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Education Survey 2010

ZOA Refugee Care Thailand
May 2010

ZOA Refugee Care Thailand is one of the programme operations of ZOA Refugee Care, based in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands. ZOA Refugee Care is an international relief and rehabilitation organization dedicated to the support of refugees and internally displaced persons, presently operating in Africa and Asia.

Since 1997, ZOA Thailand has been providing support to Burmese refugees in Thailand to enable them to manage and improve their community education system. After gaining experience working in the camps for several years, ZOA saw a need to expand the support to vocational training, which was set up in 2003. To provide more comprehensive assistance to education interventions, non-formal education and further study/ higher education were included in the ZOA programme in 2006 and 2007 respectively. In protracted refugee situations, dependency on external aid has hindered opportunities to develop the self reliance and self determination of the refugees. The pilot project of agriculture activities for income generation was identified as an approach for finding a proper model for sustainable livelihoods for Burmese refugees. With this vision, the project was set up in 2007 in Mae La camp and expanded to other 2 camps – Umpiem Mai and Mae La Oon, in 2009.

Apart from the aforementioned interventions; capacity enhancement, gender and peace building have been integrated in every step of project implementation. Explicitly, ZOA Thailand has seen the importance of promoting inclusive practices to work towards quality education for all.

For further information, please contact

Education Survey 2010

10 May 2010

Su-Ann Oh
With Supee Rattanasamakkee (Say Naw), Phanu Sukhikhachornphrai (Chai),
Somchat Ochalumthan and Simon Purnell

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Su-Ann Oh (suann.oh@gmail.com) is a sociologist specialising in education. She works as an independent researcher on the education of refugees along the Thai-Burmese border. Her research to date has examined the educational experience of Burmese and Palestinian refugees and the needs of marginalised students in England and Singapore. She has published papers and reports on the education of Burmese refugees and the daily experiences of separated children in Thai refugee camps.

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The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily represent the views of ZOA Refugee Care Thailand and any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the author alone.

The Education Survey Research Team

ZOA Thailand	Supee Rattanasamakkee	
	Phanu Sukhikhachornphrai	
	Somchat Ochalumthan	
Data Entry Team	Daw Wah	Paul Tha
	Gideon	Poe Say
	Ning	Su Wan
Research Advisor	Su-Ann Oh	

Camp Education Survey Teams

Mae La Camp	Naw Gil Da	Thu Ray Moo
	Naw Moo K' Baw	Saw John
	Naw Hser Christ Paw	Saw Moe Shay
	Naw Ro May	Saw Lay Gay
	Naw Mu Doh	Say Pla
	Naw Baby	Saw Klo Say Moo
	Naw Dah	Saw Tha Lay Paw
	Naw Moo Rah	Saw Eh Taw
	Hie Nay Christ	Saw Ti Tu
	Hser Nay	
Umphiem-Mai Camp	Saw Adino	Naw Htee Wah
	Saw Htoo Baw Paw	Saw Thomos
	Saw Eh Dah	Naw K'Baw Wah
	Saw Lay Ler Htoo	Saw Lay Thaw
	Saw Kaw Ku Hser	Naw His Sah Paw
	Saw Nay Blut Hser	
Nu Po Camp	Naw Paw Eh Doh	
	Naw Shelna Moo	
	Naw Eh Wah	
Mae La Oon Camp	Saw Christ Htoo	Naw Mu Gaw Paw
	Saw Lay K' Baw	Naw Eh T' Wan Paw
	Saw Ah Nay Wah	Naw Hser Moo Paw
	Saw Doh Moo	Naw Hsa Mu Na Htoo
	Naw Ah Leh	Naw Eh paw
Mae Ra Ma Luang Camp	Saw Dah Blah	Naw Shee Klo
	Saw Soe Nay	Naw Hsa Mya Hai
	Saw Htoo Gay Moo	Naw Tharay Htoo
	Saw Oliver	Naw Charity
	Saw K'Baw Shee	Naw Presela
Ban Don Yang Camp	Naw Moo	Htoo Ku Wah
	Naw Say Htoo	
Tham Hin Camp	Saw lay Doh Wah	Saw Eh Ni Doh Kyaw
	Saw Hein Thu	

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Several groups of people were critical to the successful completion of the 2009 Education Survey. ZOA staff coordinated and managed the work of the survey with equanimity and efficiency, pulling together resources and people to carry out a project that involved more than 4,000 respondents.

The interview teams in the camps were an indispensable part of the Education Survey team, providing information, locating interviewees and conducting interviews on top of their own work. To them, I express my humble gratitude.

I would like to thank the students, former students, parents, teachers, principals, trainers and CBO representatives for giving their time freely to respond to the questionnaires and focus group sessions. Their sincere responses were invaluable to this project.

The data entry team did a superb job of translating the written responses into numbers in a database. Their meticulous and painstaking efforts are greatly appreciated.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the KRCEE for their advice and counsel, and UNHCR in Mae Sot for providing important information and statistics.

Preface

Education is a life long process. In the same way, educational development is an ongoing process. Life and education need to support each other to become stronger and to maintain relevance. Changes in life and circumstances will lead to the need for an education system to adapt and adjust itself to meet the needs of the populations that it serves. Therefore, changes that are made to an education system need to be based on reliable and accurate information.

ZOA Refugee Care (Thailand) has been implementing an education programme in camps along the Thai-Burmese border for over 12 years and has been active in developing a broader range of educational services (either by itself or through partnerships) throughout this period. In spite of the semi-permanent existence of the refugee camps and the restrictions placed on refugees in terms of their access to information and host country educational services in this context, there have been marked changes occurring within the camp education system over the past few years.

To support the monitoring of the changes and the ability to respond to the changing needs of the education system that exists in the camps, ZOA has commissioned research at regular intervals over the past 12-13 years. The Education Survey 2009 is the fourth such survey carried out since the 1997 CCSDPT survey. These papers form the backbone of empirical research for ZOA Thailand and are essential for all education stakeholders to consult. The research has been carried out by a team of researchers from ZOA and from within the communities where ZOA is working. The high level or participation and ownership that has been engendered by the research process has meant that the Education Survey 2009 represents community voices and is a tool that can be used to make adjustments to the educational services in the camps.

On behalf of ZOA, I would like to express my gratitude for the work that has been carried out and the patience of all involved to compile such a thorough research paper. In line with the spirit of humanitarian work it is hoped that this paper will be used by a broader range of stakeholders than just those who are directly involved with the ZOA education support in the camps and that it will be useful for other community services beyond the education sector to understand the constantly changing dynamics and demographics of the camp situation here on the Thai-Burmese border.

ZOA welcomes any further information, feedback or suggestions in relation to the Education Survey 2010.

Simon Purnell   May 2010
Programme Advisor
ZOA Refugee Care
Thailand
simon@zoathai.org

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Executive Summary

The Education Survey 2010

The ZOA Education Survey 2010 is the fourth of a series of surveys on the education in refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. The purpose of the education survey is to

- document the provision of education in the camps
- provide background information on a sample of residents
- make systematic comparisons across time, and
- generate discussions and recommendations for future education provision strategies.

The Education Survey in 2009 was conducted using set questionnaires with 3,910 respondents[1]. This was supplemented by focus group interviews with particular groups of camp residents. The survey was conducted between June and November 2009 in seven refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border: Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin.

Refugees from Burma in Thailand

The profile of the respondents showed that there have been changes since 2005. With regards to education, the levels of attainment in 2009 are about the same as the 2005 cohort. However, there is a significant difference in that the percentage of people with Standard 10 qualifications is much higher than it was in 2005.

The levels of literacy of the respondents in 2009 were much lower than that of their counterparts in 2005, but women who used Skaw Karen as the home language had higher levels of literacy than those in the sample in 2005.

The percentage of respondents in different income categories has become more spread out than in 2005, meaning that there are many more respondents earning incomes across the spectrum rather than clustering in the lower levels.

Education in the refugee camps

At the State level, the policies of the Thai Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Education have jurisdiction over the types of education programmes that may

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[1] Research and compilation of this paper was carried out in 2009 with the finalisation and publication completed in 2010.

be offered in the refugee camps. At the camp level, the management of general education and adult education programmes is coordinated by the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE) in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, CBOs and other providers and funding bodies.

The type of education programmes available in the seven camps are nursery schools, kindergartens, primary and secondary learning, post-secondary learning, religious learning, special education, vocational and craft, adult learning and night school.

The resettlement of refugees from the camps to other countries has had a significant impact on the education system as a whole. The outflow of more highly educated education personnel has affected the education system in the following ways: there is a greater turnover of teachers and more teachers, principals, subject coordinators and teacher trainers need to be trained.

Participation in general education

Between 2007 and 2010, the percentage of primary students in the general education system ranged between 56 and 65%. Student numbers for 2007-8 and 2008-9 were relatively stable, hovering around 36,000. However, there was a 6.6% decrease in the total number of students from 2008-9 to 2009-10.

Participation in the primary cycle seems to be at least 100%. However, this participation falls dramatically at the secondary levels, with only 11 to 20% enrolling in secondary schools.

While the ratio of male to female students in the primary cycles across the seven camps is somewhat equal, the GER shows that especially in the secondary grades, more female students are participating in schooling than male students in all seven camps.

The Muslim population makes up roughly 12-24%[2] (UNHCR, 2006) of the camp population in the three camps in Tak province – Mae La, Umphiem-Mai and Nu Po – yet, only 1.2% of the secondary school population is Muslim.

There is usually a combination of reasons for dropout and the top reasons for dropout remain the same: adolescent marriage, learning difficulties and having to help the family.

Learning and instruction in schools

School appears to be a safe place where students are interested in what they learn, feel that they are learning things of value and that the teachers teach well. The majority of students feel accepted by their teachers and that they can talk to them. They feel that their teachers encourage them to participate

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[2] The UNHCR figures are based on the registration exercise that took place in 2005 and are therefore not up-to-date. However, they give some idea of the proportion of Muslim residents in the camps.

and listen to them in class. Teachers also reported encouraging their students and showing interest in their well being, not just their academic performance. However, students are not completely comfortable interacting with their teachers, feeling less at ease about asking questions in class than participating.

On the whole, teachers are interested in the welfare of their students and try to use child-centred methods and learning practices. However, opinion was divided on whether a good lesson is one where the students do not talk amongst themselves. The teachers also demonstrated the desire to be flexible and responsive to the diversity of their students' needs.

Health issues need to be better understood by all in school and more investigation needs to be done into why certain children are categorised as 'slow learners'.

Education is accessible and affordable although there are still children who have difficulty paying the fees or the opportunity cost of going to school.

According to both the students and teachers, the education that they receive is based on the reality of children's lives. The children interviewed were very certain that education contributes to their status, enables them to contribute to their community, provides them with the knowledge and skills required for further study and jobs, and supports them in acquiring some skills that are needed for resettlement and repatriation. However, they were realistic about their actual opportunities for gaining good jobs and furthering their studies.

Education staff in general education

The concerns regarding the quality of teaching stem mostly from the high rate of teacher turnover that the education system has been experiencing for the past few years. This has been brought about by several factors, resettlement being the principal one, and teachers' desire to further their studies.

While teacher turnover as a result of resettlement is a major concern, there are other factors which need to be addressed as well. The second reason that teachers had for leaving teaching was to further their studies. It is likely that the opportunity of furthering their studies is low since teacher subsidies are modest.

The teacher training system is struggling to keep up with the constant turnover of teachers. Nevertheless, teacher training is considered important and teachers stated that they are particularly in need of opportunities to upgrade their knowledge of the subject matter they teach.

Ultimately, teachers, trainers and principals are striving to provide good quality instruction to their students. A recurrent form of support that respondents asked for was recognition, encouragement, direction and advice from KRCEE and ZOA.

Parental involvement in school and learning

The roles of parents, teachers and principals are relatively well-defined in relation to the parent-school relationship. Parents are interested in the academic progress and behaviour of their children at school and their participation in school activities revolves around school registration, parent-related meetings and school building repair.

Teachers are intimately involved in the learning of their students, and their discussions with parents reflect that. Principals, on the other hand, are more focused on the behaviour of students in school.

For parents, the key issue is not to increase their involvement in school, but to enhance their existing involvement and to increase their capabilities to improve their children's learning at home. Using better and more novel forms of communication, school registration and meetings are settings with the potential to reach out to parents and enable them to

- learn more about how they can better facilitate the learning and development of their children in school and at home – through workshops, discussion groups and so on, during meetings and school registration
- receive reinforced, positive and regular messages about parental involvement in learning at school and home
- receive positive messages about their children
- learn more about the schooling system and changes to school and education policy, so that they can be aware of how these affect their children's learning
- find out about providing a good learning environment at home and in daily life, e.g., advice on how to develop a daily routine for their children and the best ways to support and encourage their children.

Teachers and principals need to be better equipped at communicating effectively and constructively on a one-to-one basis. This was also found to be the case in meetings with parents about their students' progress and the type of tools that parents can use effectively to enhance their children's learning.

In addition, setting up a shared sense of purpose amongst parents, teachers and principals would push forward the joint goal of developing children's learning.

At the macro level, policy-based consensus on the importance of parental involvement needs to be elaborated. This should be integrated into education and school policy and incorporated into school- and community-based awareness and action.

The non-formal education (NFE) programme

The foremost benefit that learners gained from the NFE programme was the opportunity to practise speaking English. The majority of the students interviewed seemed to have difficulty following the textbook, were not

convinced that the teaching materials helped them to learn better, and did not particularly feel that the activities were engaging.

Teacher turnover resulting from resettlement as well as the limited pool of people with the ability to teach English affect the quality of teaching and learning in the NFE programme.

The defining concern of the NFE teachers is that they do not have enough subject knowledge to teach well and to answer students' questions.

Recommendations

Child-friendly learning in the schools
- Explore and come to a consensus with teachers and students about what a child-friendly learning environment is
- Equip teachers with more teaching techniques which are inclusive in nature
- Equip teachers with a better understanding of health issues
- Better understanding of the label 'slow learners'
- Improve ZOA's provision and delivery of infrastructure, resources and materials
- Address difficulties brought about by the language of instruction
- Reduce student dropout at the end of the primary cycle
- Provide alternative forms of learning and education for those who drop out before completing secondary school
- Be mindful of gender differences in participation

Instruction and training
- Redouble efforts to increase the subject knowledge of teachers
- Enhance principals' understanding of the training provided to teachers

High rate of teacher turnover in general education
- Manage teacher training more effectively
- Manage school and training staff morale
- Increase the opportunity cost of leaving teaching

Parental involvement
- Clarify roles and expectations amongst parents, teachers and principals
- Exploit the full potential of current activities
- Equip teachers and principals to communicate more effectively with parents
- Set up a shared sense of purpose amongst parents, teachers and principals
- Community, school based recognition and action

NFE English programme
- Organise an alternative English programme for high school students
- Further investigation into and subsequent improvement of NFE textbooks and activities
- Introduce more opportunities for learners to practise speaking English in the course
- Improve the English language skills of NFE teachers
- NFE teacher training

Methodological issues

Certain sets of statistics which would further help ZOA in their work:

- Student dropout figures and reasons for
- Student grades for year-end exams.

Policy issues
- Enhance the coordination between UNHCR and ZOA for resettlement trends and numbers
- Work towards effecting policy change

Acronyms

CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCSDPT	Coordinating Committee for Displaced People in Thailand
COERR	Catholic Organization for Emergency Relief and Refugees
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
ICS	International Child Support
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
KED	Karen Education Department
KNU	Karen National Union
KRC	Karen Refugee Committee
KRCEE	Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity
KWO	Karen Women's Organization
KYO	Karen Youth Organization
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NFE	Non-formal Education Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RTT	Resident Teacher Trainer
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TBBC	Thailand Burma Border Consortium
TPC	Teacher Preparation Course
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Chapter 1 | The Education Survey 2009

The ZOA Education Survey 2009 is the fourth of a series of surveys on the education in refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. The first one was conducted in 1995 by the Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT). Subsequently, surveys were conducted in 2002 and 2005 by ZOA Refugee Care Thailand. The purpose of the education survey is to

- document the provision of education in the camps
- provide background information on a sample of residents
- make systematic comparisons across time, and
- generate discussions and recommendations for future education provision strategies.

The Education Survey conducted in 2005 involved more than 4000 interviews. Similarly, the Education Survey in 2009 was conducted using set questionnaires with 3,910 respondents. This data were supplemented by focus group interviews with particular groups of camp residents. The survey was conducted between June and November 2009 in seven refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border: Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin.

This report has been written in a format that is compatible with the Education Survey 2005 report, so that comparisons can be made easily between these two time periods.

Framework of the survey

The survey was structured along the lines of the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction (INEE, 2004). The organising categories are: access and learning, teaching and learning, teachers and education personnel and education policy and coordination. More emphasis has been placed on collecting data for the first three categories and these are presented in Chapters 4 to 7. Information on education policy and coordination is presented in Chapter 3, which provides a detailed background on the organisation, management and nature of education in the camps.

Scope of the survey

There are nine official refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. However, information was only collected from the seven refugee camps mentioned above. This is because the majority of ZOA services support the provision of education in these refugee camps. ZOA also provides some

support to two camps in the north of Thailand. However, these camps were not included in the sample because the majority of the education services there are provided by Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

The topics that were included in the survey were generated by consultation with members of the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE), ZOA staff, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the provision of educational services to refugee camps, members of the camp communities and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Mae Sot.

The main types of information collected in the survey were

- the demographics of the sample population and their corresponding significance for the design and implementation of education programmes and curricula
- the KRCEE and their policies for education in the refugee camps
- students' participation in education and their learning experience
- the profile of educational staff and their feedback on the teacher training system
- the usefulness and relevance of the school curriculum and the non-formal education programme (NFE) curriculum to camp life and beyond
- parental involvement in children's learning in school and at home
- resettlement and its impact on education and learners in the camps.

The education programmes covered in the survey were

- the general education system consisting of the primary and secondary cycles
- the non-formal education (NFE) programme run by ZOA.

The target groups, corresponding sample groups and topics asked about are listed in Table 1. All groups were asked for information about their personal background.

Table 1 | Target groups, corresponding sample groups and topics asked about

Target groups	Sample groups	Topics
QUESTIONNAIRES		
General education		
Parents	Parents	Resettlement and schooling, student dropout, parental involvement in school, participation in NFE
Students	Primary students (in Grade 6)	Curriculum relevance, instruction and learning, child-friendly schooling, resettlement and schooling, student dropout
	Secondary students (in Grades 9 and 12)	
Former students	People who left school before completing secondary school	Curriculum relevance, instruction and learning, child-friendly schooling, reasons for dropping out, participation in NFE
Educational staff	Principals	Curriculum relevance, instruction and learning, child-friendly schooling, inclusion, parental involvement in school, student dropout, teacher training and support, teacher turnover, resettlement and education
	Teachers	Curriculum relevance, instruction and learning, child-friendly schooling, inclusion, parental involvement in school, student dropout, teacher training and support, teacher turnover, resettlement and education
	Resident Teacher Trainers (RTTs)	Teacher training and support, teacher turnover, resettlement and education
	Teacher Educators	Teacher training and support, teacher turnover, resettlement and education
Non-formal education programme (NFE)		
	Students	Opinion about NFE course, outcomes from course, obstacles to attending course
	Teachers	Training and support, teacher turnover
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS		
	Young people	School experience, life outside school
	Adults working with young people	Young people's school experience and life outside school

New teachers	Students with learning difficulties, conflict between new and senior teachers
Senior teachers	Students with learning difficulties, conflict between new and senior teachers
Principals	Students with learning difficulties, conflict between new and senior teachers
PAB teachers	PAB school system, curriculum, teacher training

The research methods used are provided in detail below.

Definitions

This section sets out and defines the terms used in the report to ensure that there is a shared understanding of what these terms refer to.

In this report, **general education** refers to the education provided in primary and secondary schools. It excludes nursery, kindergarten and post-secondary learning.

Non-formal education is a general term covering education that is provided in non-school settings. However, in this report, it refers to the NFE programme run by ZOA which provides English language learning to adults.

Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) are organisations set up by the camp communities to provide services and training for different groups within the community. For example, the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) provides a host of training programmes, such as adult literacy courses, weaving and socio-political awareness courses.

Research methods

The main sources of information and data used in the survey are

- questionnaires
- focus group interviews
- statistics collected by ZOA
- statistics collected by the UNHCR, the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) and the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC).

The research tools, information sources and corresponding target groups are listed in Table 1.

Questionnaires

The primary research tool used was the questionnaire. Eight different questionnaires based on those used in the education survey in 2005 were designed for the target groups listed in Table 1. All the questionnaires are in Karen; the questionnaires for parents and students were also translated into Burmese. The data from the completed questionnaires were entered into SPSS, a statistical software programme, and this was used to analyse the data.

In total, 3,910 people were interviewed using questionnaires. Between 8.8 and 86.4% of the target population for all groups were interviewed. Proportional random sampling by gender, religion, camp, type of school and educational level was used. Due to the large number of families in all seven camps, it was decided to interview only 10% of this group. The number of families was used as a proxy for the number of parents, assuming that each family had at least one parent.

Table 2 shows the sample populations and the corresponding target populations in all seven camps.

Table 2 | Sample population and corresponding target population

	Sample population	Target population	% of Target population
Parents	2408	25762[a]	9.3
Students			
Primary students (Grade 6)	437	3069[b]	14.2
Secondary students (Grades 9 and 12)	377	4266[b]	8.8
People who left school before completing Standard 10	59	unknown	NA
Educational staff			
Principals	38	82[b]	46.3
Teachers (primary and secondary)	308	1542[b]	19.9
Resident Teacher Trainers (RTTs)	68	84[c]	80.9
Teacher Educators	11	13[c]	84.6
NFE programme			
Students	185	1300[d]	14.2
Teachers	19	22	86.4
Total number	3910	NA	NA

[a] Taken from KRC May 2009 statistics for number of families

[b] Taken from ZOA statistics, figures compiled from information collected in June 2009 for the academic year 2009-2010

[c] Based on ZOA figures compiled in May 2009

[d] This is an estimate based on the number of students enrolled in the NFE programme.

The camp education survey teams were provided with the number of individuals to interview from each target group. The numbers were calculated in proportion to camp population sizes. While efforts were made to ensure that the respondents were randomly selected based on our selection criteria, it was not always possible to do so. Respondents for the different target groups were identified using different techniques. Students were chosen on a random basis. Those of the other target groups were chosen using a quasi-snowball method.

Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews were conducted with six groups of people in each of the seven camps, as listed in Table 3. Each focus group consisted of six to 10 participants. The total number of participants in the focus group interviews is listed in Table 3.

Table 3 | Focus group interview participants by camp

	Mae La	Umphiem-Mai	Nu Po	Mae Ra Ma Luang	Mae La Oon	Tham Hin	Ban Don Yang	Total
Young people	4	6	4	0	4	2	6	**16**
Adults working with young people	6	6	5	5	2	4	5	**33**
New teachers	6	5	6	6	2	6	6	**37**
Senior teachers	6	5	6	6	2	6	4	**35**
Principals	6	3	3	5	3	3	1	**18**
PAB teachers	0	4	4	0	0	0	5	**13**
Total	**28**	**29**	**28**	**22**	**13**	**21**	**27**	**152**

Only Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po and Ban Don Yang camps have residents who are waiting to be registered by the Provincial Admissions Board (PAB). The camp interview teams were asked to find participants from the target groups and to ask equal numbers of men and women to participate.

The number of participants in each focus group was small. The intention is not to generalise the findings across these target groups. However, the information from these interviews is being used to indicate contextual issues which may require further investigation and to aid in the conceptualisation of the substantive issues that have emerged from the survey.

Statistics collected by ZOA

ZOA collects statistics on the number of students enrolled and the number of teachers by school, camp, gender and religion.

Statistics collected by the UNHCR, TBBC and the KRC

Camp population statistics were gathered from these three organisations.

Limitations of the survey

The survey investigates educational issues which are of concern to ZOA as an organisation working in seven refugee camps and this underpins the structure and content of the survey. Therefore, it only focuses on education in these seven camps. In addition, it is not an exhaustive survey of the various educational programmes provided in the camps as it is meant to explore the dimensions of learners, teachers, and learning and instruction in general education and in the ZOA NFE programme only. Hence, the survey does not examine nursery, kindergarten and post-10 education in detail, nor other courses and training programmes offered by other organisations.

As with all surveys, the data in this survey are limited as the information is self-reported. It is inevitable that respondents do not always give accurate answers. The effect of this was minimised by collecting data from different target groups and sources.

The other limitation is that, with the research tools used, it is only possible to gather surface information rather than in-depth information. To address this, the consultation draft was sent to the organisations working along the border to verify the data and to check for inconsistencies before the final draft was completed.

It is also pertinent to point out that the comparisons made across time are tentative. The data are not derived from a longitudinal study; this means that different respondents were interviewed in each time period. The validity of comparisons across time cannot be guaranteed.

Structure of the report

This chapter has served as an introduction to the nature and scope of the Education Survey 2009. Chapter 2 sets out the social and demographic structure of the camps. The education system, its institutions, actors and participants are described in Chapter 3.

Chapters 4 to 7 look into the general education available in the camps and present findings on learners, the teaching and learning experience, education staff, and parental involvement in schools.

The chapter that follows from this examines the NFE programme in detail, the feedback from NFE students and teacher training and support.

The final chapter discusses the findings and offers a series of recommendations.

Chapter 2 | Refugees from Burma[3] in Thailand

The broad social and demographic realities of life in refugee camps in Thailand are sketched out in this chapter. The intention is not to present an anthropological study but to highlight certain demographic and structural factors relevant to an understanding of the infrastructure, institutions, management and other resources in the education apparatus in the camps.

Refugees from Burma

In 2007, approximately 686,800 Burmese refugees and asylum seekers resided and continue to do so in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia and Thailand, making refugees from Burma the largest refugee population in Southeast Asia (USCRI, 2009). Of this number, the vast majority – approximately 360,000 – sought refuge in Thailand (USCRI, 2009). Children make up almost half (about 70,000) of the approximately 145,000 people registered as refugees from Burma living in the nine official camps along the Thai-Burmese border (TBBC, 2008a). About 15% of the total population is below the age of five.

It is estimated that people from Burma entering Thailand as migrants number between one (TBBC, 2007) and two million (IOM, 2009), outnumbering their compatriots who have been given the legal status of 'refugee' by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The number of children in this administrative category is unknown (IOM, 2009).

The groups of people seeking refuge from Burma are from diverse ethnic groups which have been displaced by Burmese military incursions into and control of ethnic areas of Burma (Smith, 2007). Besides those caught in the struggle of ethnic conflict, pro-democracy supporters and those who are deemed to be in opposition to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) from the urban centres make their way to the Thai border and enter Thailand either as 'refugees' or 'migrants'.

Those who manage to enter one of the nine official refugee camps have access to shelter, rations, security, health services and education and training. The UNHCR and the Thai Ministry (MOI) of Interior stopped registering new arrivals in 2005. This means that while the refugees may be able to get access to camp services, they are not recognised as legal refugees and do not have opportunities for resettlement to another country. Their counterparts, who enter as 'migrants', do not have access to the camps and its services.

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[3] In 1989, the military government re-named Burma as Myanmar. In this report, the term 'Burma' will be used to refer to the country, and Myanmar will be used where quoted by that name.

Demographic and social structure of the seven refugee camps

Information on the demographics of the populations of the seven refugee camps is limited to the number of families, children by age, religion and registration status. The education survey is unique in that it collects a selection of demographic data from a sample of camp residents. Although the survey does not collect this information from all residents, it is useful in tracking social and economic trends within the camps.

Camp locations

The seven camps surveyed are spread out along the border between Thailand and Burma. Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae Ra Ma Luang and Mae La Oon camps are located in the mountains. At an altitude of over 1,100 metres, Umphiem-Mai camp has the highest elevation of all camps.

Table 4 lists the location and size of the seven camps. These features contribute to the ease of accessibility of the camps.

Table 4 | Features of the seven camps involved in the survey

Camp	Location	Distance from border	Area
Mae La	Tha Song Yang District, Tak Province	about 8 kms	4 km^2
Umphiem-Mai	Phop Phra District, Tak Province	about 10 kms	0.7888 km^2
Nu Po	Umphang District, Tak Province	8 kms	0.64 km^2
Mae Ra Ma Luang	Sob Moei District, Mae Hong Son Province	about 4 kms	0.32 km^2
Mae La Oon	Sob Moei District, Mae Hong Son Province	about 2 kms	0.32 km^2
Tham Hin	Suan Phung District, Ratchaburi Province	about 10 kms	0.0704 km^2
Ban Don Yang	Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province	less than 1 km	0.096 km^2

Source: TBBC website http://www.tbbc.org/camps/mst.htm accessed 7 December 2009

The camps are of varying sizes and distances away from the nearest towns. Their location, to some extent, determines the extent to which residents are able to acquire resources such as firewood, food, warm clothing, transportation and forms of communication.

Camp population and structure

The UNHCR and the Thai Ministry of Interior have set up administrative classifications for the residents in the camps. These are: registered, Provincial Admission Board (PAB), unregistered and students.

Registered residents are those who were registered or re-registered by the MOI/UNHCR in 2004/5. MOI/UNHCR stopped registering residents after 2005.

Access to the nine official refugee camps is determined by the **Provincial Admission Boards** (PABs), whose responsibility is to screen entrants, and ascertain that they are indeed fleeing fighting, register the eligible ones as displaced persons, and grant them permission to live in the camps (Lee and Glaister, 2008). Displaced persons who are being considered by the PABs are colloquially referred to as PABs.

Since 2005, there has been a steady influx of newcomers, most of who have not been presented to the PABs. The number of **unregistered** people in the camps is now thought to be over 40,000 (Lee and Glaister, 2008).

There are significant numbers of young people from Burma entering Thailand with the specific intention of gaining access to the schooling in the camps. They are referred to as '**inside students**'. Most of them are not registered residents, and are classified as '**students**' in statistics compiled by the UNHCR. Having said that, the UNHCR figure for inside students in the camps is not accurate because the UNHCR[4] has not revised its figures since the last official registration in 2005.

These administrative classifications affect residents' access to services within the camps. For example, those who are awaiting PAB processing, live apart and attend separate schools from the rest of the camp residents.

Camp population

Statistics of the camp population are collected by three organisations: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) and the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC). As they are collected for different purposes, the numbers do not necessarily tally.

The UNHCR figures include residents who are registered with the UNHCR (whether or not they live in the camps), those for whom registration is pending PAB approval and 'inside students'. The statistics exclude new arrivals since 2005 because the UNHCR has not been registering new camp residents since 2005.

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[4] I would like to thank Mr Thirawat of the UNHCR for providing this information.

The TBBC collects statistics through the KRC to calculate the amount of rations to provide. This is based on age categories: adults (18 and above), children between zero and five years, children between six and 12 years and children between 12 and 17 years. These figures are more accurate than the ones collected by the UNHCR because, except for the three camps in Tak province, it includes all persons in camp including registered and unregistered 'inside students' and excludes all who are permanently or temporarily out of camp. The figures for the camps in Tak province, however, exclude significant numbers of yet unverified names recently recorded in camp lists.

Table 5 | Camp population and density October 2009

Camp	Number of residents	Density people per km^2	As a percentage of residents in all seven camps
Mae La	38290	9572	34.4%
Umphiem-Mai	14590	18496.5	13.1%
Nu Po	14314	22365.6	12.9%
Mae Ra Ma Luang	16858	52681.3	15.2%
Mae La Oon	16010	50031.3	14.4%
Tham Hin	7039	99985.8	6.3%
Ban Don Yang	4071	42406.3	3.7%
Total	111172	17829.7	100%

Source: TBBC Burmese border refugee sites with population figures: October 2009 http://www.tbbc.org/camps/2009-10-oct-map-tbbc-unhcr.pdf and TBBC website http://www.tbbc.org/camps/mst.htm accessed 7 December 2009

Mae La camp has the largest number of residents, making up more than a third of residents in the seven camps; Ban Don Yang camp has the smallest number of residents, at slightly less than 4% of all residents. Tham Hin camp has the highest density of residents. The number of residents in the camps has fallen by 8% since the last education survey in 2005.

Camp population by gender

Table 6 | Camp population by gender October 2009

Camp	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total
Mae La	15803 (49.8)	15899 (50.2)	31702
Umphiem-Mai	6638 (50.7)	6448 (49.3)	13086
Nu Po	5284 (50.9)	5088 (49.1)	10372
Mae Ra Ma Luang	7035 (50.1)	6788 (49.1)	13823
Mae La Oon	7439 (51.2)	6874 (48.8)	14313
Tham Hin	2267 (48.9)	2372 (51.1)	4639
Ban Don Yang	1594 (49.0)	1662 (51.0)	3256
Total	46060 (50.5)	45131 (49.5)	91191

Source: TBBC Burmese border refugee sites with population figures: October 2009 http://www.tbbc.org/camps/2009-10-oct-map-tbbc-unhcr.pdf accessed 7 December 2009

Table 6 shows that there are roughly equal numbers of male and female residents in the seven camps, with the number of men slightly higher than women. The percentage is roughly the same as in 2005, where 51% of the residents were male and 49% were female.

Number of families and children by gender

Table 7 | Number of families and children by gender May 2009[a]

Camp	Families	Children 0-18 years		
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Total
Mae La	7817	18014 (49.9)	18039 (50.1)	36053
Umphiem-Mai	4328	9313 (51.3)	8857 (48.7)	18170
Nu Po	5898	8841 (51.9)	8201 (48.1)	17042
Mae Ra Ma Luang	2990	9188 (50.7)	8917 (49.3)	18105
Mae La Oon	2918	8476 (51.0)	8130 (49.0)	16606
Tham Hin	978	2284 (50.2)	2262 (49.8)	4546
Ban Don Yang	833	2235 (49.5)	2278 (50.5)	4513
Total	**25762**	**58351 (50.7)**	**56684 (49.3)**	**115035**

Source: KRC (2009)

[a] The total numbers here are different from those in Table 7 as the data was collected at a different time.

There are 25,762 families residing in the seven camps. Similar to the figures for adults, the percentage of male children is slightly higher than female children. In 2005, there were about 20% fewer families.

State of origin of registered population

The proportion of residents from the different geographical areas in Burma in the nine official refugee camps and one other unofficial camp are set out in Table 8.

Table 8 | State of origin of registered population by proportion

State of origin	Percentage
Karen	61
Karenni	17
Tenasserim	7
Pegu	6
Mon	5
Irrawaddy	1
Rangoon	1
Other - Chin, Kachin, Magwe, Mandalay, Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan, Unknown	2
Total	**100**

Source: TBBC Burmese border refugee sites with population figures: October 2009 http://www.tbbc.org/camps/2009-10-oct-map-tbbc-unhcr.pdf accessed 7 December 2009

There are no figures for the seven camps surveyed as the data is not segregated by camp. These figures do provide some idea of the geographical origins of the registered population, but not their ethnic origins.

Sample profile

In this section, a selection of characteristics of the sample of parents interviewed is presented. Although information from other target groups was collected, only data from this target group are presented here. This is because the data collected for the other target groups, such as teachers, principals and trainers, would not be representative of all the residents in the camps. The profiles of these other groups are presented in separate chapters.

It would not be accurate say that this group is representative of the general population. However, the data do give some indication of the characteristics of the population in the camps.

Gender

Of the 2,408 respondents in the survey, 20 did not answer this question. Of those who answered, 43.8% were male and 56.2% were female.

Ethnicity

The ethnic make up of the respondents included Skaw Karen, Pwo Karen, Burman, Shan, Kachin, Mon, Chin, Lahu, Kayah, Po-O, Arakan, mixed heritage, Muslim, Na Gha and Ti Mae. As Figure 1 shows, Skaw Karen made up the greatest proportion of respondents, at 77.2%, followed by Pwo Karen (9.8%) and Muslim (5.5%). The latter make up a community of people living in the camps, particularly in Mae La, Umphiem-Mai and Nu Po, who identify themselves ethnically as Muslim. The majority of them speak Burmese as their mother tongue.

Figure 1 | Ethnicity

Ethnic group
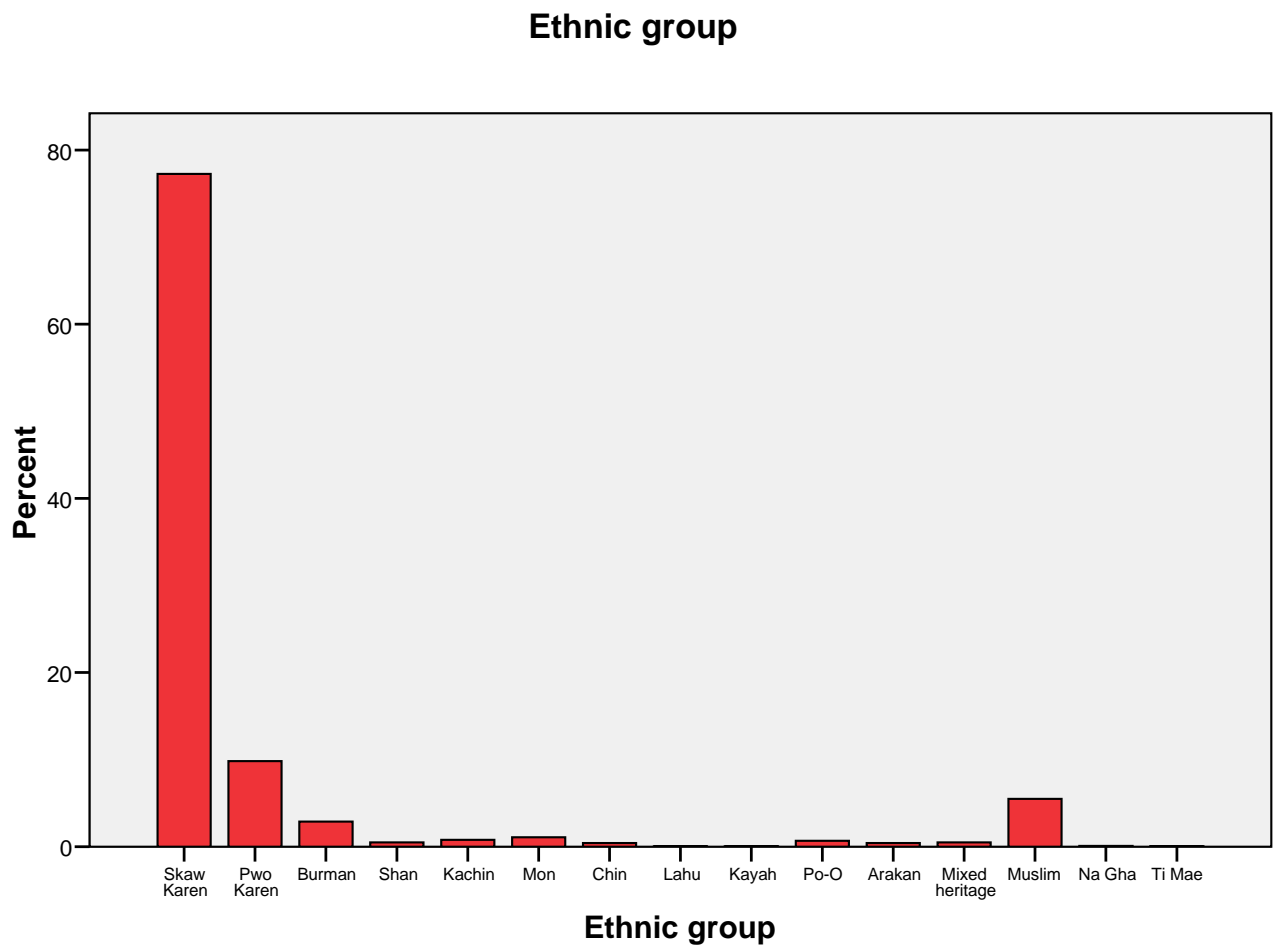
Religion

As Figure 2 shows, Christians made up slightly more than half of the sample, followed by Buddhists at slightly more than a third. Muslims were 6.4% of the sample.

Figure 2 | Religion

Religion
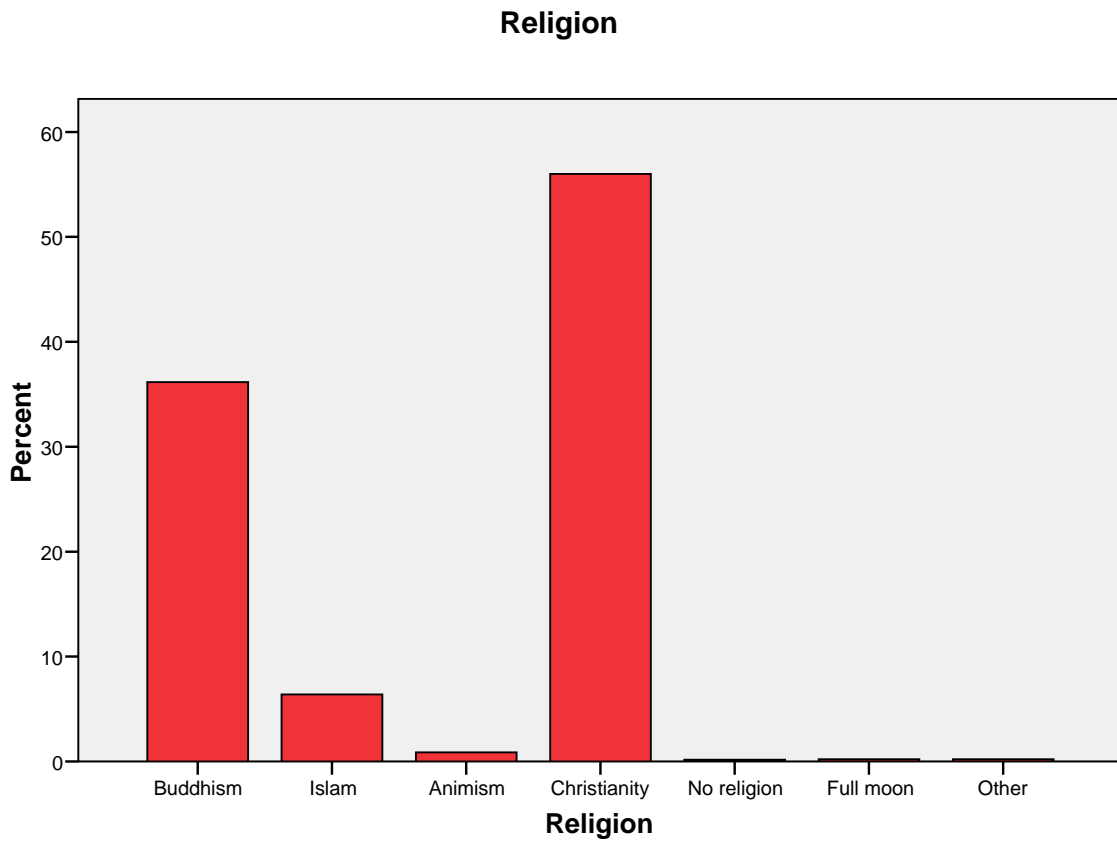
Marital status

Of the 2,390 respondents who answered this question, 82.3% were married, 0.7% were separated or divorced, 8.8% were widowed and 8.2% were single.

Number of children

The number of children per family ranged from zero to 15. This is similar to that reported in 2005. The most frequently (18.2%) occurring number of children is three, followed by four and two children.

Figure 3 | Number of children

No of children
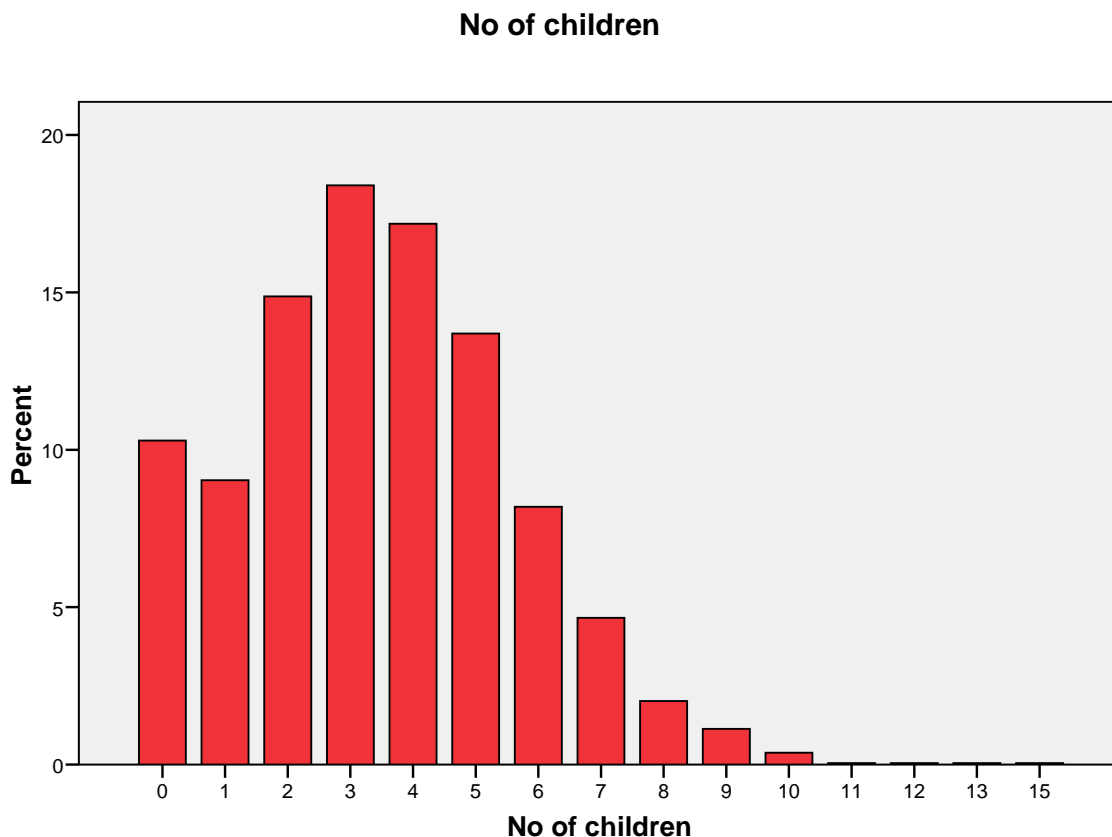
Number of people in the household

The number of people living in the household ranged between 1 and 20, with about half having between 4 and 7 living people in the household.

Type of place of residence

The majority of respondents (86.7%) had been born in a village while the rest had been born in the forest (5.9%), in a town (4.5%), in a city (2.4%) and in a refugee camp (0.5%).

Type of place of residence before camp

Again, the majority (72.5%) had lived in a village before coming to live in camp. This was followed by 14.4% having lived in a camp before moving to their current camp, 6.7% having lived in the forest, 4.1% in a town and 2.2% in a city.

Number of times moved before coming to live in camp

The largest number of respondents (32.5%) reported that they had moved two to four times before entering the camp. About a quarter had moved once and more than a fifth had moved more than four times, as Figure 4 shows.

Figure 4 | Number of times respondents moved before coming to live in camp

No. of times moved before camp

No. of times moved before camp
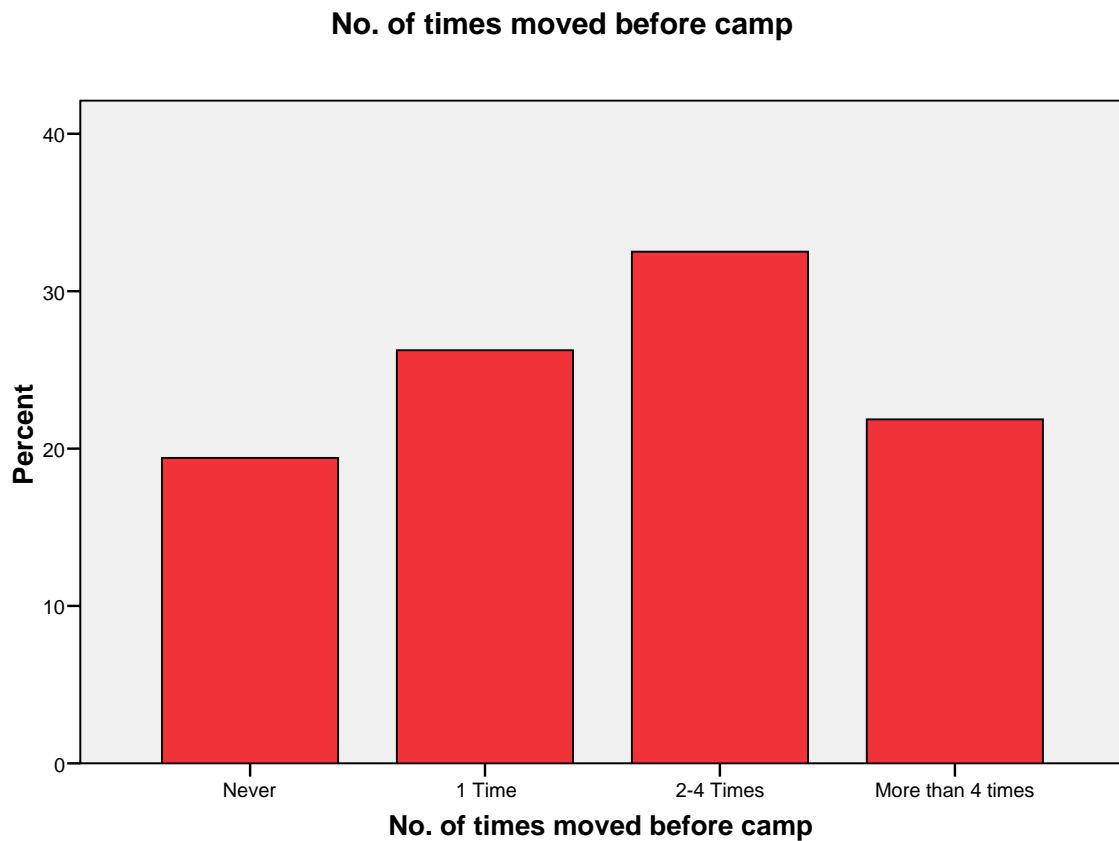
Reasons for leaving Burma

There was a combination of reasons for respondents leaving Burma, the most compelling were those related to persecution by the SPDC or the armies of groups which had signed ceasefire agreements with the SPDC:

- 66.3% confirmed that they had run away from soldiers
- 69% confirmed that they had run away from fighting
- 28% confirmed that they had to pay a lot of tax
- 20.9% confirmed that they had fled from forced labour
- 16.2% confirmed that they had not enough money
- 11.5% confirmed that they did not have paid work
- 6.2% confirmed that they had wanted to study in camp.

Other reasons included their homes and villages being burnt, and persecution (including the killing of their relatives) by the SPDC.

Highest education level attained

More than a third of respondents had no formal education at all, somewhat similar to that in 2005. Of those who had undergone formal schooling, the category with the largest number of respondents (11.8%) was those who had completed primary education (Standard 4) (see Figure 5). This is similar to the sample in 2005, 13.9% of whom had completed primary education.

Of note is the difference between the percentage of respondents who had completed Standard 10 (secondary education) in 2005 and 2009. The percentage of respondents who had completed Standard 10 (secondary education) in 2009 was 6% whereas in 2005, it was only 0.8%. The difference could be due to a variety of reasons. First, the sample might have been skewed towards a population that was more highly educated. However, the sampling method used in 2005 and 2009 was the same. Second, it could be that since 2005, there have been more people completing secondary education in camp.

Figure 5 | Highest level of education attained by respondents

Highest level of education
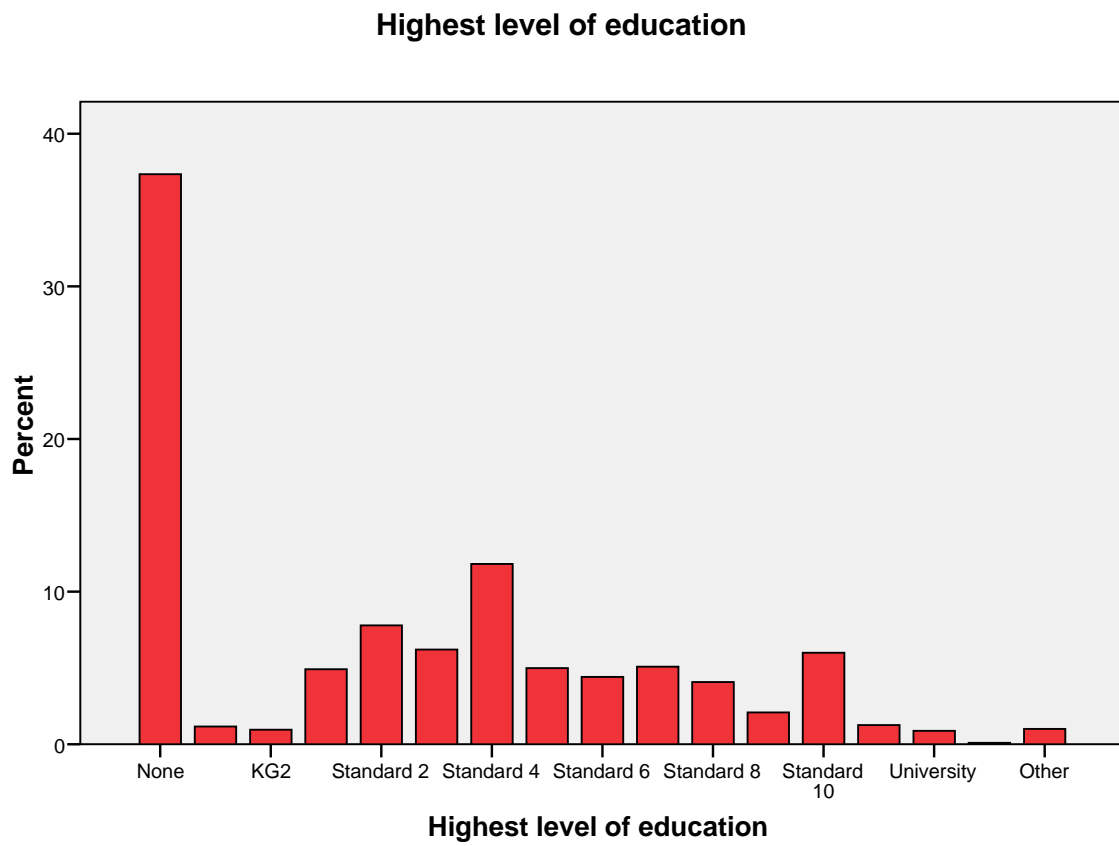
Figure 6 | Highest level of education attained by gender

Bar Chart
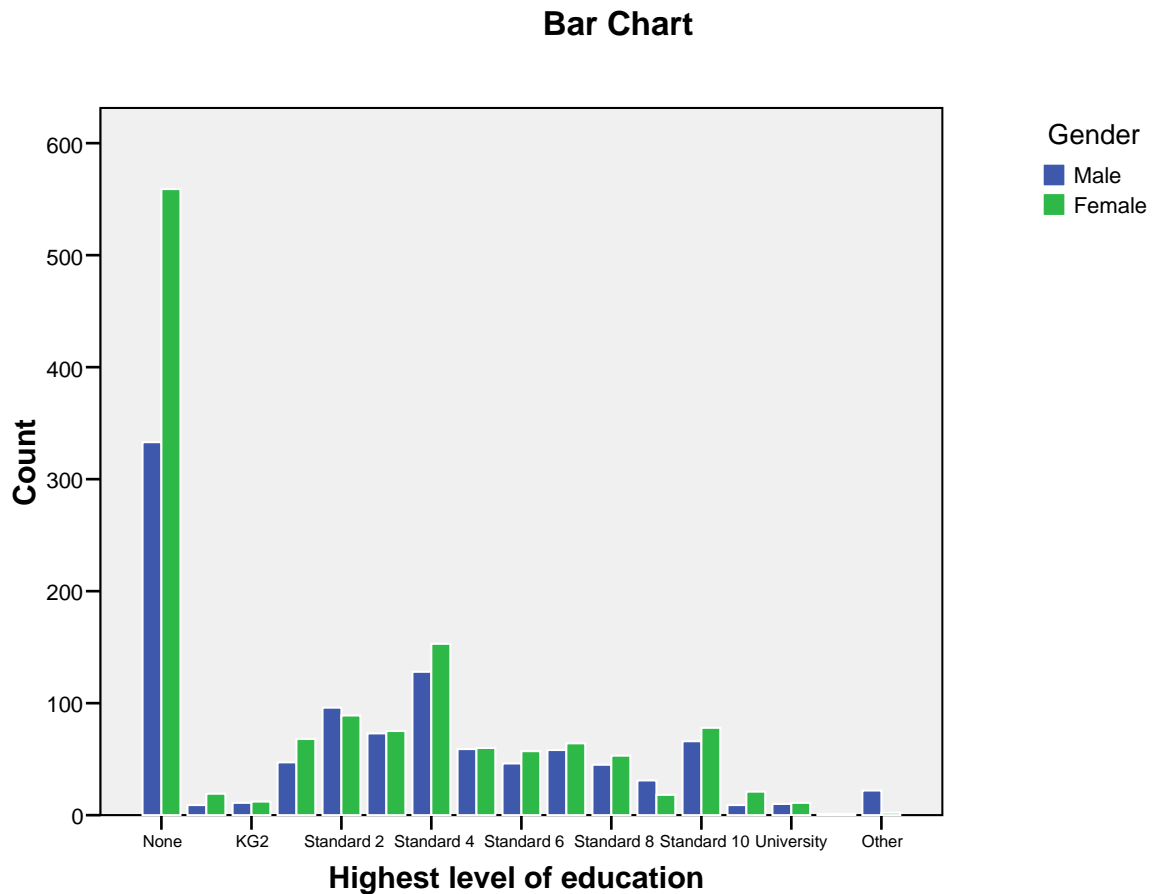
Looking at the highest level of education attained by gender, it can be seen that 333 men (31.9%) and 555 women (41.7%) had no education at all. In 2005 about 25% of the men and about 36% of women had had no education. This difference could be due to the influx of new arrivals and the resettlement of more highly educated residents to other countries between 2005 and 2009. The 2005 figures are lower than those for 1996 and 2000.

Of those who had no formal education at all, 37.3% were male and 62.7% were female. In 2005, 70% of those without education were women.

In the 2005 survey, at all levels except Standard 2, the percentage of women completing a standard was lower than for men. This reflects the pattern found in the previous three surveys. However, for 2009 women had the same or higher levels of education as men for KG1, KG2, Standards 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, post-10 and university. This represents a significant change in the level of educational attainment by women.

Figure 7 | Highest level of education attained by religion

Bar Chart
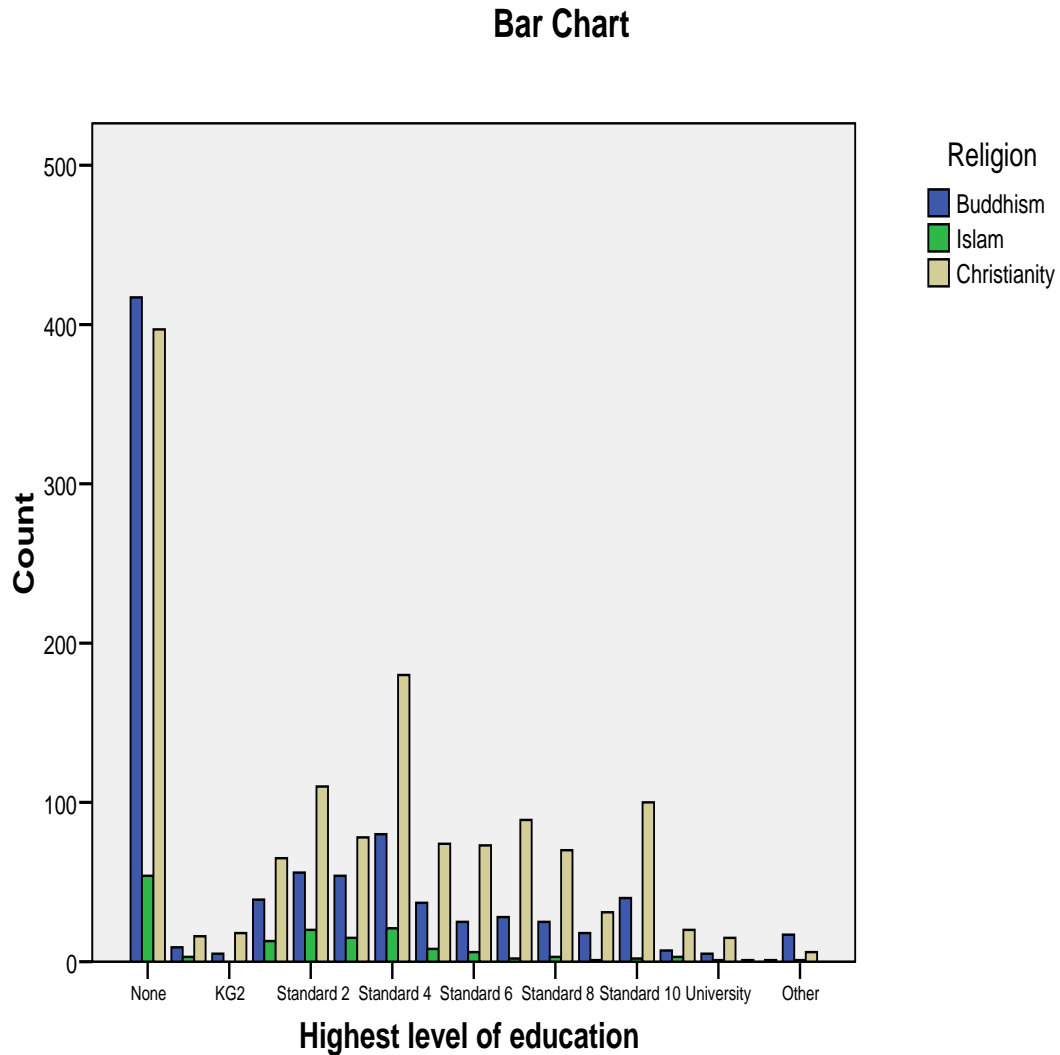
Figure 7 presents the highest level of education attained by respondents across the three most common religions in camp. Across all three religions, for those with formal education, the category with the highest number of respondents was Standard 4 (the end of primary education).

The Christian respondents had, by far, the highest numbers who completed Standards 4, 2 and 10. The Muslim respondents had the highest numbers who had completed Standards 4, 2 and followed by 3. The Buddhist respondents had the highest numbers in Standards 4, 3 and 2. For the Muslims and Buddhists, the second and third most levels completed clustered around primary levels of education. However, in the Christian group, there were two clusters, one in the primary level and another at Standard 10. This

implies that there are more people who are Christian who completed secondary education than in the other two religions.

Language spoken at home

About three quarters of the sample reported that Skaw Karen was the language spoken at home. This was followed by Burmese at 11.1% and Pwo Karen at 9.4%. The rest of the respondents (2.6%) spoke one of the following languages at home - Shan, Kachin, Mon, Chin, Lahu, Kayah, Po-O, Yakai, Arakan, Bweh, Na Gha, Nai Doo, P'ku.

Literacy

Respondents' levels of literacy were self-reported. There were 1,845 Skaw Karen speakers in the sample and 1,836 responded to questions about their ability to read, write and speak Skaw Karen and Burmese. Table 9 shows that less than half of the Skaw Karen speakers read and write Skaw Karen easily and more than a quarter do not read or write it at all.

Table 9 | Reading, writing and speaking abilities of Skaw Karen speakers (percentage)

	Easily	**Moderately**	**With difficulty**	**Not at all**
Skaw Karen				
Reading ability	48.7	14.6	12.0	24.7
Writing ability	47.4	14.1	12.3	26.2
Burmese				
Reading	16.3	18.1	16.1	49.5
Writing	15.5	17.6	15.9	50.9
Speaking	19.0	20.1	19.3	41.6

Less than a fifth of these respondents are able to read, write and speak Burmese easily and almost half of them not at all. When compared to the respondents in the 2005 survey, these respondents have much lower levels of literacy in both languages.

Figure 8 | Reading ability in Skaw Karen by gender

Bar Chart
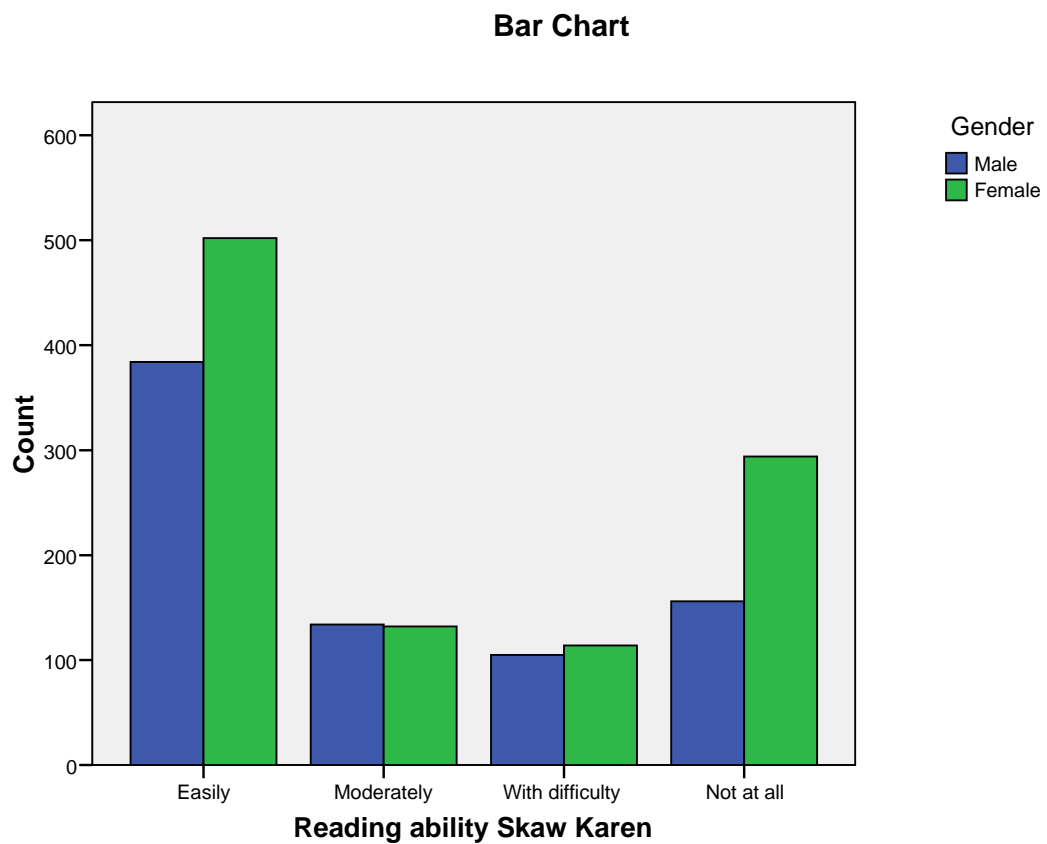
About 25% more women than men can read Skaw Karen easily. Almost twice the number of women than men can not read Skaw Karen at all. It seems that on both ends of the spectrum, women number more highly than men.

Figure 9 | Writing ability in Skaw Karen by gender

Bar Chart
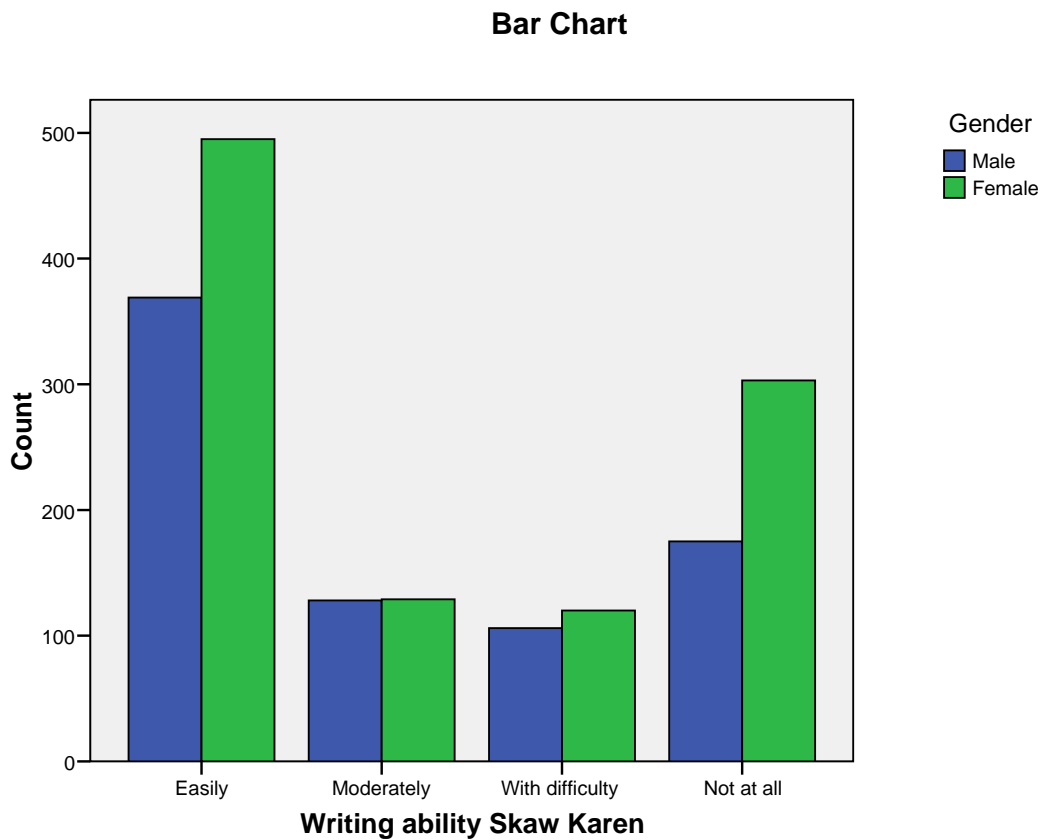
The findings for the ability to write Skaw Karen are similar to those for the ability to read it, with more women than men being able to write it easily, and more women than men not being able to write it at all.

Turning to Burmese speakers, Table 10 shows that 62.4% read or write Burmese easily and slightly less than a fifth do not read or write Burmese at all. The percentage of those who write Burmese easily is significantly larger than it is for Skaw Karen speakers writing Skaw Karen.

Table 10 | Reading and writing abilities of Burmese speakers (percentage)

	Easily	**Moderately**	**With difficulty**	**Not at all**
Burmese				
Reading ability	62.4	9.8	9.0	18.8
Writing ability	62.4	10.9	7.9	18.8

Figure 10 | Reading ability in Burmese by gender

Bar Chart
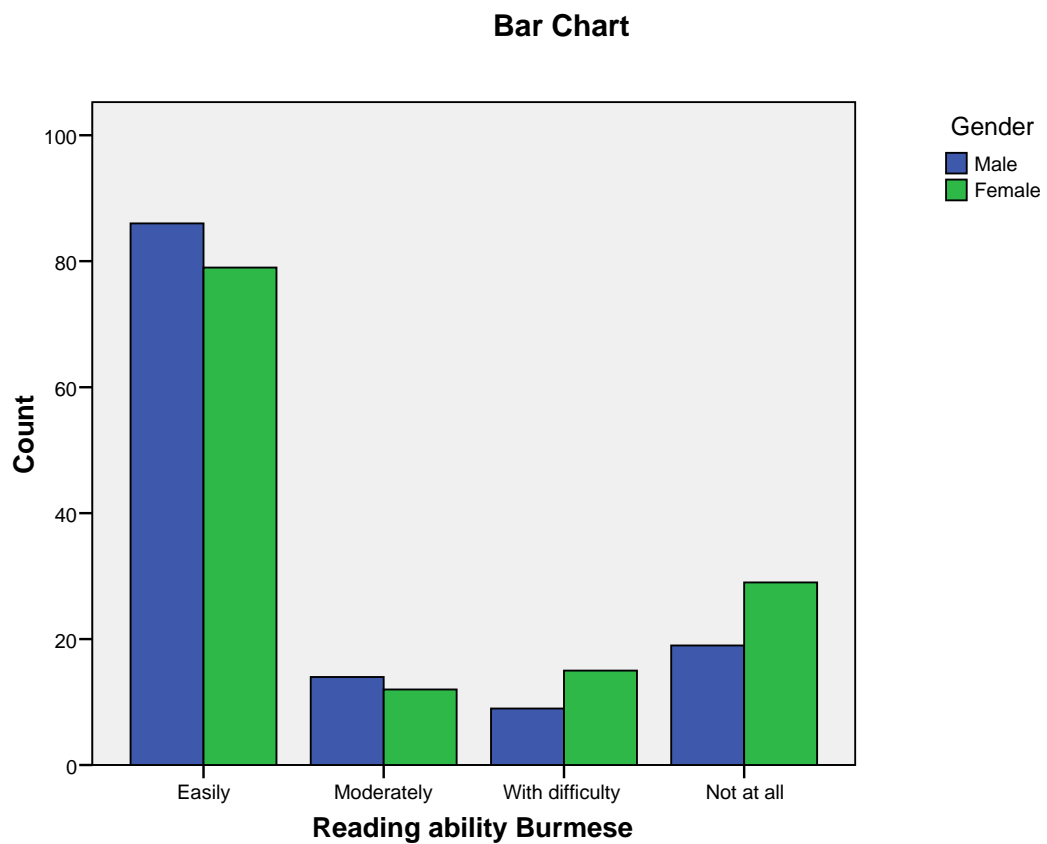
More women than men Burmese speakers are not able to read Burmese at all, and more men than women are able to read it easily as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 11 shows a similar pattern, with women having lower levels of literacy than men in Burmese.

Figure 11 | Writing ability in Burmese by gender

Bar Chart
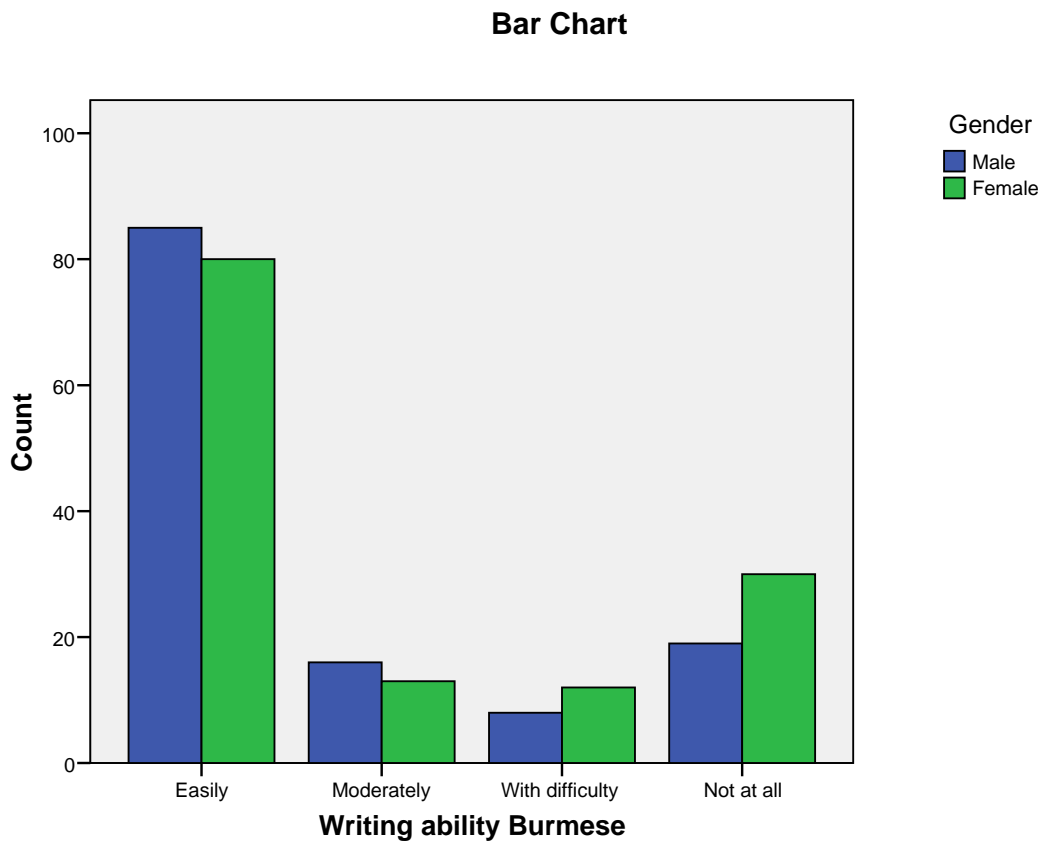
Comparing the literacy levels of both Skaw Karen and Burmese speakers in their own language, Skaw Karen speakers had lower literacy rates than Burmese speakers. For both groups, the number of women who are not able to read or write their own language is much higher than the number of men. However, female Skaw Karen speakers have higher reported levels of literacy than Burmese female speakers.

Occupation

Almost two thirds of respondents worked as farmers before they entered the camps. The category with the second most number of respondents was labourer. Figure 12 shows that two other significant groups were students and those involved in housework. The proportions are similar to that found in the 2005 survey.

Figure 12 | Last occupation before camp

Last occupation before camp
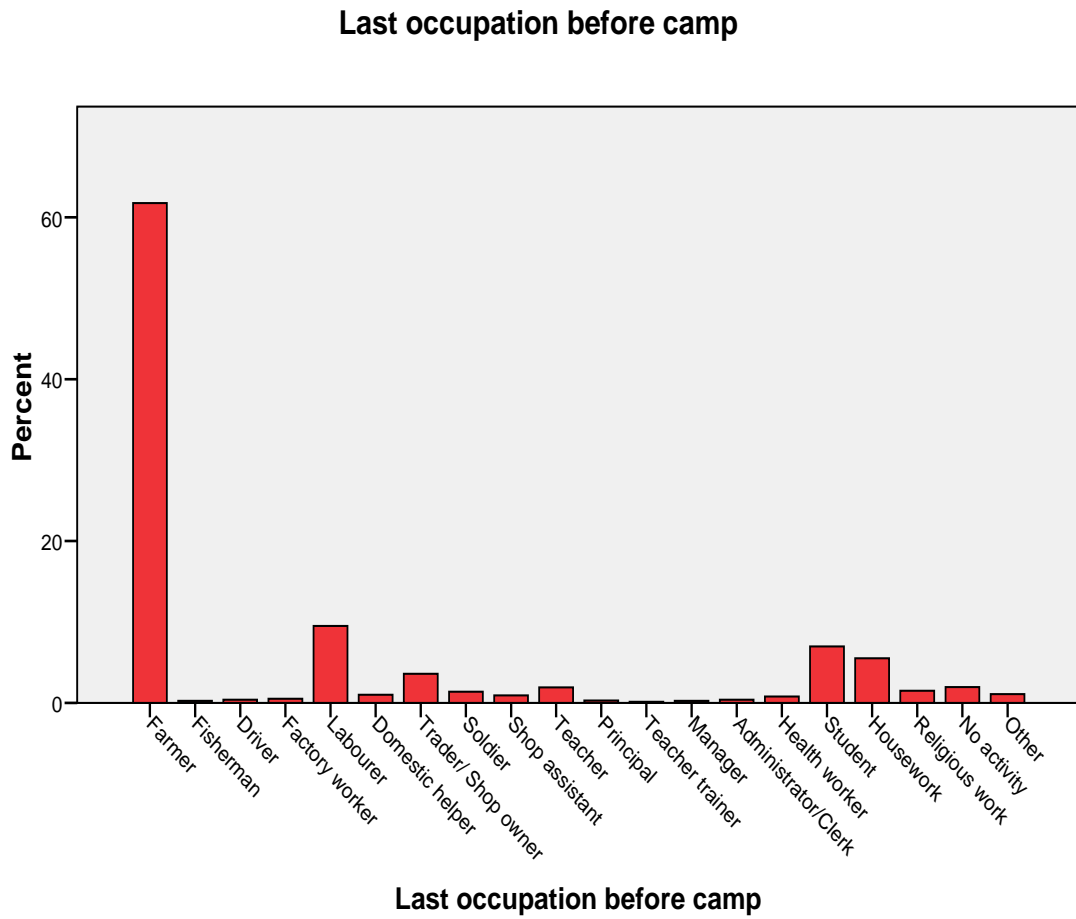
Figure 13 | Current occupation

Current occupation

Current occupation
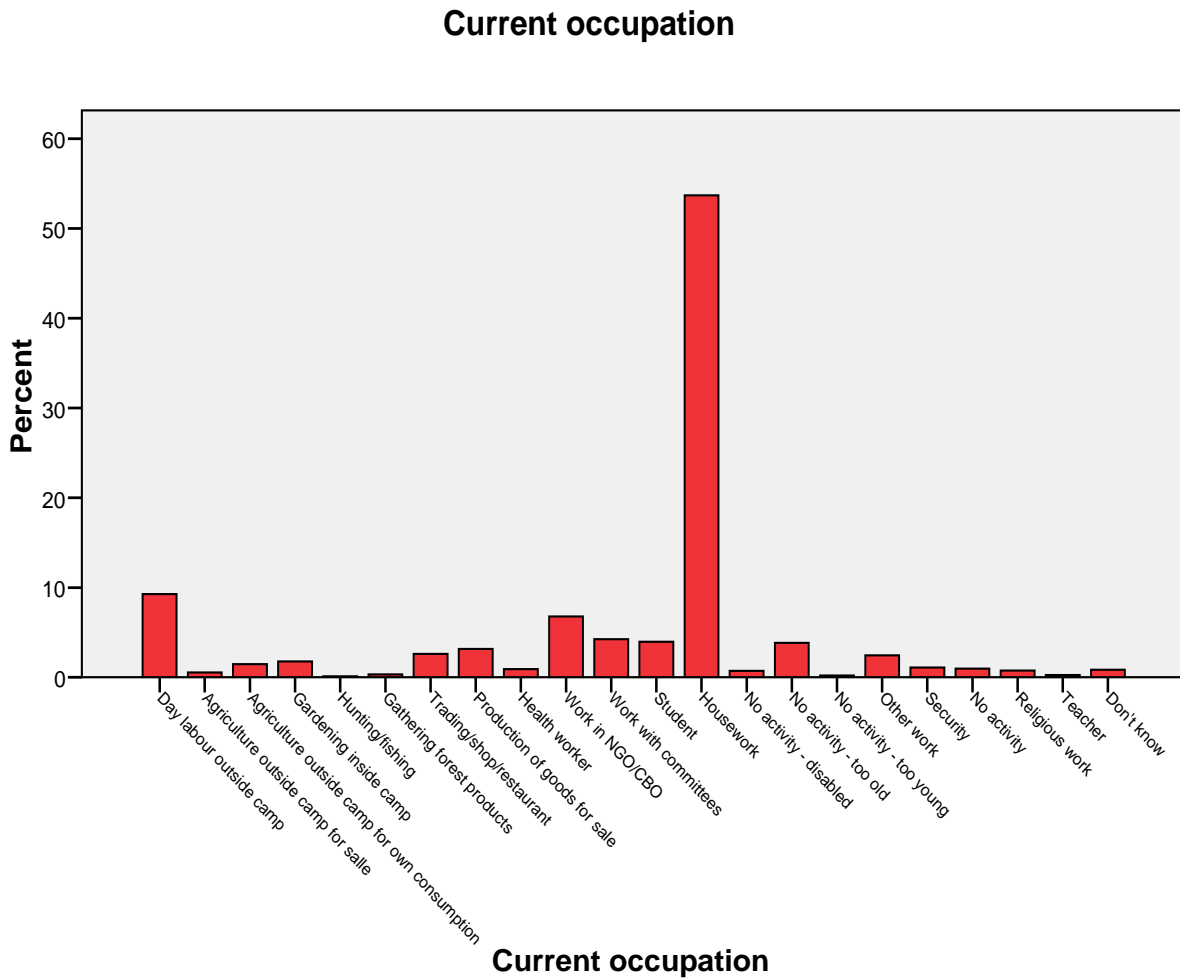
Slightly more than half of all respondents were involved in housework. The second largest category of work was day labour outside camp at 9.3%. This was followed by work in an NGO or CBO at 6.8%. Following from that, the aggregate percentage of respondents who had no activity was 5.7%. Figure 13 shows the spread of occupations.

Income

More than half of the sample earned 0 Baht. Less than a fifth earned 1-100 Baht and about a fifth earned 101-500 Baht. Table 11 shows the differences in income levels between 2005 and 2009. A higher percentage of the respondents earned no income in 2009 than in 2005. In 2005, of those who did earn an income, the highest percentage of people earned 1-100 Baht. In 2009, however, the highest percentage of people earning an income was in the 101-500 Baht category.

Table 11 | Monthly personal income in 2005 and 2009 (percentage)

	2005	2009
0	43.9	55.2
1-100	25.3	13.5
101-500	21.2	19.5
501-1000	8.2	8.3
1001-2000	1.3	2.8
More than 2000	0.1	0.7

In 2000, only 2% of the sample was able to earn income from day labour which was around 200B per month. In that year, only 7% of the respondents reported earning a monthly income from work inside the camps.

Table 12 | Monthly household income in 2005 and 2009 (percentage)

	2005	2009
0	23.2	30.7
1-100	25.4	12.8
101-500	28.9	26.1
501-1000	15.9	18.2
1001-2000	5.6	8.8
More than 2000	1.0	3.4

Table 12 shows that in 2009, the percentage of people who reported having no household income was 7% higher than in 2005. However, the percentage of people with income in the 501-1000 Baht, 1001-200 Baht and more than 2000 Baht categories was higher in 2009 than 2005.

Overall, there seems to have been a rise in the percentage of households with higher income levels as well as in the percentage households with no income at all.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out the background to the structure and demographic nature of the seven refugee camps in the survey. The profile of the sample interviewed showed that there have been changes since 2005. With regards to education, the levels of attainment in 2009 are about the same as the 2005 cohort. However, there is a significant difference in that the percentage of people with Standard 10 qualifications is much higher than it was in 2005.

Another distinction that can be made is related to the levels of literacy of the respondents. The respondents in 2009 had much lower levels of literacy than their 2005 counterparts, but women who used Skaw Karen as the home language had higher levels of literacy than those in the sample in 2005.

Without having conducted further analyses, it is speculated that these two characteristics point to 1) a bigger percentage of the camp populations completing secondary level schooling, and 2) the increase in literacy levels among Skaw Karen women speakers. In order to confirm this, it would be necessary to first rule out the possibility that those who had attained higher levels of education and literacy were new arrivals from Burma.

With regards to income, the percentage of respondents in different income categories has become more spread out than in 2005, meaning that there are many more respondents earning incomes across the spectrum rather than clustering in the lower levels. It is yet unclear why this is the case; it may be due to an increase in the salaries attached to NGO jobs, a general increase in the salary levels and/or an increase in the number of NGO jobs available.

Chapter 3 | Education in the refugee camps

This chapter provides information on the educational activities available in the seven camps served by ZOA. In addition, it describes the management, structure and policies of education in the camps, the learning activities provided and the impact of resettlement on education as a whole.

Education management

There are several actors and authorities involved in determining the existence, management and content of education in the seven refugee camps. At the State level, the policies of the Thai Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Education have jurisdiction over the types of education programmes that may be offered in the refugee camps. At the camp level, the management of general education and adult education programmes is coordinated by the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE) in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, CBOs and other providers and funding bodies.

Schools providing general education also determine some individual policies, although they are all bound by KRCEE (KED) policies. Table 13 provides an overview of the actors.

Table 13 | Policy-makers, coordinators, providers, and funders of education and learning activities

Actors	Policy-makers	Coordinators	Providers	Funders
Thai MOI	✓			
Thai MOE	✓		✓	✓
KRCEE	✓	✓		
CBOs			✓	
NGOs			✓	✓

As the table indicates, certain actors play several roles. For example, while the Thai MOE is involved in policy making for education provision at a macro level, it also delivers Thai language classes in the camps.

In addition, although the table lays out the actors and their roles separately, there is some overlap in these areas. For example, non-governmental organisations have a certain degree of influence over the decision process in KRCEE policy making and vice versa.

Policy makers

Thai policies on education provision permitted in the refugee camps are decided upon by the Thai MOI and MOE.

Within the confines of the policies set by the Thai authorities, the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE) has jurisdiction over all education activities in the seven refugee camps served by ZOA. In April 2009, responsibility for education in the seven camps was transferred from the Karen Education Department (KED) to the newly created KRCEE. One of the reasons for this change was due to the restrictions that some NGOs and donors faced in working with the KED as it is part of a political organisation, the Karen National Union (KNU). In addition, this was part of a process of streamlining and rationalising to ensure more coherence and efficiency in managing the different education programmes and sectors in the camps. Prior to 2009, the KED had overall responsibility for kindergarten, primary, secondary, vocational and adult education in the refugee camps as well as education in the Karen State in Burma. However, the KED had difficulty gaining access to camps and to operate freely within them. Since the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) had already established an education branch in their management structure, it seemed appropriate and most effective for them to manage education in the camps. At present, the KRCEE operates freely in camps under the aegis of the KRC, and KED policies on education have now been taken over by the KRCEE. The KRCEE has the jurisdiction to adjust and add to them as necessary. The KED is now only responsible for education in Karen State.

At present, the KRCEE focuses on basic and further education, and does not have a specific focus on vocational and adult learning. It is attempting to enhance its coordination of activities with the various NGOs and CBOs operating along the border by facilitating consultation meetings that take place monthly. ZOA works with the KRCEE to enhance its capacity to coordinate and improve education.

The Board of Directors of the KRCEE consists of five people. The Director and the Deputy Director are elected during KRC elections. The Director, Deputy Director and the board of the KRC then appoint three other persons to serve as the heads of the three departments in the KRCEE: Secretary of Board of Directors (Finance/Support/Administration), Secretary of Basic Education and Secretary of Higher Education. The rest of the staff members are recruited through open announcements and interviews. For all staff members, the continuation of their contract is based on an annual appraisal.

At the camp level, according to the KRCEE charter, the Committee for Camp Education Entity in each camp is to be formed or reformed, with at least seven members representing the diversity of interests in the camp: youth (not members of the Karen Youth Organisation (KYO)), women (not members of the Karen Women's Organisation (KWO)), parents, teachers, religions, disabled persons and so on. The Education Coordinator is the chairperson of this committee.

Schools implement the policies that the KRCEE set out and also interpret them in ways which suit their particular circumstances.

Coordinating body

As described above, the KRCEE coordinates the education activities in camp along with the other NGOs and CBOs working along the border. At the day-to-day level, the Office of Camp Education Entity (OCEE) implements education activities and policies. The top two positions in this body are elected by camp elections and the rest of the staff work on a contract basis.

As a result of the change in management structure, it has been reported that there is more of a sense of community ownership. Prior to the change, there had been little management support provided by the KED, due to difficulties with access to the camps. Now, all staff members receive managerial support from the KRCEE, and directly receive financial support. The links between camp administration and coordination to the central levels are now much clearer and there is greater clarity and understanding of the structure, roles and responsibilities of those involved.

Providers

There is a myriad of education providers within the camps, consisting of the Thai MOE, CBOs such as KWO and KYO and NGOs such as ZOA and World Education.

Funders

There are four main funders of education infrastructure, training, supplies and salaries in the seven camps. ZOA provides funding for educational facilities, buildings, pre-service and in-service teacher training, the development of curricula and teaching/learning materials for schools, and school/education staff salaries. World Education provides financial support for educational facilities, pre-service teacher training and special education. TOPS supply materials for educational facilities in nurseries. Until 2009, ICS – Asia provided direct support towards educational facilities, and teaching and learning materials. Since 2009, they have continued supporting materials but this is now done through ZOA.

Some schools have affiliations with external organisations and religious institutions and they receive funding from them.

Learning activities provided in the seven refugee camps

There is a host of learning activities in the seven refugee camps and they can be roughly categorised in the manner set up in Table 14.

Table 14 | Educational programmes in the seven camps

Type	Target group	Content	Institutions	Organisations providing services
Nursery	Children aged 3 years	Introduction to basic education and preparation for kindergarten: Karen Burmese, English Maths	Nursery schools	TOPS
Kinder-garten	Children aged 5 years	The KRCEE proposes that the kindergarten curriculum includes Karen, English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education.	Schools	ZOA
Primary and secondary	Children and young people of school-going age	General education using KED/KRCEE-approved curriculum	Schools	ZOA
Post-secondary	Young people who have completed secondary education	General education; specialized courses: English, leadership, medic courses; KED/KRCEE approved 'curriculum	Schools	World Education, ZOA, Thabyay - Curriculum Project (CP)
Religious learning	Children and young people	Religion	Religious schools	Religious institutions outside the camp
Special education	Deaf, blind and mute children	Sign language, braille	Special education centres	KWO, World Education
Vocational and craft learning	Adults and school leavers	Auto-mechanics, radio mechanics, sewing, agriculture, cooking, weaving, basket weaving and other courses	Vocational training centres	ZOA, KWO, TBBC, COERR
Adult learning	Adults and school leavers	English, Thai, literacy, music, computers	Learning centres	ZOA, KWO, Thabyay – Curriculum Project
Night school	Adults and school leavers	General education using KED/KRCEE-approved curriculum	Schools	ZOA

Note: For comprehensive coverage, this table includes nursery and kindergarten programmes. Although these programmes were available in 2005, they were not included in the Education Survey 2005 report because they were not supported by ZOA.

Nursery

Nursery schools are run by Taipei Overseas Peace Service (TOPS).

Kindergarten

Kindergarten, known as KGB is offered in primary schools and is a one-year programme.

General education: primary and secondary cycles

This section is more substantive than the others as one of the key foci of this report is general education.

Breakdown of schools and types

In total, there are 70 schools in the seven camps. Some of them offer both primary and secondary teaching. Thus, in Table 15, some schools are represented in both the primary and secondary cycles.

Table 15 | Number of schools offering primary and secondary schooling by camp

Camp	Primary KG-Grade 6 offered	Secondary Grade 7-12 offered	Number of schools
Mae La	25	16	32
Umphiem-Mai	8	5	8
Nu Po	7	5	10
Mae Ra Ma Luang	9	5	10
Mae La Oon	8	6	8
Tham Hin	1	1	1
Ban Don Yang	1	1	1
Total	59	39	70

Grade structure

Table 16 shows the grade levels and the corresponding age of students. The ages given in the table are approximate as some students have had their schooling disrupted due to internal displacement in Burma. In addition, if progress is limited, pupils repeat an academic year.

Table 16 | Grades and corresponding ages

Level	Primary							Secondary					
Stage	Lower Primary				Upper Primary			Lower Secondary			Upper Secondary		
Grade/ Standard*	KG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Age	5+	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17+

* In the camps, the term 'Standard' is used to mean 'Grade', so that Grade 1 is referred to as Standard 1.

Source: Steadman (2008)

Curriculum

The curriculum, devised by the Karen Education Department (KED) and developed with ZOA's support, covers all educational levels. From Grade 1, the curriculum will consist of

- Mathematics – Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry
- Social studies – History, Geography and Social Studies
- Health and Physical Education
- Science – Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology
- Languages - Karen, Burmese and English

Thai is to be taught from Grade 4 onwards. Currently, there are some local variations, e.g., Tham Hin camp offers Computer Studies at the secondary level.

At present, the standards and content for four subjects from the Thai Ministry of Education will be adopted and translated to Karen and Burmese for tuition in the camps: Thai, English, Maths and Science. This is part of the process of developing equivalent learning standards for refugee and Thai education to support the recognition of the new curriculum.

Assessment

Each school sets its own exams for each grade level. Two formal examinations, set by the KRCEE, are known as the Board Exams and are taken at the end of Grades 6 and 9. A leaving certificate is issued at the end of Grade 12.

Post-secondary schooling

Since the change in the structure of the grade levels, post-secondary education now begins after Grade 12. It is still commonly referred to as Post-10 education. It now comes under the aegis of the KRCEE. Table 17 shows that there are 27 post-secondary schools[5] in six of the camps; Ban Don Yang does not have any post-secondary schools.

Table 17 | Number of students, teachers and schools in the post-secondary cycle by camp March 2009

Camp	Students	Teachers	Schools
Mae La	423	80	9
Umphiem-Mai	112	25	4
Nu Po	165	54	4
Mae Ra Ma Luang	246	37	6
Mae La Oon	136	23	2
Tham Hin	12	10	2
Ban Don Yang*	0	0	0
Total	1094	229	27

* There are no post-secondary schools in Ban Don Yang.

Source: ZOA internal statistics for 2008-9 academic year collected in March 2009

Religious learning

Religious learning is provided for children in monasteries (Buddhism) and schools akin to madrassahs (Islam). Parents may either send their children to a mainstream school or a religious school or both. Christianity is taught in church and there are no separate schools for it.

Special education

Until 2008, World Education sub-granted to the KWO to support programmes for children who are deaf, blind or have learning difficulties. They also supported an early intervention programme and inclusive education. Since then World Education has been providing technical support and inclusion training to the KWO on request. At present, the KWO provides special education programmes for children who are deaf, blind or have learning difficulties and this is done in their learning centres.

Vocational learning

There is a plethora of vocational learning programmes in the camps provided by a host of NGOs and CBOs. These range from basket weaving to agricultural skills.

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[5] Changes to the structure and areas of responsibility within 'Higher Education' under KRCEE have meant that this figure is no longer accurate. (ZOA – 2010)

Adult learning

Adult learning programmes include a host of programmes, such as literacy programmes run by the KWO and English courses provided by ZOA and a number of independent programmes with varying levels of support from groups like Thabyay Curriculum Project, CBOs, religious organisations and independent donors.

Night school

Night school is available in Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang and it provides learning opportunities for adults and young people who want to complete their secondary school studies using the KED (KRCEE)-approved curriculum. It is limited in the grade levels that are provided and in scale.

The impact of resettlement on education

The resettlement of refugees from the camps to other countries has had a significant impact on the education system as a whole. Since 2004, more than 50,000 refugees from the nine official camps have been resettled to other countries (UNHCR, 2009). This has affected the education sector disproportionately. First, Banki and Lang (2007) found that within each education level, education personnel with higher education levels were more likely to express interest, submit an application, be accepted, and depart for resettlement than those with no education. Second, the majority of those who are highly educated and have jobs are those in the education sector. According to Banki and Lang (2007), the education sector employs, by far, the largest number of camp refugees. Altogether, teachers, principals, teacher trainers, educators in special education, post-secondary, vocational training, non-formal education, and other associated staff comprised 3,400 workers in the camps, just under half of the total of 7,000 for the nine refugee camps in 2007 (Bank and Lang, 2007).

The outflow of more highly educated education personnel has affected the education system in the following ways: there is a greater turnover of teachers and more teachers, principals, subject coordinators and teacher trainers need to be trained.

This section has described the overall situation in relation to resettlement and education. In the following chapters, the data collected on the impact of resettlement on learning, teaching and training are presented for specific groups of learners and education staff.

Conclusion

The background to the education survey, the Burmese refugees living in Thailand and the education system they have established have been the substantive themes of these first three chapters. The intention is to provide the reader with some context of the education in the camps, which will form the backdrop to the survey findings reported in the following chapters.

Chapter 4 | Participation in general education

This chapter provides an overview of the participation of children and young people in primary and secondary schools in the seven camps. The total number of learners is presented, followed by the gross enrolment rate and a discussion on dropout.

Participation in general education

Number of students by education cycle

Between 2007 and 2010, the percentage of primary students in the general education system ranged between 56 and 65%. Table 18 breaks down the number of students by cycle for the three academic years. The total number of students for 2007-8 and 2008-9 was relatively stable, hovering around 36,000. However, there was a 6.6% decrease in the total number of students from 2008-9 to 2009-10.

Table 18 | Total number of students by cycle 2008-2010[a]

Academic year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2007-8	23,482	12,861	36,343
2008-9	20,129	16,346	36,475
2009-10	20,235	13,813	34,048

[a] Figures are taken from ZOA statistics from December of that academic year

Participation by gender

For the three academic years – 2007-10 – the percentage of male students in the primary cycle is higher than that of female students, at slightly more than 51%. However, the proportion is reversed in the secondary cycle with female students ranging between 50 and 51% in the three years.

Participation by religion

In the 2008-9 academic year, 57.7% of the primary students were Christian, more than a third were Buddhist, 6.8% were Muslim. The rest were categorised under 'other' religions.

Mae La, Umphiem-Mai and Nu Po camps had the most number of Muslim students, whereas the proportion of Christian students was much higher than the other religions in Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La Oon, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang camps as shown in Figure 14. In fact, the number was often more than twofold that of Buddhist students.

Figure 14 | Primary students by religion 2008-9
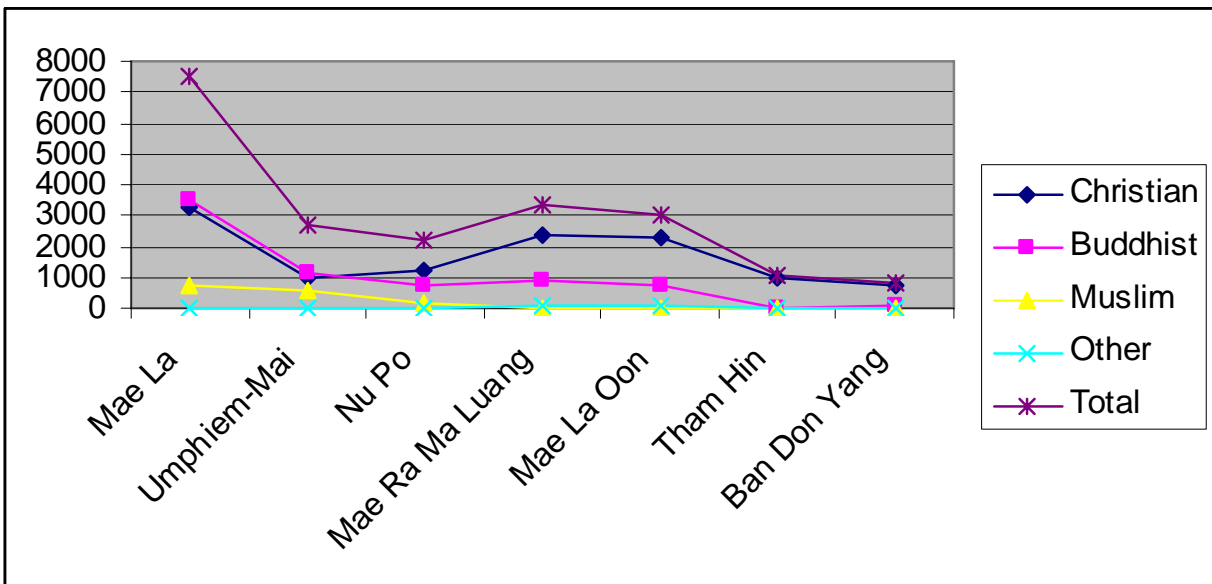
For secondary students, the proportion of Christian students was higher than in the primary cycle, with Christian students representing 64% of the secondary student population. The Buddhist students made up roughly the same numbers as in the primary cycle, at about a third. The percentage of Muslim students was much lower than in the primary cohort, at 1.2%.

Figure 15 | Secondary students by camp by religion 2008-9
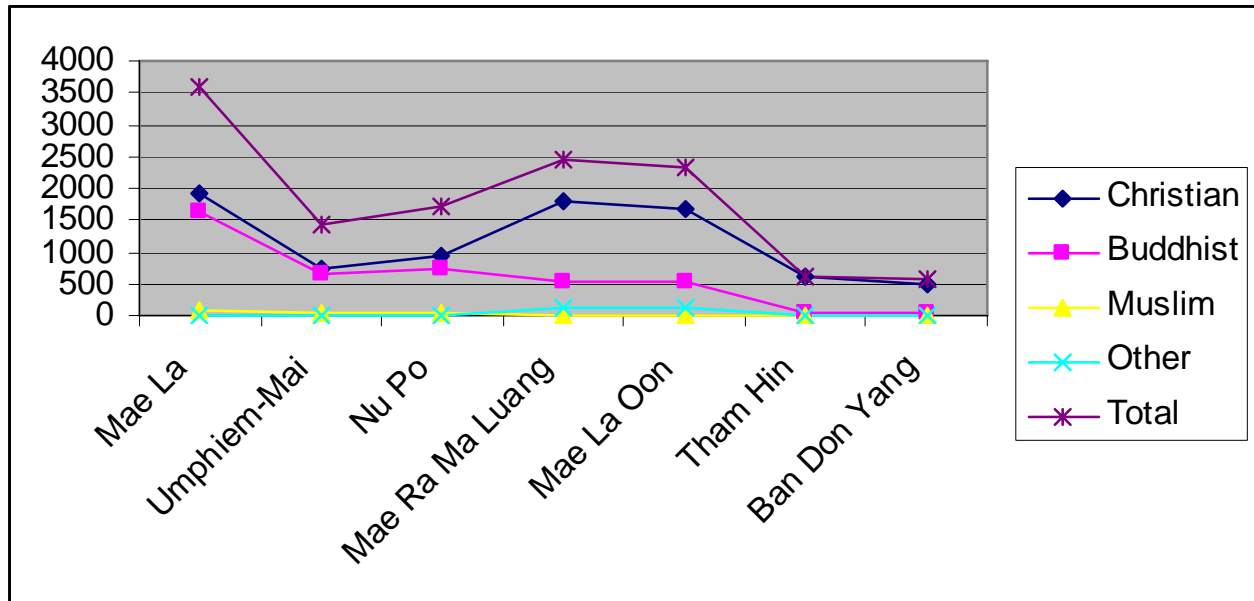
Gross enrolment rate

The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school-year. It is widely used to show the general level of participation in a given level of education. It indicates the capacity of the education system to enrol students of a particular age-group. It is calculated by dividing the number of students enrolled in a given level of education regardless of age by the population of the age-group which officially corresponds to the given level of education, and multiplied by 100[6].

Table 19 | Gross enrolment rate for end of academic year 2008-9

		Mae La	Umphiem-Mai	Nu Po	Mae Ra Ma Luang	Mae La Oon	Tham Hin	Ban Don Yang	Total
GER (standard for end of year >= 80%)									
GER	**M**	104.67%	89.26%	73.24%	91.03%	95.92%	107.01%	108.29%	94.93%
(Primary)	**F**	109.75%	95.14%	78.68%	91.22%	90.84%	110.34%	111.88%	97.62%
	T	107.13%	92.05%	75.89%	91.12%	93.40%	108.58%	110.01%	96.23%
GER	**M**	14.86%	11.81%	13.46%	20.10%	20.42%	17.04%	17.91%	15.98%
(Secondary)	**F**	14.74%	12.14%	15.55%	20.87%	21.10%	25.37%	18.71%	16.88%
	T	14.80%	11.97%	14.45%	20.48%	20.75%	21.29%	18.32%	16.43%

Source: ZOA 2008-9 March 2009 figures for enrolment and KRC May 2009 camp figures

As Table 19 shows, the GER is significantly different between the primary and secondary cycles. In the primary cycle, the GER is almost 100%. This drops to an average of about 16% in the secondary cycle. For both cycles, the GER is lower for male students than for female students.

There seems to be a significant difference in GER for secondary schooling across the camps. Umphiem-Mai camp has the lowest GER for enrolment in secondary schooling, while Tham Hin camp has the highest. Mae Ra Ma Luang and Mae La Oon have about the same value as Tham Hin. This could be due to inaccuracy of the figures for the total number of children and young people of secondary school-going age, or it could be due to certain factors within camp that foster a greater or lesser enrolment of students in secondary schools. More investigation into this would shed light on this issue.

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[6] This definition was taken from the World Bank, available at http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstats/RegionalIndicators/caribbean/definition.html

Two caveats need to be raised when considering these figures. First, the numbers used are not based on the school-age population because it is not always possible for students to attend the grade that corresponds to their age, due to prolonged internal displacement before reaching camp, and/or the lack of educational opportunities in their villages. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to minimise the error by using aggregate primary and secondary numbers instead of numbers for each grade level.

Second, feeding figures used by the TBBC give categories of children by age: 0-5, 6-12, 12-17. These figures were used to calculate the GER. They do not accurately reflect the total number of children and young people of school-going age because some students are not registered in these figures and some students who are older than 17 years old attend secondary school. This explains why the GER for some camps is greater than 100%.

Dropout

Students who dropped out are defined as those who left school before completing a school year, and those who did not complete school up to Standard 10 (for the cohort that completed in 2008) and Grade 12 (for subsequent cohorts).

The number of students who dropped out is calculated by subtracting the total number of students at the beginning of the school year from the number in December of the same year. The reason for using the figure in December is to introduce some consistency across the years – there is no information for the number of students in March for all the years between 2008 and 2010.

Table 20 | Student enrolment change by camp (percentage)

Camp	2007-8 [a]	2008-9	2009-10
Mae La	-16.9	-4.8	-4.7
Umphiem-Mai	+0.1	-3.7	-0.3
Nu Po	-19.7	-16.7	+0.7
Mae Ra Ma Luang	-6.1	-1.4	-4.1
Mae La Oon	-3.9	-1.4	-3.8
Tham Hin	-11.6	-4.4	-4.8
Ban Don Yang	+1.6	-5.0	-4.4
Total	**-10.3**	**-5.1**	**-3.3**

[a] Figures for 2007-8 are calculated using the number of students in KGB, KGA and Standards 1 to 10; those for 2008-9 and 2009-10 are calculated using the number of students in Grades 1 to 12

The figures are not accurate because they do not distinguish between students who left because of resettlement/to continue their studies in another school and those who stopped schooling altogether.

As Figure 16 shows, except for Umphiem-Mai and Ban Don Yang camps, the dropout rate fell for all the camps in the last three academic years.

Figure 16 | Change in student numbers by camp (percentage)
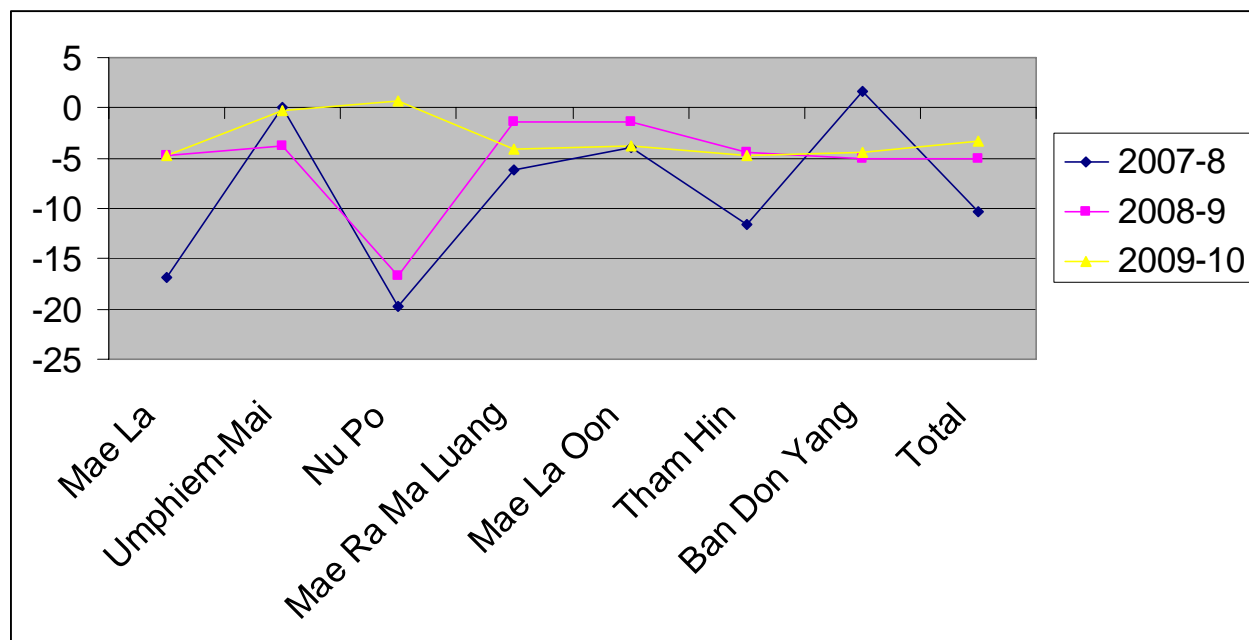
In the survey, 59 people who had dropped out of school were interviewed. Table 21 shows the number interviewed per camp.

Table 21 | Number of persons interviewed in the survey who did not complete secondary school

Camp	Number of persons interviewed
Mae La	15
Umphiem-Mai	4
Nu Po	8
Mae Ra Ma Luang	8
Mae La Oon	9
Tham Hin	7
Ban Don Yang	7
Missing information	1
Total	**59**

Of the 59 respondents, 43.1% were male. The majority (56.9%) lived at home with their parents, a quarter with their relatives and 10.3% in their own homes. The rest lived in a dormitory or in other arrangements. Almost all of them (91.5%) were Skaw Karen and 6.8% were Pwo Karen. Almost all of them

(90%) had been born in a village in Burma. The range of years they had lived in the camp was between zero and 19 years. The largest number of respondents – almost a fifth of them had lived in camp for 10 years.

The highest level of education completed ranged from none to Standard 10 (now known as Grade 12) as shown in Figure 17. The largest number of respondents had completed Standard 7 (currently Grade 9). This was followed by Standards 6 and 9, and Standards 4 and 5. The transition between primary and middle school occurred between Standards 4 and 5, and that for middle and secondary school occurred between Standards 7 and 8. It seems, as is common in many education systems, that these transition grades are points where dropout occurs the most often.

Figure 17 | Highest standard completed

Highest standard completed

Highest standard completed
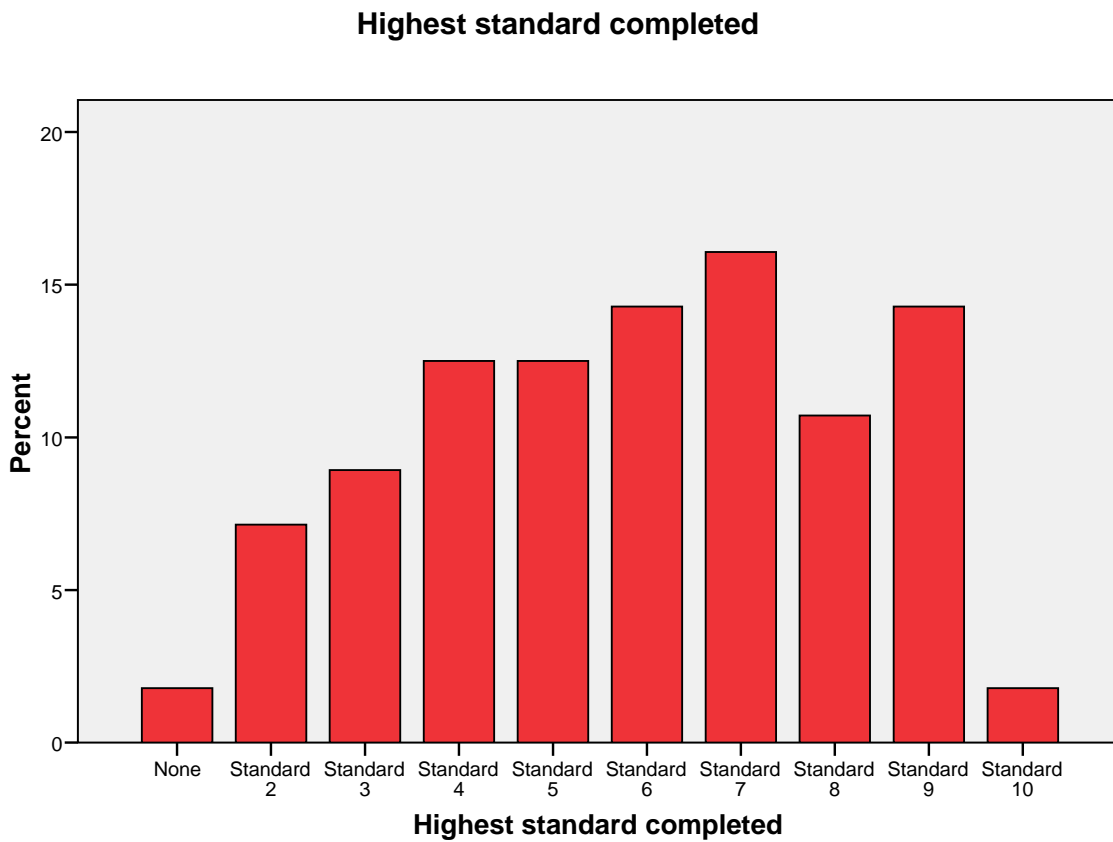
Respondents were asked for their reasons for leaving school, their learning concerns at school and the language of instruction.

The most significant reasons for dropout were

- to get married – 43.6%
- learning difficulties – 18.2%
- to help their family by working – 10.9%

These responses are similar to those given in 2005. Similarly, the gendered nature of dropout follows the same pattern as that in 2005. The majority (77.4%) of people who reported that they had left school because they had gotten married were female. Of those who had learning difficulties, 58.3% were male. Finally, of those who had dropped out because they had to help their family, 71.4% were male.

In the current survey, respondents were asked for information about the type of learning difficulties they encountered. Of the 56 who responded, 23.2% had health-related problems that made it difficulty for them to fully participate in class. These ailments included fever, headaches, dizziness, heart problems, eye problems, stomach aches and liver disease.

When asked if they had any health-related problems that made it difficult for them to study at home, 14.5% answered in the positive.

Slightly more than a quarter (28.6%) reported that they have special learning needs. Of these, only 16.7% said that the school helped them with their special learning needs.

A quarter of them considered themselves 'slow learners' and slightly more than half felt that the school had helped them with their needs. When asked why they believed they were 'slow learners', the most common reasons given were: difficulty remembering and not being able keep up with others in the class.

For those who reported having special learning needs and being a 'slow learner', and who confirmed that the school helped them with their needs, the type of support they received was from teachers, who worked with them to explain lessons and gave them more of their time.

When asked if they would continue studying if given the opportunity, 73.2% said yes.

Recommendations and conclusion

Participation in the primary cycle seems to be at least 100%. The education system is doing a good job in providing access to primary education to all children in the camps. However, this participation falls dramatically at the secondary levels, with only 11 to 20% enrolling in secondary schools. More attention needs to be paid to the possibility of dropout at the transition points

from primary to middle, and middle to higher secondary school. Principals, teachers, parents and the KRCEE need to be aware of this pattern of dropout and work together to stem this. It could be the case that for the primary levels, learning problems are encountered by students in the earlier grades and these are compounded as they move up the system, so that by the time they reach the end of the primary cycle, they face numerous unresolved learning obstacles. A solid foundation needs to be built from the start of their primary schooling.

With regards to participation by gender, while the ratio of male to female students in the primary cycles across the seven camps is somewhat equal, the GER shows that especially in the secondary grades, more female students are participating in schooling than male students in all seven camps. There seems to be a gender-related component to participation which needs further investigation, so that it will be possible to determine the reasons for lower male participation particularly in the higher grades.

While the differences in participation by gender are, at present, slight, the differences by religion reveal a starker picture. The Muslim population makes up roughly 12-24%[7] (UNHCR, 2006) of the camp population in the three camps in Tak province – Mae La, Umphiem-Mai and Nu Po – yet, only 1.2% of the secondary school population is Muslim. This is a grave situation and has implications on the extent to which inclusion is taken seriously in schools in the camps. One of the main reasons for this is the language of instruction - Skaw Karen - which is not the home language of this group of learners. Also, some textbooks are in the process of being translated from English into Skaw Karen and Burmese (see Oh and van der Stouwe (2008) for more detail). This is a systemic issue which requires a systemic change. It cannot be resolved through short-term inclusive measures but through committed dialogue and efforts to re-orient the education system in such a way that Burmese-speaking Muslim students are no longer disadvantaged by an education system that teaches them in a foreign language and which does not add to their preparation for resettlement, repatriation or integration into Thai society.

As the majority of the respondents interviewed about their reasons for dropout are Skaw or Pwo Karen, the data from this survey does not give nuanced information on reasons by religion/ethnicity. What it does show is that, like the survey in 2005, there is usually a combination of reasons for dropout and the top reasons for dropout remain the same: adolescent marriage, learning difficulties and having to help the family.

The first reason for dropout reflects the cultural and social restriction imposed upon young people who become sexually active. The second reveals the inadequacy of schools to address the learning difficulties encountered by the weakest students. The third reason is a systemic issue – the lack of income and work opportunities available to camp residents, thereby requiring young

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[7] The UNHCR figures are based on the registration exercise that took place in 2005 and are therefore not up-to-date. However, they give some idea of the proportion of Muslim residents in the camps.

people to drop out of school to attend to their families and/or contribute to the household income.

These issues require changes within society, schools and Thai government policies. Changing attitudes and external policy needs to be done but it will take time. In the meantime, certain measures are already in place to provide students who drop out with alternative forms of education. However, these need to be improved.

Night school is available to young people in Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang but instruction for Grades 10 to 12 is provided only. In addition, few students who drop out do actually switch to night school. Further investigation needs to be conducted into why they do not attend. Second, there are other courses offered in the camps, including a course on basic education provided by the KWO. These programmes, while addressing the learning needs of the adult population, do not directly tackle the reasons why students dropped out of school in the first place: early marriage, learning difficulties and economic necessity.

Finally, there has to be more effort put into identifying the number and reasons for dropout. More accurate figures need to be collected by the schools and by ZOA so that there can be a clearer understanding of the nature and scope of the issue and how best to resolve it. The data collected from interviews with people who had dropped out of school in this survey is limited. It is not a comprehensive and representative sample nor does it have in-depth data on the reasons for not attending alternative forms of schooling.

Chapter 5 | Learning and instruction in schools

In this chapter, the learning experience of students in general education and the instruction they receive as reported by them are considered. The purpose of this is to determine the quality and relevance of the learning including instruction and the curriculum. This is embedded in an overarching framework based on the characteristics of a rights-based child-friendly (UNICEF, undated) school, which are

1. reflects and realises the rights of every child -- cooperates with other partners to promote and monitor the well-being and rights of all children; defends and protects all children from abuse and harm (as a sanctuary), both inside and outside the school

2. sees and understands the whole child, in a broad context -- is concerned with what happens to children before they enter the system (e.g., their readiness for school in terms of health and nutritional status, social and linguistic skills), and once they have left the classroom -- back in their homes, the community, and the workplace

3. is child-centred -- encourages participation, creativity, self-esteem, and psycho-social well-being; promotes a structured, child-centred curriculum and teaching-learning methods appropriate to the child's developmental level, abilities, and learning style; and considers the needs of children over the needs of the other actors in the system

4. is gender-sensitive and girl-friendly – promotes parity in the enrolment and achievement of girls and boys; reduces constraints to gender equity and eliminates gender stereotypes; provides facilities, curricula, and learning processes welcoming to girls

5. promotes quality learning outcomes -- encourages children to think critically, ask questions, express their opinions -- and learn how to learn; helps children master the essential enabling skills of writing, reading, speaking, listening, and mathematics and the general knowledge and skills required for living in the new century -- including useful traditional knowledge and the values of peace, democracy, and the acceptance of diversity

6. provides education based on the reality of children's lives -- ensures that curricular content responds to the learning needs of individual children as well as to the general objectives of the education system and the local context and traditional knowledge of families and the community

7. is flexible and responds to diversity -- meets differing circumstances and needs of children (e.g., as determined by gender, culture, social class, ability level)

8. acts to ensure inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity for all children -- does not stereotype, exclude, or discriminate on the basis of difference

9. promotes mental and physical health – provides emotional support, encourages healthy behaviours and practices, and guarantees a hygienic, safe, secure and joyful environment

10. provides education that is affordable and accessible -- especially to children and families most at-risk

11. enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment, and status -- ensures that its teachers have sufficient pre-service training, in-service support and professional development, status, and income

12. is family focused -- attempts to work with and strengthen families and helps children, parents and teachers establish harmonious, collaborative partnerships

13. is community-based -- strengthens school governance through a decentralised, community-based approach; encourages parents, local government, community organisations, and other institutions of civil society to participate in the management as well as the financing of education; promotes community partnerships and networks focused on the rights and well-being of children

In the survey, all characteristics except 2, 4, 9 and 13 were examined in varying degrees of detail. The characteristics corresponding to point 11 on teachers, is covered in detail in the next chapter. Point 12 - parents and schools - is the topic of the chapter following that.

In all, 437 primary students, 377 secondary students and 308 teachers responded to the questions on child-friendly instruction and learning in the survey.

1. Reflects and realises the rights of every child

Almost all respondents felt comfortable in school (more than 90%), liked going to school and enjoyed being with their classmates. However, a slightly lower percentage of secondary students felt that they were accepted by their classmates (86.1%) as compared to primary students (87.5%).

Similarly, 89.4% of secondary and 87.1 % of primary students felt that people in school respect their culture and background.

With regards to how they thought their teachers perceived them, the majority felt that they were accepted by their teachers (98%) and that they could talk to their teacher about a problem they had at school (94-96%). However, fewer felt that their teachers took an interest in how they were doing in general (80.6% of secondary and 85% of primary students) and were not afraid to talk to their teachers (87%).

Of those interviewed, 87.2% of teachers agreed that the school is a safe place for their students.

3. Is child-centred

Almost all teachers agreed that it is important to encourage students with positive remarks and that they wished they had more time to talk to their students individually. Of those interviewed, 86% disagreed that their job is to look after their students' academic progress only, and not their well-being.

5. Promotes quality learning outcomes

In general, the students gave positive feedback on their teachers' instruction. More than 90% of all students disagreed with the statement 'I don't like the way my teachers teach'. Almost all of the students agreed that the learning activities in class help them to understand the topic, and more than 90% of the students disagreed with the statement 'Teachers' teaching is not clear'.

In relation to how they interacted with their teachers, the proportion of students who felt comfortable with their teachers was much lower. For example, 14.4% of the secondary students who responded were afraid to ask for their teacher's help, and this figure was higher (21.4%) for primary students. Only 59.5% of the secondary students were comfortable asking their teachers questions in class, as compared to 65.5% of the primary students interviewed.

In terms of class participation, though, a greater percentage (82% of the secondary and 87.9% of primary students) felt that their teachers encouraged them to participate in class.

A much higher percentage of secondary students (92%) felt that their teachers listen when they have something to say in class. This was lower for primary students (88%).

Only 60.5% of the 308 teachers interviewed felt confident teaching their subject and more than a quarter (28.4%) reported not having enough knowledge of their subject to answer some of their students' questions. With regards to teaching practices, opinion was divided on whether a good lesson is one where the students do not talk amongst themselves: 46.2% agreed and 53.8% disagreed. Nevertheless, 97.7% reported that they encourage their students to ask questions during class.

Almost all the students interviewed agreed that they learn a lot at school (98.4%) and that the topics are interesting (92%). However, only 75.5% of secondary students and 66.4% of primary students had their own textbook for all subjects, and slightly more than 50% of all students found it difficult to understand the textbook when it is written in English.

The language of instruction used has an impact on access to learning, as not all students understand Skaw Karen. In fact, slightly more than a fifth of the secondary students interviewed reported not understanding the language their teachers use to teach. This figure was a little lower for primary students (15.7%).

A third of the teachers interviewed also reported that their students have difficulty with the language of instruction. Of those in the sample, 81.8% teach in Skaw Karen, 16.3% in Burmese, 0.3% in Pwo, with 1.6% in other languages (Thai, English).

Student-teacher ratios

Table 22 shows that the student-teacher ratio varies across camps and education cycles. Mae La camp has the highest ratio for the primary cycle and the lowest for the secondary cycle.

Table 22 | Student-teacher ratio[a] by education cycle and camp 2008-9

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Mae La	46 : 1	10 : 1	21 : 1
Umphiem-Mai	24 : 1	19 : 1	22 : 1
Nu Po	21 : 1	17 : 1	19 : 1
Mae Ra Ma Luang	24 : 1	27 : 1	25 : 1
Mae La Oon	23 : 1	19 : 1	21 : 1
Tham Hin	26 : 1	11 : 1	17 : 1
Ban Don Yang	20 : 1	21 : 1	21 : 1
Total	28 : 1	15 : 1	21 : 1

[a] The figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest integer as appropriate.

For the primary levels, all the camps besides Mae La have between 20 and 26 students per teacher. However, this figure has to be interpreted with caution. It is an average across all primary grades, and there are typically more students in the lower grades than in the higher ones. It is not unusual to have more than 60 students in the lower levels of primary school. In addition, the ratio varies by school.

For the secondary levels, the number of students per teacher ranges between 10 and 27, with Mae Ra Ma Luang camp having the highest number of students per teacher.

There is an additional factor that adversely affects the learning environment: noise from the surrounding classrooms. The classrooms are separated by bamboo walls and are not enclosed all around. As all the classrooms are on the same level, the noise from other classrooms reverberates throughout the whole school, thereby disrupting the teaching in all the classrooms.

About a third of all students agreed that the classrooms are too crowded and noisy and slightly more than a third of teachers agreed with this.

6. Provides education based on the reality of children's lives

This section examines the extent to which the curriculum is relevant to different aspects of the lives of the students. The dimensions of curriculum relevance are:

- relevance to the learning environment, teaching resources and camp environment
- relevance to camp life and community
- relevance to work
- relevance to furthering students' studies
- relevance to resettlement and repatriation.

Relevance of curriculum and schooling given the learning environment, teaching resources and camp environment

In order to ascertain this, an analysis of the infrastructure, learning environment and teaching resources would need to be conducted with reference to the camp context (e.g., the number of jobs, job requirements). This is outside the scope of this project.

However, as reported above, the students did report finding the learning activities relevant and the topics interesting.

Relevance to camp life and community

The overwhelming majority of students (more than 90%) believed that what they learn in school helps to prepare them for a useful life in camp and to work for their community in camp.

Teachers were a little less positive about the usefulness of the school curriculum in preparing students for a useful life in camps: only three quarters agreed that what is taught in their school helps to prepare their students to live a useful life in camp. On the other hand, 93.4% of teachers interviewed agreed with the students that what they learn in school will enable them to work for the community in camp.

A very high percentage (95.4% of secondary and 96% of primary) of students agreed with the statement 'People will respect me more if I have achieved high levels of education'. Of those interviewed, 96% of the teachers believed that too.

Relevance to work

With regards to work, 92% of secondary students and 88.5% of primary students disagreed with the statement 'The education that I receive in school is not useful for getting a job in camp', and 93.9% of secondary students and 98.2% of primary students agreed with 'If I achieve high levels of education, I am more likely to get a good job in camp'. However, a much lower percentage (69.8% of secondary and 76.5% of primary students) disagreed with the statement 'I don't understand why I have to go to school when I won't be able to get a job after that'. This implies that the students interviewed were convinced that the education they receive is useful for attaining jobs in camp, and that the higher levels of education they achieve, the greater their chances of obtaining a good job. However, they were realistic about their own ability to obtain those jobs and aware that these jobs are scarce.

Teachers also believed that the education in school is relevant to students' work opportunities. The majority (94.5%) believed that what students learn at school helps them to get a job and 93.7% disagreed with the statement 'The education that my students receive in school is not useful for getting a job in camp'. However, only 84.3% agreed that if their students were to achieve high levels of education, they would be more likely to get a good job in camp, once again reflecting the awareness of the scarcity of good jobs in camp.

Relevance to furthering their studies

In relation to further opportunities for study, 30.1% of secondary students and 22% of primary students did not understand why they had to go school if they could not further their studies.

With regards to the content, 86.5% of teachers disagreed with the statement 'The curriculum is not good enough to enable my students to further their studies when they finish Standard 12'.

Relevance to resettlement and repatriation

More students found that the education they receive is helpful for when they resettle (86.4% of secondary and 90.8% of primary students) than for returning to Burma (70% of secondary and 73.4% of primary students).

Almost 90% of teachers agreed that the education that their students receive in school is useful for when they resettle in another country, and slightly less than that (82.7%) believed that the education that their students receive in school will be useful when they return to Burma.

Almost a quarter (24%) of the secondary students and 29.5% of the primary students' families were considering resettling to another country. Of those whose families were considering resettling, only 4.4% of the secondary students and 7.1% of the primary students were not interested in going to school because they will be resettling. Almost all of the secondary students (95.5%) and 88.9% of the primary students disagreed with the statement 'What I am learning in school now is not useful to my life in the country I am resettling in'.

The majority believed that what they are learning will be useful to them when they resettle: 97% of all students agreed with the statement 'I continue going to school in camp so that I don't fall behind in my education when I resettle in another country'; 93.3% of secondary students and 82.9% of primary students disagreed with the statement 'I think that the subjects that they teach in school will not help me in my education when I resettle'.

The most relevant school topics to their future resettlement experience were explored in the following statements and listed in descending order:

- I continue going to school so that I can improve my English which will help me when I resettle - 98.9% agreed (secondary), 97.6% agreed (primary)
- I continue going to school so that I have an understanding of my culture and history - 98.9% agreed (secondary), 92.1% agreed (primary)
- I continue going to school so that I learn Karen, which will not be taught in schools in the country we resettle to - 87.6% agreed (secondary), 84.9% agreed (primary)
- I continue going to school so that I learn Burmese and can use it in the future - 83% agreed (secondary), 84.9% agreed (primary).

7. Is flexible and responds to diversity

Health-related learning difficulties
Of those interviewed, 7.2% of secondary students and 6.8% of primary students reported having health-related problems that make it difficult for them to participate fully in class. Examples of these were: malaria, pain in legs and body, nose bleeds, gastric, fever, headaches, pain in the ear, dizziness, eyes that burn while reading and difficulty seeing clearly, liver problems, asthma, heart disease.

A lower percentage of students (3.5% secondary, 4.4% primary) reported having health-related problems that make it difficult for them to study at home.

Out of 307 teachers, slightly more than a quarter (26.4%) reported that their students have health-related problems that make it difficult for them to

participate fully in class. Almost all teachers (92.8%) reported that they did not have any students with health-related problems that made it difficult for them to study at home.

'Slow learner'

Almost a fifth of secondary students and 13.3% of primary students considered themselves 'slow learners'. The reasons they gave were that they could not remember what was taught, they could not recite, they could not follow the lesson and they had difficulty understanding lessons.

More than half (57.4%) reported having students who were considered 'slow learners'. Teachers defined students as 'slow learners' in the following way: students who were naughty, lazy (to read) and did not try hard, were unable to read or write, cannot remember what was taught, cannot catch up with the other students, were unable to understand even after several explanations, and those who had language problems.

The students appeared to define themselves as 'slow learners' if they were unable to retain what they had learnt or if they had difficulty understanding. As outlined above, teachers had a broader definition which, besides those mentioned by the students, included attitude (an unwillingness to learn), language difficulties and differential learning abilities compared to other students.

8. Acts to ensure inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity for all children

With regards to inclusion, about a quarter of the teachers interviewed do not understand what it means to be inclusive in the classroom. One fifth does not know what type of inclusive activities to use during their classes. This is not for want of trying, though; 92.7% of the teachers agreed that they work hard to incorporate teaching methods which include all their students.

10. Provides education that is affordable and accessible

In the survey, 88.3% of the secondary students and 91.5% of the primary students interviewed reported that the school asks them to pay school fees; almost all (95.9% of secondary students and 97.2% of primary students) were able to pay these fees. School fees per year ranged between 5 to 700 Baht for secondary students, with the greatest number paying 70 Baht per year. For primary students, the range was between 5 and 300 Baht with the largest proportion, about a third, paying 60 Baht.

Of those interviewed, 15.6% of secondary students and 13.8% of primary students reported that they had brothers and sisters who were not going to school because their parents could not afford to pay.

Recommendations and conclusion

School appears to be a safe place where students are interested in what they learn, feel that they are learning things of value and that the teachers teach well. The majority of students feel accepted by their teachers and that they can talk to them. They feel that their teachers encourage them to participate and listen to them in class. Teachers also reported encouraging their students and showing interest in their well being, not just their academic performance. However, students are not completely comfortable interacting with their teachers, feeling less at ease about asking questions in class than in participating.

On the whole, teachers are interested in the welfare of their students and try to use child-centred methods and learning practices. However, opinion was divided on whether a good lesson is one where the students do not talk amongst themselves. Worryingly, more than half of the teachers felt inadequate about their knowledge of their subject.

The teachers also demonstrated the desire to be flexible and responsive to the diversity of their students' needs. However, where more needs to be done is in ensuring that students who do not speak Skaw Karen well are not disadvantaged by the language of instruction and that teachers are equipped with the skills to introduce more inclusive practices into their teaching and classroom management techniques.

In addition, health issues need to be better understood by all in school. Correspondingly, the medical nongovernmental organisations need to provide standard health services in school: simple health checks conducted in school should be part of the school routine and teachers should be equipped with ways of identifying health issues.

More investigation needs to be done into why certain children are categorised as 'slow learners'. While the findings in this chapter are a good first step to understanding how students perceive themselves as 'slow learners' and how teachers do so, there needs to be a more nuanced consideration of what this means in reality and in a classroom setting, and how students and teachers can be supported to deal with learners with different needs.

Education is accessible and affordable although there are still children who have difficulty paying the fees or the opportunity cost of going to school.

According to both the students and teachers, the education that they receive is based on the reality of children's lives. The children interviewed were very certain that education contributes to their status, enables them to contribute to their community, provides them with the knowledge and skills required for further study and jobs, and supports them in acquiring some skills that are needed for resettlement and repatriation. However, they were realistic about their actual opportunities for gaining good jobs and furthering their studies.

It is clear that the attitudes and practices towards child-friendly schooling and teacher training need to be implemented to improve the learning experience,

and these will take time. On the other hand, the issue of resources and infrastructure can be more easily and quickly addressed by ZOA. This is particularly so for the provision of textbooks to ensure that all students are provided with a copy of the textbooks they need for school.

Chapter 6 | Education staff in general education

This chapter sets out the overall numbers of education staff in the general education sector as well as a selected demographic profile of the staff interviewed in the seven refugee camps. There are several different types of educational staff working in the camps ranging from cleaners, building caretakers to teaching staff. In this report, the focus is on the profiles of the

1. **Teachers** who work in schools providing general education
2. **Teacher trainers** consisting of Resident Teacher Trainers (RTTs) and Teacher educators
3. **Principals**.

The purpose of the chapter is to provide an overall picture of the number and profile of teachers, trainers and principals, as well as to examine key issues related to the delivery of quality teaching. These issues include teacher turnover and training and support.

The sources of data for the information in this chapter are

- statistics collected by ZOA throughout the year
- interviews conducted with respondents for the survey.

Profile of education staff

Table 23 | Number of staff members by camp 2009-2010 academic year

Camp	Principals[b]	Teachers[a]	RTTs[b]	Teacher educators[b]	Total
Mae La	30	545	18	3	596
Umphiem-Mai	9	198	11	2	220
Nu Po	11	194	8	2	215
Mae Ra Ma Luang	14	255	10	2	281
Mae La Oon	13	271	8	2	294
Tham Hin	4	90	9	2	105
Ban Don Yang	1	75	5	0	81
Total	**82**	**1,628**	**70**	**13**	**1,792**

[a] as at September 2009

[b] as at June 2009

Teachers in primary and secondary schools make up the bulk of the corpus of educational staff. Due to a shortage of teachers, some of them teach at both the primary and secondary level. In Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang camps, some school teachers also teach in the night schools.

Trainers in the camps conduct both pre- and in-service teacher training. The RTTs are responsible for in-service training, while Teacher educators conduct pre-service training. The latter group is a newly established group, the ZOA pre-service training having just begun in 2008.

Principals manage and run the schools. They are primarily responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the schools, recruiting teachers and ensuring that quality education is delivered.

Staff members by gender

Table 24 | Staff members by gender 2009-10

	Principals	**Teachers**	**RTTs**	**Teacher Educators**
Male	44	652	46	8
Female	38	976	24	5
Total	**82**	**1,628**	**70**	**13**

Overall, there are more male principals and trainers than female ones, and there are more female than male teachers. In particular, there is a greater proportion of female to male primary teachers, but this difference lessens in the secondary cycle as shown in Figures 18 and 19.

Figure 18 | Primary teachers by gender by camp 2008-9

Primary teachers by gender
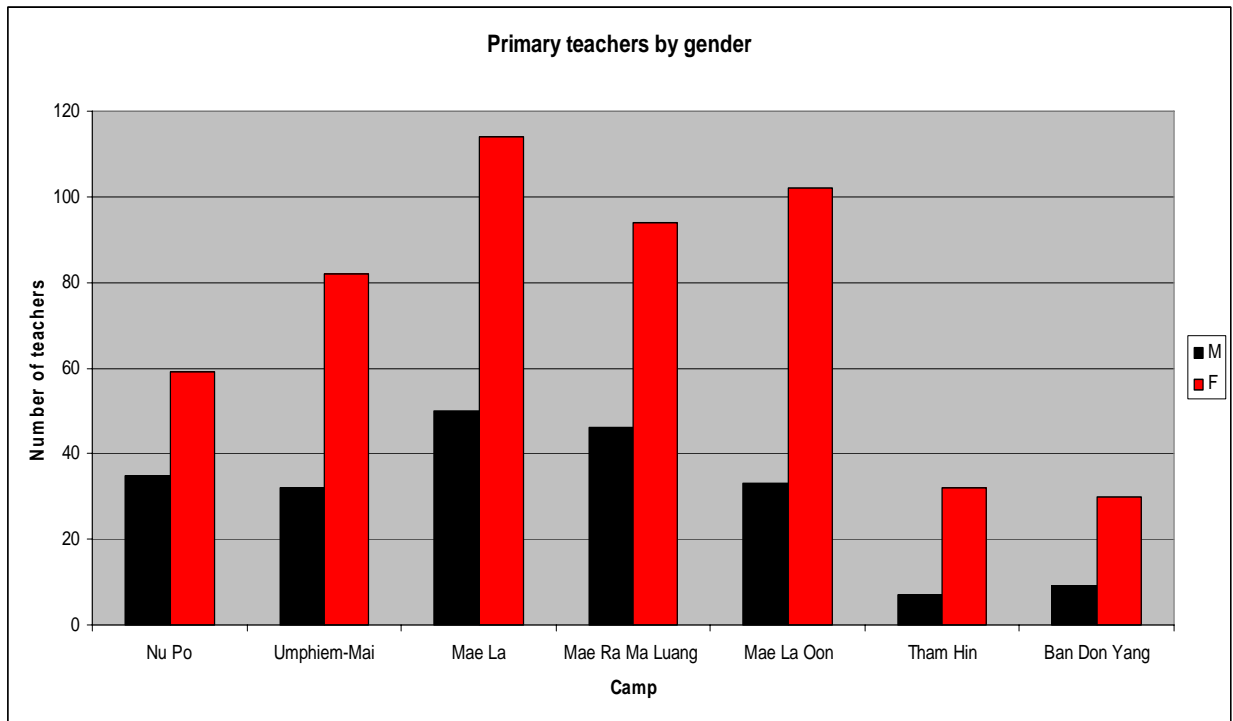
Figure 19 | Secondary teachers by gender by camp 2008-9

Secondary teachers by gender
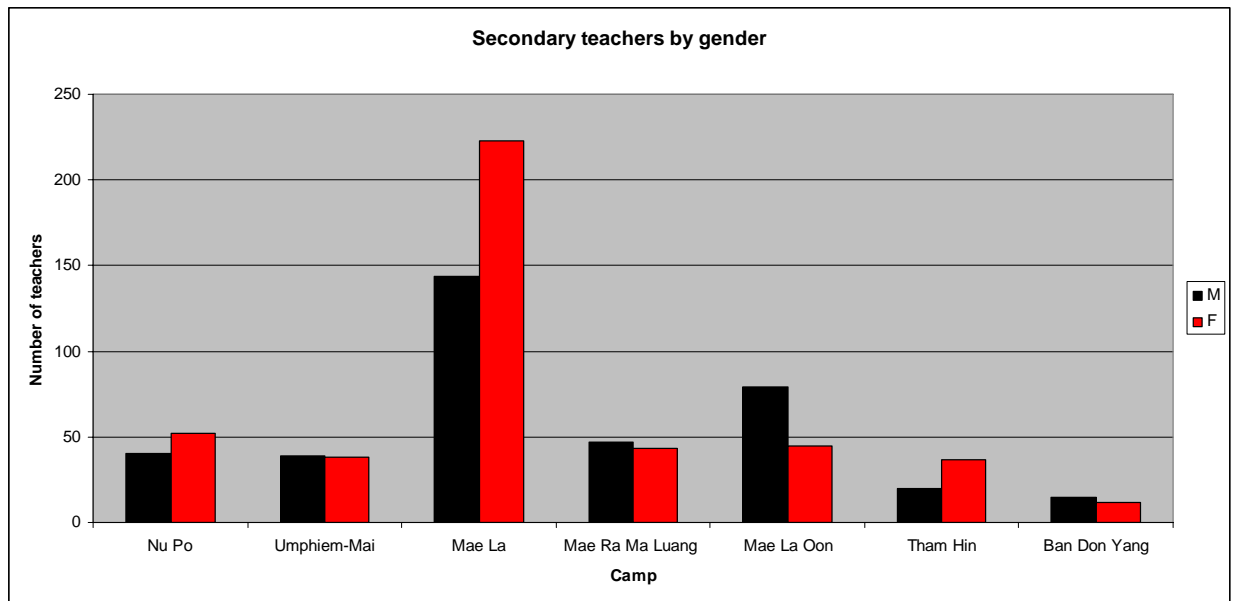
Staff profile from survey data

The total number of education staff interviewed by camp in the survey is set out in Table 25.

Table 25 | Number of staff members interviewed by camp

Camp	Principals	Teachers	RTTs	Teacher Educators
Mae La	14	98	16	3
Umphiem-Mai	4	39	8	1
Nu Po	5	40	10	2
Mae Ra Ma Luang	5	48	8	2
Mae La Oon	6	53	10	2
Tham Hin	3	16	10	0
Ban Don Yang	1	12	6	0
Missing information	NA	2	NA	1
Total	**38**	**308**	**68**	**11**

Ethnic composition

The majority of education staff members are Skaw Karen. Of the 305 teachers interviewed, 80.7% were Skaw Karen, 9.5% were Pwo Karen, 3% were Burman and 1% were Muslim, with the rest made up of individuals from the Shan, Kachin, Mon, Chin, Pa-O and Karenni ethnic groups.

As Figure 20 shows, the majority of principals, RTTs and teacher educators interviewed were Skaw Karen, with a few Pwo Karen and even fewer Burman.

Figure 20 | Education staff by ethnicity
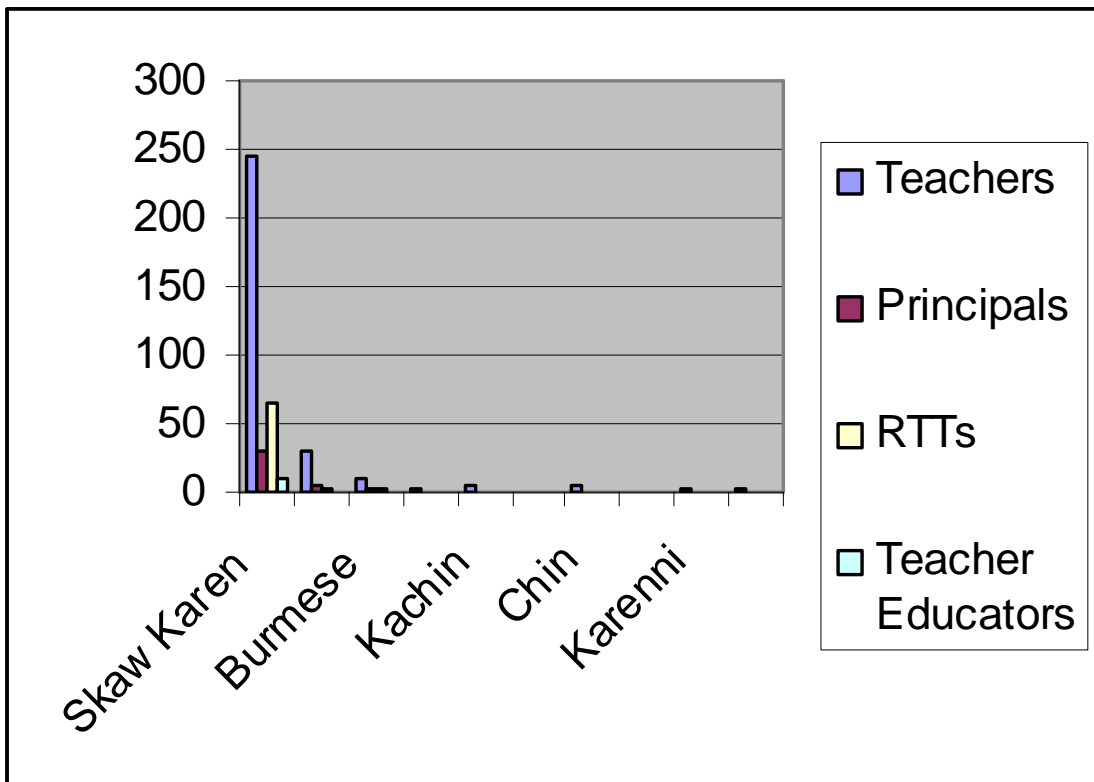
Educational qualifications

Among all staff members, teachers had the greatest range of education levels, from none to university level. The majority had Standard 10 qualifications (41.2%), post-10 qualifications (22.7%) and university degrees (14.9%).

Principals, RTTs and Teacher educators had high levels of education ranging between Standard 9 and university degrees, with the greatest numbers having Standard 10 qualifications, as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21 | Education staff by highest education level attained
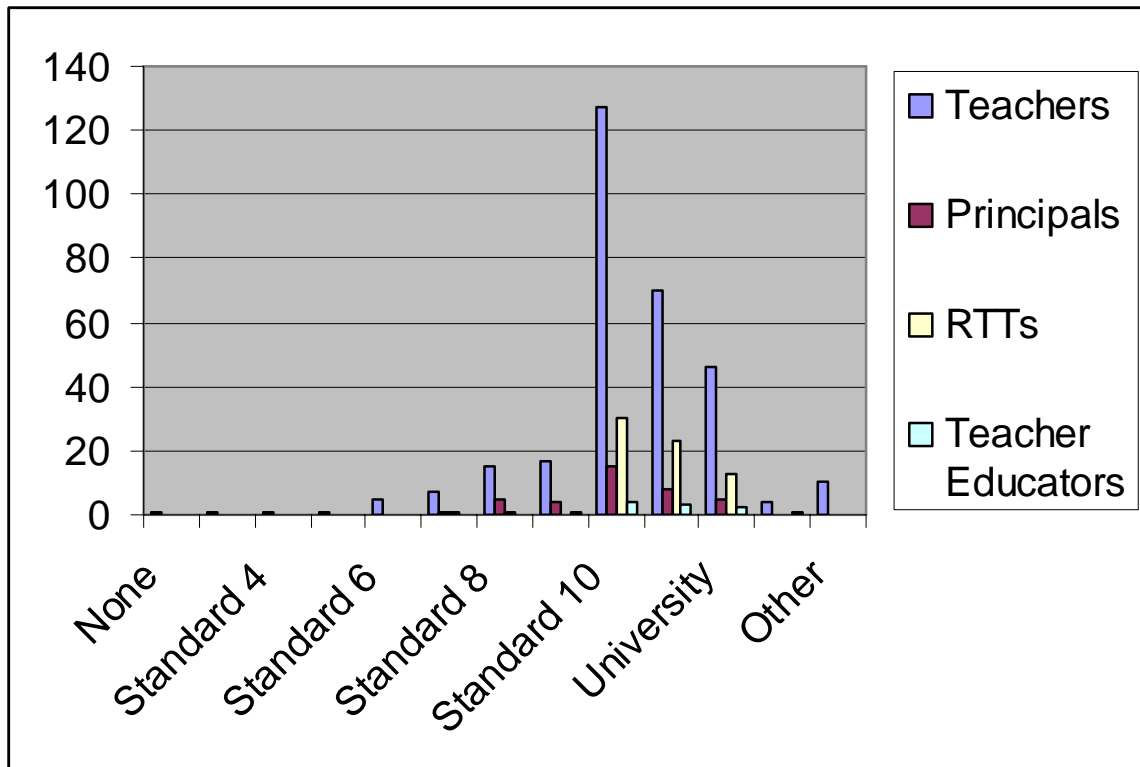
Number of years in camp

The number of years that the education staff has spent in camp ranged between zero and 29 years, with the majority clustering around one and four years.

Figure 22 | Number of years spent in camp
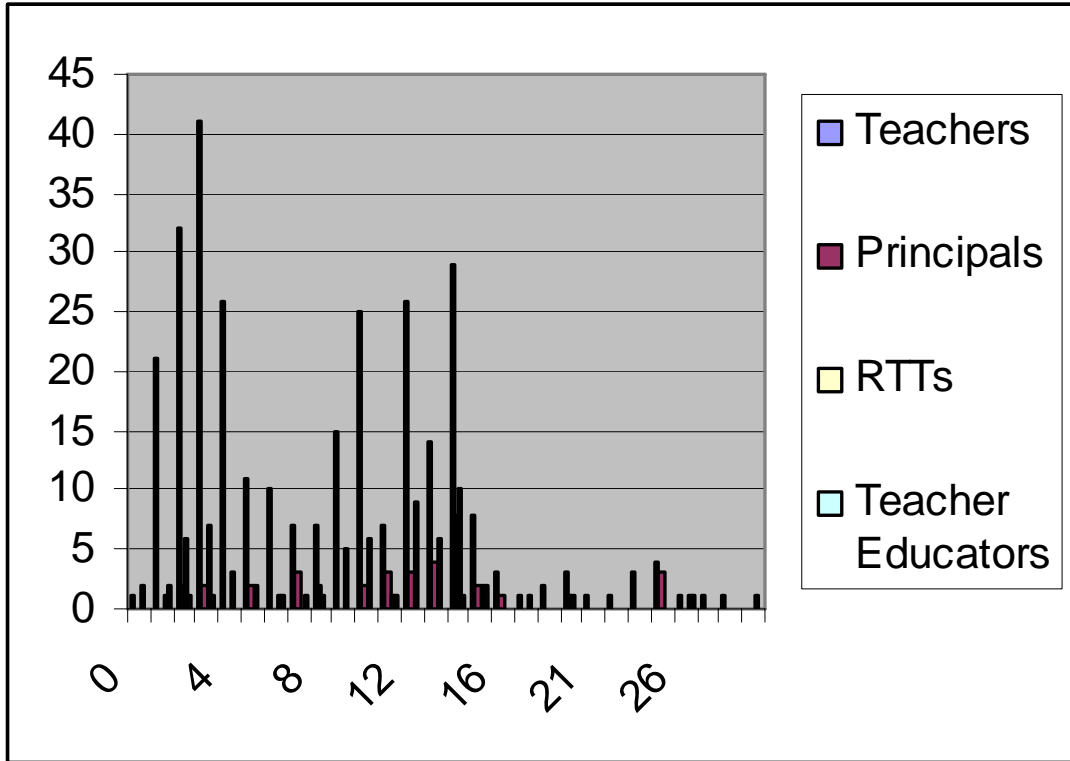
Occupation before camp

As Figure 23 shows, the top three occupations that education staff held before entering camp were, in descending order, student, teacher and farmer.

Figure 23 | Last occupation of staff before entering camp
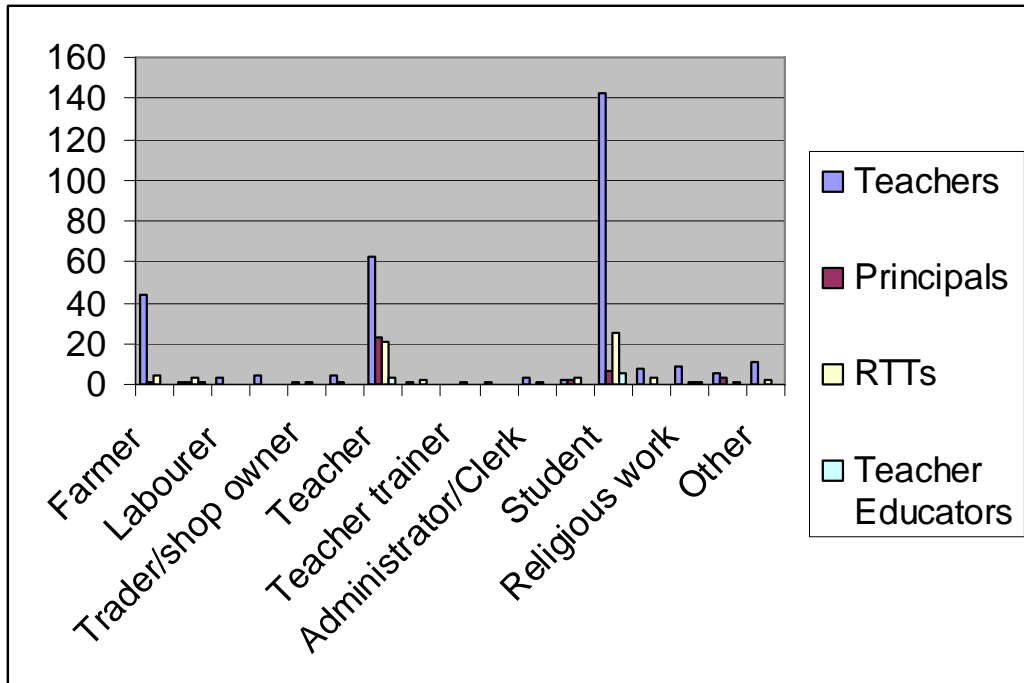
Personal income

Teachers, principals and Teacher educators reported earning 500 to 1000 Baht per month, while RTTs reported earnings of between 101-500 and 101-200 Baht per month.

Figure 24 | Monthly personal income
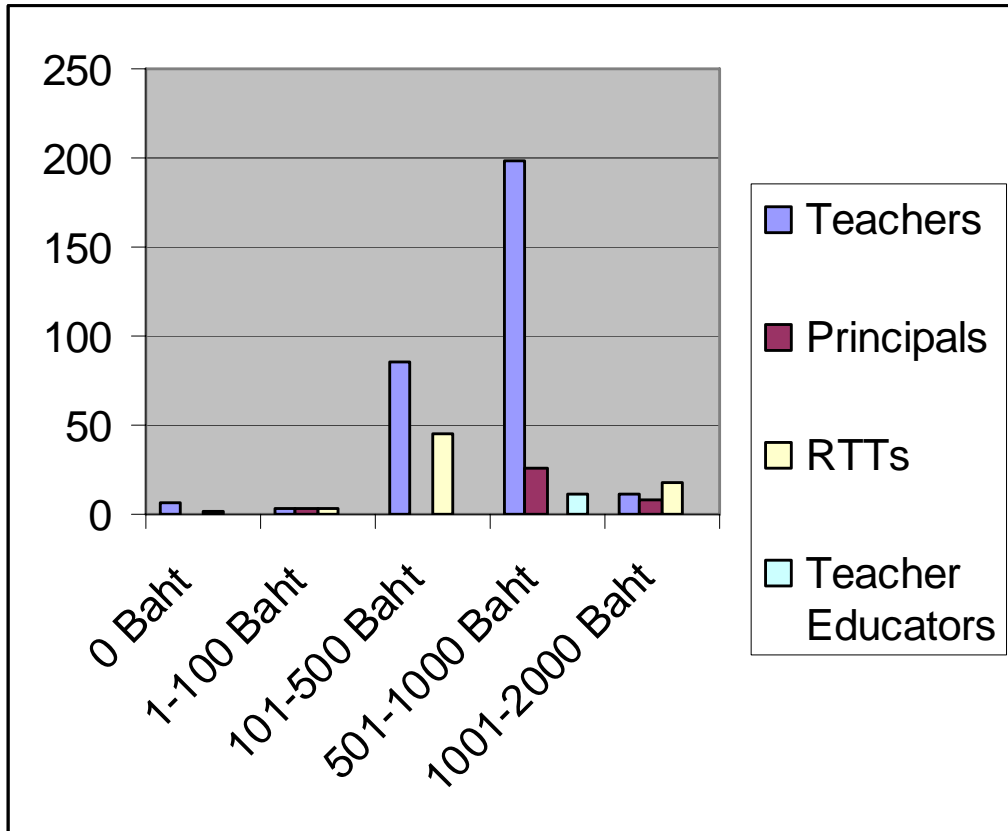
Household income

The household income of education staff ranges from zero to more than 2000 Baht with more teachers than other staff members reporting lower levels of income. In addition, the majority of principals, RTTs and Teacher educators reported having household incomes ranging between 501 and more than 2000 Baht per month.

Figure 25 | Monthly household income
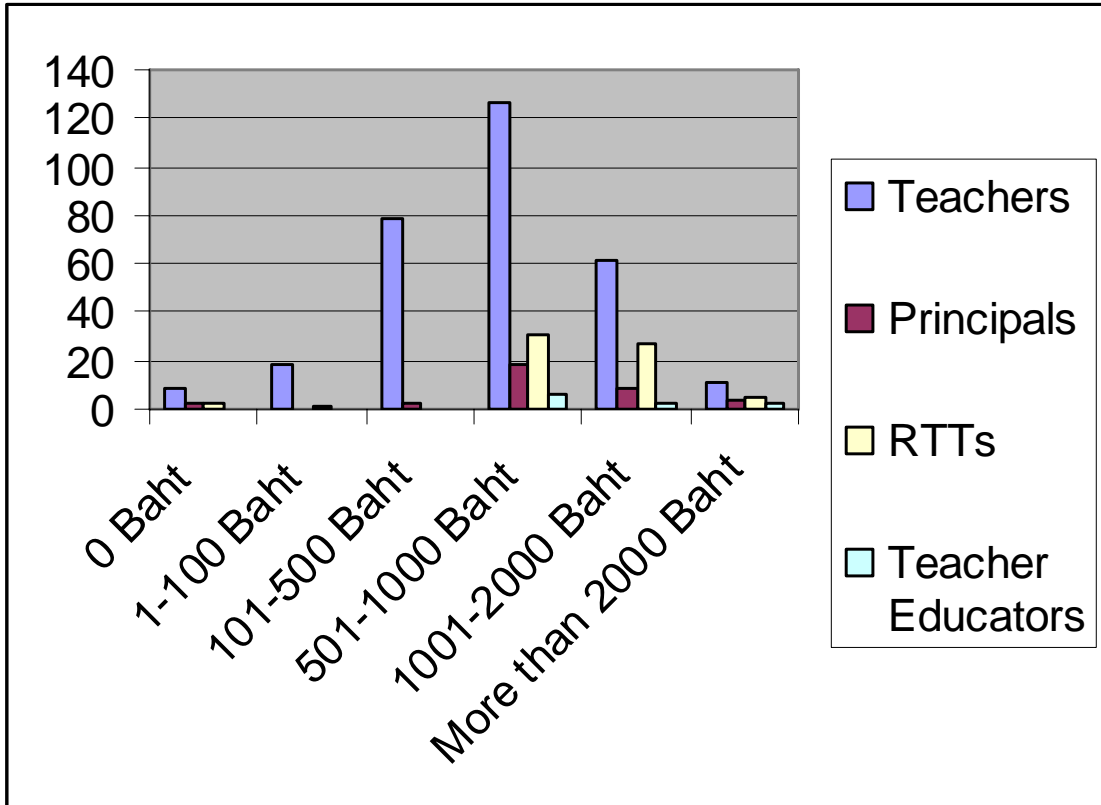
Experience in education

Teachers

The mean number of years teachers had been teaching altogether was 5.02, lower than that reported by teachers in 2005 (6.07 years). This is the case even though the range of years they had been teaching was between one and 50, a wider range than that in 2005, which was one to 35.

The number of teachers who had two years of teaching experience was the highest. This is an improvement over the experience teachers had in 2005, the most number having had only one year of teaching experience.

The majority (60.9%) of teachers had between zero and three years of teaching experience.

Figure 26 | Teachers' number of years of teaching experience

Length of time been a teacher altogether

Length of time been a teacher altogether
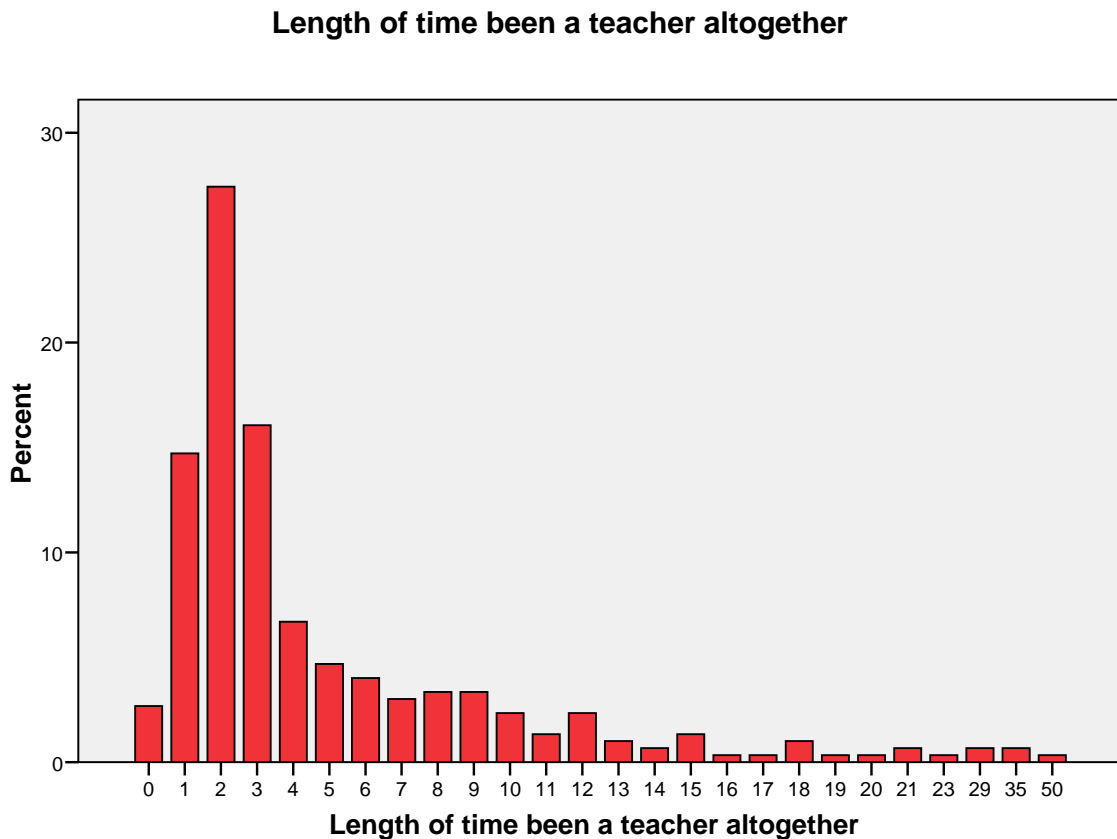
Principals

The range of experience that principals have as school heads is between one and 45 years. The mean number of years that principals had been working in that capacity was 4.59 years. This is significantly lower than the mean of 8.49 years that principals had reported in the 2005 education survey.

The majority of principals in this survey had less experience than their counterparts in 2005: 56.8% had between one and two years of experience, whereas 49.1% in 2005 had worked between one and six years as a principal.

Figure 27 | Total number of years in capacity as principal

Length of time been a principal altogether
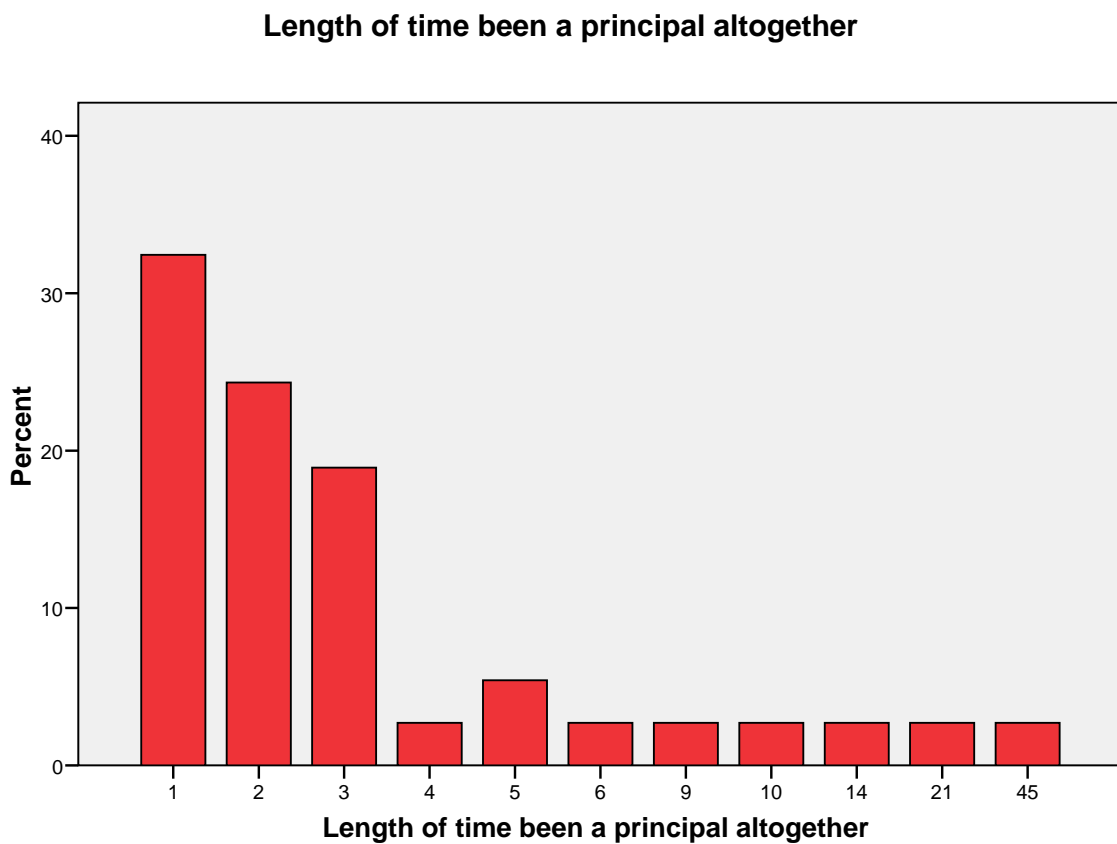
Principals' teaching experience

Before starting work as a principal, 91.9% of the 37 who responded had been teachers. The mean number of years they had taught was 11.18 years, with the highest number having had eight years of teaching experience. Half of the sample had between one and nine years of teaching experience.

Figure 28 | Principals' teaching experience

No of years teaching before becoming principal
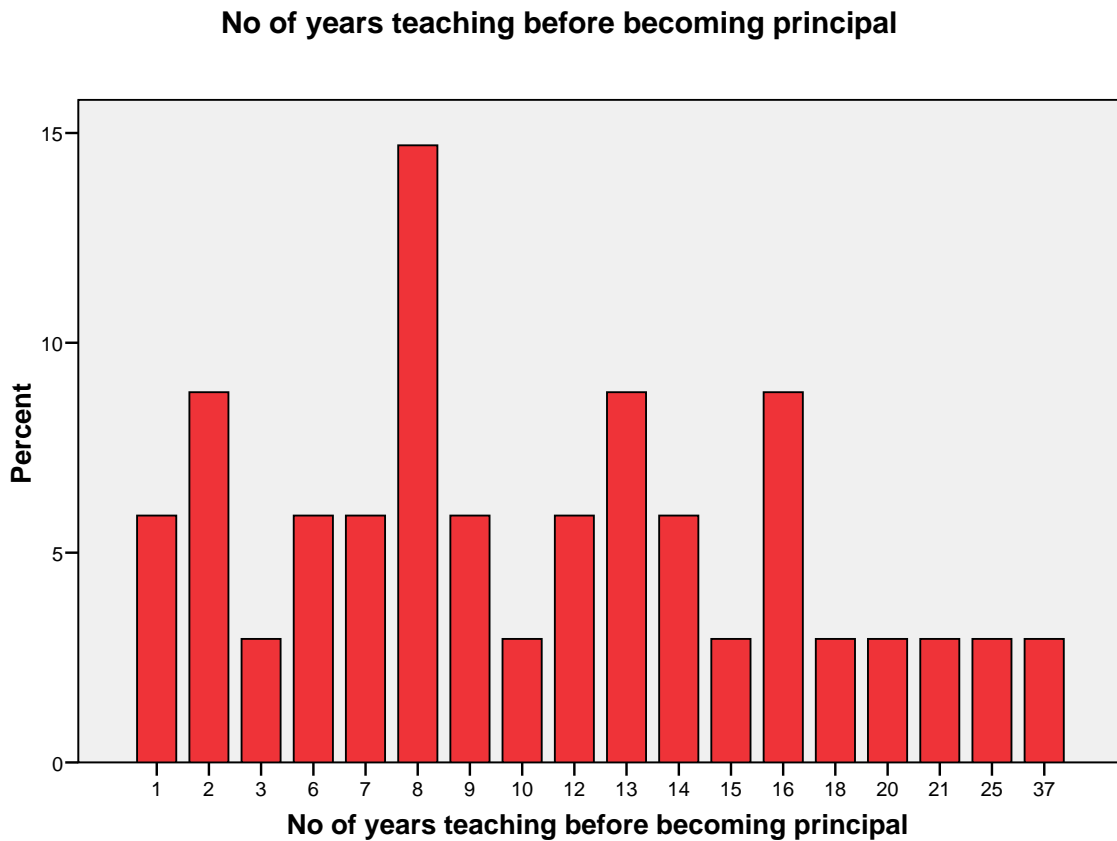
RTTs

Trainers' experience ranged between zero and nine years. The number of years of experience that trainers have has decreased since the 2005 education survey, where the range was between one and 12 years.

In 2009, the mean number of years of experience was 2.86, with the highest number (27.9%) having had two years of experience. This represents a decrease from 2005 where the highest percentage of trainers had had two years of experience as a trainer (30.6%).

Like 2005, 80% of the trainers had been working as a trainer for one to four years. Figure 29 shows the percentage of RTTs by their years of experience.

Figure 29 | Number of years as a trainer

Length of time been an RTT altogether

Length of time been an RTT altogether
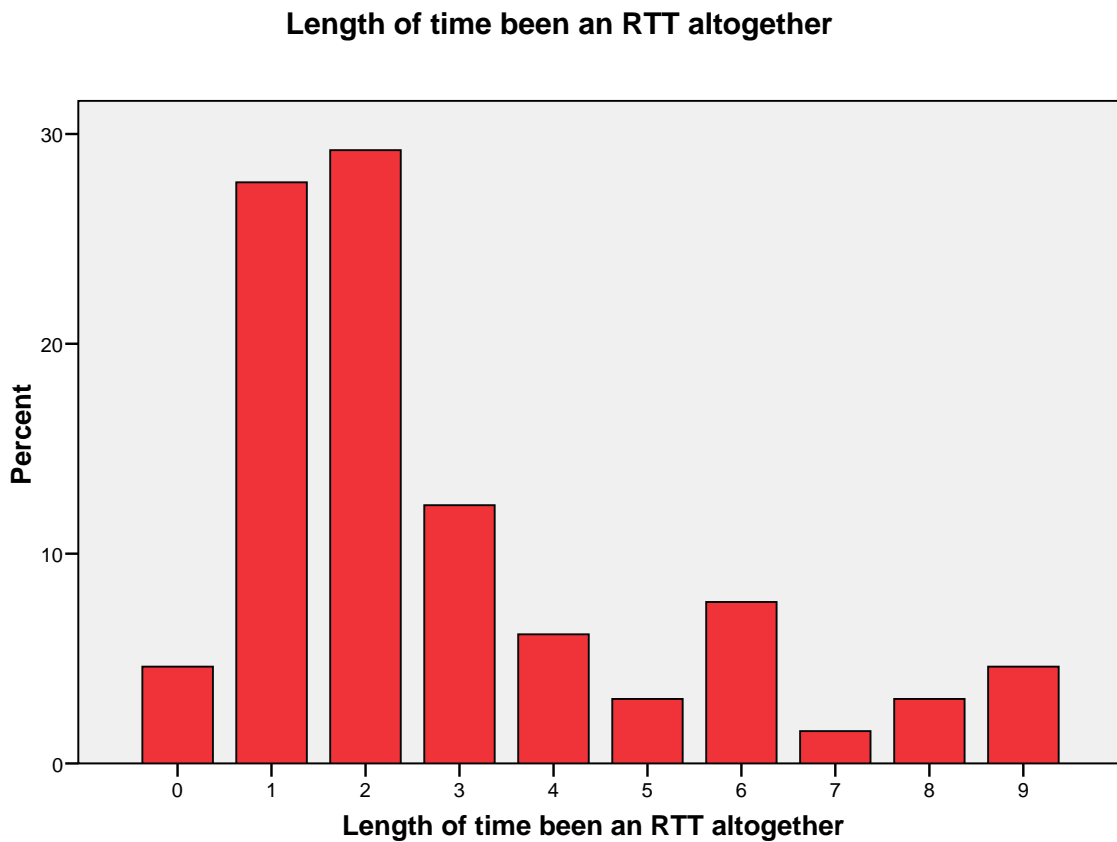
When comparing this with the experience the RTTs reported having in 2005, two differences emerge. First, the range of years of experience has shortened. Second, in 2005, the highest percentages of years of experience were two and four years. However, in 2009, this has fallen to one and two years. These two features imply that the number of years of experience that the RTTs currently have is lower than that of those who were working in 2005.

In addition, there is a greater proportion of RTTs in 2009 who are newcomers than there were in 2005.

RTT's teaching experience
Almost all (97.1%) RTTs interviewed had been teachers before starting work as a trainer.

Teacher educators
Teacher educators were only recently introduced as staff members, thus the majority had been working for a year only.

Teacher educators' teaching experience
Before beginning work as a teacher educator, slightly less than half had been teachers (5 out of the 11 respondents) and their teaching experience ranged between two and 30 years.

Teacher turnover and wastage

Of the 302 teachers interviewed, 10.9% were thinking of leaving. The reasons given are set out in Figure 30, which shows that resettlement is the major reason for teachers leaving, with 56.3% choosing this as a reason. This is followed by teachers wanting to further their studies. The other reasons given were that they had health problems and were 'fed up' of teaching.

Figure 30 | Teachers' reason for leaving teaching

Reason for leaving teaching

Reason for leaving teaching
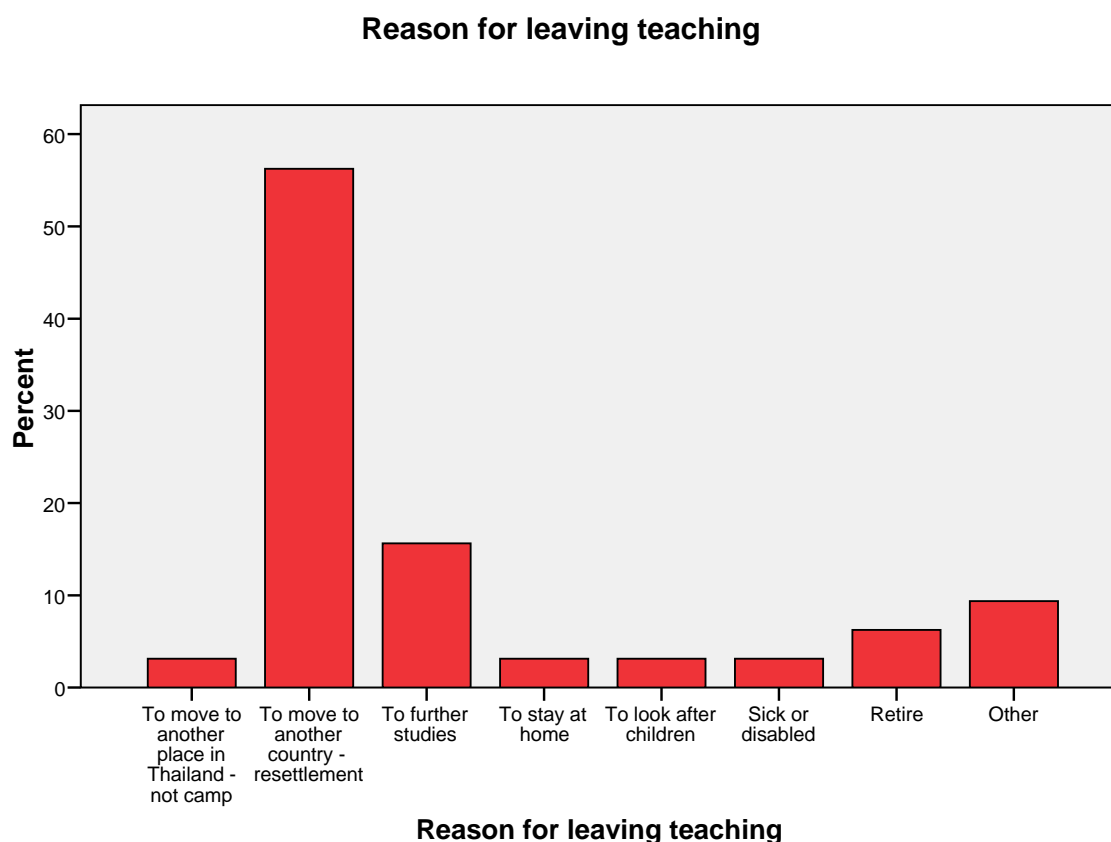
The main reasons for teachers leaving are the same as those reported in 2005: resettlement, furthering their studies and retirement. However, the percentage of respondents for each of these has changed significantly. In 2005, 34.6% reported that their reason for leaving was resettlement, whereas in 2009, the figure was 56.3%.

In 2005, furthering their studies was the top reason for teachers leaving, with 44.9% of the respondents choosing this option. In 2009, only 15.6% cited this as a possible reason for leaving.

Resettlement now has a much larger impact on teacher turnover than it did in 2005. When asked if they were considering resettling, almost a third answered

in the affirmative. Of those who were, slightly more than a third had already informed the UNHCR of their intention, 7.2% (seven individuals) had already been accepted for resettlement, one person had attended the Cultural Orientation sessions, and 40.2% had not done anything to make their intentions for resettlement known to the UNHCR.

Impact of teacher turnover

About a third of teachers confirmed that the teacher turnover affects their work. It causes changes to timetables, discourages teachers, lowers their morale and disrupts the learning process for students.

The way that teacher turnover affects teachers' and principals' work differs between the two roles. Teachers are more affected in terms of an increased teaching load, and having to adjust to changes in timetabling and rescheduling. Principals, on the other hand, are mostly affected by having to recruit new teachers and boosting the morale of teachers who remain, as Table 26 shows.

Table 26 | The impact of teacher turnover on teachers and principals

	Percentage of Teachers who agreed with the statement	Percentage of Principals who agreed with the statement
I have to teach more classes	24.5	18.4
I have to teach subjects that I don't normally teach	18.5	15.8
I learn more because I have to teach subjects I don't normally teach	21.5	NA
I have to do more training	13.8	10.5
I have to do a lot of rescheduling	17.8	15.8
I have to recruit new teachers for my subject/I have to recruit new teachers constantly	13.8	55.3
I have to keep up the morale of the teachers who remain	13.1	28.9
It does not affect my work at all	32.6	15.8
I am less committed to my work	1.3	15.8
It motivates me to work harder	21.5	10.5
It helps me to think of new solutions for how to deal with teacher shortage	NA	15.8
I can work better because I have fewer teachers to deal with	NA	2.6
When the teachers leave, I don't know where they store the teaching aids, so there are not enough teaching aids	6.0	2.6

In terms of motivation and commitment, the proportion of teachers who displayed disenfranchisement was smaller than for principals. Only 1.3% of the teachers interviewed felt less committed as a result of the teacher turnover, whereas 15.8% of principals reported feeling less committed. A fifth of the teachers was motivated to work harder because of the teacher turnover as compared to only 10% of the principals interviewed.

Besides the work and commitment of teachers and principals, teacher turnover also affects the training efforts of the RTTs and Teacher educators.

Table 27 | The impact of teacher turnover on RTTs and Teacher educators

	Percentage of RTTs who agreed with the statement	Percentage of Teacher educators who agreed with the statement
I have to do more training	64.2	45.5
I have to prepare more materials	25.4	NA
I have to do a lot of rescheduling	19.4	NA
I have to recruit new teachers for my subject	37.3	27.3
It helps me to think of new solutions for how to deal with teacher shortage	11.9	27.3
I have to keep up the morale of the teachers who remain	19.4	45.5
It does not affect my work at all	3.0	9.1
It motivates me to work harder	16.4	27.3
I am less committed to training teachers because I know that they will leave after I have trained them	20.9	NA
I can work better because I have fewer teachers to train	1.5	NA

Table 27 shows that RTTs' work and commitment are much more affected by the constant teacher turnover than that of Teacher educators. This is because they work with teachers who are already teaching in the schools, and their work is meant to train and support teachers throughout their career, whereas the responsibilities of Teacher educators are limited to a short training period and constantly training new people is inherent to the nature of their work. The workload of the RTTs is increased as a result of constant teacher turnover, more so than for Teacher educators. The discouragement of training teachers who leave has left a fifth of RTTs feeling less committed to their work.

Training and support

This section sets out the types of training and support provided to teachers, teacher trainers and principals as well as the findings from the survey on respondents' views of training received and the further forms of support they would like to receive.

The teacher training system

Teacher training in the camps can be clearly divided into pre- and in-service training. Table 28 lists the types of teacher training provided.

Table 28 | The elements of camp-based teacher training

Type of training	Name	Location	Funded by	Training conducted by	Duration	Participants
Pre-service training	Teacher preparation course (TPC)	Four camps	World Education	TPC teachers	Two years	Students training to be teachers
	Pre-service course	Seven camps served by ZOA	ZOA	ZOA teacher trainers	20 days	Untrained teachers
In-service training	Summer break training	Seven camps served by ZOA	ZOA	ZOA teacher trainers	10 days during the summer break in camp	New and existing teachers
	Follow up training	Seven camps served by ZOA	ZOA	ZOA teacher trainers	Five days within the academic year	Mostly for RTTS and targeted groups of existing teachers
	Teacher training by RTTs	Seven camps served by ZOA	ZOA	RTTs	Through-out the year	Teachers
	RTT training	Seven camps served by ZOA	ZOA	ZOA teacher trainers	Through-out the year	RTTs
	COPE	Nine camps	World Education	World Education and ZOA trainers	Through-out the year	Teachers

Source: modified from Steadman (2008)

As Table 28 shows, World Education funds one type of pre-service teacher training and one type of in-service teacher training (COPE), while ZOA funds and implements both pre- and in-service teacher training for primary and secondary school teachers (see Steadman 2008 for more details).

Initial teacher training/pre-service training

Teacher Preparation Course (TPC)

Up until 2008, there was a Teacher Preparation Course (TPC) in four camps, lasting two years and following on from Standard 10. They were facilitated and funded by World Education. World Education has now passed the responsibility of running the TPCs to the KRCEE. The TPCs are now only running Year 2 of the course, and the first year of the course is now part of the newly established Institute of Higher Education (IHE).

When World Education was running the four TPCs, the maximum output per year was low - 100 teachers. Even if all of the students completed the course, 100 graduating teachers per year could not meet the staffing demands of the 63 schools in the camps with the TPCs.

Pre-service teacher training

At present, there are two pre-service courses available: one that is delivered during the summer break training and another that is an intensive pre-service induction course for new teachers. The majority of new teachers begin the academic year without any prior teaching experience, and many do not attend summer break training. Due to recruitment difficulties, new teachers are often only appointed just before the school year commences, or they join a school mid-way through the year.

The intensive pre-service induction course was introduced in December 2008 by ZOA as a rolling programme of training which runs throughout the year, ensuring that new teachers who join in the middle of the school year are provided with teacher training. Teacher educators have been recruited to provide this training.

In the survey, Teacher educators were asked about the difficulties that they observed in new teachers applying the training provided. Significantly, the issues that the teacher educators were most divided on were: teachers do not have enough subject knowledge to apply the techniques (54.5% disagreed; 45.5% agreed) and that teachers do not know how to adjust what they learn to the situation (54.5% disagreed; 45.5% agreed).

These difficulties were confirmed by the teachers interviewed: 96% of them reported being able to apply what they had learnt but when asked what difficulties they faced in application, the statements that the highest percentage of teachers agreed on were:

- I do not have enough subject knowledge to apply the techniques - 10.5% agreed
- The techniques are difficult to apply in the classroom - 8.9% agreed.

Of the teachers interviewed, 40.4% had attended the pre-service induction course.

The majority of the Teacher educators reported that they were able to use the training materials and resources that ZOA provided but that they did not have access to them or that they were not available.

Three teacher educators from Mae La camp reported that some school principals are resistant to their teachers attending pre-service training. Only 72.2% of the principals interviewed knew about the pre-service teacher training programme provided by ZOA. More needs to be known about why this is the case.

In-service training
In-service training is delivered in two ways: through training sessions facilitated by ZOA teacher trainers and through regular in-camp training and support from Resident Teacher Trainers (RTTs). ZOA teacher trainers travel to the camps to deliver training at specified times of the year. RTTs, on the other hand, are camp residents assigned to particular schools and subjects, and they deliver training on a weekly basis.

Summer break training
The summer break training consists of nine or 10 days of training in the camps. Teachers in the larger camps can choose between two levels of training – one for new teachers and the other for more experienced teachers.

Of the 293 teachers interviewed, 86.3% had received training from ZOA trainers and 87.6% had attended summer break training, with the majority having attended one or two times (89%). About 60% were content with the frequency of the summer break training, wanting it to remain the same, whereas more than a third wanted it to increase.

Follow-up training
A second round of training, called follow-up training, takes place part way through the year, lasting about five days and serving secondary teachers and RTTs. The three secondary ZOA trainers (or an invited trainer) conduct the training. There are further occasional subject refresher courses, for example, a refresher course for Science RTTs. Additional *ad hoc* training is supplied by other NGOs or organisations. The ZOA trainers focus on RTT training needs so that ongoing training is available for teachers throughout the entire school year.

Subject upgrading from ZOA trainers was the most highly attended type of training (54.8% of teachers interviewed) with 86.8% having attended one or two times. The demand for this type of training was the highest: 46.7% wanted the training sessions to be increased, and slightly more than half wanted it to stay the same.

COPE training was attended by the second highest percentage of teachers – 50.6% - with the majority having attended one or two times. This was the second most popular type of training with 42% of teachers wanting the number of training sessions to be increased and slightly more than half wanting it to stay the same.

Of the teachers interviewed, 48.5% had attended follow-up training between June and August. Less than half of the teachers interviewed (43.9%) had attended monthly training with ZOA primary trainers. Only 31.4% of the teachers interviewed had attended twice yearly training sessions from ZOA secondary trainers. For all these sessions, the majority had attended one or two sessions and the percentage who wanted the sessions to increase in frequency was slightly more than a third. The majority – about 60% - wanted it to stay the same.

Only 27.6% of the teachers interviewed had attended training between December and February, with the majority (89.1%) having attended one or two times. Again, the majority (64%) wanted it to remain the same in terms of frequency, and slightly less than a third wanted it to be increased.

The decrease in attendance in the chronologically later training sessions could be due to the fact that many of the teachers are new and had not yet completed a whole academic year, and so had not yet had the opportunity to attend those sessions.

When asked, 96.9% of teachers reported being able to apply the training provided by ZOA staff but the most common difficulties that they experienced in applying the training were

- The techniques are difficult to apply in the classroom - 11.3% agreed
- I do not have enough subject knowledge to apply the techniques - 10.5% agreed.

RTT training for teachers

RTTs provide training on subject matter, lesson planning, teaching methods and so on throughout the year in schools. They also provide support, demonstration lessons, one-to-one and group training.

Of those who responded, 95.3% of the teachers felt that they were able to apply the training that the RTTs provided. The top difficulties that teachers had in applying the training were

- The techniques are difficult to apply in the classroom – 8.5% agreed
- They do not have enough subject knowledge to apply the techniques – 6.8% agreed.

Unsurprisingly, teachers' top choices of the type of training they wanted more of were

- teaching methods – 93.3% agreed
- lesson planning – 93% agreed
- classroom management – 91.0% agreed
- general knowledge – 88.9% agreed
- subject matter – 88.2% agreed.

Principals' perspective on teacher training

Of the 37 principals who responded, almost a third thought that the teacher training programme affected school scheduling and classroom teaching. They were given a list of training sessions and asked if these affected school scheduling and classroom teaching. Their responses, in descending order, were

- ZOA Refresher course – 60% replied in the affirmative
- Subject-upgrading training from ZOA trainers – 50% replied in the affirmative
- Monthly training from ZOA Primary trainers – 30% replied in the affirmative
- Twice-yearly training from ZOA secondary trainer – 30% replied in the affirmative
- ZOA Pre-service teacher training – 30% replied in the affirmative
- Follow up training between June and August – 18.2% replied in the affirmative
- ZOA Follow up training between Dec and Feb – 18.2% replied in the affirmative.

It seems that the refresher course and subject-upgrading training from ZOA trainers cause the most disruption, according to the principals.

Principals were asked if they had noticed any positive changes to their teachers' teaching after they had attended different types of teacher training. Their responses, presented in descending order, were

- ZOA Summer break training - 91.9% replied in the affirmative
- ZOA Refresher course – 73% replied in the affirmative
- Monthly training from ZOA Primary trainers - 69.4% replied in the affirmative
- COPE and child-protection - 67.6% replied in the affirmative
- Subject-upgrading training from ZOA trainers - 63.9% replied in the affirmative
- Follow up training between June and August - 62.2% replied in the affirmative
- ZOA Follow up training between Dec and Feb - 62.2% replied in the affirmative
- Twice-yearly training from ZOA secondary trainer - 52.8% replied in the affirmative.

The summer break training and the refresher course were considered by the most principals to be the training sessions that brought about positive changes to teachers' skills and knowledge.

Principals were asked which difficulties teachers face in applying the training given by ZOA trainers, and the statements which received the most affirmative answers, in descending order, were

- They do not have enough confidence to apply what they learn – 13.2% replied in the affirmative
- They cannot remember the techniques after the training session – 13.2% replied in the affirmative
- The students are resistant to the new techniques they introduce – 10.5% replied in the affirmative
- They do not have enough subject knowledge to apply the techniques – 10.5% replied in the affirmative

On the whole, there seems to be a difference in perception between teachers and principals about the difficulties that teachers face in applying the training. Teachers consistently reported that they do not have enough knowledge of the subject matter and that the techniques introduced in the training are difficult to apply in the classroom. Principals, on the other hand, believe that it is teachers' lack of confidence and inability to remember the techniques that are the biggest stumbling block to teachers applying the training they receive.

Training for trainers

Training for RTTs

All the RTTs in the survey had been teachers before becoming a trainer. Of the 67 who answered, 67.2% had not received teacher training before coming to camp. All of the 68 interviewed had received teacher training in camp.

Of the 67 who answered, 95.5% had received RTT training from ZOA trainers. Table 29 shows that the types of training that most had received were summer break training, COPE training and the ZOA Refresher course.

Table 29 | Types of training RTTs received

	Percentage who received	No of times	Training frequency desired - percentage
ZOA Summer break training	87.7	1-5	Increase - 31 Stay the same -69
Follow-up training between June and August	29	1-2	Increase – 35.6 Stay the same – 64.4
ZOA Follow-up training between Dec and Feb	25	1-2	Increase – 40.9 Stay the same - 59.1
ZOA Refresher course (happens every 2 years)	71.4	1-3	Increase – 39.6 Stay the same – 60.4
COPE and child-protection	86.2	1-3	Increase – 35.8 Stay the same – 64.2
Monthly training from ZOA Primary trainers	21	1-3	Increase – 48.8 Stay the same – 51.2
Twice-yearly training from ZOA Secondary trainer	38.7	1-2	Increase – 47.9 Stay the same – 52.1
Subject-upgrading training from ZOA trainers	64.1	1-3	Increase – 69.1 Stay the same – 30.9

Subject-upgrading training from ZOA trainers was the type of training in most demand, with more than two-thirds of the RTTs wanting more of this type of training. This was followed by monthly training from ZOA Primary trainers and twice-yearly training from ZOA Secondary trainers.

All respondents replied that they were able to apply the training received from ZOA staff. The top three difficulties they encountered in applying training were

- The techniques are difficult to apply in the classroom - 37.3% replied in the affirmative
- I don't have enough knowledge of the subject matter - 19.6% replied in the affirmative
- I don't know how to use the training materials and aids in the classroom - 15.7% replied in the affirmative.

The RTTs were satisfied with the following aspects of ZOA trainers' training: that the trainers were able to transition smoothly from one activity to another during training and to pace the teaching and activities of the training sessions, their ability to organise their presentation logically and to engage participants during the training session. However, they were least satisfied with ZOA trainers' knowledge of the content.

Support for RTTs

The support that RTTs wanted from principals was

- understanding, acceptance and support of their work.

The support that RTTs wanted from KRCEE was

- more training including subject training
- help in dealing with teacher turnover and finding new teachers
- encouragement from KRCEE, more frequent visits
- monthly meetings with KRCEE representative
- collaborative participation
- more teaching aids and materials
- more textbooks
- resources such as telephone cards.

The support that RTTs wanted from ZOA was

- larger teacher subsidies
- teaching resources such as posters and charts
- teacher encouragement
- sufficient textbooks delivered on time
- meetings
- to encourage parents to cooperate
- to provide food on time (for training sessions).

Training for Teacher educators

The role of the Teacher educator is to conduct pre-service teacher training and to provide follow-up support to new teachers once they have completed the two-month pre-service training.

All of them received Teacher educator training from ZOA trainers either in 2008 or 2009. The Teacher educators were asked how satisfied they were with the training they received from ZOA trainers' based on the indicators in Table 30. The corresponding replies are listed next to the indicators.

Table 30 | Teacher educators' satisfaction with ZOA trainers' training

Indicators of ZOA trainers' training abilities	Response
Ability to communicate content clearly	All were satisfied or very satisfied
Ability to apply teaching methods to their own teaching during training	All were satisfied or very satisfied
Ability to transition smoothly from one activity to another during training	All were satisfied or very satisfied
Ability to organise their presentation logically	All were satisfied or very satisfied
Knowledge of content	90.9% were satisfied or very satisfied
Ability to manage time well during the training sessions	90.9% were satisfied or very satisfied
Ability to engage participants during the training session	72.8% were satisfied or very satisfied
Ability to pace the teaching and activities of the training sessions well	72.8% were satisfied or very satisfied

On the whole, the Teacher educators were satisfied with ZOA trainers' training capabilities. The areas which needed to be improved, according to them are Teacher educators' ability to engage participants during the sessions and the pacing of the training sessions.

All of them reported that they were able to apply the training provided by ZOA staff. When asked about the difficulties they had in applying the training the statements that received the most votes were

- The techniques are difficult to apply in the classroom - 72.7% agreed
- I don't have enough knowledge of the subject matter - 63.6% agreed.

Support for Teacher educators
The support that RTTs wanted from KRCEE was

- training to be provided for principals and teachers so that they understand what pre-service training is about
- provide teacher subsidies.

The support that RTTs wanted from ZOA was

- more pre-service training and other training to improve teachers' skills
- build a dedicated building where the pre-service training can take place
- training to the school committee about pre-service training.

Training and support for principals
Of the 34 principals who responded to the question, 82.4% had attended school management training courses in camp and 94.3% wanted to receive more training from ZOA trainers. The most popular types of training desired were lesson planning (94.4% wanted training on this), followed by computer skills for school management (91.7%). Teaching methods, general knowledge, communication and observing and giving teachers feedback were the next most popular, with 88.9% of principals wanting training on this.

The support that principals wanted from KRCEE was

- visits to provide moral support
- encouragement
- monitoring and assistance to help principals
- provide resources that are needed in school and for education activities
- meetings between KRCEE and parents, teachers and school committees.

The support that principals wanted from ZOA was

- training, including leadership and management training
- school materials, stationery and textbooks to be delivered on time
- computers
- good classrooms, roofs and buildings
- school building to be completed on time
- help in dealing with constant teacher turnover
- visits
- advice.

Recommendations and conclusion

The concerns regarding the quality of teaching stem mostly from the high rate of teacher turnover that the education system has been experiencing for the past few years. This has been brought about by several factors, resettlement being the principal one, and teachers' desire to further their studies.

It is pertinent here to consider future trends in resettlement and how they may or may not affect teacher turnover. More needs to be known about the prospects for resettlement in the coming years. Will resettlement continue at the same rate as it has?

If resettlement slows down, the training mechanisms that have been put in place may be able to maintain the education system. If, however, resettlement continues at the same rate, it will be difficult to maintain a standard of quality instruction in the schools. First, principals face considerable difficulties in teacher recruitment and retention. It is increasingly difficult to find prospective teachers who meet two of the criteria: those who have completed Standard 10 and are willing to commit to teach for two years. In addition, the survey findings show that for teachers, on the whole, it is more often than not that they have little teaching experience. In addition, new arrivals can no longer be considered as teaching candidates, as there are restrictions on new arrival registration. Consequently, less than satisfactory replacements are found to maintain the size, but not the quality of the teaching force (Steadman, 2008).

Second, although worthy efforts have been made so far through the introduction of the pre-service induction training, the teacher training system is not equipped to handle constant turnover and the low education qualifications of new recruits. At present, the teacher training aims to provide teachers with a rudimentary grasp of teaching techniques before sending them off to classrooms. Teachers, even after going through the training, are finding it difficult to use these techniques in the classroom and to teach subjects for which they have insufficient knowledge. Either the training is inadequate to teachers' needs or the techniques are not suitable for the classroom or both. The introduction of the pre-service induction course is an appropriate response to the need for teacher training for new recruits. Given the logistics and the short lead time available to provide new teachers with teaching skills, the bulk of the training efforts should be on providing new teachers with in-service support through contact with Teacher educators, more experienced teachers and RTTs.

There appears to be a 'dependent' culture of training and support, where teachers rely predominantly on the support of the RTTs for providing solutions to teaching techniques. Given the high teacher turnover and the large number of teachers that RTTs support, this over-reliance on RTTs has to be changed. Alternatives to this would include forming groups of teachers who work together to provide solutions, and calling upon retired teachers to work as mentors to new teachers. This will require a change in mindsets and attitudes

and these will require the support of the principals and the community over a period of time.

These forms of support would also help to reduce the disruption to the school timetable and scheduling brought about by ZOA teacher training. Having said that, it is paramount that principals are aware of the content and benefits of all the types of teacher training being provided to teachers, and given the opportunity to observe the results of such training. At the moment, some principals do not see the benefits and are rightly concerned about the effects on students' learning when teachers are called to training sessions when there are not enough teachers to cover classes.

While teacher turnover as a result of resettlement is a major concern, there are other factors which need to be addressed as well. The second reason that teachers mentioned regarding leaving was to further their studies. It is likely that the opportunity cost of furthering their studies is low since teacher subsidies are low. When asked, 77.2% of the teachers were satisfied with their income, meaning that slightly more than a fifth was not. This figure varies by camp, with Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang camps having the highest percentage of respondents who disagreed with this statement, 26.7% and 58.3% respectively. Between 70 and 87% of the teachers interviewed in Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La Oon, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai and Nu Po were satisfied with their income. Better subsidies would make the opportunity cost of furthering their studies much higher than it currently is, and would persuade teachers to continue in their profession.

Ultimately, teachers, trainers and principals are striving to provide good quality instruction to their students. Teachers are fairly motivated: 93.5% of them agreed with the statement 'Teaching is hard work but it is worthwhile', 96.1% agreed with the statement 'I enjoy teaching' and 97.7% felt that educating young people is a top priority for them. While their motivations are clear, they are also dealing with the realities of teaching: 88.5% look forward to going to school every day, 61.1% teach to keep busy and 11.9% agreed with the statement 'If I could get another job that paid me, I would leave teaching'. In the findings, a recurrent form of support that respondents asked for was recognition, encouragement, direction and advice from KRCEE and ZOA. Given the low pay, challenging work conditions and the cultural notions of leadership in camp, it is imperative that KRCEE and ZOA provide education staff with regular and appropriate recognition and support, as well as timely and efficient provision of materials and resources.

Chapter 7 | Parental involvement in school and learning

The previous chapters have focused on learners, the learning experience and instruction, and the issues surrounding the recruitment, retention and training of educational staff. This chapter turns to the relationship between parents and schools, in an attempt to describe the nature and scope of parental involvement, and to frame this in the perspective of the relevant parties – parents, teachers and principals.

Research has shown that the role of parents, family and the home environment is crucial in determining children's cognitive development and achievement, and that such factors are more important and influential than school factors (Coleman 1966; Jencks, 1972; Mayeske, 1973; Moyster and Moynihan, 1972). In addition, families that receive frequent and positive messages from teachers tend to become more involved in their children's education than do parents who do not receive this kind of communication (Dauber and Epstein, 1993).

Parental involvement in schools is particularly important in a situation where financial resources are scarce; a good relationship between parents and schools enables schools to tap into the non-monetary resources that parents and the community possess, so as to support and improve the learning experience and well-being of students. At the same time, a more comprehensive and cohesive set of learning and management practices can be supported both at school and in the home through a common understanding between parents, teachers and principals.

In the survey, parents, teachers and principals were asked about three aspects of parental involvement

- parental support to their children's learning at school
- parental support to their children's learning at home
- communication between school and home.

These three dimensions were used in a baseline assessment conducted in 2008 prior to the survey. The 2009 survey built upon the assessment so that valid and meaningful comparisons could be made between these two moments in time. In total, 2,136 parents were interviewed in the 2009 survey.

Policy and programming on parental involvement in schools

Since 2008, ZOA has made a concerted effort to formalise and strengthen the relationship between parents and schools. It has conducted the following activities:

- a baseline assessment of the nature and scope of parental involvement in schools
- the set up of a parent-teacher conference, for which all principals have been given formal guidance. A written document has also been sent out to principals, education committees and teachers about this conference. This document was never formally discussed with the KED or KRCEE.

Types of parental participation

In the survey, parents, teachers and principals were asked about three dimensions of parental participation in school activities:

- parental support to their children's learning at school
- parental support to their children's learning at home
- communication between school and home.

Parental support to their children's learning at school

In the past year, the activities that parents were involved in are listed in Table 31. Parents were given a list of activities and asked which ones they had participated in. The table shows the percentage of parents who reported having been involved in each activity in descending order.

Table 31 | Parental support to their children's learning activities at school

	Percentage of parents involved
take your children to school to register them for school	89.9
attend a parent-teacher conference	84.2
attend a parents meeting at school	76.7
help to repair the school building	74.8
attend special events such as drawing competitions, singing contests, debate, impromptu speech, football match and volleyball matches, graduation ceremony	64.3
Donate leaves and bamboo for the school roof	62.7
accompany your children to school	57.5
give a donation to school such as food for teachers' meeting, school closing ceremony, etc	51.4
develop teaching materials	36.6
discuss the school rules with teachers and use the same rules at home	34.3
bring/prepare food for workers when they are working on the school building	28.3
help in school fund raising	28.0
volunteer in the classroom	16.6

The activity that the highest percentage of parents was involved in was taking their children to school for registration, followed by attending a parent-teacher conference, attending a parents meeting at school and helping to repair the school building.

About two-thirds of parents reported that they had attended special events and donated materials for the school building. Roughly a third was involved in developing teaching materials and discussing the school rules with teachers and using them at home.

Parents were asked why there were not involved in some activities and given a series of statements to choose from. The statements with the highest percentage of positive responses were

- I don't have the time - 28.8% replied in the affirmative
- I did not know about these activities - 27.1% replied in the affirmative
- I don't have the resources to contribute - 23.6% replied in the affirmative.

Under other reasons for this, many parents replied that they cannot read or write, they cannot speak Skaw Karen and they do not have enough education. Many also mentioned that they would be willing to help when asked.

These difficulties were confirmed by teachers. When asked about the difficulties that teachers faced in communicating with students' parents, the statements that the highest percentage of teachers chose were:

- Some parents don't read and write so they cannot read notes and exam report cards - 53.9% replied in the affirmative
- Parents work outside camp and are not around - 33.8% replied in the affirmative
- I don't have time to speak to parents of all my students - 14.9% replied in the affirmative

Almost all teachers believed that parents' involvement with the school benefits students' learning, benefited teachers' work, and that it is useful to talk to students' parents, with 88.2% wanting parents to be more involved in their children's education at school.

The top school activities that teachers wanted parents to be involved in were

- Help to repair school building - 97.8% replied in the affirmative
- Register children - 96.5% replied in the affirmative
- Attend parent-teacher conference - 95.1% replied in the affirmative.

The activity that received the lowest percentage of affirmative replies was that of parents volunteering in the classroom - only 54.4% of teachers wanted parents to be involved in this.

Almost all principals were in agreement with teachers about the types of activities that parents were involved in and the types of activity they wanted parents to be involved in. This was also the case in the baseline assessment. However, it was reported by some principals in the baseline assessment that the type of help that parents provided in school building repairs was limited and that only a small percentage of parents was involved.

More than 90% of the principals interviewed believed that parents' involvement with the school benefits students' learning and their work. When asked how parents became involved in these activities, the statements with the highest percentage of positive replies were

- principals ask parents to get involved - 89.5% of principals replied in the affirmative
- parents volunteer without being asked - 34.2% of principals replied in the affirmative
- parents ask if they can be involved - 21.1% of principals replied in the affirmative.

The principals interviewed believed that parents' reasons for not being involved as much are

- Parents believe that it is the teachers'/principal's responsibility to ensure that children learn at school, not the parents – 27% replied in the affirmative
- They don't have the time – 24.3% replied in the affirmative
- They don't know how to be involved – 21.6% replied in the affirmative
- They are embarrassed to speak to the teachers/principal – 21.6% replied in the affirmative.

The findings give an overall picture of the type of parental involvement in school activities. It would appear that parents have limited participation in school activities, confined mostly to parent meetings, registering their children and helping out in school building repair. There needs to be a better understanding of the type of involvement and the messages that parents take away with them from meetings. This would make it possible to exploit the full potential of the meetings and school registration activities in maximising parents' role in the cognitive development and achievement of their children.

Parental support to their children's learning at home

Parents were given a series of statements about how they support their children's learning at home, and the statements which received the highest percentage of positive responses were

- make sure their children get to school on time - 72.2% replied in the affirmative
- limit time for playing games and sport - 50.9% replied in the affirmative
- talk to their children about the importance of education - 47.5% replied in the affirmative
- set a regular time for their children to do homework - 38.9% replied in the affirmative
- ask their children what they learnt in school each day - 34.5% replied in the affirmative.

It would appear that parents set boundaries for learning and playing, and provide support, encouragement and advice with regards to the importance of school and the value of education. This seems to contradict the findings of the baseline assessment, which found that the school-related activities that parents did the most with their children at home were: recounting role model stories, reading with them, helping them with homework in subjects such as Burmese, Karen, Maths and English at the primary level, and talking about the importance of education. The activities that they did the least were: taking them to a tutor or teacher to do their homework, limiting time for playing games and doing homework or reading, praising them for good school work and asking them what they had learnt at school everyday.

Why is there a difference? It could be that the baseline assessment itself and the subsequent activities related to parental involvement in school and learning changed the way that parents perceive their role. This would be a highly plausible explanation if the parents interviewed were the same in the assessment and in the survey. However, this was not part of the methodological design. Alternatively, the questions may have caused interviewees to respond in particular ways.

The main problems parents have in relation to supporting their children's learning at home are

- Ability to help with some subjects but not others - 45.7% replied in the affirmative
- Inability to read and write - 45.9% replied in the affirmative
- Uncertainty about how to talk to their children about the importance of education - 11.0% replied in the affirmative
- Uncertainty about how to support their children's learning at home - 10.6% replied in the affirmative
- Not having enough information about what the school's learning objectives are - 10.9% replied in the affirmative.

The other problems mentioned were illness, the lack of electricity, and the lack of time and money.

It appears that parents are encountering stumbling blocks in terms of their own capacity to support their children's learning at home. Practical concerns pose another hurdle. In the baseline assessment, teachers from Tham Hin High School said that 50% of parents work outside the camp, leaving them with little time to support their children's learning at home. Some parents also take their children with them when they work outside the camp.

In the baseline assessment, it was reported by principals that parents provide the most support to their children when they are attending primary school. This could be due to a number of reasons: they only have the skills and knowledge to support them at the primary level, they believe that the primary cycle is more important than the secondary one, they think that primary schooling is the foundation and less support is needed during the secondary levels, etc. These factors need to be explored in more detail so that schools, the community and ZOA can provide parents with the support they need to better support their children's learning at home in all levels of schooling.

Communication between school and home

Only 4.2% of the parents interviewed knew all the names of their children's teachers; over half knew the names of some of them and more than a quarter knew none of the teachers' names. Of the 1,813 who responded, 62.5% agreed with the statement 'I know my children's teachers and principal well and can talk to them easily'. However, 65.3% of the parents interviewed agreed with the statement 'I hardly speak with my children's teachers and principal'. This implies that while more than half of the parents interviewed

know who their children's teachers and principal are and feel comfortable talking to them, they do not actually speak to them on a regular basis.

The highest positive responses to instances where parents communicate with their children's teachers/principal revolved around chance meetings in school (88.7% of respondents confirmed this) and around the camp (85.3%), school-organised meetings with parents (75.9% had attended one-on-one parent-teacher conference to talk about students' learning and behaviour and 68% had attended a school meeting), and through their children (53.6% had received messages that their children had relayed from their teachers).

These findings show that parents are not proactive in seeking information about their children and making appointments with their children's teachers/principals. Only a fifth made appointments and 16.5% sent notes to the teachers/principal. This was confirmed by teachers' responses when asked how they got parents to be involved: 70.2% asked parents to get involved, only 16.9% reported that parents ask to be involved, and slightly less than a third reported that parents volunteered without being asked.

Of the 1,556 who responded to the question, almost all found it useful to talk to their children's teachers/principal. However, the top four difficulties they have of communicating with their children's teachers and principals are

- 27.3% were not comfortable visiting their children's teachers or principal to talk about their children's learning
- 15.8% did not know what the best way of communicating with the teachers and principal would be
- 14.3% did not know if it was acceptable for them to speak to the teachers/principal about their children's learning
- 12.2% did not have the time.

With regards to the topics of conversation between parents and teachers/principals, the top four things that parents talk to teachers/ principals about are

- Their children's learning in school (63.2% having done this)
- Their children's behaviour in school (60.3% having done this)
- Their children's attendance (50.9% having done this)
- Their children's exam results (31.9% having done this).

The three topics that they spoke the least about was

- To find out how I can help my children with their learning (9.1% having done this)
- Classroom rules and consequences (6.9% having done this)
- To find out how I can contribute to the school (4.9% having done this).

As a whole, the findings reveal that parents discuss their children's behaviour and academic progress in school but are less likely to discuss with teachers

and the principal how they can contribute to their children's learning at home or in school.

In the baseline assessment, many parents did not feel comfortable visiting their children's teacher or principal to talk about their children's learning. Once again, they felt that they did not have adequate learning, they did not know that it was their responsibility to talk to their child's teacher and they did not know what to talk about. Often, the meetings were not effective because many of the parents cannot read and write. As the issues discussed during the meeting were not specific enough for parents with low levels of formal education, they tended to forget what was discussed after the meeting.

In the survey, three quarters of the teachers interviewed and almost all (more than 90%) principals reported communicating with their students' parents. The percentage of teachers and principals who communicate with parents by situation is listed in Table 32.

Table 32 | Forms of communication between teachers, principals and parents

	Percentage of Teachers	Percentage of Principals
When I see my students' parents around the camp, I speak to them about their children's education	91.3	97.3
When parents take their children to school, I speak to them when I see them	93.0	100.0
I make appointments to see my students' parents	59.3	89.2
I send my students' parents notes about their children's learning and behaviour	45.0	70.3
I send parents information about their children's learning through the exam report card	84.1	94.6
The school sends the parents notes on how they can help their children with their learning	44.8	56.8
Parents send me notes about their children	28.9	32.4
I am involved in one-on-one parent-teacher conferences to talk about students' learning and behaviour	65.2	72.2
The school conducts meetings to share information with parents	83.5	89.2
The school publishes a school newsletter that helps parents know about school goals, objectives and activities conducted within school	34.8	16.7
I visit parents at home	77.1	81.1
My students relay messages from me to their parents	59.5	83.8

The table reveals two things. First, principals are more proactive than teachers in reaching out to parents. Second, both teachers and principals are

in general agreement about the situations where they communicate with parents: when they see their students' parents around camp and in school, and when meetings are conducted in school to share information with parents.

In the baseline survey, teachers reported that, besides chance meetings with parents around camp, the situations where there was communication between the school and parents were during parents meetings and school opening and closing ceremonies.

Almost all teachers and principals agreed that it is useful to talk to parents. Table 33 lists the topics they talked discussed.

Table 33 | Topics teachers and principals discussed with parents

	Percentage of Teachers who replied in the affirmative	Percentage of Principals who replied in the affirmative
Their children's behaviour in school	58.4	69.4
Their children's learning in school	70.0	52.8
Their children's attendance	50.2	52.8
Their children's exam results	42.9	44.4
Their children's sports activities	17.2	16.7
School goals, purposes and activities	21.5	27.8
School rules and consequences	25.3	38.9
Classroom rules and consequences	22.3	19.4
School donations	11.2	5.6
School fees	17.6	25.0
To find out how parents can contribute to the school	8.6	11.1
To find out how parents can help their children with their learning	15.9	13.9
To find out about my students' needs	20.6	27.8

The topics that teachers tended to discuss with parents were related to students' academic performance and behaviour, such as children's learning, behaviour, attendance and exam results. Principals also talked to parents about these issues, but the emphasis was more on behaviour. The difference in emphasis between teachers and principals stems, most likely, from the fact that teachers are more directly involved in their students' learning than principals.

The topics that the lowest percentage of teachers discussed with parents were school donations, finding out how parents can contribute to the school, and how parents can help their children with their learning.

The main difficulty that teachers and parents had in communicating with parents was that some parents cannot read and write, which meant that they cannot read notes from school and exam report cards. In addition, many parents work outside the camp and are not always available.

In the baseline assessment, the communication channels used between school and home, as reported by principals, were parents meetings, letters, school opening and school closing ceremonies, and parents visiting the class teacher.

Recommendations and conclusion

The findings show that the roles of parents, teachers and principals are relatively well-defined in relation to the parent-school relationship. Parents are interested in the academic progress and behaviour of their children at school and their participation in school activities revolves around school registration, parent-related meetings and school building repair.

Teachers are intimately involved in the learning of their students, and their discussions with parents reflect that. Principals, on the other hand, are more focused on the behaviour of students in school.

There is an implicit understanding of these roles amongst these three parties. As a start, it would be constructive for all parties to explicitly acknowledge these roles and the associated expectations. Once this is done, there will be clarity in terms of what each party needs to do and take responsibility for in relation to student achievement and development.

For parents, the key issue is not to increase their involvement in school, but to enhance their existing involvement and to increase their capabilities to improve their children's learning at home. This would involve taking advantage of the full potential of the activities that they are already participating in: taking their children to school for registration, attending parent-teacher conferences and parents meetings, and helping to repair the school building. As highlighted in the baseline assessment, the guidelines for parents on how to be involved in their children's education are not specific enough. In addition, many parents reported not learning anything from parents meetings.

Using better and more novel forms of communication, school registration and meetings are settings with the potential to reach out to parents and enable them to

- learn more about how they can better facilitate the learning and development of their children in school and at home – through workshops, discussion groups and so on during meetings and school registration
- receive reinforced, positive and regular messages about parental involvement in learning at school and home
- receive positive messages about their children

- learn more about the schooling system and changes to school and education policy, so that they can be aware of how these affect their children's learning
- find out about providing a good learning environment at home and in daily life, e.g., advice on how to develop a daily routine for their children, and the best ways to support and encourage their children.

Teachers and principals need to be better equipped at communicating effectively and constructively on a one-to-one basis and in meetings with parents about their students' progress and the type of tools that parents can use effectively to enhance their children's learning.

In addition, setting up a shared sense of purpose amongst parents, teachers and principals would push forward the joint goal of developing children's learning. To this end, it would be useful to set up ways in which parents and schools could collaborate. For example, in the baseline survey, it was suggested that schools develop a homework checking system between parents and teachers. Parents check students' assignments everyday to make sure they are done and sign off the work. After the teachers correct the papers, the parents will be able to check the grades given to the children.

At the macro level, policy-based consensus on the importance of parental involvement needs to be elaborated. This should be integrated into education and school policy and incorporated into school- and community-based awareness and action. ZOA's role would be to organise workshops with education and school committees, principals and teachers to facilitate better understanding of the benefits and modes of parental involvement, and the roles and expectations of all parties. This would involve workshops and guidance sessions with education staff and bodies at all levels. These activities would also equip the education community, its institutions and education staff with the tools to support parents with their children's learning, as mentioned above.

The final recommendation relates to the measurement of the efforts made in enhancing parental involvement. The baseline study and the 2009 survey were descriptive exercises, showing the types of parental involvement, and the form and function of communication between parents and school staff. Two things need to be done to ensure that a better and more nuanced understanding of parental involvement is generated. First, more in-depth investigation into what parents actually do and take away with them during the activities they are most involved in would help to identify what else can be done during these activities to help parents become more involved in their children's learning. Second, it is necessary to elaborate certain indicators to check if parental involvement efforts have made a difference to student outcomes (exam grades), attitudes and behaviour.

Chapter 8 | The non-formal education (NFE) programme

The previous chapters of the report considered the findings of the survey in relation to general education; this chapter examines the data for the non-formal education (NFE) English language programme run by ZOA. This is a programme that teaches learners English for general and resettlement purposes.

To add context to the findings, some background on the programme is presented, followed by a breakdown of the number of learners in the entire programme. A brief profile of the sample of learners interviewed follows. Their motivations for attending the course(s) and their assessment of the usefulness of the course(s) attended are laid out in the following section. Finally, a profile of NFE teachers and the training and support they require are described.

The information in this chapter was derived from

- Discussions with staff in the ZOA NFE department
- ZOA NFE documents
- ZOA NFE statistics
- Survey interviews with current and former NFE students
- Survey interviews with NFE teachers.

Background to the non-formal education programme (NFE)

The non-formal education programme (NFE) run by ZOA is held in the seven camps that ZOA operates in. There are eight NFE centres, with two located in Mae La camp. It was begun in 2006 and is funded by the UNHCR.

The curriculum is designed to teach adults English with a focus on the vocabulary and the cultural references needed for resettlement in an English-speaking country. There are four levels to the course: Pre-Beginner, Beginner, Elementary and Pre-Intermediate. The teachers are drawn from the camp community. The programme runs three cycles of courses a year, from February to April, June to August and October to December.

Number of students

The programme began enrolling students in 2007. In 2008, 3405 students were enrolled, 24% of whom eventually dropped out. The number of students may overstate the number of persons who enrolled as it does not distinguish between repeat or continuing students and first-time registrants.

Students are selected by NFE officers, camp NFE committees and camp-based staff based on their resettlement intentions, motivation for study and level of education. Students are then selected based on gender, race, religion, marital status, and age, provided they are over 16.

In 2008, the highest number of students was enrolled in the Beginners level (1487), followed by those in the Elementary level (953), Pre-beginners (515) and Pre-intermediate level (289).

Sample profile

In the survey, 185 NFE students were interviewed. Of those interviewed, 46.7% were female.

Ethnicity

The majority of students (58.7%) were Skaw Karen, followed by 12.5% who were Pwo Karen. Less than 10% were Burman and less than 5% were Muslim, Kachin or Mon, as shown in Figure 31.

Figure 31 | Ethnicity of NFE students interviewed

Ethnic group
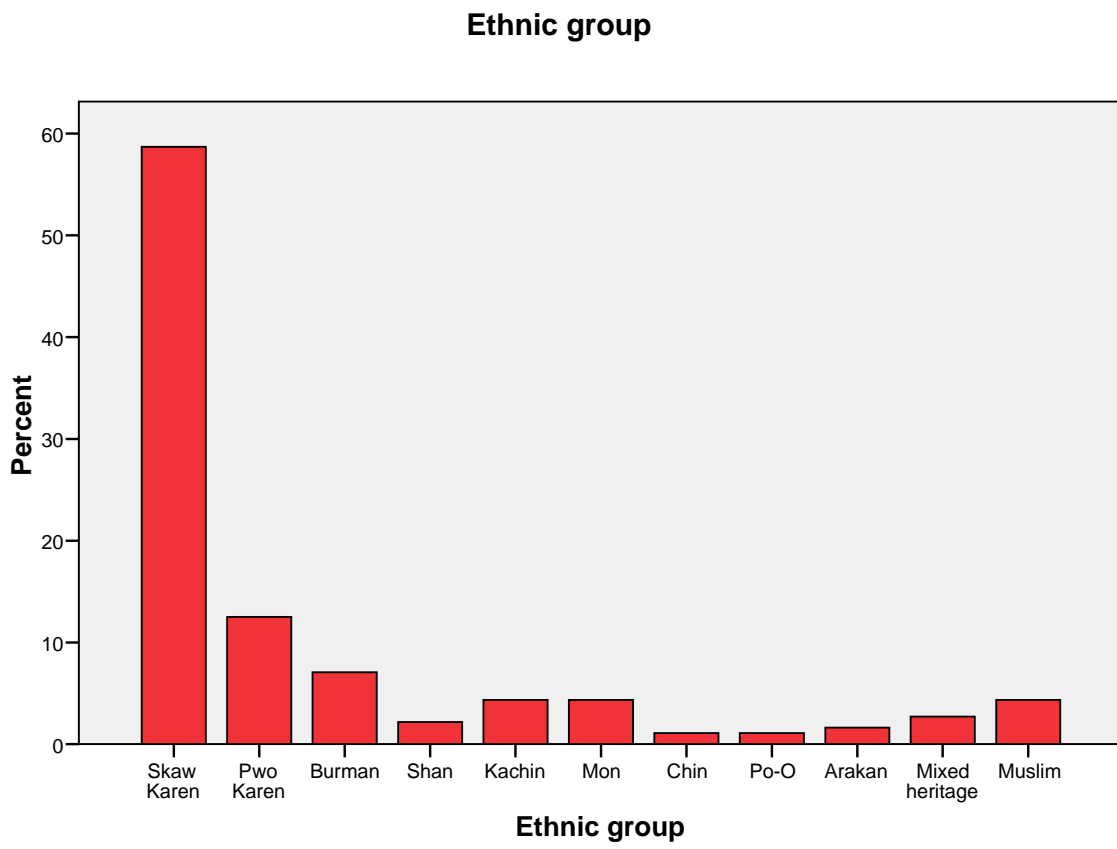
Religion

More than half of the respondents were Christian, less than 40% were Buddhist and about 5% were Muslim.

Marital status

Less than half of the respondents were married, and about the same proportion were single. The rest (7%) were separated/divorced or widowed, as shown in Figure 32.

Figure 32 | Marital status of NFE students interviewed

Marital status

47.28%

45.65%

4.35%

2.72%

- ■ Married
- ■ Separated/divorced
- ■ Widowed
- ■ Single
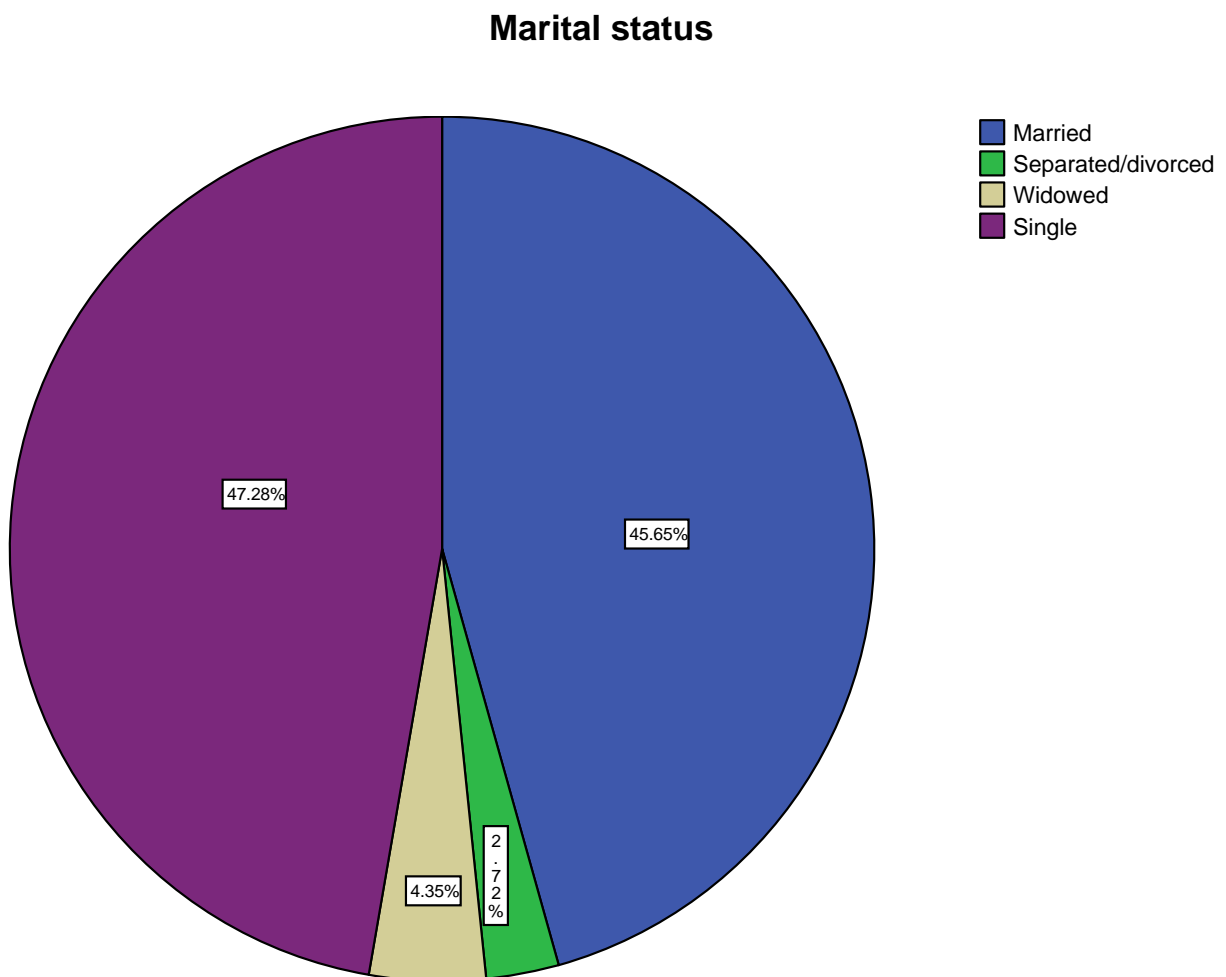
Education levels

The education level with the highest percentage of respondents was Standard 10, at 18.4%. This was followed by Standard 8 and Standard 7. Figure 33 shows that the highest education level that respondents had attained ranged between none and university level.

Figure 33 | Highest level of education obtained by NFE students interviewed

Highest level of education
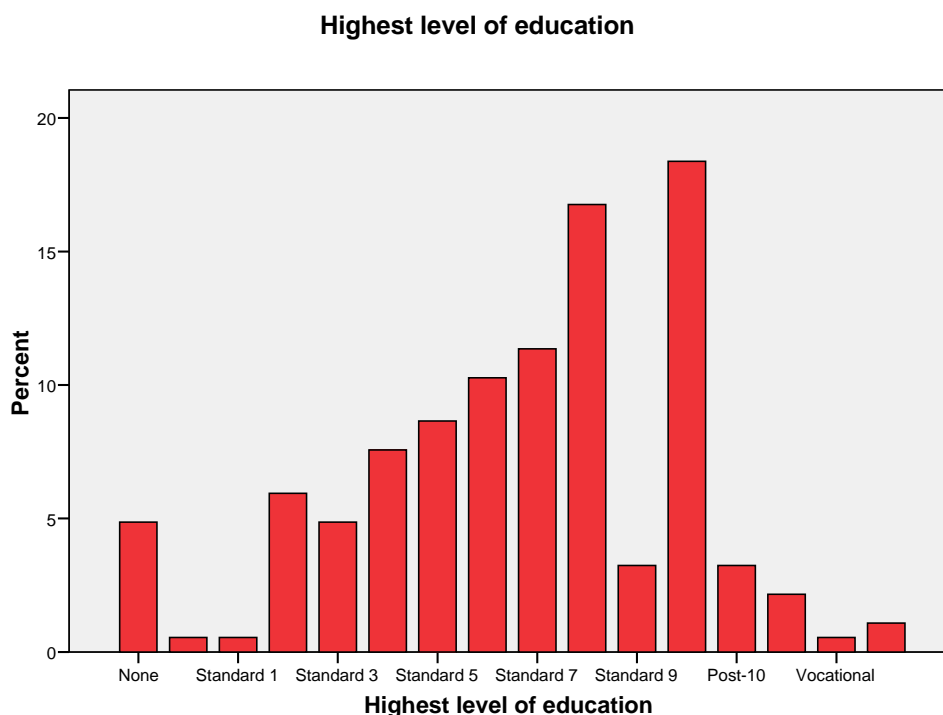
Occupation

Students made up the biggest group of respondents at 40.2%. This was followed by people who did housework at slightly more than a quarter, and those who work in NGOs/CBOs (7.1%).

Monthly income

The majority of respondents (62.5%) earned zero Baht per month. Figure 34 shows that slightly less than a fifth earned between 101 and 500 Baht and slightly less than 10% earn 501-1000 Baht per month.

Figure 34 | Monthly income of NFE students interviewed

Earn per month person

Legend:
- 0 Baht
- 1-100 Baht
- 101-500 Baht
- 501-1000 Baht
- 1001-2000 Baht
- More than 2000 Baht
- Missing

62.84%
6.01%
18.58%
9.29%
2.73%
...
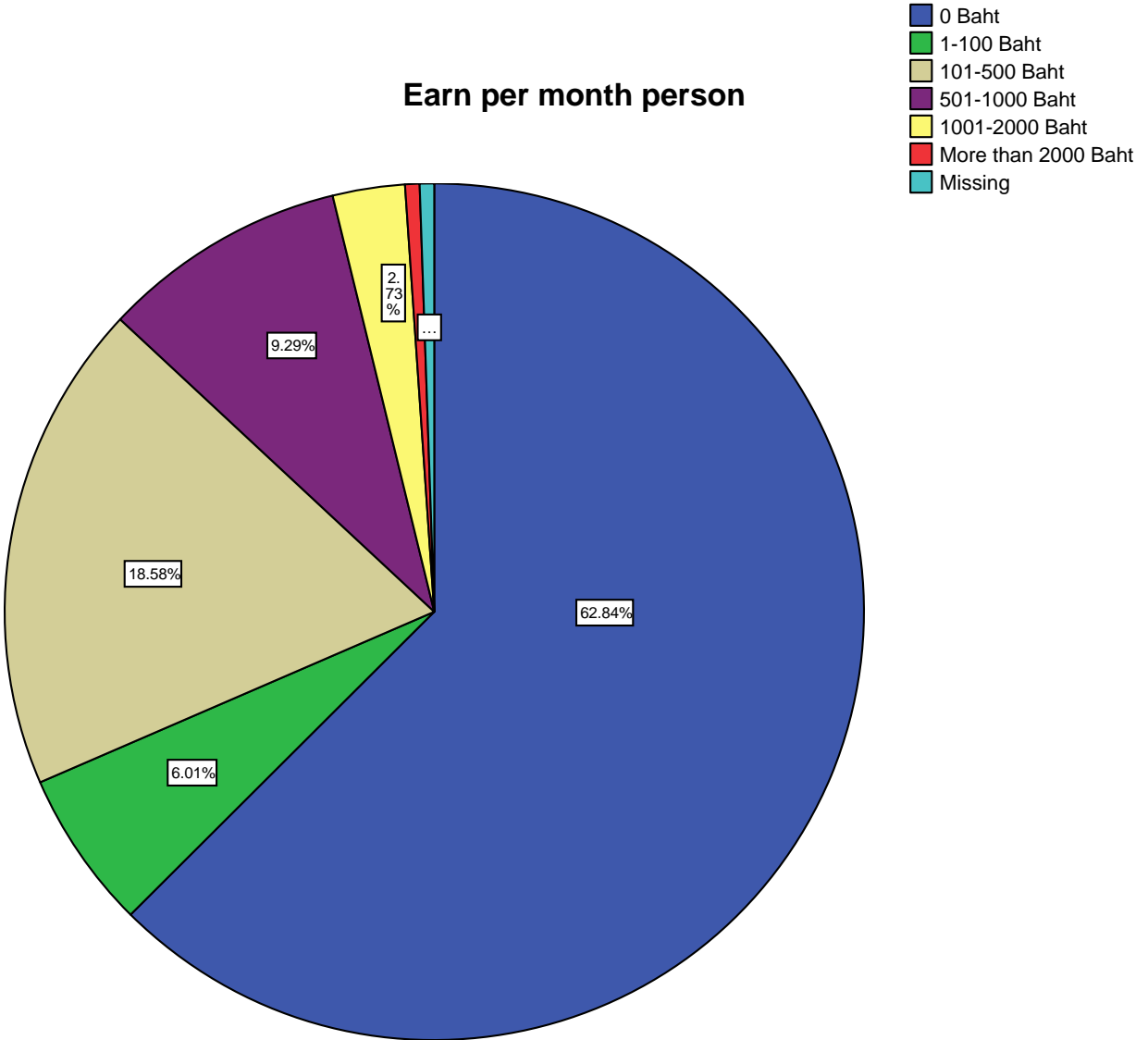
Students' motivation and learning experience

Motivation

NFE students were asked about their motivations for attending the NFE course. Overwhelmingly, the reason given was to help them prepare for resettlement - the highest percentage (54.4%) of respondents chose this option.

The other reasons for attending the course were

- I wanted to learn English to get a better job – 44.8% agreed
- I like learning English – 47% agreed
- I will get more respect in camp if I can speak English – 12.1% agreed.

Some other reasons given were the desire to learn in general, to improve their education levels and to learn English.

Learning experience

The 183 NFE students in the survey were given statements about what they liked about the NFE course they attended. The statement which had the highest percentage of positive responses was 'I had opportunities to practise speaking English' with 61.5% of interviewees agreeing to this. Only 47% of them thought that the teacher taught well.

In addition, only slightly more than a quarter thought that the textbook was clear and easy to follow, less than a quarter that the teaching materials helped them to learn better, and less than a fifth felt that the activities were engaging.

Usefulness and relevance of the NFE course

NFE students were asked about the changes to their English language skills after attending the NFE course. Of the 43 NFE students who responded, more than 10% felt that they could speak better English, 14% reported that they could write better in English and 16.3% believed that they could read better in English after attending the course. A high percentage (83.7%) reported feeling more confident about communicating in English, and 86% said that they practise speaking English with their friends and family.

With regards to social standing, 62.8% felt that people respected them more because their English has improved. On the job front, 65.1% believed that they would be able to get a better job in camp because they can now speak better English.

In relation to resettlement, 69.1% of those interviewed were considering resettling. Of those who responded, 85.7% felt more confident about communicating in English when they resettle and 90.5% reported knowing more about the culture and practices of the country they are resettling to. However, 53.5% did not feel more prepared for resettlement.

It seems that the course was useful in introducing learners to the culture and practices of a resettlement country, and enhancing their confidence in communicating in English. However, those are only some of the things that the respondents need to feel prepared for resettlement. One of the ways to check how useful the NFE course is with regards to resettlement would be to discuss with those who attended the NFE course and have already been resettled to an English-speaking country.

NFE Teachers

Table 34 shows the breakdown of the number of teachers by camp and gender. Altogether, there are 29 teachers with the majority of the teachers being male.

Table 34 | NFE teachers by camp and gender

Camp	Male	Female
Mae La	4	4
Umphiem-Mai	5	0
Mae Ra Ma Luang	0	2
Mae La Oon	3	0
Nu Po	6	0
Tham Hin	2	0
Ban Don Yang	1	2
Total	**21**	**8**

Sample Profile

In total, 19 NFE teachers were interviewed in the survey, eight of whom were female. Table 35 shows the number of NFE teachers by camp.

**Table 35 | Number of NFE teachers interviewed by camp**

Camp	NFE teachers
Mae La	6
Umphiem-Mai	1
Mae Ra Ma Luang	4
Mae La Oon	2
Nu Po	2
Tham Hin	2
Ban Don Yang	2
Total	**19**

Teaching experience

More than half of the interviewees (17 responded to this question) had been an NFE teacher for a year, slightly more than a fifth had been teaching for two years, and slightly less than a fifth for three years. The rest had been teaching for four years.

Half of the sample had been teaching (both NFE and other types of teaching) for zero to two years. The range of teaching experience was between zero and 29 years, as Figure 35 shows.

Figure 35 | Length of time NFE teachers have been teaching altogether

Length of time been a teacher altogether
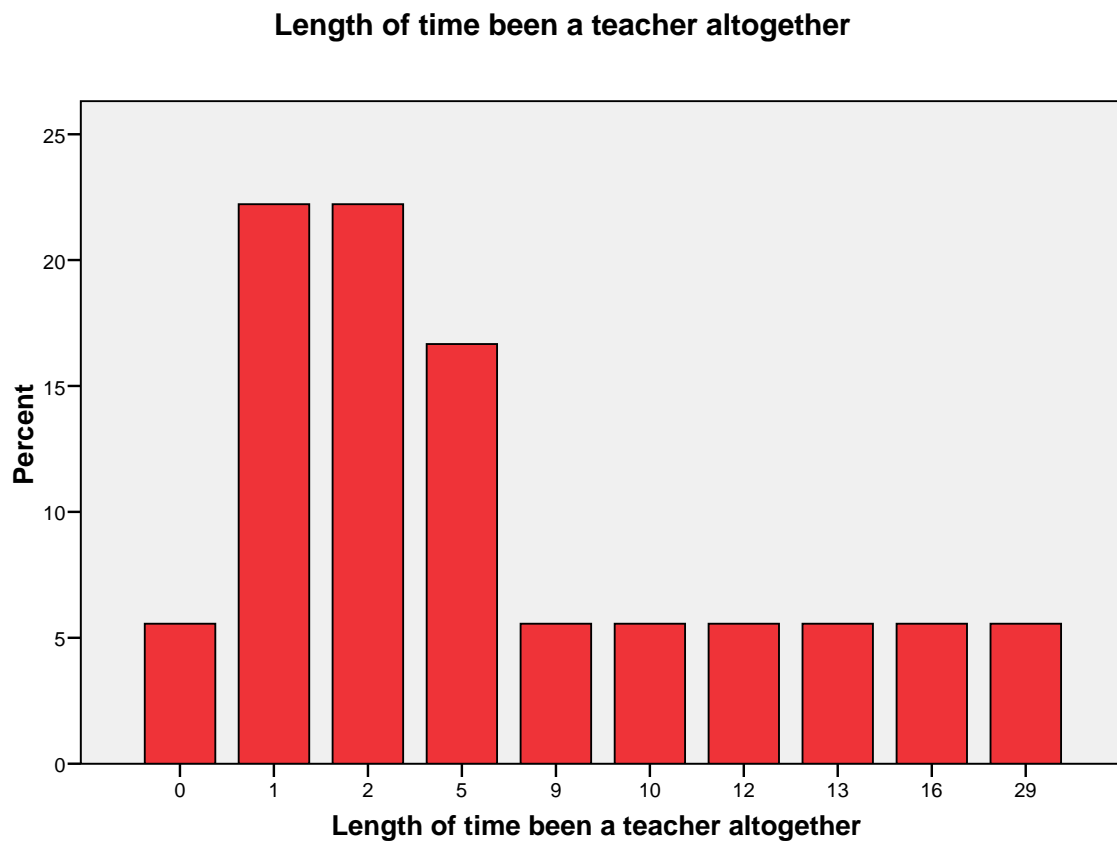
Educational qualifications

All respondents except one had Standard 10, Post-10 and university qualifications.

Last occupation before camp

Almost three quarters of the respondents had been teachers and students before coming to camp; the rest worked as farmers, soldiers and in religious work.

Monthly personal income

In the sample, 16 out of the 19 interviewed reported earning more than 2000 Baht per month. The others earned zero Baht or 1001-2000 Baht.

Monthly household income

Almost 80% of those who replied to the question had a household income of more than 2000 Baht. The rest earned zero Baht or 1001-2000 Baht.

Job satisfaction

NFE teachers were given a battery of statements relating to job satisfaction and asked if they agreed or disagreed with them.

- Teaching is hard word but it is worthwhile – 94.7% agreed
- Teaching enables me to contribute to my community – 94.7% agreed
- I enjoy teaching – 94.4% agreed
- I look forward to going to school everyday – 89.5% agreed
- Teaching is a way for me to keep busy – 76.5% agreed
- I am satisfied with my income – 66.7% agreed
- I have always wanted to be a teacher – 55.6% agreed
- I teach too many classes – 47.4% agreed
- I feel like a failure as a teacher – 42.1% agreed
- If I could get another job that paid me, I would stop teaching – 26.3% agreed
- I teach because I don't know what else to do – 11.1% agreed

It appears that the NFE teachers interviewed are satisfied with their work. However, it is important to note that slightly more than 40% feel like a failure as a teacher.

NFE teacher turnover

According to ZOA reports for 2009, teacher turnover is a major challenge to maintaining the quality of the programme. Some teachers resigned in the middle of the course and had to be replaced by new teachers with little or no pre-service training. It is becoming more difficult to find replacements with the ability to teach English as many of the residents who are able to have already resettled.

When asked, 88.9% of those interviewed were not thinking of leaving teaching. For those who were thinking of leaving, the overwhelming reason was resettlement, with 42.1% considering resettling.

Instruction

All the NFE teachers reported feeling confident about their teaching and that they encourage their students to ask questions. Despite this, 42.1% reported feeling like a failure as a teacher (as mentioned in the previous section) and the same percentage agreed with the statement 'I don't have enough knowledge of my subject to answer some of my students' questions'.

A major difficulty that teachers encountered was teaching classes of students with varying levels of English – 78.9% of the respondents agreed that this was a concern of theirs.

With respect to the textbook, a high percentage (slightly less than 90%) agreed that it is well designed and pitched at the right amount of difficulty for each level, easy to use and that the textbook activities are relevant to the topics being taught.

Slightly more than a quarter reported that there is not enough time to go through each chapter during the class, and slightly more than a fifth felt that their students do not understand the textbook.

All of the teachers disagreed with the statement that the teaching materials are not useful at all.

Relevance

All the teachers interviewed believed that the English that they teach and the topics in the textbook help to prepare their students for resettlement. However, slightly more than a third believed that the English that their students are learning is not useful in helping them get a job in camp.

Training and support for NFE teachers

Considering the finding that about 40% of the teachers interviewed feel like failures as teachers and that they do not have sufficient knowledge to answer some of the students' question, training and support for NFE teachers are crucial.

NFE teachers receive the following types of training: classroom management, adaptation skill, observation and feedback and subject matter. All of the interviewees reported being able to apply the training given by ZOA staff. The only difficulty that they encountered in applying the training was not having enough subject knowledge to apply the techniques - one quarter of the sample agreed with this.

Recommendations and conclusion

The foremost benefit that learners gained from the NFE programme was the opportunity to practise speaking English. This is a key feature that should be further developed in the programme.

The majority of the students interviewed seemed to have difficulty following the textbook, were not convinced that the teaching materials helped them to learn better, and did not particularly feel that the activities were engaging. Further investigation needs to be done into how the textbooks, teaching materials and activities are being used in the classroom. Could it be that the activities in the textbook are repetitive? Or that the exercises are not detailed enough? Or that they do not provide enough options for progression?

As documented in the preceding chapters, resettlement has had a huge impact on the quality of general education. This is also the case in the NFE programme. Teacher turnover resulting from resettlement as well as the limited pool of people with the ability to teach English have been seen to affect the quality of teaching and learning in the NFE programme.

The defining concern of the NFE teachers is that they do not have enough subject knowledge to teach well and to answer students' questions. To this end, the provision of self-study materials, in addition to the training and support currently provided to teachers, would help to address that. In addition, the ZOA NFE team could consider having NFE teachers attend subject matter training that is currently being provided to teachers in general education, so as to pool resources effectively.

The resettlement of teachers causes the quality of teaching to fall, as new teachers have to be recruited as replacements. This is, however, a recurrent issue that needs to be better managed. Better mechanisms for providing training to new teachers as and when the need arises need to be set up in all the camps, so that teachers are provided with some rudimentary training when they start teaching. More rigorous training to be provided by the ZOA trainers and staff can take place at a later stage, in accordance with the training schedule.

A final point emerged from a discussion with ZOA NFE staff who reported that many students from the secondary schools have been attending the NFE course during the summer holidays. They subsequently drop out of the course to go back to school when the academic year recommences. It is noteworthy that secondary school students are attending an English course during their school holidays. While this is commendable, it disrupts the NFE programme and denies other learners a place on the course. Right to Play (RTP) was consulted during the survey and they are willing to work with ZOA on the possibility of a collaboration to provide English learning to students during the summer either through existing or new programmes.

Chapter 9 | Recommendations and conclusion

Since 2005, there have been significant numbers of residents departing the camps for resettlement in other countries; this happened in tandem with an influx of new arrivals. The changing demographics of the camp population have had important implications on schooling and the education system in the camps.

Resettlement has brought about the departure of the most highly educated individuals, including teachers, trainers and camp education leaders and staff. This outflow of skills, experience and knowledge of the culture, system and content of the schools and education in the camps has left a gap that the schools are scrambling to fill. This, in turn, has lowered the quality of learning and instruction in the camps. Moreover, it has brought about a pervading sense of discouragement and frustration amongst those who are left behind to cope with a constantly changing teaching and training staff, and school disruptions.

Some of the new teachers are recruited from the pool of people who have recently entered the camps and are new to the education system and the culture of the schools and camps. While it is normal to have new teachers entering schools every school year, this is occurring in greater numbers, so that the systems, schedules, values and philosophy of the schools are easily destabilised.

These changes are layered onto the systemic issues imposed by the Thai government which constrain camp (education) activities. The restrictions on work, movement and the use of materials and resources limit the quality of the education activities in the camps. Nevertheless, there is still some scope to improve the provision of education within these constraints and to modify them.

The recommendations below pull together the separate recommendations provided in the preceding chapters. At the same time, they combine the issues that address resettlement, new arrivals and the underlying restrictions imposed by Thai government policies under the headings of child-friendly learning, instruction and training, teacher turnover, parental involvement, the NFE programme, methodological issues and policy issues.

Child-friendly learning in the schools

The attitudes and practices towards child-friendly schooling and teacher training need to be addressed and implemented to improve students' learning experience.

Explore and come to a consensus with teachers and students about what a child-friendly learning environment is

There needs to be a process whereby students, teachers and principals can discuss and decide amongst themselves the type of environment they want in their school. From there, it will be possible for them to identify and use the types of teaching and discipline techniques that could be used to create and maintain such an environment.

Equip teachers with more teaching techniques which are inclusive in nature

Teachers need to be able to identify instances of exclusion in the classroom and in school and to be able to apply more practical and appropriate ways of dealing with them. The VSO specialists working on inclusion at ZOA are in a perfect position to work with them to identify what they need and which methods to use. They could start by working with a few schools and then use those as focal schools from which other schools could learn, so that the model is spread out through the schools and not solely through the VSO specialists.

Equip teachers with a better understanding of health issues

Health issues need to be better understood by all in school. Simple health checks conducted in school should be part of the school routine and teachers should be equipped with ways of identifying health issues. This could be conducted in collaboration with medical nongovernmental organisations.

Better understanding of the label 'slow learners'

More investigation needs to be done into why certain children are categorised as 'slow learners'. While the findings in this survey have shed some light on how students perceive themselves as 'slow learners' and how teachers label students, there needs to be a more nuanced consideration of what this means objectively and in a classroom setting, and how students and teachers can be supported to deal with different learning needs.

Improve ZOA's provision and delivery of infrastructure, resources and materials

ZOA needs to provide the best possible support to education staff by providing infrastructure that is designed for child-friendly learning (taking into account children with health issues and disabilities), clean and safe toilets, accessible and safe school playgrounds, resources (such as chairs for teachers, increased teacher subsidies and non-monetary benefits) and materials (timely delivery of adequate numbers of textbooks and stationery). Given the frustrations that teachers and education staff face while coping with

limited resources and the high rate of teacher turnover, ZOA could reduce further aggravation by ensuring timely and adequate delivery of supplies.

Address difficulties brought about by the language of instruction

There needs to be some serious consideration of the impact of the language of instruction - Skaw Karen – on the learning of non-Skaw-Karen speaking students. Besides the Muslim Burmese-speaking residents, the number of non-Skaw-Karen speakers is increasing due to 1) anecdotal evidence of the arrival of refugees from Burma who are not Skaw-Karen-speakers (there are no figures for this) and 2) the increase in the number of 'inside students' who studied in Burma using Burmese, who may be Skaw-Karen-speakers but have limited literacy in Skaw Karen.

Although it is understood that the reasons for using Skaw Karen are embedded in nationalistic and ethnic concerns, for all children to achieve in school, it is recommended that in the long run, Burmese is used as the language of instruction, as is the case in the Karenni camps. At the very least, there needs to be a dialogue on this issue, even if the decision is made to continue with Skaw Karen as the language of instruction.

In addition, all textbooks need to be translated from English into Skaw Karen and Burmese.

The corollary of this is that the students' skill levels in Burmese have fallen. Teachers reported that students have trouble with Burmese and students revealed that they have difficulty learning the language.

Reduce student dropout at the end of the primary cycle

Participation in school falls dramatically at the end of primary schooling - more needs to be known about why this happens. One of the reasons is that progression to secondary schooling for Burmese speakers is inadequate: a limited number of primary schools in the three Tak camps use Burmese as the language of instruction but there are no secondary schools where Burmese is the language of instruction. In addition, for all children, a solid foundation of learning needs to be built from the start of children's primary schooling so that they are able to continue into secondary school with confidence.

Provide alternative forms of learning and education for those who drop out before completing secondary school

Night school is available to young people in Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang but only instruction for Grades 10 to 12 is provided. In fact, few students who drop out do actually switch to night school. Further investigation needs to be conducted into why they do not attend. If night school were extended to cover primary schooling and the other grades, would students who dropped out attend?

Other modes of schooling that combine income-generation and general education need to be explored. At present, there are other courses offered in the camps, including a course on basic education provided by the KWO. These programmes, while addressing the learning needs of the adult

population, do not directly tackle the reasons why students dropped out of school in the first place: early marriage, learning difficulties and economic necessity.

These issues also require changes within society, schools and Thai government policies. Changing attitudes and external policy need to be done but will take time.

Be mindful of gender differences in participation

In all seven camps, more female than male students are participating in schooling, particularly in the secondary grades. There needs to be further investigation into the reasons for this. Could it be due to families needing their sons to earn income for the family? Or could it be that boys are finding it more difficult than girls to achieve in school? Or could it be a combination of reasons?

Instruction and training

Redouble efforts to increase the subject knowledge of teachers

Worryingly, more than half of the teachers felt inadequate about their knowledge of their subject. This is a function of the fact that many are new recruits and have had little teaching experience or teacher training. In order to reduce the pressure on RTTs and ZOA trainers, teachers need to form groups to work together on subject knowledge. The role of RTTs and ZOA trainers would be to provide self-study materials and consultation after teachers have discussed issues with one another. Teachers need to develop more independent ways of resolving teaching and subject matter concerns, through, for example, group study, and to reduce their reliance on RTTs and ZOA trainers, so that their self-development and learning are sustainable.

Enhance principals' understanding of the training provided to teachers

During regular meetings that ZOA staff has with principals, principals should be made aware of the content and benefits of all the types of teacher training being provided, and given the opportunity to observe the results of such training. They should also be consulted about the best way to manage the training and school schedules so that they do not clash. One of the ways to do this is to declare certain days as teacher training days, and the students in school are supervised by teachers whose training is staggered across the training days.

High rate of teacher turnover in general education

The two principal reasons for teachers leaving are resettlement and the desire to further their studies. The first is something that has to be managed and the second is something that can be reduced.

Managing teacher training

If resettlement continues at the same rate, it will be difficult to maintain a standard of quality instruction in the schools. Given the logistics and the short

lead time available to provide new teachers with teaching skills, the bulk of the training efforts should be on providing new teachers with in-service support through contact with Teacher educators, more experienced teachers and RTTs.

There appears to be a 'dependent' culture of training and support, where teachers rely predominantly on the support of the RTTs for providing solutions to teaching techniques. Given the high teacher turnover and the large number of teachers that RTTs support, this over-reliance on RTTs has to be changed. Alternatives to this would include forming groups of teachers who work together to provide solutions, and calling upon retired teachers to work as mentors to new teachers. This will require a change in mindsets and attitudes and these will require the support of principals and the community over a period of time.

Managing school and training staff morale

There needs to be more moral support for teachers, trainers and principals with regards to the frustrations of constant teacher turnover and training. This could be done in groups, in workshops, in current training sessions, and so on so as to help them to manage their own expectations about their work and to help them to come up with ways to manage the situation and their own frustrations, particularly as this is a systemic issue that will not change.

Increase the opportunity cost of leaving teaching

The second reason most popular reason for leaving teaching was the desire to further their studies. This was also the case in 2005. While teachers are fairly motivated in their work, the low pay, challenging work conditions and lack of resources exact a toll on their enthusiasm. This often means that the opportunity cost of giving up teaching and its associated benefits are low.

There are several ways of influencing education staff to remain in their jobs such as: increase the subsidy provided to teachers, raise the social standing of teachers by presenting them with awards, provide more recognition for their work and arrange regular visits from leaders and ZOA staff to talk with teachers and to provide positive reinforcement and encouragement.

The timely and efficient provision of training and material support from KRCEE and ZOA would also go a long way in supporting teachers' work. Finally, increased parental involvement and support in children's learning at home should help teachers in their work.

Parental involvement

Clarify roles and expectations amongst parents, teachers and principals

This could be done during parent-teacher conferences to explicitly acknowledge the roles and expectations of the different parties with respect to students' learning and development. This would also open up the opportunity to address the concerns that parents have in approaching and talking to teachers and parents and to establish more specific guidelines for all involved.

Exploit the full potential of current activities

There is no need at present to increase parents' involvement in school. Instead, it is recommended that their existing involvement and their capabilities to improve their children's learning at home are enhanced. This would involve exploiting the full potential of the activities that they are already participating in: taking their children to school for registration, attending parent-teacher conferences and parents meetings, and helping to repair the school building. Better and more novel forms of communication can be used in these activities to enable parents to

- learn more about how they can better facilitate the learning and development of their children in school and at home – through workshops, discussion groups and so on during meetings and school registration
- receive reinforced, positive and regular messages about parental involvement in learning at school and home
- receive positive messages about their children
- learn more about the schooling system and changes to school and education policy, so that they can be aware of how these affect their children's learning
- find out about providing a good learning environment at home and in daily life, e.g., advice on how to develop a daily routine for their children, and the best ways to support and encourage their children.

Equip teachers and principals to communicate more effectively with parents

Teachers and principals need to be better equipped at communicating effectively and constructively on a one-to-one basis and in meetings with parents about their students' progress and the types of practical tools that parents can use to enhance their children's learning. This can be done through teacher training sessions, or other training/guidance sessions that they are already involved in.

Set up a shared sense of purpose amongst parents, teachers and principals

Set up concrete ways in which parents and school could collaborate. For example, schools can develop a homework checking system between parents and teachers. Parents check students' assignments everyday to make sure they are done and sign off the work. After the teachers correct the papers, the parents will be able to check the grades given to the children.

Community, school based recognition and action

At the macro level, policy-based consensus on the importance of parental involvement needs to be elaborated. This should be integrated into education and school policy and incorporated into school- and community-based awareness and action. ZOA's role would be to organise workshops or more fully exploit those that are currently running with education and school committees, principals and teachers to facilitate better understanding of the benefits and modes of parental involvement, and the roles and expectations of all parties.

NFE English programme

Organise an alternative English programme for high school students

Design and implement an English language programme in collaboration with Right to Play (RTP). RTP was consulted during the survey and they are willing to work with ZOA on the possibility of providing English learning to students during the summer either through existing or new programmes. Issues relevant to the needs of young people (health, friendship, sport) could be incorporated into the syllabus. This would help to increase the English language skills of young people as well as reduce the disruptions to the NFE English programme.

Further investigation into and subsequent improvement of NFE textbooks and activities

Closer investigation into how the textbooks, teaching materials and activities are being used in the classroom will identify the issues that students have with them. Could it be that the activities in the textbook are repetitive? Or that the exercises are not detailed enough? Or that they do not provide enough options for progression? These questions can only be answered when adequate information has been gathered.

Introduce more opportunities for learners to practise speaking English in the course

Introduce activities which encourage learners to practice their English speaking skills, such as mobilising students to organise plays, set up an English club where they gather to practise English, invite foreign volunteers to participate regularly in informal English activities with students.

Improve the English language skills of NFE teachers

Besides the training and support already available, provide self-study materials to NFE teachers so that they can improve upon their English language skills. Teachers should also be encouraged to use the resources that are already available in the education centres. In addition, the ZOA NFE team could consider having NFE teachers attend subject matter training that is currently being provided to teachers in general education, so as to pool resources more effectively.

NFE teacher training

Better mechanisms for providing training to new teachers as and when the need arises need to be set up in all the camps, so that teachers are provided with some rudimentary training when they start teaching. More rigorous training by ZOA trainers and staff can take place at a later stage, in accordance with the training schedule.

Methodological issues

ZOA has made much progress in collecting statistical information on students and teachers so as to improve their programming. There are, however, certain sets of statistics which would further help them in their work:

- Student dropout figures and reasons for
- Student grades for year-end exams.

Policy issues

Enhance the coordination between the UNHCR and ZOA for resettlement trends and numbers

At the systemic level, better coordination between the UNHCR and ZOA on projected numbers being resettled would enable ZOA and camp education staff to plan more effectively based on expected trends.

Work towards effecting policy change

At the policy level, ZOA and other education NGOs would do well to work with the Thai Ministry of Education towards allowing students to attend neighbouring Thai schools. This is the most sustainable mode of educating children and young people and NGO resources that are currently used for schools in the camps can be put towards improving the overall quality of education in Thai schools. The schools in camp can be used to teach Burmese and other languages during the weekends or as after-school activities.

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