at home with their learning achieve better results. Many families are unable to support their children through their limited education, where they do not support and encourage their children in education or where parents do not prioritize education for their children. In addition, in the refugee camp context, children from non-Karen speaking families are unable to get help from their parents with any Karen language schoolwork.

Majority of education and community leaders in the camps are Karen Christians and these have connections with, and access to, NGOs, foreigners, and funding. They are also the ones working for NGOs and have decision-making power as both community leaders and NGO workers. In recent years, KED has made an effort to implement a more religiously inclusive policy: there are more Buddhist and Muslim schools in the refugee camps and they are working closely with KED. Mainstream KED schools in the refugee camps are officially secular and do not have any religious affiliation. However, some individual schools still hold religious events such as weekly or daily devotions. We did not get any explicit negative feedback from any of the stakeholders about this through the formal interview process; however, we have heard a lot of informal comments mostly from the Muslim community that they feel excluded. Even 'Muslim' schools, located in Muslim communities with instruction in Burmese, have to rely on Karen teachers due to the use of Karen language curriculum. The majority of those teachers are Christian with some Muslim children and parents mention that they feel out of place in either 'Karen' or 'Burmese/Muslim' schools.

In Karenni camps, where instruction in primary schools is in Burmese, children mostly rely on the teachers to translate the textbooks for them, taking up the majority of classroom time. The teachers generally only translate into the 'majority' language used in the class, which is usually Kayah, therefore children who do not speak Kayah or Burmese are at a disadvantage.

Children often have to learn 3 different scripts in 3 different languages none of which are their mother tongue, putting a lot of pressure on children. This contradicts current research findings that children learn best in their mother tongue and introducing too many foreign languages and literacy's too soon actually puts the children at risk of not being able to fully acquire any language or literacy (Dutcher, 1995; UNESCO, 2005).

In the MLC context, WE staff commented that whatever happens in the classroom is pretty much down to the individual teacher. If the teacher is motivated and receptive to training, they are more likely to experiment with new methods and make their lessons more active. In these lessons, the students are more involved and achieve better. Many teachers, however, do not feel confident to change what they are doing and try something new. There were also a small minority of school directors who appeared to be less supportive of change and do not encourage the teachers to embrace learner-centred approaches. What is needed is a different approach rather than just more time for cramming.

Based on indirect evidence as discussed throughout this report, we suspect that many children are bored at school, apart from when playing with friends. The only children who actually admitted openly that they found school boring were the ones who had dropped out. However, most other children reported being happy in school because they like playing with friends. We did not get any feedback from children of being interested in lessons, though many said they want to be educated. When we asked children: 'What is your favourite subject?' they mostly mentioned subjects based on it being easy, rather than interesting.

Teachers often referred to students as not being very motivated ('lazy', 'not trying hard'). All this leads us to believe that children might actually be bored at school. We have encountered frequent references to certain children as 'slow learners'. A variety of respondents seemed to put different meaning into these words. We found that students with learning difficulties due to all sorts of factors are grouped into this category. Some are SE children with mental impairments; others are those children identified as 'lazy' who have low motivation for studying or children who do not achieve in school for some other reasons. The group also includes new arrivals from IDP areas that are unlikely to have had any formal education.

Lack of resources and poor facilities no doubt affect instruction. In most refugee camp schools and in some MLC's, the classrooms are too crowded for students to move around, the furniture cannot be rearranged, there is a lack of any teaching aides, such as media, technology, or any play space outside.

From interviews with children we have gleaned, that low motivation might be caused by a variety of factors, such as:

- lack of support at home
- language difficulties
- lack of support and understanding from teachers
- inappropriate curriculum (textbooks too hard, topics not interesting, teaching style etc.)
- health problems (emotional and physical); it is interesting that there is rarely an understanding between the difference
- religious activities at schools
- cultural differences
- other problems at home

In some cases, 'slow learners' are excluded, as teachers consider them to be lazy or not trying hard enough and thus are reluctant to give them extra help. In cases where teachers believe that the learning difficulties of a particular child result from health problems, they are more likely to be more helpful and understanding towards these students.

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

General recommendations:

- Most recommendations from the previous section apply
- Work with teachers and education managers to correctly identify and diagnose, if needed, those students who are currently labelled as 'slow learners'. Identify reasons why they are underachieving and work on finding individual solutions

- Help teachers find alternatives to ‘more cramming’ approach
- Explore the situation with the extra tuition. Who requires it? Who gets it? Who pays for it?

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

General recommendations:

- Most recommendations from the previous section apply
- Help teachers find alternatives to the ‘more cramming’ approach

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

General recommendation:

- Most recommendations from the previous section apply

8.3.4 ASSESSMENT:

Are appropriate methods used to evaluate and validate learning achievements?

In the refugee camp context each school year is divided into three terms with an examination at the end of each term. Those who fail the final term exam have to repeat the year. Teachers routinely complain that students only begin to ‘study hard’ before the final exam. This potentially points to the lack of student motivation. The exam accounts for most of the grade, and a very small number of points allocated to attendance and attitude. There is no on-going assessment that would respond to the needs of children with different learning styles. Existing exam-focused assessment only favours students who are good at memorizing and answering exam questions. In addition, there is a system that only passes a percentage of students in each year rather than everyone who gets a passing grade.

In the MLC’s context, there is not a standardized exam system. They usually use a school-based exam. Assessment is predominantly exam based but some schools do not use exams for younger learners.

In the Thai schools context there is both a school-based and standard MOE exam system. Assessment is mostly test-based but includes other categories as attendance, participation in activities, and projects.

ALL THREE CONTEXTS

General recommendations:

- All three contexts surveyed will benefit from a gradual, planned, monitored and evaluated introduction of an on-going assessment system that monitors the students’ progress throughout each term and the entire year, is language appropriate, and takes into account different learning styles
- Support organisations involved in developing assessment training
- Help the education managers in each context explore their student assessment systems and identify the problems
- Include assessment training in the general teacher-training courses

8.3.5 SPECIAL EDUCATION

In the refugee camp context the refugee camps referred to as Karen, SECs are organized by KWO. The Special Education Programme comprises of an Inclusive Education Programme where SE children attend mainstream schools and get assistance from SE teachers either in class or separately and; an Early Intervention Programme where young children diagnosed as SE are visited by

SE teachers in their homes and come to SECs once a week or so for playing and snacks. In a number of the Karen refugee camps there are classes for children with hearing or visual disabilities.

In Karenni camps, SECs are funded by JRS and run on a similar system to that described in the Karen refugee camps.



A boy working on his drawing in Star Flower Centre, a Special Education Centre for migrant children in Mae Sot

Main difficulties experienced by the SE Programme that impact on inclusiveness:

- Relationships with refugee camp schools and refugee camp School Committee's where schools push children into SE, who could be catered for by mainstream schools, resulting in SECs becoming overloaded
- Some schools and teachers do not allow SE teachers into their classroom to support the SE children
- Some school directors do not accept SE children into their schools
- There is a lack of awareness about SE issues among refugee camp leaders, educational personnel and parents
- Teachers do not believe SE children can learn. There is lack of understanding regarding the differences between physical and mental disabilities and how it affects a child's ability to learning. These issues are also valid for migrant and Thai contexts
- Lack of training for SE teachers who are not required to be teacher trained before they become SE teachers

In the Karenni refugee camps KnED are more aware and involved in the issues surrounding SE. The KnED's interpretation was that community leaders de-prioritize education for children with physical and mental impairments, as they are considered potentially, in the long term, useless to the community. They are not expected to be able to get jobs, have careers and unable to contribute to their communities in any meaningful way. Therefore, it is considered a waste of resources to have any special services, programmes, resources, or support for them. KnED commented that it is very important to educate the leaders about SE and inclusive education.

In the migrant context there is no SEC for migrant children, however WE is considering opening one. Currently, access problems, lack of facilities and lack of specialized training for teachers prevent most SE children from accessing any kind of education. Due to lack of legal status, financial difficulties, and security for families, most SE children lack even the most basic healthcare and their condition will not have been assessed or diagnosed by a health professional.

WE runs an SE outreach programme for migrant communities with SE specialists making home visits to SE children's families registered with them. As part of

the outreach Programme WE works to identify new cases of SE children in the communities, gaining access to them, and where possible enrolling them in the SE Programme. They, WE, cooperate with Handicap International (HI) who also visit those children offering physical therapy assistance, assessments for potential mobility equipment needs and opportunities.

Despite these activities, SE children potentially remain unidentified, due to the demographic situation of the migrant community, lack of awareness of the part of the families, and lack of access to health services. Migrant children with impairments are particularly at risk as they are potentially left unattended while parents go out to work.

In migrant and refugee camp schools surveyed, all respondents said that there is no problem for SE children to access school or centre facilities (classrooms, toilets, play areas, etc.). Teachers also said that all their SE students manage on a little extra help. However, none of the schools had any special access facilities or SE students with mobility equipment. We believe this reinforces that children with severe physical or mental impairments do not access education in these contexts.

In the Thai school context, there is a Special Education Unit (SEU) at Mae Tao School under Tak ESA2. There is an understanding that all SE students should attend the SEU and, this is one of the reasons why school directors from other schools in the area are reluctant to accept SE students. As a result and, as mentioned earlier, none of the schools surveyed have any special facilities for SE children. In reality though, many SE children, especially the more severe cases or with mobility difficulties, do not attend any school, especially if they live far from the SEU or are not aware of its existence. Families, especially poor or migrant families, might have trouble with transportation for their disabled children, while they are unable to enrol their children in the local school, which does not accept SE children.

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendations for VSO:

- Upgrade teacher training for SE teachers, currently they are not required to qualify as regular teachers before qualifying as SE teachers
- Continue raising awareness of community and education leaders about issues surrounding SE and the need for inclusiveness

General recommendation:

- Include an SE component in standard pre-service or in-service teacher training
- Improve outreach to identify all SE cases in the refugee camps and find strategies that would allow children with mobility disabilities, especially those who live at a distance from, or in remote areas to access SECs
- Prioritize houses in central locations and close to the SECs for families with SE children and this could be achieved by allocating those house vacated by resettled families

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

Recommendations for VSO:

- Carry out a thorough assessment of SE needs in the migrant community with the view of opening an SEC for migrant children
- Continue working on identifying all SE children in the communities

General recommendation:

- Develop cooperation between education and medical NGOs to help more thoroughly assess new cases, as most children with impairments have never been seen or assessed by a medical professional

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendations for VSO:

- Upgrade teacher training for SE teachers
- Work on increasing awareness of education managers about including SE children in mainstream classrooms

General recommendation:

- Improve community outreach

8.4. TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL (BASED ON PART D OF THE QUESTION SHEETS)

8.4.1. REQUIREMENT AND SELECTION

Is sufficient number of *qualified teachers recruited? Do they represent diversity? How is resettlement affecting schools?*

In the refugee camp context the resettlement Programme has detrimental effect on all educational activities, particularly teacher training and recruitment. Vast numbers of trained and experienced teachers have either left or are expecting to leave in the immediate future and schools are forced to recruit graduates fresh out of high school. According to KED regulations, teachers are required to have at least a month of pre-service training, but often there is no time and new teachers start without any training at all. Teacher training may take place at some point during the school year. Apart from being untrained and inexperienced, the new teachers are also very young and lack the authority to manage the students.

Teacher salaries, referred to as stipends, are dismally small (500-540 THB a month) and do not cover the basic living expenses. For comparison, most other salaries paid by NGOs to refugee camp residents, for unskilled jobs with less responsible than a teacher, are at least 1,000 THB a month. Teachers feel humiliated; under-appreciated that negatively affects teacher motivation and recruitment.

In the MLC context teachers are trained teachers from Burma or undertaken teacher training provided by WE, BMWEC, GFC, and other NGO's. Some of these organisations provide ongoing teacher training Programmes and continuation training and support for qualified teachers. Generally, MLC's are in a better position to recruit trained and experienced teachers, depending on funding available. There was no significant teacher shortages reported with teachers coming from a variety of ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds.

Most difficulties associated with recruiting, retaining and maintaining teachers are to do with their legal status. Unregistered teachers are vulnerable to arrest and have very limited freedom of movement. They might require accommodation at or adjacent to the MLC for security reasons.

Migrant education organisations have been coordinating with MOE in an effort to issue identity cards to teachers, to avoid arrest and/or deportation by police or immigration. Unfortunately, these cards, sometimes issued by MOE, are often not recognised by MOI, police, or immigration officials.

In the Thai school context, teacher recruitment is centralised and standardized being undertaken by the MOE. Some schools that need additional teachers are able to recruit them on an informal, temporary basis on lower salaries. Centralised teacher placement results in a high turnover of teachers who leave at the end of the compulsory period set by MOE. This process also negatively affects teacher motivation.

Similarly, there is a policy that allows school directors to serve for only 1 year in a school before they become eligible for promotion. This results in poor management and commitment, inconsistent policies at the school level and negatively affects motivation of other teachers.

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recommendation for VSO:

- Continue to work to address the range of problems with education in the refugee camps, as mentioned in other sections of this report in order to improve teacher motivation

General recommendations:

- Continue to work with all stakeholders to develop effective strategies for dealing with the impact of resettlement in all aspects of education
- Improve recruitment of trained new-arrivals as teachers and possibly trainers, wherever necessary

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

General recommendations:

- Continue cooperating with MOE and improve cooperation with MOI to increase the security and safety of unregistered teachers
- Look at developing a pre-service training course for migrant teachers

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

General recommendations:

- Improve teacher participation in decisions about their place of service
- Look at strategies that might improve the schools' choice in teacher recruitment
- Do more research to identify other strategies that might help with better teacher retention and improving teacher motivation

8.4.2 EDUCATION POLICY AND COORDINATION

Are the teachers sufficiently reimbursed? How is teachers' motivation affected?

In the refugee camp context teachers are paid an inappropriately small stipend, not a salary. As they live in a refugee camp, they are provided with free accommodation and a refugee ration. However, the money is still not enough for other needs, such as supplementary food for the family, clothes, and other basic personal items. The main way in which the insufficient salaries affect teachers' motivation is comparing it to other NGO-funded positions in the camp. Camp residents with NGO jobs in the camps usually receive salaries that are 2-4 times higher than the teachers' stipend. Teachers feel under-appreciated, unmotivated, or they leave their jobs to seek higher-paid employment.

In the MLC context teachers receive much smaller salaries compared to Thai teachers and they have to struggle with the everyday challenges of being migrants and trying to make ends meet. Some schools provide accommodation and/or food, but not all. Teachers with families find it harder to survive on a teacher's salary and support their families. If their every day needs is met, they tend to be more motivated in their work.

In the Thai school context teachers recruited through MOE receive standard salaries, which are not high. Supplementary teachers recruited by schools locally, receive much smaller salaries or allowances, as they may not have formal teaching qualifications.

What seems to affect teacher/school director motivation more than the salaries is the centralised job placement policy practiced by MOE. The less experienced teachers have less choice where they are placed, less connection to the place

where they work and are therefore less motivated. They often choose to leave as soon as their obligatory contract is finished. There is a similar tendency among school directors, as mentioned in the previous sub-section.

CAMP-BASED EDUCATION SYSTEM

General recommendation:

- Coordinate with KED, ZOA and other decision-makers to bring the teacher salaries/stipends up to the camp salary standard

MIGRANT EDUCATION WORK

General recommendation:

- Assist migrant schools in fund-raising in order for them to be able to better support their teachers

THAI STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM

General recommendation:

- Most recommendations from the previous sub-sections apply

8.5 SUMMARY

This section summarizes the findings discussed in this chapter and re-organizes them in order to answer the research question and the sub-questions, stated in the introduction and repeated below:

'How inclusive is the primary education in the 9 camps, migrant schools in Tak area, and Thai schools in Tak area?'

This question is further unpacked as:

1. How do the target communities define inclusive education?

There are a great variety of definitions of inclusive education; most of them include mention of ethnic, religious, linguistic, social, legal status, disability, diversity or other conditions. Some of the participants made such disclaimers as limiting the types of disabilities that are acceptable for SE Children to participate in mainstream education, or expressed a preference for separating SE children into separate programme.

The main difference between local definition and the VSO definition was that none of the communities offered any mention of the quality of education and the condition that it needs to respond to the needs of the particular children involved.

2. What are the gaps in the inclusiveness of primary education in the target communities?

- Language (see Table 2), where it appears many children are studying in a language they do not understand
- Curriculum, where in many cases there are problems with the curriculum, i.e. not contextualised enough, irrelevant and/or of low interest to the students or, too difficult
- Teaching methods: mostly teacher-centred
- Children with impairments, particularly more severe cases as well as older children with impairments, or those who live far from schools or SE centres
- Drop out particularly with children over the age of 10 years
- Economic or legal reasons (summarised in Table 1)
- Children too old for their grade level
- Muslim or Hindu children

3. What are the needs of the target communities in regards to achieving more inclusive primary education?

- More suitable curriculum
- Training for teachers and SE teachers
- Access to health services for SE children
- Funding for facilities and training to use them
- Security and stability for communities
- Awareness about inclusive education among all stakeholder

4. How aware are the target communities, including partners and stakeholders, of what inclusive education is and its importance?

All appear aware that it is important but most, especially families do not fully understand what it means. Most think it is education, any education. Most stakeholders believe that as long as children are in the classroom, any classroom, they are included. Most respondents were aware that there should not be discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, sex, poverty, and language. Some indicated that SE should be included and very few mentioned age. While most explicitly mention these inclusion categories, whether there are strategies in place to make sure that inclusion happens, is another question.

5. How motivated are the teachers to be inclusive and what factors affect their motivation?

Almost 100% of teachers claim they are motivated, however in different contexts there are strong factors affecting their motivation:

- Refugee camps: dismal salaries, resettlement and lack of training
- Migrant Learning Centres: low salaries, lack of training and hardships of migrant life (security, making ends meet for family)
- Thai schools: teachers have little choice where they are placed, school directors are not always supportive, change frequently, and, there is a lack of commitment

While teachers might be motivated, they often do not have much capacity to be inclusive due to factors such as large class sizes, lack of facilities, teaching aides, and bilingual instruction teaching aides.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Smaller scale - Any further study on this topic should be more localized. We recommend only exploring one community or context at a time, rather than doing such a wide study.
2. More participatory - If the study is on a smaller scale, it will allow for more participatory approach, for example doing workshops, community mapping exercises, and brainstorming sessions with different types of participants, rather than only interviews.
3. More locally specific - A more localized study will also reveal more locally specific solutions.
4. Longer term with more immediate results - a smaller, community based study could be carried out over a longer period of time, structured as action research, with observations, reflections, and planning sessions, where participants could plan for educational change in their own communities and decide exactly what they can do themselves, and where they need assistance from NGOs.

10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we found that certain aspects of education provided in all 3 contexts explored have some characteristics of inclusiveness while they lack others. While certain schools or systems might look non-inclusive when assessed from the outside, to others they might seem inclusive. It is the difference in perspective.

While most respondents agreed that some kind of change is needed, it cannot come from outside (or at least not primarily). If there is going to be change, it will come from improved communication and cooperation between the different players and stakeholders within each educational context explored in this study.

Given the change has to come from the inside, perhaps VSO's and other NGOs' role could be to provide capacity to improve such communication and cooperation, and empower the marginalized, under-represented, and 'invisible' parts of the communities to become represented and involved in the process of change.

11. NOTES AND UPDATES

Since this research began in November 2008, a number of changes have taken place that could have an effect on inclusive education within the 3 different research contexts. They are noted here in brief:

- ZOA announced their decision to adapt and implement the Thai curriculum for refugee camps within the next 3 years. However, there are no details as to how the translation, implementation, and teacher training are to be managed or, the implications in terms of certification.
- KED has announced that it is handing over their mandate on education in refugee camps to Karen Refugee Committee (KRC), who are setting up an education department for this purpose.
- WE is in the process of opening a Special Education Unit for migrant children in Mae Sot.

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APPENDIX : 1
Camp-based education system - final sample for school and SEC participation

	Camp	ML	UP	NP	MRM	MLO	BDY	TH	Site 1
Type of schools									
Community schools		Primary 1A	Zone B Primary school	No 2 Primary school	No 3 Primary school	No 3 Primary school	BDY school	Tham Hin Primary School	No 2 Primary School
		Primary 1B	No 2 Primary	No 4 Primary school	No 2 Middle school	No 1 Primary school			No 4 Primary School
		Middle 5	Section 16 Primary (PAB)	No 5 Primary school		No 2 Primary school			
		Primary 2							
		No 2 Secondary school							
Muslim schools		Middle 4 (Muslim)	Muslim school						
Buddhist schools		Thirim-agala							
Christian schools		No 15 Primary school (Mission)							St. Peter's School (Mission)
SECs		SEC	SEC	SEC	SEC	SEC		SEC	

Migrant and Thai state education system - final sample for school and SEC participation

Setting	Schools visited
Migrant education work	CDC
	Nam Tok
	48 KM
	Rocky Mountain
	Sky Blue
	New Day
	Parami
	Morning Glory
	Islam Boon Roong
	Agape (bridge children)
	SAW school
	New Blood
	World Vision center for street children
	New Day
	Thu Mweh Khee
Thai state education system in Tak province	Sappawittayakhom HS, MS
	Moe Ker Primary School, Phopra
	Thaad Primary School, MS
	Pamaiautid 4 Primary School, Phopra
	Jok Pok Primary School, Mae Ramat
Total number of school	20

Final Sample - participants from the three settings

Camp-based education system	
Participant	Number
KED	1
ZOA	2
JRS	2
KWO	2
Education Committee	2
Principals	12
Teachers	28
SE teachers	13
Students	41
Parents	15
Children out of school	13
Parents with children out of school	18
Total	142

Migrant education work	
Participant	Number
BMWEC	1
WE	3
GFC	1
JRS	2
Principals	13
Teachers	33
Students	43
Parents	16
Children out of school	3
Parents with children out of school	5
Total:	120

Thai state education system	
Participant	Number
Tak Service Area 2	1
Principals	5
Teachers	10
Students	26
Parents	7
Total:	49



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