Taking Learning Further
A research paper on refugee access to Higher Education

Simon Purnell
with Aranya Kengkunchorn
January 2008
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## Acronyms

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<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APL</td>
<td>Assessment of Prior Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>Child’s Dream Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD-ROM</td>
<td>Compact Disc – Read Only Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Curriculum Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>General Educational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE/NFE</td>
<td>Higher Education/Non-Formal Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IB</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGCSE</td>
<td>International General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INEE</td>
<td>International Network for Education in Emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organisation for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRS</td>
<td>Jesuit Refugee Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KED</td>
<td>Karen Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEDC</td>
<td>Karen Economic Development Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEP</td>
<td>Karen Education Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KnED</td>
<td>Karenni Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNFEP</td>
<td>Karenni Northern Further Education Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KnRC</td>
<td>Karenni Refugee Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRC</td>
<td>Karen Refugee Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFE</td>
<td>Non-Formal Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDC</td>
<td>Personal Development Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPE</td>
<td>Politics, Philosophy and Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTG</td>
<td>Royal Thai Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIL</td>
<td>Sumner Institutes of Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSS</td>
<td>Student Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEN</td>
<td>Thabyay Education Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPC</td>
<td>Teacher Preparation Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</td>
</tr>
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Executive Summary

Chapter 1 | Introduction
This survey was carried out to provide stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of the options for and implications of implementing the Higher Education programme.
This evaluation has examined Higher Education in the following areas.

1) The ways that refugee students can access opportunities to Higher Education
2) The impact that this would have on the education provided in the camps
3) The role that accreditation and accredited qualifications would play in the education system in the camps
4) The requirements to deliver a Higher Education programme for stakeholders
5) The risks and threats that exist for the delivery and impact of the Higher Education programme

The foci of the evaluation and the ensuing recommendations are:
1) Learners and learning process in terms of what it leads on to
2) Personnel: Teachers (and their training), Admin, NGO/CBO roles, relationships and responsibilities.
3) Curriculum and learning assessment
4) Materials and physical facilities
5) External factors/variables/opportunities

Chapter 2 | The right to learn
This chapter addresses the way that internationally agreed conventions and frameworks are supported by the provision of Higher Education for refugees. It also presents information regarding the rights of individuals to gain accredited education and how these support the process of inclusion that has been begun by ZOA already.

Chapter 3 | Education in the camps
An overview of the opportunities to study in the refugee camps is given in this chapter. The range of courses from KG to Tenth Standard is presented. The problems and challenges associated with delivery of quality education are also stated in sections four to six of this chapter including problems information on the impact of resettlement on the refugee education system and the problems that exist regarding access to Higher Education.

Chapter 4 | Higher Education Opportunities
The main options that have been developed by stakeholders regarding refugee access to Higher Education are presented in this chapter. The information given is a comprehensive presentation of the views and perspectives of the various actors and stakeholders involved in the proposed refugee Higher Education programme. The situation regarding access to Thai-language programmes at universities in Thailand is provided first and followed
up with research findings for access to English-language programmes at universities in Thailand and access to Higher Education through distance learning.

**Chapter 5 | Programme design and issues for further investigation**

In addition to the information given throughout the research process related specifically to the options that are being explored there has been considerable information given that related to the overall set up of the programme. This ranged from the goals of the programme to community needs and the role of graduates to support these needs. Other areas discussed in this chapter include NGO and CBO roles and responsibilities and the requirements that will need to be met to run this programme. There is also an overview of suggestions and comments provided by those consulted during this research.

**Chapter 6 | Accreditation and recommendations for the process**

The issue of accreditation is discussed in detail in this part of the report. There have been different options proposed to resolve the lack of accredited education available for refugees. The first option is the use of GED or another form of testing to measure students’ aptitude and ability. The second option discussed is a medium term option of providing a foundation course for students to have the opportunity to prepare themselves for GED or similar. The longer term option that was given by interviewees was the alignment of the camp curriculum to the Thai curriculum. The opportunities and risks of this are presented in detail in this section of the chapter and information is given to support the process.

**Chapter 7 | Assessment of the impact of Higher Education on the education system in the camps**

The development of opportunities for refugees to access Higher Education has been seen to be likely to have an impact on the education system that operates in the camps. The possible impact of the programme on the General Education in the camps is presented with details regarding the routes that graduates would be likely to take. There is a presentation of information relating to the need for graduates to be ‘channelled’ into supporting the community and the responsibilities for NGO and CBO staff to monitor and support the situation. Other topics in this chapter are related to the impact of Higher Education on Post Tenth Standard education and points to note to reduce any negative impact as well as an overview of the KED planning for Post Tenth Standard education. Other information in this chapter concerns the need for a broad spectrum of educational opportunities to be considered and the role of the Thai NFE system is introduced.

**Chapter 8 | Risks**

Various risks have been seen to be present for the implementation of the Higher Education programme. The main risk has been identified to be the resettlement programme. Other areas that can be risks if there are not steps taken to establish and monitor the programme that have been discussed are NGO responsibilities and perceptions regarding the role and benefits of providing Higher Education. Also flaws and inaccuracies in the research process are considered here.
Chapter 9 | Strategic recommendations
This chapter provides a set of strategic recommendations for ZOA and the other partner organisations to consider in the development of the Higher Education programme. Each of the following strategies has sub-strategies provided to help ensure that actions and activities are supporting the guiding strategies.

1. Strategy to develop access to opportunities for Higher Education
2. Strategy to support learners to gain accredited education
3. Strategy to ensure that the programme is beneficial for the refugee education system
4. Strategy to ensure access to the programme is inclusive
5. Strategy to ensure that implementation support is present at all levels
6. Strategy to work on sustainability and capacity building

Chapter 10 | Conclusions
The conclusions provided in this chapter are given to show a suggested approach for the partner organisations to assist with their implementation planning. The text is supported by the table provided in Appendix II which presents the development of the three options and supporting activities as broken down into stages for implementation.
Chapter 1 | Introduction

1.1 Aims and purpose of the survey

This survey was carried out to look into the situation regarding opportunities for access to Higher Education for refugees. The survey thoroughly assessed Higher Education needs to identify what role it could play in the broader spectrum of education in the camps whilst aiming to provide stakeholders with a strong base of information so that there can be clear understanding of how to most effectively organise future interventions, including what role should be taken by implementing agencies.

The need for this research was partly constructed from the lack of sufficient material information to have a complete overview of the existing opportunities, constraints and implications with regard to Higher Education and partly from the need to accrue relevant information pertaining to the subject.

This evaluation has examined Higher Education in the following areas.

1) The ways that refugee students can access opportunities to Higher Education
2) The impact that this would have on the education provided in the camps
3) The role that accreditation and accredited qualifications would play in the education system in the camps
4) The needs for delivery of a Higher Education programme for stakeholders
5) The risks and threats that exist for the delivery and impact of the Higher Education programme

For the purposes of the research it was decided that the most appropriate criteria for assessing the potential for such a programme were to investigate the relevance, feasibility, sustainability so that an understanding of the logic of running this particular intervention could be developed. These criteria are used to formulate fitting strategies that increase the potential for delivering a programme with beneficial levels of effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Are opportunities in line with the needs and priorities of the community and students’ own lives?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feasibility (Operational/Logistical/Legal and Economic/Financial)</td>
<td>Are the resources (human and physical) available to implement any of the possibilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What can and cannot be provided in terms of implementing the possibilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is possible within the restrictions faced under Thai law?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there enough financial support available and donor interest to establish this programme so that it has a positive impact?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional and Organisational Sustainability

- Is there the opportunity for institutions of Higher Education (Considering 3.1-3.4) to continue to provide places long-term?
- Will the political will (Local (Karen etc) and Host/3rd country providers) remain to offer these programmes?
- Do the implementing organisations have the expected capacity to continue to implement the possibilities on a long-term basis and hand-over progressively?

The information regarding these points was used to assist with assessing the overall logic of running the programme as far as can be understood from the research perspective. The above points as well as the risks that are encountered have an overall bearing on the outcome regarding programme logic. The criteria given above were used to analyse the programme according to the areas given below. Information provided within each of these areas is not to be seen as mutually exclusive but that the divisions have been made for accessibility of the information within the overall picture of the possibilities for Higher Education for refugees. These areas were chosen because they represent a broad spectrum of areas for consideration in any education programme and are therefore fitting for this scenario.

The foci of the evaluation and the ensuing recommendations are:
1. Learners and learning process in terms of what it leads on to
2. Personnel and support systems: Teachers (and their training), Admin, NGO/CBO roles, relationships and responsibilities.
3. Curriculum and learning assessment
4. Materials and physical facilities
5. External factors/variables/opportunities

1.2 Research methods

The research process used three main tools for collecting data. These are as follows:

1. Documentary review
2. Semi-structured individual interviews
3. Focus-group interviews

The assessment was conducted during the course of the months September to December 2007.

1.3 Structure of the report

This assessment paper aims to provide ZOA with a broad and all encompassing view of the possibilities and constraints with regard to the provision of Higher Education opportunities for refugees. The information provided in this paper is a collection of ideas, thoughts, perceptions and experiences of a cross section of NGO staff, Thai ministries, CBO staff and
representatives of the target group for this particular planned intervention. This has been presented in this fashion to enable the actors involved in this programme to have ready access of fresh information regarding the current understanding and situation for Higher Education for refugees. The report will deal with issues regarding the right of people to learn and move on to look at education as it is provided in the camps. The options that have been proposed will be explored in detail and followed by a commentary and review of findings related to accreditation and the implications for the education system. There will also be an assessment of major risks to the programme such as the resettlement issues. It will also provide a set of strategic recommendations for implementation of this programme.
Chapter 2 | The right to learn

2.1 Introduction
As with any programme that is providing educational services it is appropriate to situate the work against a broader set of values that has been adopted with regards to education as a whole. This has been done in this paper to add substance and a stronger base to the outcomes of the research and recommendations.

It has been agreed that all individuals have the right to an education. This right has been articulated in many international conventions and documents, such as:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951)
- The Geneva Convention (1949)

(INEE, 2004, p5)

The last of these documents has added a structural approach to assist with aligning education and access to education with achievable and realistic indicators of progress. All of these conventions and agreements made at the international level are to ensure that education provision for all is a common goal. However it is the responsibility of actors in education provision to use these agreements and to use the messages contained within to promote strategies that are working towards achieving the goals that are set.

At a global level there have been pronounced changes in the legitimisation of the rights of learners of all ages to access education. This has been with the support of the Dakar Framework and the Convention against Discrimination in Education adopted on 14\textsuperscript{th} December 1960 by the general conference of UNESCO. Article One of the Convention explicitly states that:

“…the term ‘discrimination’ includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education…”

(UNESCO, 1960, p13)

The convention goes on to state in Article Three that there should be the equal provision of access to education for foreign nationals as there is for the host territories’ own nationals. (ibid, p22) This information is included to highlight the rights of the refugees and the responsibilities of the host government, (in this case the Royal Thai Government) the non-governmental organisations and institutions of Higher Education in Thailand to ensure that

\footnote{The Royal Thai Government has not signed up to this convention}
opportunities exist for learners of a given standard to be able to access Higher Education.

As stated action frameworks have been agreed upon that guide the ways of working towards the ability of educators and learners to achieve goals in education that are seen as a human right. The World Declaration on Education for All on meeting basic learning needs which has been adopted by the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (5-9 March 1990) and the Dakar World Education Forum Framework for Action (2000) provide an international policy base that directly supports developing refugee education standards and opportunities. The Thai policy at present refers to basic education and has not yet addressed the question of Higher Education. However these supporting frameworks are providing a strong base to develop opportunities further.

The subject of rights of refugees in their territory is something that the Royal Thai Government is actively addressing through policy adjustments which aligns the Thai efforts to the EFA requirement of developing a supportive policy context. There is clear understanding in this context that there have to be improved support systems including policy to assist with the refugees’ ability to fulfil their rights. The need to ensure that there are equal provisions of access and equal exercising of rights amongst all persons in Thailand is given increased significance by the views given by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. In the speech entitled ‘Education of the Disadvantaged’ given by the Princess there is clear reference to the status of the migratory populations in Thailand that are given the status of refugee by UNHCR and the fact that they are not recognised as refugees. They are seen as illegal immigrants. However, it is also said that these people must be respected by any organisation as human beings [and the rights that exist as such]. (UNESCO 2004, pp. 17-19)

2.2 Inclusion and the right to learn

The strategy of inclusion in the provision of education is actively working towards and supporting the achievement of the goals laid out in the conventions and documents discussed above. The work that is done towards providing systems, content and attitudes that are actively ensuring that education is provided regardless of the indicators that are discussed in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (see quote above) are referred to as inclusive education.

ZOA Refugee Care has begun a process of working towards eliminating discriminatory processes in education. It is not the focus of this paper to explore this process, however a comprehensive overview of the process can be found in ‘Having their say’ – Refugee camp residents and inclusive education. (Oh et. al 2007) However, the development of access to opportunities for Higher Education level study is supporting the approach of ZOA to actively work towards the providing education for those who are marginalised. (ibid p8)
In the current context of education provided for people residing in Thailand there has been a marginalisation of the refugee population through policies that have excluded them from accessing opportunities relevant to their learning needs. The work that has been done by staff from ZOA Refugee Care on policy adaptation is a highly commendable output from the process on Higher Education this far. Additionally, the openness of staff from ministries of the Royal Thai Government to actively enhance the inclusion of marginalised persons resident in their country in all levels of the education system is likewise highly commendable.

The commitment from actors in this process is demonstrated further and given more organisational sustainability by means of the project framework that is worked towards by ZOA Refugee Care. This is by means of the inclusion of the project output “Access to education broadened through targeted educational initiatives for new beneficiary groups”. (ZOAI, 2005) Within this project output there have been investigations into the possibility of providing distance education opportunities. In addition ZOA Refugee Care has developed links to educational institutions in Thailand to explore other opportunities.

The objective of this report is not to provide a thorough overview of the processes and conventions that exist in terms of education as a right. The information that has been provided is, as highlighted earlier, given to provide substance and a broader context for the information and recommendations that have come from this research. The main focus of the research is to look into the different options that are available for establishing access to Higher Education from the perspective of a broad cross-section of actors and agents, including possibly most importantly the refugee perceptions and perspectives.
Chapter 3 | Education in the camps

3.1 Introduction
The delivery of services for the provision of education in the camps is a massive task with a multitude of actors and stakeholders. ZOA Refugee Care plays the major role in providing educational services which are focused towards enabling the refugees to manage and improve their own community education system. The Karen Education Project (Phase IV) began in January 2006 and the main intervention areas are in-service teacher training and support, curriculum and text-book development, institutional capacity building, community development, and the provision of operational services. (van der Stouwe, cf. Oh et al. 2006, p2) As introduced in the previous chapter, an additional intervention put under the fourth phase of the project is the fifth output, “Access to education broadened through targeted educational initiatives for new beneficiary groups”. (ZOA, 2005) The main challenge for the future has been stated to be the need to assist the further improvement of the quality of education and to ensure the sustainability of the interventions in light of uncertain future scenarios for the refugees. (van der Stouwe, cf. Oh et al. 2006, p2)

Within the seven refugee camps that are predominantly populated by Karen refugees there are sixty-two Primary and Secondary schools (ZOA, 2007) and these are divided into schools providing general education (schools set-up by the camp community, schools set up by the Muslim community and Mission schools) and religious schools (Bible schools, Buddhist or ‘thirisanda’ schools and Koranic schools) (Oh et al. 2006, p70)

3.2 Study in the camp schools
Education provided in the schools in the camps follows a twelve year system with two kindergarten levels and ten ‘Standards’ forming the basis of the learning process. Primary schooling consists of kindergarten A and B, and Standards 1 to 4. Middle school is seen as the period from 5th to 7th Standards. High school runs from Standard 8 to 10. (ibid, p67) There are not prescribed ages to be learning at these levels due to various factors in the camp related to the ongoing situation in Burma.

Pre-middle school learning in the camps provides students with the opportunity to learn Burmese, English, Karen, Maths, Geography and Health. After fifth standard is reached History and Science are introduced into the curriculum and Health is dropped. There are also arts programmes for Primary and Secondary level learners as well as some vocational activities within some of the school learning programmes in the camps. (ibid, p68)

The structure of the education system used in the camps has been carried over from the structure used by the Karen before they fled to Thailand. In the

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2 The seven camps are: Tham Hin, Don Yang, No Poe, Umphiem, Mae La, Mae La Ma Luang & Mae La Oon.
closed environment of the camp there was a need to provide students with the chance to enhance their learning opportunities. This led to the natural progression within the education system of establishing Post Tenth Standard schools. These are places for further study and enable refugee students to learn for two or three years in most cases. This development has caused an increase in the numbers of Post Tenth Standard learning facilities. These community initiated programmes are seen as relevant to the community needs as their establishment is usually do to a perceived need in the education system or camp environment. However other factors that have contributed to the increased development of opportunities at this level can be seen to be attributed to policy changes allowing these institutions to operate and increased interest from donors. (Curriculum Project, 2007, p2)

3.3 The role of Post 10 and graduates

There are twenty-six camp based Post 10th Standard schools (Curriculum Project, 2006, p2). This is not inclusive of vocational training schools and courses, internship programmes, short-term trainings that are less than one year long, schools within the KG-10th Standard system and part-time classes. These schools provide a range of subjects but all teach English. In some cases this is a general course without a specific focus on reading and writing. In addition, some schools also teach ‘Reading’ and ‘Writing’ or ‘Reading and Writing’ as a separate subject or subjects respectively. Some also have separate classes on other aspects of English language learning: ‘Grammar’, ‘pronunciation’ and ‘listening and speaking’ are examples. Other subjects provided at the majority of programmes include science, maths and social studies. Additionally a large number provide Burmese language classes and other subjects taught at some of the schools include Thai, community development, leadership, management or teaching skills. (ibid. pp. 2-18)

The very presence of such high numbers of opportunities being developed at Post 10 level automatically indicates the strong desire amongst refugees to learn and to develop their skill base. The role of Post 10 programmes has been noted to be one of providing schools with teachers, community based organisations with junior staff, adding to the human resource pool within Karen State and preparing students for higher level academic programmes³. Some of the programmes such as PDC or KNFEP have a particular focus on guiding students towards working for their community and it was reported by representatives of the community education system that this is the main role of Post Ten courses. Other courses such as KEDC in Nu Po give students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in areas such as accounting, economics and management.

3.4 Problems with level and content of Post Ten programmes and skills of graduates from these programmes

Most students who join a course of study at a Post Ten level have completed 10th standard. A few schools, especially those set up by community-based

³ The number of students that access these courses is very low.
organisations, waive these requirements. (Curriculum Project 2007, p3) The role of Post Ten schools includes providing new teachers and community workers for the camp or for nearby in Burma, however it must be stressed that the only schools with a specific focus on developing skills for people to become teachers are the TPCs.

This role for Post Ten schools is a highly valid function in terms of addressing the shortfalls of teachers and staff available to camp and Karen or Karenni State schools and organisations however it has been said that a huge percentage of graduates end up teaching afterwards, but this is not necessarily by preference. The skills of graduates have been reported by many in the camp as not being high enough to support the learning needs of students. There are cases of teachers at Post Ten level who themselves have only completed a Post Ten school course themselves. There are serious doubts about the ability of all of these teachers to deliver courses of a suitable level to the students at Post Ten schools as well as their ability to do their job to the standard required at other levels of schooling.

Education authorities have decided that Higher Education should be English-medium, for reasons that include enabling students to access international further education opportunities. Also suitable materials for Post Ten are not available in ethnic languages or Burmese. Furthermore, the use of the Burmese government curriculum in the camp schools from KG onwards is widely viewed with disdain both politically and pedagogically, thus limiting any options in this regard.

Additionally, students do not have sufficient English language proficiency to access English-medium content unless it is written in simplified English. Off-the-shelf senior Secondary maths, science and social studies materials are written in highly complex English. Also lower-level (junior Secondary and Primary) materials have content well below the levels students are expected to work with. Teachers also are often not confident in dealing with first language material. Many teachers are themselves recent graduates of the programmes they are teaching at, and have English a little higher than the students’ levels. Other course materials from the USA, UK or other sources are written for a learning context very different to the Burma border. In addition to complex language, students and teachers often have to deal with unfamiliar and irrelevant content that presupposes knowledge of Western cultural norms. This issue has been addressed to an extent by CP. They have provided an eighteen month to two year English course, three years of social studies modules and the beginnings of science, maths and community management courses. Various components of these are being used in twenty four Post Ten schools. (ibid, p6)

3.5 Resettlement and its related impact for Higher Education
Post Ten schools are located in the refugee camps and therefore resettlement of both teachers and students is an issue. One consequence of this is that many experienced teachers are being replaced by less experienced ones. Often recent graduates of Post Ten programmes are required to work as
teachers with very little training and practical experience. This has been seen to weaken the overall standard of the human resources available to support education. In a fair number of cases camp schools have also managed to recruit highly qualified teaching staff from amongst the new arrivals from Burma. However, amongst these new teachers there are many waiting for resettlement opportunities. So the solution to the problem of losing teachers is shown to be a temporary measure. The high turnover of teaching staff puts a heavy teacher training load on the CBOs and NGOs working in the field.

3.6 Problems with access to Higher Education

There have been seen to be two main areas that serve as barriers to refugee access to Higher Education. These are:

1. The lack of permission to attend courses
2. The lack of accredited qualifications that can be used to demonstrate the content and level of any prior learning

The opportunities to access Higher Education are reduced further by the fact that there is massive demand from schools in the camps to be provided with teaching staff. The graduates of Post Ten schools are often obliged to work as teachers in the camp schools even though many state clearly that they would like the opportunity to continue their studies. Solutions to the permission issue are being discussed and resolved by staff from ZOA and staff from ministries of the RTG. The permission granted to open opportunities for some refugee students as a trial programme is currently underway however the accreditation process is discussed in more detail in chapter six.
Chapter 4 | Higher Education Opportunities

The development of opportunities to explore what could be possible in terms of providing refugee access to Higher Education has led the various stakeholders to arrive at three main areas or options. This chapter will explore the three options and provide a thorough overview of the different points of view that exist for the options. The information for each of the options will consider the various actors and factors that are present and explore the following areas:

- Learners and the learning process
- Personnel and support systems including administrative responsibilities, teachers and their training and NGO/CBO roles
- The curriculum and the learning assessment
- Material and physical facilities
- External factors, variables or opportunities.

There have been ongoing discussions between various stakeholders that have meant that there is the possibility of a trial or test programme for a small group of students. However, the test programme is under development and the possibility for students to start on courses is being worked towards.

4.1 Access to Thai-language programmes at universities in Thailand

4.1.1 Introduction

The use of Thai language medium courses for refugee students is a longer term programme because students in the camp do not have the opportunity to learn the language to a level where they can apply for places on courses. However, the development of the option has to be considered as it is a resource that can be made available to refugee students. In longer term refugee settings it is widely accepted that the curriculum should ‘face both ways’. (INEE, undated) This means that sufficient elements of the curriculum from both host country and country of origin are present for it to be acceptable and recognised by both sets of educational management and assessment agencies. In this case the Thai Ministry of Education and the community education departments. This is a challenge and it requires substantial regional and inter-agency coordination to harmonise educational activities.

As reported above there is a need to consider this option as it is an opportunity to gain access to resources that have been previously unavailable. In addition there has been a clear indication from Thai government ministry staff that they feel that there is a real benefit for people from the adjoining border areas of Thailand to learn and develop their Thai language skills. This is in terms of providing sustainable networks and relationships that could be developed to be of advantage to both Karen and Thai alike as well as serving to support security for Thailand. This policy is also followed by NSC, where staff must learn the languages of neighbouring countries.
Staff from MOI have highlighted that they are very aware of the weak level of Thai language amongst the refugee population at present and have indicated that this may need to be a longer term programme. In addition it has been said that it is essential that the use of the Thai curriculum be carefully implemented. This was backed up by comments given on tuition in rural or isolated Thai communities where materials and skilled teachers are not always available. It was said that there is often a need to support students from these areas with additional Thai language classes at university to enable them to catch the subject matter. The need for this to be a programme with a longer term implementation strategy is also echoed by the staff of ZOA and of the partner agencies. It was reported that the development of Thai language skills for refugee students is a big challenge that will also need a large time scale to assess the success and impact of its implementation.

Discussions with a wider cross section of staff from programmes and agencies has also indicated the same outcomes related to a long term strategy and it has been stressed that the implementation of Thai language to enable students to access the Thai language medium courses should not be forced upon the students. This becomes more important for the refugee students because they are already learning three languages (Karen, Burmese and English) and a fourth language could overburden them. There is a low level of interest in learning of Thai language amongst the camp population. The value of learning the language is seen by some of the refugees but the size of the challenge to get learners to be able to communicate in Thai language is de-motivating for them. Over half respondents at camp level who were consulted in the research stated that reaching the standard in Thai language is the biggest barrier for refugee access to Thai medium courses.

4.1.2 Learners and the learning process
The task of reducing the barrier of language for the delivery of Thai language courses to refugee students is a difficult one. As part of the accreditation process that is described in more detail in chapter six there will be an increased presence of Thai language taught in the refugee camp schools. This is the only way that students can realistically address their learning needs in relation to access to courses where the language of instruction is Thai. The idea of providing students with an intensive course in Thai language is not favoured by the researcher. This was backed up by a member of ZOA staff who felt the development of writing skills in Thai language would require more time than was available within the constraints of an intensive course. The researcher strongly agrees with this point. This reinforces the need for a long term strategy for the development of Thai language skills amongst refugees.

Many people that were interviewed said that given the present circumstances in the camp education system the option of Thai courses was the least suitable for refugee students. The majority of these were refugees that participated in the research however partner organisation and ZOA staff also indicated this viewpoint. There are many positives that can be gained by pursuing the development of Thai language skills for refugees to the point
where they can access Thai language medium courses. The number of courses and the number of institutions that are available to provide courses as well as the fact that there are branches of university colleges in Mae Sot, Mae Sariang and the Rajabhat Institutes in Mae Sot and Kanchanaburi. The proximity of sites for the delivery of Thai medium courses to the areas where the refugee camps are situated also provides a manageable opportunity to enable the students to carry out their independent study project on an issue in the camps. Students could also be in a position to come back and work in the camps during holiday periods as well as carry out their research (if applicable to the course of study).

Subjects that were proposed as suitable courses for refugees included accounting, business and economics related subjects; education and teaching related subjects; health and medicine related courses as well as a broader cross-section including engineering, management, law, philosophy and political science. It was also suggested that there should be opportunities for Masters level study if possible.

Refugees who were interviewed also provided information and support for the value of developing the education system to enable the access of students to these courses. There was the view put forward that Thai language would be useful for the future. If the adjusted curriculum that is to be developed out of the accreditation process can develop opportunities and Thai language skills for students to be able to access these courses there will be a positive impact on refugee education. The key with this option is the fact that opportunities for what students can do after graduation will be more closely linked to the geographical area of origin than if they are studying on international courses. However the concern that refugees will not come back to the camp to work still remained with respect to Thai language medium courses.

In spite of the developments to the curriculum and the increased presence of Thai language that will be provided there will not be an integration of Thai language from the first year of schooling. It has been suggested that in the future the level of students in Thai language on leaving Year Twelve of the system should initially be comparable to the Year Six level of tuition in Thai schools and be developed to be reaching Level Nine. This still leaves students with three years of learning to be at the level required by universities. It has been explained that there will be the option of further learning through the Non-Formal Education (NFE) route. There are questions raised here as to whether the students from the camp will be able to reach the level needed to enter courses run with Thai as the language of instruction. There may well be some capable students who will be in a position to take advantage of the opportunities to learn on these courses but the vast majority will most probably not be able to reach the standard necessary. It seems likely that the level of Thai language that could be achieved would not be likely to lead students onto Thai language courses at university. It has been suggested though that students who have reached this level may be in a position to access vocational courses run through the NFE department of the Thai MOE. The options here are discussed further in chapter seven, section three.
4.1.3 Personnel and support systems
The main question raised in relation to developing these opportunities has been the fact that the human resources are not available to teach Thai language to the standard necessary. This demonstrates that the option of accessing Thai language Tertiary education is something that would require massive implementation support. It has to be looked at by all stakeholders as something that can be worked towards and constantly re-evaluated for nature, purpose and function. The training systems that would be used would need to be done in conjunction with staff from MOE and logically so would the monitoring indicators. The coordination responsibilities take on a new dimension when working through additional channels. There has to be a very thorough approach taken by ZOA in carrying messages to and from the community and Thai authorities to avoid failure with developing this option.

An advantage in providing access to Higher Education courses where the language of instruction is Thai is the fact that the costs are significantly lower than international courses. The massive increase needed in time and in resources to raise Thai language skills amongst refugees to be at the level where these courses could be accessed would eventually be counteracted by the ability to pay for more places on courses. However, this is an extremely long-term option and would require strong commitment from all involved to work towards it as a programme goal. If the NGOs working for this programme plan to commit themselves to a long term strategy then this option can be developed further alongside the more easily accessible options that are being discussed.

If Thai teachers are to be used, either as teachers or teacher trainers in the camps to support the development of Thai language skills as part of this option, there will be increased responsibilities to support the teachers. There will need to be agreement over who will pay the salary of these teachers, and who will be responsible for their support, training, materials and lodgings. Also paperwork will be needed to support permission papers for any Thai teachers working in the camps. It has been said that ZOA will take care of administration issues such as this, but clarification of roles and responsibilities of the Thai MOE will also be needed.

4.1.4 Curriculum and assessment
The curriculum needed to support access to these opportunities is a crucial point to be put under further consideration. There have been comments made during the research process that local MOI staff have said that there must be inclusion of Thai language in the camps. There needs to be greater investigation as well by ZOA into how well Thai language tuition could be done so that it is effective and not serving to abate interest in study at school. The option of electives for course of study for language could be investigated for upper-Secondary schooling to assist with the feeling amongst students that the education that they receive is relevant to their own interests and learning needs. This is not to state that students will not wish to study Thai or that there may the danger that this is being forced upon them. As pointed out before there is interest in learning Thai and understanding of its value. The
concerns in the camp were more related to how these courses could be accessed. There was information provided from the camps that there is a need to develop Thai language skills and set the curriculum for students to have access Thai language medium courses.

In chapter six on the option of longer term accreditation of the curriculum there are points raised regarding the conceptualisations of identity amongst refugees and the relationship that external values will have on those constructions. It was said during one interview that linking into the Thai courses and context reduces the need to be drawn into the Burmese context and presents options in a new direction. However it was also highlighted that this approach can also serve to weaken relationships with the Burmese context. Therefore there needs to be careful consideration of the changes to the meaning, values and constructions of identity that will occur by developing this option. This is not to state that it should not be done. The accreditation process including the linking into the Thai systems is possibly the strongest and most sustainable action done so far in this process. The point is that there must be participatory involvement with a broad base of refugee education and community stakeholders for this to be implemented well.

4.1.5 Material and Physical resources
In terms of materials and physical resources there was only a small amount of information provided for the research. This was related to the materials that would be needed to support the students’ learning, such as books and stationery. There would also be other costs incurred in terms of accommodation and funds to support the daily living expenses of the students. Universities can provide an overview of what they see to be the typical expenses and costs for an average student however there have been comments made that these estimates are not very accurate. Therefore there should be a clear investigation into the real costs that would need to be met to provide students with the support necessary for their study period. The tuition costs for courses with Thai as the language of instruction are also lower than international courses which means that less funds would be needed to support students on these courses.

4.1.6 External factors/ variable and opportunities
Discussions with staff members from MOI were used as an opportunity to understand the requirements that exist for the students to study in Thailand. Students should know and adhere to the campus rules. There is the danger that disrespecting the rules may reduce the opportunity for other students in subsequent years to gain permission to study. In addition the students should report to the local police so that their whereabouts and status can be verified. Also the university has a responsibility to inform the RTG the names and origin of all of the students at its facility.

Due to the competition for places at university for Thai students it was suggested when this opportunity could be utilised there should be discussions with individual universities about setting a quota or number of places that
could be filled by refugees. This would serve to provide a justification for refugees to receive any places on courses.

The availability of courses in towns near to the camp should also be investigated. See the sub-section above related to learners and the learning process.

There has been substantial evidence provided during the course of this research that the option of access to courses with Thai as the language of instruction is a long term option. However, there is an opportunity to investigate the possibility of providing some scholarships for students from rural or isolated Thai communities. There has been an indication from the Thai authorities that they would like to see opportunities for Thai students as well. Students who have come from communities such as these and have been able to receive support or sponsorship to study to the end of high school could be considered as a target group that can be used to support Thai inclusion on the programme. This would also provide the NGOs with an opportunity to monitor the situation for students learning on Thai programmes and could be useful for the future developments for refugee access to such programmes. This could be used to help understand the needs of students in relation to where they are studying.

The evidence collected has indicated that this needs to be a long term programme with a long term commitment for it to benefit refugee education in this context. The long term strategy does support greater institutional and organisational sustainability. However the long term nature of the option means that there should be consideration of other approaches to effect results for the Higher Education programme more quickly.

4.2 Access to English-language programmes at universities in Thailand

4.2.1 Introduction

English language has featured prominently in the education programmes available to refugees with significant importance being placed on the learning of and use of English as a learning tool. Throughout other assessments of education provided for refugees from Burma there has been seen to be a high demand for English language skills. (Thomas & Reyes, 2005, p48; Purnell & Oh, 2006, p80) As a result there is a policy for education in the schools supported by the Karen Education Department that the language of instruction for Upper Secondary education should be English. This prominence of English and the access to learning with English as a medium of instruction is seen as a major contributing factor in the outcome that study on an English language programme was viewed to be the most suitable option available by refugees and representatives of the community education system. Over 75% of interviewees responded in this way. The other 25% of responses indicated that distance or online courses or the option of a camp-based community university offering courses at Tertiary level but in Karen language were more appropriate. Interviews with wider representatives of agencies involved with refugee education also stated that the use of international programmes to
enable refugees to gain access to Tertiary level education is the most appropriate, but that this is also due to the particular situation regarding the prominence of English in the camp education systems at present. Furthermore ZOA staff members and staff from partner organisations in this programme demonstrated that they feel that international programmes are the most suitable. Representatives of Thai ministries indicated that the nature of the course was not something that they should be deciding and that this was reliant on what students could access and NGOs could support.

4.2.2 Learners and learning process
To consider the learning process of the students it is necessary to initially look at the courses that are available. Within the scope of international courses that are available in Thailand there are not a great number of options. The choice of subjects and the number of institutions offering a broad range of fields of study has been reported by staff from partner organisations to be low in number. This was further backed up by correspondence and meetings with Thai universities. Subjects offered on international programmes of institutes of Higher Education in Thailand include; business, politics, philosophy & economics, civil engineering, computer science, psychology and education, communication arts, South-East Asian studies and nursing. Furthermore, post-graduate studies are available at some institutions. Assumption University provides post-graduate courses in teacher education as well as curriculum and instruction.

Discussions carried out for this research highlighted many different courses that were seen to be relevant or appropriate to address the students’ and communities’ needs. The view of agency and RTG staff members was that courses in fields such as education, health and medicine or engineering were appropriate. However amongst the community many other courses were suggested. These included accounting, business, irrigation management, communication arts and philosophy. More popular suggestions were community management, economics and law, with the highest number of respondents stating that politics or political science was the most needed subject. This response indicates that there may not be sufficient information available to refugees as to the nature and content of certain courses of study. International students at university in Thailand were consulted and it was stated that the some subjects were hard to follow. This shows the difficulty in finding a course that is of relevance to personal learning needs. This was in spite of support and one-to-one meetings to assist these students with course selection. Such difficulties in aligning courses to the learning interests and subsequent needs have been said to arise from the fact that there are only a limited number of courses that are available to international students.

A further point raised by camp representatives of refugee education which highlights the need for improved information sharing in the refugee community is the fact that in three of the seven Karen camps it was stated that the international programme would be easy for refugee students because they have learnt English already. Here the need to highlight the level of English language that is needed to access these courses appears to be essential. The
instance of informed choices as to the course of study will be dealt with more comprehensively in the sub-section below which addresses issues regarding NGO roles and responsibilities.

An area that has been stated to be a beneficial experience for people who access international programmes is the ability of students to gain experiences and have contact with an urban environment and to meet students from other countries as well. These experiences are of high value to students who have been residing in a closed environment such as the camps. However, there were also concerns voiced by camp residents in about half of the camps that graduates would be unlikely to want to come back to work even though they would be welcomed and their input for the community valued. Other interviewees feared that the exposure to alternative thinking methods and life outside the camp would result in difficulties to re-integrate and be of value to the community. It has also been stated that this may be a greater risk for students on international programmes. The students that have been identified for the pilot programme have expressed an interest in returning to the community to work after graduation. Therefore, in the case of any student that goes to attend international programmes there needs to be clear information given to support the students’ choice. It was stated above that there is the danger that there may be difficulties in making choices for students as to their course of study and that there are only a limited number of courses available. Therefore, there needs to be a balance between finding courses that match with student learning needs and the courses that are available. In other words it is a case of making the best of the options that are available. The concerns raised in this paragraph add further substance to this potential risk for the provision of places on international courses to study subjects that are not entirely related to community needs.

The subject choice is highlighted because there must be consideration of what the graduates would do after they return to their community. The route of graduates and finding employment that is directly related to their course of study that matches with the societies’ needs is problematic in Western societies and so in a society where the opportunities for employment are significantly smaller, the risk of students following inappropriate or unrelated courses of study to the community needs is logically increased. One of the most crucial areas of the programme is the provision of systems to support and guide students both before and at university towards appropriate employment after graduation. To be fully effective and logical it should be possible to demonstrate how the course of study is related to supporting community needs.

A major advantage of providing refugees with access to institutions of Higher Education is that their learning experience will be enhanced significantly by better resources. The practical experience of learning in a university environment is a direct contrast to the learning environment in the camp. The lack of resources and the isolation from practical learning experiences have been seen to be major weaknesses in the education system in the camps. This has been added to by partner organisation staff members who feel that there should not be a ‘university’ in the camp. There are still questions as to
how effectively the new experiences can be utilised that should be considered as well. It was stated by international programme students that the use of Thai language in practical situations is a major hindrance to learning. For the nursing programme at one of the universities where students were consulted it was stated that in the hospital the doctor explained most things in Thai as there were also Thai students on the course. Even though students have a grasp of the Thai language the terminology was too hard for them. The problem was compounded by Thai students who were unwilling to assist with translation of the information. This is just an example of how problems can still be faced and has been included to show that there should be careful selection of courses with assessments of all aspects of the learning environment and assessments within to assess suitability and areas for student support so that the learning process is more effective.

4.2.3 Personnel and support systems

The provision of opportunities for refugees to access international programmes at university in Thailand is a complex process that requires much more than just opening the routes to gain access. Above it was introduced that there should be better awareness amongst the refugee community regarding the nature and content of Tertiary level international programmes. This is just an example of the type of responsibilities that NGOs will take on by providing this type of programme. Other areas that are in need of support have been stated to include regular meetings with students and implementation of systems to support student tracking. MOI has stated that they wish to have a clear and detailed student supervision plan from the NGOs that will support the students. There should also be support for the students if there are any problems or difficulties with living and studying at the university. Whilst tutors can provide some support, there will be some areas and instances that students will want to talk to someone who is familiar with their situation. This may be another refugee student at university or someone from the community or an organisation that can provide time to support and interest in the student’s well-being. This type of support should be made available and wherever possible refugee students attending university should not be located too far from their peers. A further point raised by staff from MOI was that there is a need to consider where the students will be studying and the type of support that will be needed. This information is further supported by the following statement from the INEE website:

“Tertiary education is an investment that has significance if students graduate. To ensure that students have the support necessary to complete their course, it is necessary to regularly monitor their progress, and in some cases assist them in finding a job following graduation. Students may wish to delay completion, but their delays will take resources away from other deserving students. Since students have lived through a crisis and are adjusting to a new life, class attendance and grades should be used as indicators for individual or group support.” (INEE undated)
Having introduced the need for active support systems for refugee students at university it is necessary to consider other responsibilities for NGOs. It was said by staff from NGOs that were consulted and by MOI staff that the international programme option is expensive. There are two main routes that can be taken to address this issue. The first is to discuss and negotiate for fee waivers for tuition fees from the universities for refugee students but this may not be attractive to some institutions. However, if this can be achieved it then means that there must be sufficient guaranteed funding available to support the other costs of the student’s life at university. The alternative is for organisations to take on the funding of the students at university. If more than one organisation is to take on the responsibility of providing funding for the students there will need to be a comprehensive and coordinated strategy of compiling proposals between these organisations for this support. However, as with any sources of funding, there is the risk that there will be funding gaps that remain. Other concerns that have been voiced by interviewees were related to the fact that there is a very significant risk that the student may opt for resettlement to a third country and therefore remove resources from other students. This is compounded further because the cost of attending international programmes is high. Assumption University offers international programme courses that range from approximately 360,000 to 500,000 Baht per student for just the tuition fees. (Assumption University, 2007, p20) Finding funds to support students at university would be a major commitment alone. Therefore, the results that would be gained from the programme when compared to the amount that will be put into it as well as the risks of student drop-out or resettlement mean that the running of just an international programme without robust support systems may not be very effective. There is a need to employ well researched strategies and strong monitoring systems to ensure that the funds that have been raised to send students onto international programmes are not wasted.

Administrative responsibilities will also be increased by providing these services. It has been clarified for the researcher that ZOA will be responsible for the paperwork and coordination with the Thai authorities that will be needed to support the student applications. Interviewees from various sections of the sample group unequivocally stated that ZOA was the best organisation to provide this service. However, within ZOA staff members commented that they have concerns that ZOA may end up taking on more work if gaps are found to be present in the programme. This issue should be discussed more amongst the partner organisations to ensure that there is not any duplication of work or gaps.

A further point to explore at this stage, which is relevant to all forms of Tertiary education that have been suggested, is the role of the university tutors. International students at university in Bangkok stated that they have received good support from their tutors but there are some areas that they could not help. It is suggested that the students that have been accepted to study in Bangkok be given further support services by NGOs. NGOs and students should voice their concerns about any problems that may arise so that the tutor can be aware and ready to support. The first group of students should have the opportunity to share their experience and there should be an agreed
system for monitoring of students developed between the NGO partners. This should not be too time consuming and should be run efficiently. There is the danger that various fragmented visits and calls will disrupt the course of study of the students and become cumbersome for the NGO staff to manage. Open communication channels for discussion must be available and the students should be encouraged to provide information about the course and its suitability and how they feel it can be useful for the refugee community or inside Burma. They should also be encouraged to provide information about the type and level of support that should be given. This is the type of information that should be used to assess the course and then supported by more ‘standard’ monitoring systems such as grades, attendance and course achievements.

A further point to consider in providing students with the opportunity to study on international programmes is the logistical support that will be required. There will be the need to transport students to and from Bangkok. It has been stated that ZOA will provide for such requirements so there is the need for student movements to be built into and supported by ZOA’s implementation planning.

4.2.4 Curriculum and assessment

Gaining access to international programme courses has been seen to require a recognised standard of learning. The most suitable way to get students to show this is the GED or General Educational Development certificate. There are other ways of assessing the standard of learners but within the refugee camp education system the possibility of using them is not present so the opportunities are not available. The point of here is to show that students that have passed through the refugee education system have not been able to structure their learning and be in a position to provide an assessment of prior learning (APL). Without this standard and the training involved with it students may be at a disadvantage when entering a different learning environment. Techniques in self-study may be weak and the importance of examinations may be understood in different ways that do not enable refugee students to be able to meet the demands of the curriculum on international programmes.

The GED assessment is a widely recognised benchmark for access to Higher Education. There are logistical problems regarding the use of this tool that will need to be addressed if GED is used as the standard for entry to international programmes. The GED assessment bodies are in Bangkok and movement of refugees for testing is not possible. The test itself is also expensive, with a five part examination costing 525 US$. However it has been said that costs can be reduced by almost 30% by doing the exams in two packages. Additionally, there will need to be negotiations held between the NGOs supporting this initiative and MOI to negotiate for students to be tested at the places in

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4 Information has been given that shows GED is not pedagogically respected and unsuitable as a course of general study, but it is the easiest way to gain an internationally accepted qualification. IGCSE and IB are much better courses but impossible in a resource-poor environment.

5 This information is taken from the World Study Centre (Bangkok) information leaflet.
Bangkok that offer the GED exam as it is not possible given the present circumstances to conduct the exam outside of the testing centres in Bangkok. A further issue is the requirement for a passport to register to take the exam, and there will need to be discussions with the centres that offer the GED testing for other forms of identification to be accepted given that refugee students do not usually have passports.

The universities that have accepted the group of refugee students as a trial have taken the GED assessment as proof of ability and aptitude. Some of the students have been given the opportunity to pass their GED whilst studying at the university. This is a suitable approach for the students that are taking part in this trial programme however the cramming of information by students to pass the GED may not be a wholly effective way of preparing students to access the information at university. The majority of camp residents stated that the standard of education on leaving Post Tenth Standard courses is not high enough and that a foundation course providing a course to support the students to pass the GED may be a suitable approach. This foundation course should therefore include study skills courses as well as subject matter and English language training. The foundation course will be elaborated on further in this paper, but it has been introduced here to highlight the gulf that exists between the non-accredited and weakly structured refugee curriculum and assessment systems and the need for self-disciplined evaluative thinking at university.

4.2.5 Material and Physical resources
In terms of materials and physical resources there was only a small amount of information provided for the research. This was related to the materials that would be needed to support the students’ learning, such as books and stationery. There would also be other costs incurred in terms of accommodation and funds to support the daily living expenses of the students. Universities would be able to provide an overview of what they see to be the typical expenses and costs for an average student. It has been said that these estimates are not accurate but it may be a useful indicator to help with planning the level of funds needed to operate this programme. The tuition costs for international courses are much higher than with Thai as the language of instruction which means that more funds would be needed to support students on these courses.

A further point raised in relation to international programmes was the opportunity that students would be presented with in terms of the wide range of learning resources and libraries available. This is a positive for the consideration of what materials and environment would serve to make this programme logical. However, there may be a need to assist students with skills in researching and using increased levels of resources in an efficient manner. This could be considered as part of the role of any foundation course that is set up to support this programme.
4.2.6 External/variables and opportunities

As said above in relation to Thai language courses consultations with the staff from MOI were used as an opportunity to understand the requirements that exist for the students to study in Thailand. Students should know and adhere to the campus rules. It was also said by UNHCR that there will be further orientation for the students about life in Bangkok and Thailand provided by UNHCR before they go to study to reduce the risk of any unfavourable outcomes. There is the danger that disrespecting the rules may reduce the opportunity for other students in subsequent years to gain permission to study. In addition the students should report to the local police so that their whereabouts and status can be verified. Also the university has a responsibility to inform the RTG the names and origin of all of the students at its facility. A further concern for the RTG has been said to be the issue of refugees studying in a big city. There are concerns that some of the universities are where wealthier Thais study. Changes to their behaviour and values may occur and there may be issues with their willingness to return to camp. Within this there has also been the concern raised by interviewees that students may decide to marry Thai students and fail to return to serve their community.

An opportunity that has been discussed between staff of NGOs and Rajabhat Institute of Higher Education in Mae Sot is the idea of students attending an English programme there. There are currently no programmes there, but if thirty students who have the relevant qualifications can be found there is the possibility to look into refugee students attending courses there. This opportunity should be investigated fully as it removes the concerns of the RTG over refugees studying in a large city like Bangkok. There is the added significance with this option that refugees are not travelling far from their locale in order to access Higher Education. A branch of Ramkamhaeng University is also in Mae Sot and this institution could be approached to discuss access to or opportunities to establish English language medium courses.

There are forty-one universities or Higher Education schools, institutes and colleges offering international programmes. The majority of these are situated in Bangkok but are also in other towns and cities throughout Thailand. It was suggested by one interviewee that there should be care taken when looking at the courses that students will attend. In some cases there are good facilities and the campus may appear suitable, but the standard of the tuition and the opportunity to gain a solid learning experience may be substandard.

Resettlement has been mentioned previously in this section and it is a major risk that exists regarding the investment of capital and other resources in refugee education at international programmes. These concerns are increased through the international programme channel because the English language training and internationally accredited degree may serve to make the refugee a more desirable candidate for resettlement. Resettlement as a topic will be discussed in more detail in chapter eight section one.
At present there is only a small number of students that have the opportunity to enter courses of Higher Education but if this opportunity can be provided into the long term, there are valuable opportunities for programme assessment and evaluation. The experiences of the students at university already will be useful to help new students (if a second round of students enter the following academic year) become orientated and can provide the type of peer support that was introduced earlier in this section. The suitability of courses can be analysed and additional support can be provided where it is needed. The opportunity for some refugees to attend courses of Higher Education has been given and it is being used as a trial. Therefore, it is essential that these students have a positive learning environment and reliable support. However, even if problems are faced there must clear demonstration that there have been lessons learnt and that particular problems faced will not recur. It should in effect become easier to identify ways to support students at university as the programme continues. There should be sympathy from the RTG towards any initial problems that may occur with the new opportunity that has been created and at the same time an open and clear communication system from the NGOs involved in the programme to enable the RTG staff to understand the situation more effectively.

There could also be the opportunity to look at other institutions within this initial period to assess whether other places could be opened. As part of this research universities were contacted (other than Rangsit and Mission) about whether they would be interested to discuss refugee education at university. Due to the time constraints only a small number were contacted, but Assumption University said that they would be interested and willing to take refugee students as long as there was full backing from MOI and UNHCR as well as financial support for the student(s). This opportunity should be looked at further as the more options that are available the more scope there will be to make a decision as to the most suitable institution or course of study.

Considering the education that has been provided for refugees this option is the more feasible if certain standards such as the acquisition of accredited qualifications to support applying for opportunities on Higher Education courses are met. The risks are however increased with this option due to the higher costs involved and increased risk of students choosing resettlement. Therefore there is a need to ensure that the selection of students is done carefully and that the risk of resettlement is reduced. This would provide the opportunity for the effects of the programme to be guided back towards the education system in the camps and enhance the sustainability of the skill development and its effects in the camps.

4.3 Access to Higher Education through distance learning

4.3.1 Introduction

The idea of distance education has been well received in the refugee camps in terms of the fact that it is seen by many as a way for greater numbers of students to access accredited educational opportunities and the range of options that it provides the learner to be an independent student. However, at
camp level there are still many questions as to the nature and set-up of any online learning and there is a clear understanding of the need for additional support for the implementation of any programme.

4.3.2 Learners and the learning process

Representatives of community education have expressed clear interest in having access to online programmes as a tool for learning. However, there is clear understanding of the implications of implementing such a programme. The positives that were raised by representatives of the refugee community were that greater numbers of students could access online programmes than could degree programmes outside the camp. This would also enable people who are working in the camps to both support themselves whilst studying and remain focused on the community perspective as well. It is seen to be crucial for the refugee community to ensure the effects of Higher Education provision are supporting the benefits to refugees and their environment.

The main areas of study that were suggested by refugees to be the most suitable to pursue were management and community management. Furthermore English was suggested as the most appropriate language to use for study. However, there was clear indication that the weaknesses of distance or online learning included the lack of practical opportunities and the need for students to study independently. It was stated that refugee students are not so skilled in following this type of methodology for study. There was a suggestion given that there should be modular form of online learning that could be completed at the students’ own pace. This approach of providing modular courses was also suggested by staff from ZOA. Other viewpoints from ZOA staff included the facts that online courses would mean greater numbers have the opportunity to access to programmes. However, this was put in more realistic terms by other staff who felt that learning online is not something that refugee students are used to. It was felt that this could become a very cumbersome process for the students. Relevance of the course of study was also introduced by ZOA staff. It was suggested that any courses should undergo a development to adjust them to be more relevant to the situations and contexts of the lives of refugees, rather than being based in Western contexts and situations. Staff members of ZOA also said that the provision of online education in or near the camps was beneficial and conducive to ensuring that people studying on Higher Education courses remain focused on their community.

A more cautious approach was vindicated by partner NGOs. Whilst it was agreed that distance or online education can be good and provided at relatively low costs when compared to the fees for international programmes, many concerns still remained. This is not to state that the access to this type of education is inappropriate but more to highlight what should be considered and in place before developing such a programme. Some staff members from partner NGOs have experience in various aspects of distance education and their experience should be heeded. It was said that course content especially for new learners can often be overwhelming. This is both in terms of the language used for non-native speakers and in terms of concepts presented in
the syllabus. There is a need to ensure that there are supporting documents in the students' own language to assist with the potential for learning at a rate that can keep them motivated. There were also comments made that the lack of practical learning weakens the skill development process of the students. The researcher is of the opinion that this is problematic. The point of the course should be to provide people with knowledge and skills that will be useful for their community. There should be a constant theme in this programme of considering what the course of study can and is likely to lead students onto. This will serve to motivate learners. This is supported further by the recommendations made in relation to government distance learning programmes in Cambodia. It has been advised that learning materials need to be motivational to stimulate learner's intellectual curiosity so as to sustain their academic pursuit. (STOU, 2007, p133) Other suggestions made by NGO partner staff that can help with learner comprehension and motivation included to investigate undergraduate diploma courses as well as other levels of courses besides Bachelor level degrees. This is supported further by the suggestion that students who graduate from Post Ten schools would not be ready to access learning in this way and that there would need to be a bridging course to raise the study skills and in the case of online learning computer skills to help students to be able to take advantage of such an opportunity.

4.3.3 Personnel and support systems
At camp level the need for tutor support was raised by many interviewees as an area that would have to be addressed with distance or online learning. This has been found to be a key need in terms of human resources in implementing online learning programmes. The view in the community is that this person should probably be a foreigner and a native English speaker who needs to have knowledge of the fields of study, however discussions with a wider cross-section of stakeholders demonstrated that this person does not necessarily need to be a native speaker but there is a need for a highly educated person who is fluent in English with the technical back-stopping to support their English language skills. This role was developed further by some of the people spoken to. It was suggested that the tutor role would not be enough to support students with this type of learning. It would be necessary in fact to have a staff member whose role was more of a teacher. The distance learning programme could then be structured along more familiar learning patterns for the refugees. Benefits from this approach would be the routine that is created by classroom learning and attendance at these classes as well as the opportunity for peer based learning that is created. Without this type of support the adjustment to learning on distance education programmes may not be successful.

Other points raised by representatives of the refugee community demonstrated that the support systems for implementing distance learning in the camps would have to be very well organised and that there should be a role for the Camp Commander or Balat to monitor and control course content and internet usage. This is concurrent with the view of the RTG. They have stated that there have to be ways to control the internet content and the Balat
should have a role to support internet supervision. This need for strong support systems was also put forward by staff from ZOA and the NGO partners. This would include additional responsibilities for administration of the programme. Staff from MOI said that online learning would be best located outside the camp but very close or directly next to the camp. This location would assist with monitoring of the programme and for support for the students. Managing an online programme is a large challenge and the programme should be simplified wherever possible, in this case the monitoring and student support.

A further point to consider for the responsibilities of NGOs and stakeholders in the provision of distance or online learning is the need for a long term commitment. There are considerable financial requirements that need to be met to establish an online programme. There will be a need to find funds for the equipment used as part of the programme as well as for the construction and maintenance of any facility. Other responsibilities will include finding funds for staff or learning materials for the programme. The initial outlay that will be required to establish such a programme demonstrates that running the programme for a longer amount of time would be an opportunity to increase its overall effectiveness.

It has been suggested by many amongst the refugee community that a benefit to this type of programme is the ability of people working in the camp or those who are married to access the programme. People with other responsibilities in their lives may need extra time to complete any given course. This means there is the need for courses to be developed to be flexible and sympathetic to the learning environment in which they are delivered. This could also mean the need for some pilot programmes to understand the implications of providing education in this way. There are many opportunities to investigate online learning through Australian universities and these have been suggested as options that could be investigated if the RTG is willing to allow courses from overseas institutions to be provided. After pilot programmes have been introduced all stakeholders should be open to a thorough review from the learners as to the outcome of the process and the programme re-designed accordingly.

The professional development of the tutor should also be considered as a key responsibility of any implementing agency. There is a need to ensure that the tutor has sufficient knowledge of the course content and approaches to learning online. Tutors should also be familiar with refugee education and the gaps that exist between camp-based learning and online distance education from universities. The tutor should if possible be skilled at assessing student learning needs and supporting students that work at varying speeds. Information regarding course participants’ prior learning being made available would support the responsibilities in this respect.

**4.3.4 Curriculum and assessment**

With the exception of suggestions for suitable subjects for students there was very little feedback given by refugees as to the type of curriculum and learning assessment. It was also stated by interviewees that they just do not know
enough about this type of learning to comment. However, other interviewees said that the content is readily available for this option but referred to the potential for difficulties in the nature and subject matter. Western concepts have already been raised in this chapter and it is raised here to highlight that it is not possible to take a course from a Western institution and expect it to lead to the same outcomes in the camp setting. The norms and values that are conveyed by such course content can be challenging for people removed from that context to appreciate. Prior to introducing students to courses like this there should be a structured introductory process to develop students to the appropriate level. It may need to be used as an assessment of student ability and as a selection process as well. Orientation subjects such as Tertiary learning approaches and English language standard testing should be included.

4.3.5 Materials and physical facilities
The main constraints for access to distance or online learning aside from the regulations of the RTG have been the isolated nature of the camp and subsequent lack of resources like electricity and internet as well as the lack of libraries and teaching or learning aids. The MOI has said that they can be open to the option of internet provision near the camp. This resolves the issue of accessing the internet and should be the noted for this programme when it is investigated further. Refugee interviewees have indicated that Mae La camp could be a good place to implement online learning. This is partly due to the inaccessibility of some of the camps and lack of nearby electricity. The option of implementing a pilot programme online learning facility near Mae La camp should be brought into discussions with the Thai authorities. This should be a small facility initially to enable it to be run at a low cost and also so that it can be seen to be a manageable programme. Other resources that would need to be addressed include the provision of libraries including CD-ROMs with information to support the course. The computers and other materials needed to run the course have to be appropriate for use on the course. Online programmes have sometimes been given a small amount of old and outdated equipment that proved to be difficult to use. (Purnell 2006, p8) There is not a need to provide the best computers available but there should be research done into the suitability of any equipment purchased.

Other resources to consider for setting up an online programme in this context are the nature of the learning room such as the construction materials that will be used and the layout of the facility including furniture and the amount of natural light that can enter the building; the power source for the facility – renewable, non-renewable, battery or hybrid; hygiene, security and safety; impact of the facility on the environment; life span of the building and maintenance responsibilities. Furthermore it is not uncommon in refugee schools and education programmes for supplementary food to be provided and funds are often made available from the budget for opening and closing ceremonies and other miscellaneous activities.
4.3.6 External factors/ variable and opportunities

With any new programme that is implemented in the refugee camp context there is the risk that it will divert resources away from other sectors of the education system. It has been stated that ZOA wishes to follow a facilitation and operational support role for the programme. However, there is the risk that teachers who would have worked in the camp schools may look at opportunities to work for a new programme. This has been seen with some Post Ten teachers leaving to work in the NFE schools in the Karen camps. This is something that should be considered by ZOA before entering into the establishment of a programme for distance or online learning.

Interviews provided information regarding the need for a multi-layered selection process to assess the suitability of students as well as the skills and ability. Their role in the community and their links to existing community structures and work should be fully understood. It is not possible to set up a framework where refugees have to incur a fine or penalty for leaving the community to be resettled to a third country after gaining scholarships for study or places on a course. Therefore, the amount of focus that the individual has regarding the community and the amount of networks they are involved with that maintain a community focus, will be a useful indicator for the likelihood of any given person to choose resettlement over putting skills and knowledge back into the community.

Many institutions can provide courses online and this increases the feasibility and sustainability of this type of course but the relevance of course content and any impact that it could have on the community and individual have been seen to be brought into question throughout this research. This is not to state that the possibility of providing online courses should be discounted. The positive data can be used as a base for exploring the option and the difficulties addressed. It is also advisable for NGOs to investigate the experiences of governments in South-East Asia for the implementation of distance and online learning. There may be too much focus on the idea that Australian institutions are suitable because there have been discussions regarding the possibility of opening courses through these institutions. There are recommendations provided in Appendix I that refer to the experiences of implementing this type of programme from Malaysia, Lao P.D.R. and Viet Nam.

After initial the start up costs have been met the provision of distance education can be used as a means of providing this level of education to greater numbers. Negotiations can be made over the permission issue and there are suggestions regarding this above. This directly affects to the programme logic in a positive way. However, this can only be fully realised if the course content is relevant and support systems are present. This would require high levels of administration on the ground but there is a case for investigating the opportunities further by approaching more institutions regarding the establishment of opportunities or for advice to guide the set up process.
Chapter 5 | Programme design and issues for further investigation

5.1 Introduction
A considerable amount of information was made available to the researchers regarding the way that any programme should be set up. This was aside from the information given regarding the three options and the ideas related to ensuring a broader focus of opportunities for refugee education. The information that was given related to the development of the programme as a whole.

5.1.1 Learners and the learning process
Within the camps there was a clear indication that this programme should be run for the benefit of the community. However, there were viewpoints given by other interviewees that the nature of decision making regarding students and their choices should be a free choice. Within ZOA there was a difference of opinion between some staff members as to the role of this programme. It was said in one interview that the course should be for the benefit of the community and in another that it should be for the individual because access to education is a right. This issue should be brought to the table in the next Higher Education meeting to understand how staff members can conceptualise the role of the programme and the way that it works towards the overall project goal.

Further information provided in interviews demonstrated that there should be a focus on aligning courses of study to the community needs. This would serve to strengthen the role that the Higher Education programme would have in working towards developing the education provided in the camps to be of increased relevance and quality. To make this programme a more feasible option the role of complete free choice should be discussed further. In most of the workshops conducted in camps there it was said that students should work as an intern for a period of time after graduation. This is a sensible and relevant approach to take with the students and where their learning takes them. Therefore if courses studied at Tertiary level are related to community needs the placement of graduates and the value of their skills after study will be more effective for the community. There have been statements made that any Tertiary level education will serve to develop the skill base of the students and that this will provide the opportunity for any academic development for refugees to be of value to the community. The view of representatives of the RTG was in accord with the idea of students returning to support the community and that the course of study should be addressing community needs. In this sense it was suggested that the target group should contain a good sample for studying nursing and education related subjects and it was also said that the target group (including the course of study of the students) is very important to MOI to keep programme continuing. Furthermore it was said that courses such as political science do not reflect community needs.
The researcher is of the opinion that to support the aim of maintaining programme logic, it is advisable to guide the students towards making an informed choice as to their course of study. This would serve to ensure that the student would be motivated to follow their own course of study and enable them to understand the value of subjects that meet needs in the community. This information is supported further by the comments given by ZOA staff members. Within ZOA there is clear understanding that if there are no opportunities for graduates the programme would be likely to fail and staff from CDF said that if members of the target group have jobs in the community there will be a better chance of them returning. This viewpoint was supported by the idea that older students may be more suitable as they would be more likely to have had the opportunity to develop a community focus already. This would enable them to make an informed choice regarding their course of study and the relevance of it to the community.

A further benefit given by those consulted during this research was said to be that by providing students with access to courses and placing them appropriately was that this would be addressing the need within CBOs for qualified and staff with critical thinking and analytical skills.

The information given in this subsection should be used for all of the options that are to be developed. Furthermore the researcher has been led by the course of this research to advocate that the provision of informed choices for students and guidance related to the benefit for the community that will come about by students making such informed choices should be one of the key principles contained within the programme. The adoption of such a policy for student subject choice and the provision of opportunities afterwards have the potential to work directly towards increased sustainability of the programme and logically the project as a whole. This is by supporting the issues of weakening human resource levels in the camp education system. It would then have a better chance of being a feasible programme because the value could be demonstrated to the host government.

Further points to consider under the topic of the path that students take after graduation related to the overall logic of running this programme include the fact that it is normal in many Western countries to take on personal debt to finance Tertiary education and there is normally a period where graduates must take time to re-pay this debt whilst simultaneously paying tax to the government. The role of study contracts was discussed earlier in the report and there are real difficulties to enforce penalties if the contract is not honoured. However, the availability of fields of study, the wishes of the RTG and the selection processes should be used to guide students towards certain areas of study. If these areas of study are related to the work and the students have a community focus already there will be less risk to the initial investment in terms of the relationship to long term gains to the educational standard in the camps.

There is another point that should be considered for the programme that is related to the investment and return. This is related to the numbers of students that would be able to engage in this level of learning process. This
has been seen to be a low number at present and so to increase the amount of opportunities within the programme it is advisable to look to provide accredited opportunities for refugee education beyond the narrow sector of Higher Education. The researcher is aware of the work that has been done by ZOA so far for school curriculum accreditation and the delivery of accredited vocational training courses and it has been cited here because there has been clear evidence provided it is a necessary addition for the support of the logic of the programme as a whole. All three of the Higher Education options should be developed in a coherent manner according to resources available, feasibility and be staggered in implementation with consideration of the risks for each. Please refer to Appendix II for the suggested approach for the stages of implementation.

For the programme related to Higher Education this approach would mean that there would be the opportunity to have a larger target group if all three opportunities are provided and there is the greater chance of more numbers of students coming through the learning process and returning to their community. Points to consider here are that there will be some learners that would not be able to attend courses outside the camp and so distance learning options could be seen to be more suitable for them and so the number of available students would be increased. As the development of accreditation of the curriculum and development of Thai language skills occurs there will be more students who may be able to access courses with Thai as the language of instruction. Also as stated earlier there is the option of students from Thai villages making up the Thai student quota for this programme.

5.1.2 Personnel and support systems

The information provided here will relate to the strengths of the roles for the partner organisations that have been proposed for the programme as well as the gaps and areas for further consideration that have been identified. Recommendations provided will also be given as will further points to consider that were raised by interviewees.

Positives regarding the relationships that have been developed to date include the fact that a wide cross section of people consulted said that ZOA is capable of taking on the role of facilitation of refugees to gain access to Higher Education. This included almost every person spoken to at community level. Other strengths regarding the situation have been stated to be that ZOA is good at working with other organisations and that it is a very self-aware organisation which means that the staff members are clear about their limitations and capabilities. Another interviewee said that ZOA has a good non-political role with good links to academic institutions. This is highly positive feedback for ZOA to receive that reinforces their suitability to take this role on above any other organisation. This role is given added organisational sustainability by the fact that this role for Higher Education was a planned output under KEP IV.
The suitability of organisations to their roles was given further clarity by the approach that CDF wishes to take. Their focus is not on the technical and content side of education and is one where they are in a position to look at funding opportunities to support this programme. It has been said that CDF should be seen as an active stakeholder that is interested in participating in the design and progress as well as the funding of programmes looking at opportunities for higher education for refugees as long as these programmes. However CDF does not plan to be the single donor for this programme but expects the partner organisations also to financially contribute. In addition TEN is very interested in looking at possibilities of a subcontract related to running a foundation course and delivering Student Support Services to refugees.

To support the programme MOI have said that they will provide clear guidelines and regulations for the programme. This is a further positive outcome of the process that directly links to one of the questions that this research was to investigate. This is the development of what is feasible under Thai law. This information can be used by the partner organisations to adjust the programme to be in accordance with the laws of the host country. Operating within these guidelines will enable the political will of the host government to remain, and would logically add to the sustainability of running the programme.

The main point related to gaps and areas to consider further is the fact that the roles of the organisations are not really clear. This is understandable as before this research, the programme had not yet been studied to the point where all issues could be identified. There is agreement over the general scope of the role that will be taken, but without the formulation of a clear intervention plan that identifies the roles of stakeholders, these roles can become less clear and the quality of the programme will be weak. It also engenders the question as to who will take on the responsibility to fill these gaps. An overview of the suggested elements to be included in the programme strategic planning is provided in chapter nine.

There have been concerns raised by staff within ZOA that this programme will entail more work for the area Field Officers. This will be to support the facilitation of the opportunities to get refugees into Higher Education. This point is especially important for the Mae Sot area team. Their proximity to the Head Office means that they may need to support the Head Office staff more than other areas. This is because of the suitability of using Mae Sot as a venue for the foundation course and the potential for placing an online programme near to Mae La camp. This point should be noted by Head Office staff and the Mae Sot area coordinator who has a role to ensure that the team is run efficiently.

Whilst it has been clarified for the researcher that CDF has a much broader geographical focus than other partner organisations it is seen by the researcher that there will be a need to raise the profile of CDF in the camps if they are to be fully successful in supporting the programme. The difficulty of providing such visible support from Head Office in Chiang Mai is difficult and
the plan to open a small branch office in Mae Sot is sensible. This would provide these partners in the programme to travel to camp together and to coordinate the work more closely. The same is true with this opportunity as with the process and methods used to establish the foundation course. This level of coordination would also assist to reduce the clearly stated risk that ZOA will end up taking on a greater role.

Another point to note in the planning of the detailed roles that will be taken by the partner agencies includes the fact that ZOA has no previous experience in the field of Higher Education. There will be a need to develop the technical understanding and set up of the programme for some ZOA staff. TEN is keen to provide support and this is an opportunity from which CDF and ZOA can both take advantage.

ZOA’s role is seen by the partner organisations as one that will provide transport, logistics, operational and administrative support. Therefore there are issues that will need to be addressed because KED has said that they wish to select students to gain access to these opportunities from the schools under their mandate, but not for other schools. If the programme is to be successful there will be a need to ensure that students at all schools have an opportunity to access any further courses. To avoid weakening the inbuilt systems in the programme it should be remembered that selection must be primarily based on competency. Whilst community commitment is important, if the students do not have the necessary competency the programme will struggle to be a success.

Almost every person spoken to in the camps said that ZOA should cooperate with KED, the camp education committee and other NGOs for implementation. This was added to further by some people who stated that there should be a committee set up for Higher Education. This may be something to look into in the future but at present it is seen as advisable to work within the structures that presently exist, such as the camp education committee. The establishment of a committee without a clear role and clear understanding of what each person should be doing including understanding of selection procedures for potential students could mean that the committee could become a cumbersome body that has low effectiveness. After the programme has been put into a clearer format for all to discuss, the role of any committee could be investigated.

Within ZOA the concerns for Field Officers’ workload have been presented already. It was suggested that the Higher Education Officer should take on the work for ZOA but others suggested a more constructive approach where Field Officers are coached to work with this additional responsibility in an efficient way. Other responsibilities identified for ZOA include the provision of reports and data analysis to the RTG. The suitable responsible person for this would probably be the HE/NFE Project Manager however this should be negotiated amongst staff members themselves. It was also suggested that ZOA should be prepared to provide some support to students at university. This is because people in the refugee community feel that ZOA knows the situation for refugee students very well and can assist with student support service
provision. Another area that was seen to be relevant to being supported by ZOA was the role for ZOA to play in assisting graduates to gain access to jobs or internships after their course of study has been completed.

CDF has clarified that there is the likelihood that they will need more staff for the scholarship programme as it grows. The role of this of these people should be developed in conjunction with the other partner organisation staff and in response to clear gaps in programme support or delivery. It appears that there has been clear planning from CDF already in this regard and staff have already identified that there will be the need to work closely to the Strategy Department within ZOA as the programme develops.

TEN has indicated that although the refugee population is not their primary target group they are interested in applying their expertise with preparation and student support for university to the refugee population. They have experience and skills for programme implementation especially in the areas of the foundation course, development of a student tracking database and Student Support Services (SSS). Their expertise in the form of SSS will be crucial important in supporting the programme to be more effective.

The student support that is provided by NGOs to the students is an additional tool that can be used to encourage students to remain involved with the refugee community. The contact and support has been said to be used to keep students ‘in the loop’. This is vital in ensuring that the programme is of value to the community as well as the individual. Other methods of supporting this approach can include recruitment of students for the programme by CBOs at camp level and the selection methods used.

In reference to the roles of NGOs it was suggested that there is the potential for one person to become the coordinating person for the NGOs with the various other stakeholders. This is advisable so that confusion over responsibilities is avoided. However the researcher is of the opinion that there should be identification of all staff that will be involved in the programme from different agencies, such as ZOA Field Officers, or staff from management level and develop job descriptions where applicable to support the staff planning. This team of people whose work will involve linking to the Higher Education programme would enable greater organisational sustainability to the design of the programme and would reduce the risk of skills and contacts being affected by staff changes. This should also be actively developed with representatives of the RTG, so that any staff changes will not affect to the continuity of the process. The roles can always be adapted or adjusted in future.

To gain support for the work done by NGOs from the RTG there will be a need for a clear reporting format. This should include information regarding the target group as well as information showing how the students make the grade to gain access to university. MOI has said that they can manage their end of the responsibilities and it is advisable to prepare the situation at Bangkok level and then to investigate the options for permission at the
Provincial level. The funding and support for students at university are the areas that they can not provide assistance.

The funding support is to be provided by CDF. It was stated by CDF that the organisation has always looked for input and comments before funding is committed. This suggests that CDF will look at the funding provided for this programme in close cooperation with the other partner agencies. This approach is seen as positive by the researcher. Furthermore, to ensure that there is agreement from all parties on approach strategy and subsequently a reduction of gaps or risks to the programme it could be possible to look at proposal development being done in a coordinated manner. Clear reporting guidelines that show the outcomes of the programme and the relationship they have with the improvement of refugee education will also serve to assist with finding supplementary and ongoing funding. Furthermore, MOI wish to see the budget information for the programme and the Memorandum of Understanding between partners as well.

A further suggestion for the programme put forward was the idea for workshops at the community level to introduce the ideas that have been agreed upon for programme implementation and for the development of consultative approaches with all stakeholders. This consultative approach is also advocated for the delivery of refugee education programmes elsewhere in the world. It is advised that colleges should develop a consultative relationship with refugee organisations as a means of gaining information and insight regarding refugee education and training needs. (FEU, 1994, p21)

5.1.3 Curriculum and assessment
These areas are dealt with in each of the sections on curriculum and assessment above. The number of issues and points raised mean that it is seen by the researcher as more appropriate to place this information next to each of the Higher Education options being investigated. Further information regarding curriculum and its accreditation as well as the assessment systems that could be used are found in the next chapter.

5.1.4 External issues, variables and opportunities
In terms of sustainability there have been concerns raised at camp level that changes in the government will affect to the success of the programme. Refugee International reported that in 2005, the RTG, led by then Prime Minister Thaksin [Shinawatra], approved the option of resettlement from the refugee camps and agreed to permit greater freedom of movement and access to education and work opportunities for refugees not opting for resettlement. (Shukla, & Olson, 2007) This demonstrates that there has already been a government change and the situation has developed rather than diminished. Furthermore the changes are in the process of being written into policy which provides the programme with much greater institutional sustainability. This policy adjustment was given greater strength as a tool for developing programme sustainability by the fact that staff from NSC said that they too have been considering refugee access to Higher Education.
Furthermore MOI staff demonstrated strong awareness of the EFA framework and human rights issues. The optimism that the researcher has been given regarding this point is supported further by the views of staff from agencies that have been discussing this programme previously.

Other support for the programme was voiced by representatives from UNHCR. They said that they support the programme and that can help with the advocacy for the programme. However there was clear awareness for ZOA to take the main role due to its neutrality as an NGO. Funding support from UNHCR was also discussed but it was clear that this should not be done at the expense of other project areas. They are also currently involved in discussions with Microsoft regarding the possibility of advocating for internet access in the camps. An online programme set up next to the camp as has been suggested in this report so far would be an ideal opportunity to test the feasibility and to understand the practical implementation in the context of the RTG concerns regarding internet access in the camps.

Opportunities that should be taken on board from the community level include the offer of support from KRC for any programme and the fact that KnED is willing to assist ZOA with information sharing and student recommendations. A further possibility for the programme at camp level is the use of an existing facility such as the education centres in the camps for providing and displaying information about courses and internships and the possibilities after study. This could serve to start people off thinking about how study can assist them in their life here in the refugee setting rather than in a third country. This idea was developed further by a staff member from ZOA who suggested that there could even be a type of CBO event to attract interest in students following a course of study and with a chance to work for the community afterwards. This is a sound idea for keeping the learning process close to the community but this would possibly be best set up after the students that will go to Mission and Rangsit as a trial programme has begun and there is a clearer understanding of the scale of this programme.

A further idea proposed by CDF was the provision of social or entrepreneurial grants for graduates to develop an initiative after studying. This would need much greater development and it would be essential to have strong analysis mechanisms to evaluate whether the proposals would be worthwhile and it would need specialist staff skills to analyse the impact of and opportunities created by such a scheme. It is recommended that this be discussed further amongst the partners and with the RTG as well.

Concerns raised that fit with this section of the report include that ZOA or another partner may stop their support if problems are faced and that there may be issues related to camp security if refugees are accessing education at this level. Another concern raised in the camp was that there may be a clash of ideas as graduates return to the camp. These have been raised as minor concerns and it is seen that they should be kept under consideration during the course of the programme development.
Regarding the points that should be taken on during the implementation of the programme it was raised that the scope and scale of any intervention is wholly dependent on the wishes of the RTG. Furthermore the NSC is a key agency in negotiating the possibilities for this programme and there is full cooperation needed from MOI and MOE for the programme to be successful. They have stated that politically charged subjects would be best avoided so that there are not any issues that arise for Thai relations with Burma. Also the permission for refugee students to attend university must go through NSC. The minutes of the meeting held on September 7th also state that MOI will only approve for students to study in Thailand. An area that will need further discussions with MOI is the situation regarding refugees working. This is in effect a dual status combining refugee and migrant worker. This is not possible under Thai law. There will need to be adjustment of the policy or a special criteria established to classify refugees in this category should work placements be developed for graduates. A suggestion put forward to alleviate this problem was the idea to classify the work as internships, placements and extensions to that placement. There would however need to be a way of showing that the placement and experience gained was still related to the course of study for it to gain legitimacy.

A further point to consider on the role of graduates after they return to the camp was raised during interviews. This is that there must be realistic expectations for the refugees that graduate and that they themselves must keep their expectations realistic. There is a need to highlight initially that the numbers who will be able to gain access to such opportunities is at present small. It has been said that although people will gain accredited Tertiary level education as part of this programme it must be remembered that the graduates are still refugees. There should be careful management of the impact of returning to the camp environment so that disillusionment does not occur. The marginalised status of Karen people in terms of decision making, geographical location (for a majority) coupled with the values and history as presented in the Thai education system will mean that these people will still be marginalised even if they have a recognised qualification. This has been given further substance by the fact that representatives of the RTG have said that they want the refugees to return to the camp. Therefore the need to provide opportunities for the graduates that can provide them with a respectable salary is seen to be amplified. This would also reduce the risk that graduates could become at odds with their own culture as new values and freedom of choice are developed alongside traditional Karen values.
Chapter 6 | Accreditation and recommendations for the process

6.1 Accreditation
The lack of accredited basic education has been given by almost every interviewee as a major problem and constraint for refugee access to Higher Education. The problems associated with the lack of accreditation for the camp education system were discussed in chapter three. The process of addressing this issue is already partly underway. Within this section the options that have been explored to date are discussed. The researcher sees that there are various options available for the short term, medium term and the longer term.

It is important to remember that accreditation is a multi-faceted and multi-level process. Accreditation is given according to fulfilment of various criteria that should go beyond the use of a particular syllabus for a particular course. There are many other factors such as the standard of teaching, the environment in which the lesson is delivered, the assessment techniques and subsequent grading methods or the presence of clear stages to learning from level to level and from year to year to avoid duplication or gaps. It is also sensible to remember that schools may not be ready to be accredited. There should be a ‘self-study’ carried out by each school that will be involved in the accreditation process that focuses on what and how students learn as well as an investigation into the school environment and facilities. This is normal procedure in the accreditation process in Thailand. (Noppakunthong, 2007, pp. 1-2)

6.1.1 – Short Term Option: Testing
A short term option has been developed as a result of the work on Higher Education done so far. Some of the students that will attend Mission and Rangsit universities as the pilot programme for Higher Education for refugees will study for and sit their GED exam during the first year of study. This is a positive approach from the universities and from the RTG and the opportunity for these students should be valued. However, there have been some comments related to the amount of extra work that will be required to prepare for the GED exam and complete the first year of study at university. It is likely that some of the students that take this approach will manage whilst others will struggle. It is dependent on the student and the support made available to them.

Another option that has been put forward is to arrange GED testing for students that may be able to meet the grade. This has not been favoured by some interviewees and it is not seen as a sustainable approach by the researcher as well. This is because one of the main themes presented in the information given to the researchers was the gap that exists between Post Tenth Standard education and university entrance level. Therefore the number of students who may be able to access study at this level given the
nature of refugee camp education would be likely to be small to the point
where it affected to the logic of the programme if this option were to be used
in the longer term rather than as a means to provide access to Higher
Education whilst other options were being developed. It was also proposed
that students sit the MOE exams to assess their competency. Whist this is a
good option for the present it still brings forward issues related to the
sustainability.

Throughout the research process the need for a more structured approach to
addressing the bridging of the gap that exists between Post Tenth Standard
education and university entrance level has been seen to be required. The
short term option that has been used can be considered as a logical method
only as an interim measure used until the foundation course has been
established.

6.1.2 – Medium Term Option: Foundation course
A constant theme that has been presented throughout this research has been
the need to bridge the gaps that exists between the level of students at Post
Tenth Standard level and the level on entry onto courses at institutions of
Higher Education. The solution proposed was put forward by almost every
interviewee and has been discussed amongst the partner agencies as well. It
relates to the establishment of a foundation course to raise the ability and
knowledge of a number of students that have shown the aptitude and
commitment to be able to access Higher Education.

a) Learners and the learning process
The view of representatives from the community was predominantly that
students leave school with a low amount of general knowledge and for
refugees to access Higher Education opportunities there should be a
foundation course provided. There was not a clear case made by
representatives from the refugee community as to whether this course should
be located inside or outside the refugee camp however some interviewees felt
that a course of this nature should be done in a town, such as Mae Sot. This
was suggested partly for the learning environment that could be created and
partly to enhance the chance of finding teachers to come and work on such a
programme.

The role of the foundation course to be a ‘stepping stone’ to higher level
courses was given further weight by interviewees from ZOA who felt that the
course would be beneficial because it would give students the opportunity to
adjust to life outside the camp. It has been suggested that the lack of
exposure to the outside world and subsequent lack of opportunities has
served to lower the levels of maturity of the majority of students in the camp.
The exposure to new learning environments and the opportunity for greater
social interaction can be seen as ways to build towards resolving this
situation. Addressing the educational standards gap between unaccredited
refugee education and accredited Higher Education courses was also stated
as a guiding need for the establishment of such a course. However, ZOA staff
members made it clear that they did not want to see a role for ZOA of providing teacher training, curriculum, monitoring data and responsibilities concerning the quality of the outputs of the foundation course.

The need for a course of this nature was reinforced by the information provided by partner organisation staff members. There was a clear consensus that the course should be provided outside the camp as well. There were other suggestions made regarding the course and the opportunities that it provides. Staff members wish to see that a course of this nature would be providing opportunities for all ethnicities that are resident in the camps. This view was supported further by the views given by representatives of other organisations that work on refugee education. There should then be a learning process for the students provided that includes activities to break down divisions that exist according to ethnicity. Targeted activities that address this issue would need to be incorporated into the learning methodology. The course itself was suggested to be a one year course by some interviewees and there were others that responded that it may be advisable to provide a two-year programme. This is viewed as an issue that should be investigated after the academic level on entry to the course is assessed and the possible outcomes that are achievable within a particular time frame explored more thoroughly. Effectively there need to be clear goals and understanding of the standard of the course when compared to the learning needs of the students that will attend as well as the routes taken by students after completion of the course. This would serve to reduce the drop-out rate from the course. If it is too short and the level of tuition too high there will be the risk of students becoming de-motivated and if it is too long and does not capture the imagination of the learners the potential for increased drop-out from the course is subsequently and logically increased. The need for clear goals and planned outcomes for a foundation course was also given as a need by representatives of the RTG that were interviewed.

b) Personnel and support systems

The development of a foundation course for refugees is a challenging task. There will need to be clear agreement amongst the partner organisations as to the roles and responsibilities for each of the stakeholder agencies. It has been discussed previously that the main responsibilities in terms of funding and provision of resources will be taken on by Child’s Dream Foundation. ZOA will again be responsible for facilitation and administration and there is a need for the technical and content of the course to be provided by TEN. The researcher discussed the development of the foundation course with staff from Curriculum Project. There was a clear understanding of how the course could be approached demonstrated by staff of this organisation. There should be the discussions with Curriculum Project regarding the expected entry level for this course. This is a logical approach because of the role that CP has in provision of support for Post Tenth Standard education. Administrative responsibilities that would be taken on by ZOA will be additional work. If the course can be established outside the camp, there would responsibilities for ZOA to arrange permission with the relevant Thai authorities and provide reports showing the status and location of the students and staff.
Furthermore, it has been suggested that there should be fluent English speakers involved in the tuition and this may mean visas and other documentation would be needed. ZOA’s position and relationships with the RTG would make it the sensible choice in terms of requesting the provision of documentation for any teachers. The teacher or teachers for a foundation programme would need to be proven teacher(s) and communicator(s). This is not just in terms of their teaching qualifications and experience but also in terms of their classroom management and ability to be sensitive to individual students learning needs. It is advised that part of the selection process for any teaching staff for the foundation course should include the development of a plan by the applicants as to how the learning needs can be addressed through the classroom environment and external learning opportunities. There should also be a teacher observation test to see how the teacher operates in the classroom. It may mean that teachers with experience with refugee education would perform better in this situation as they are aware of the learning styles that can be employed for refugee students. This is not to state that the teacher must have experience of teaching refugees along the Thai border but a candidate from the area may be able to analyse the learning needs of students more efficiently.

NGO responsibilities in this regard will also include the training provided to the foundation course teacher or teachers. It is advised that TEN be responsible for the training and orientation of teachers for the foundation course. It was stated by representatives of the refugee community that finding teachers for such a course will be a challenge. It is for this reason that there needs to be a well planned and agreed role for the teacher(s) for the foundation course to assist with candidate selection. Furthermore, the training and development of the teacher(s) to be effective in their role is directly working towards alleviating the problems that may be encountered by trying to find suitable people to work on the course.

A further consideration that was proposed by ZOA staff was the high costs that would be involved in providing a foundation course and subsequent GED test for the students as an indicator of aptitude and ability. This will require clear funding strategies from the donor agency. In this case Child’s Dream Foundation will be taking the lead for funding support. There will need to be a clear understanding of the scale and scope of the course that would be set up and this should include an assessment of prior learning of potential students for the course by looking at the potential pool of students in the camps at present. Post Tenth Standard school student diagnostic testing would be a useful indicator for this. Details of the entry level testing that was done and the make-up of Post Tenth Standard programmes are available through CP. After the number of students and the set up of the course has been agreed upon by partners, appropriate levels of funding can be explored. It is not seen by the researcher as a sensible approach to simply find funds for the course and deliver the programme according to the number of places that the funds can support. This would engender on one hand the risk of increasing the drop-out rate from the course as it may serve to be enabling students to access the course when they are not yet ready to take advantage of such an opportunity and on the other hand if only a low number of places can be provided the lack
of access to such as an opportunity would serve to de-motivate learners on Post Tenth Standard courses and could increase the drop-out rate from these schools.

To establish the foundation course it is advised that a member of staff be found with programme design and implementation skills. These skills would need to be backed up with a background in teaching and education. Experience of teaching students at pre-university level in different settings and countries would also be of value. Strong understanding of the dynamics of teaching refugees would be a further skill that is seen to be appropriate for this task.

This research has included the investigation of possibilities for establishing a foundation course for refugee students. The information provided is given to assist the next stage of the foundation course development. The first stage in this should be for the NGO partners to discuss and plan approaches to address the risks and opportunities as well as the responsibilities in providing a foundation course. It is advised to develop a strategic implementation plan that can be presented to the Thai authorities for further discussion on how the interventions could be implemented. This would also be useful as it would address concerns that have been voiced by NGO staff that there may be gaps in the support that will be provided.

c) Curriculum and assessment

After the roles and planning for the foundation course has been agreed upon it is necessary to use the goals that will have been developed for the programme to be linked into the current standard of refugee education and the proposed standard for students on leaving the course. The academic expectation and the goals will need to be used and be open to be adjusted when developing the learning framework and assessment indicators.

During the course of interviews it was said that assessment of students to join the course should be multi-layered process. It is appropriate to invite initial applications in the form of a short question paper and a short essay. This could be used to assess the potential candidates for the course. This would need to be directly related to the goals and aims of the foundation course that would have been developed previously. The potential candidates should be tested further with an examination that looks at the general knowledge of the students, their general aptitude and problem solving and critical thinking skills based on actual problems and issues faced by the refugees or inside Burma and a paper to look at their English language skills. These examinations should be supported by an interview to assess the applicant’s suitability to the course. The examinations should be done using English language. This is because at this level the applicant should be able to use English to provide solid and evaluative responses to questions posed.

The course itself and the benchmark to be used to access courses of Higher Education have been discussed in chapter four, section two. The most suitable syllabus to use that has been stated in interviews is one which prepares students for the General Educational Development or GED exam.
Most importantly, the multiple choice format of the exam means that students do not need a sophisticated level of English expression to pass it. They do need to be able to fully comprehend the material, and this is a different type of skill to being able to write at the sort of level required by IB or IGCSE or especially, by credible Open University Courses.

Developing students that can pass the GED standard is one of the main outputs that the foundation course will be responsible for but evidence provided throughout this research has demonstrated that there would need to be a broader curriculum provided within the foundation course. This would be to ensure that the learning process that comes from the curriculum is providing a more comprehensive and sustainable learning system than would be developed by just having a GED cramming to reach the standard required. Subject matter and development of English language skills would be essential components of the course for this to be achieved. It is added by the researcher that there could be an introduction to comparative, critical and evaluative thinking techniques on the course. The course could be enhanced further by training for students in areas that they will go on to after the programme. TEN also recommended ‘vocational’ components which are intended to reinforce student commitment to return to community based work after they graduate and to promote relevant skills in this area.

In addition if students wish to access opportunities in distance education that have been planned there could be an introduction to online learning techniques. For students that aim to access the university route appropriate learning methodologies could be introduced to provide the students with a stronger foundation for their future studies.

A further point to ensure that the foundation course is set up with greater institutional sustainability is to look to find institutional affiliation for the programme. This could be provided through an international school in Thailand. There are over 100 international schools and programmes in Thailand.6 (Bangkok Post supplement, 30/10/2007) This could be investigated prior to the development of the course and facilities and the curriculum used by the institution could be developed within the accreditation guidelines to be suitable for the foundation course environment and students. This would be a sensible approach because it would provide the institution with opportunity to provide advice on the development of the foundation course.

d) Materials and physical resources

This research has not provided extensive lists of materials and equipment to be used for the course, but there are areas that have been proposed that should be considered and investigated when developing the course. These can then be discussed with staff from ministries of the RTG to understand what is possible.

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6 Details are available from the researcher on request
It has been advised by some respondents that the foundation course would be best located outside the camp. The researcher's opinion is in accord with this proposal. There are extra responsibilities that come with locating the course outside the camp. There would need to be provision for student accommodation at the facility so large premises would be required or construction of boarding houses would be required. The location should not be in a busy or noisy environment. There should be the opportunity for students to focus on their studies. To assist the focus on study further there should be quiet places for study available for students in addition to the spaces that are available in the course library that would be set up.

The library should be well stocked and there should be subscriptions set up for materials from publications that are in line with the students' own interest as well as from sources deemed to be useful by the NGO staff and teachers working for the programme. There should also be investigation into the other resources that could be used such as a multi-media library which would serve to enhance the learning opportunity given to the students.

The opportunity for students to access the internet should be provided at the facility. The function of the internet service must be made clear to the relevant Thai authorities and there should be the opportunity for students to access websites that are available to Thai users of the internet. In this sense all academic and news related information can be used by the students, but inappropriate and offensive material that does not have any relationship to the course does not need to be available to students.

After the course content has been developed the purchase and construction of teaching aids can be addressed. As with any programme, there needs to be responsible use of funds in purchasing course and teaching support materials. There are courses that have been set up which have provided excessive equipment when compared to the overall effectiveness of the programme and the standard of the student's academic ability on graduation. In one case it was seen that donors felt that by simply running the courses there will be automatic developments and improvements to the quality and standard of the education provided. (Purnell 2006, p31) The technical expertise within TEN means that discussing the issue with staff from this organisation should be the first stage in understanding the most relevant materials to be using.

e) External, variables and opportunities
The establishment of the foundation course outside the camp environment is completely dependent on the permission given by the RTG. Staff members from the partner organisations have demonstrated that they clearly understand that the dynamics and make-up of any Higher Education opportunities or foundation course is also reliant on the granting of permission. The researcher sees the need to highlight the educational benefits and advantages to the process of pedagogy by setting up the foundation course outside the camp appear to be likely to outweigh the risks that are incurred by running the programme in this way. There are risks and
these are also related to the respect that must be given to the sovereign rights of the Kingdom of Thailand to manage and operate its own national security plan. However it has been suggested that discussing the issue with the Provincial Governor could be a way to come to an agreement about the location of the course.

A further point regarding the set-up of any course that was raised was the idea of running the foundation course at a pre-existing site. This may be logical in the provision of security for the students and for the security of Thailand and it would reduce programme development costs drastically. This could be investigated but the course delivery should not be distracted from its function and goals. This could serve to weaken the outcomes of the learning process. Also it would be necessary to consider the extent to which this would place strain on existing resources that are under the auspices of the Thai Ministry of Education. Discussions would be needed to understand what could be established and a decision would need to be made as to the most suitable path. The researcher’s opinion has been guided by the responses of interviewees and it is seen from this perspective that a course in a separate facility with institutional affiliation to a Thai education programme (state or private) is the most suitable in terms of ensuring that the educational standards required from the course are met.

In the sub-section above on learners and the learning process it was discussed that activities to break down divisions that exist according to ethnicity could be used as part of the course. It is seen that the course must be open for all regardless of ethnicity, gender or other determinant criteria. There is the risk if the learning process is not managed well that relationships between the students would be affected in a negative way. This is a risk that cannot be avoided as it is often natural human behaviour to classify and segregate people according to predetermined knowledge, experiences and degrees of exposure. However, the key is to actively ensure that there is a sympathetic learning environment for all created and activities to break down preconceived ideas are implemented in a gradual and responsible fashion.

The information given above is the result of the research that has been carried out. As development of this opportunity progresses there will probably be further points that will need to be considered but this has been provided to give the NGO partners a clear base from which to start the discussions and planning. It is accurate according to the information provided and should be considered in relation to the overall picture of the realistic possibilities within the framework of refugee education. It is addressing the need for providing students with a form of accredited education that can serve to give students access to higher level study. This has been discussed as a medium term option but should also be re-evaluated against the backdrop of the longer term solution to resolving the lack of accreditation for refugee education in Thailand. The need for this course and the nature of the course would need to be re-evaluated relative to the process described in the next section of this report.
6.1.3 – Longer Term Option: Accreditation of KG-12 curriculum

The lack of accreditation for refugee education in Thailand was discussed in chapter three. There it was shown to be a problem and a barrier to gaining access to education of a higher level than can be provided in the camps. The first section of supporting information for Article Four of the Convention against Discrimination in Education states that, “...make Higher Education equally accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity...” (UNESCO, 1960, p22) Therefore, there is a need to ensure that refugees registered as resident in Thailand should be provided with the opportunity to access Higher Education and this should include the opportunity to develop their capacity so they can compete for places with Thai citizens in a more equal manner. Furthermore, the process of accrediting refugee education and developing equivalency to the Thai curriculum serves to support the implementation of the above article.

It is seen by the researcher that this process should begin in tandem with the other options for the short and medium term given above. A positive outcome of the work that ZOA has been doing on this process is the fact that the present structure of the education system in the camps will be altered in 2008. There will be a change to the KG end of the system and Standards 1-10 will become structured in the same way as the Thai system. This will mean that Standards 1-10 will become Years 3-12. There are two ideas that have been proposed. The first is to translate the Thai tests into English and look at results. The second proposal is a long-term strategy that is more sustainable than the first option. It is to develop a proper curriculum framework and develop the refugee curriculum according to what is needed to reach the same standard. It has been proposed that a 70:30 percent split is made in the curriculum, with the larger percentage representing the Thai curriculum and the smaller the local curriculum. Subjects such as Maths and Science from the Thai curriculum can be accommodated in the refugee curriculum and the local curriculum is to provide subjects such as History or other languages. It is planned to develop the amount and time spent with the study of Thai language as the process is implemented.

Furthermore, it has been said that if this equivalency process can be completed effectively and implemented well there may not be the need to run a foundation course to support applications to university. This is something that would need to be investigated at the appropriate time rather than be decided upon in advance. Interviewees have stated that to do this is a big decision and that it is also a challenge, however it has also been said that there is a need to update the nature of the education in the camps. This is an opportunity to do this. The case for developing this option was supported by approximately half of the camp residents spoken to on the subject. In workshops a number of people said that they needed accredited and recognised education, not just the camp standard.

In chapter four the section that introduced the access to courses at Thai university in Thai language it was stated that in the INEE guides, curriculum should ‘look both ways’. This has been found to be fitting in protracted refugee settings. This approach is working towards fulfilling the recommendation in the
INEE guides. Therefore it can be seen that there is an overwhelming case for the fact that the education in the camps will be supported to be more effective and the effects of the outcomes more sustainable than if this opportunity is not taken.

a) Learners and the learning process
The implementation of Thai curriculum as part of the learning process for refugee students needs to be managed extremely carefully and the negotiations over the curriculum and its content will need to be highly participatory and aimed at producing satisfactory compromise for all involved. Further factors to consider in the implementation include the fact that even with the adjusted curriculum the camp environments are closed. This will restrict some of the potential for students to learn effectively in the school system in the camps. This is not to state that there have to be changes to RTG policy over freedom of movement of refugees but that this should be considered and discussed during the development of the accreditation process. Another area that will need to be considered and supports the need for a wholly participatory process in the implementation of these curriculum developments is the role of indigenous concepts amongst users of the curriculum and how the education system in its adjusted form will relate to these. Additionally, if the implementation of the Thai curriculum is not done carefully then students may need further Thai language training on entry or prior to entry to university.

A further outcome of this process that will need to be discussed at length is how these alterations to the curriculum will be of value in the future or to think about the steps that students will take given these skills in this context. The changes may serve to link and reinforce the refugee relationships in the Thai context. It is not the role of this paper to decide which path the refugee community should take, and also it is seen by the researcher to be inappropriate to indicate the best path according a personal perspective. This will need to be discussed with a large cross-section of representatives of the refugee community and members of the camp committees and committees responsible for refugee coordination relief such as KRC or KnRC. The value of greater inclusion of Thai language in the refugee school curriculum is one that can be of benefit to students that study on international programmes at university in Thailand as seen earlier in this paper.

The issues discussed above all relate to the issue of being able to access education or information provided within the education system or inclusion. There is inclusion within an education system which has been discussed in this paper already however the point here is concerned with clarifying that there is the need to consider how any particular education system is incorporated in or excluded from wider relationships, resources and opportunities. This is because this integration process goes further than just increasing the amount of Thai language and subjects in the refugee curriculum and into questions relating to the role of students after their schooling and how they construct their identities, socio-economic relationships and core personal values. Furthermore how these identities
relate to the needs and future scenarios that are expected to be in Burma needs to be discussed. The main point of this section related to learners and the learning process is that there needs to be clear understanding of the benefits and shortcomings of the accreditation process and potential outcomes and there need to be negotiations and research into the methodology of implementation of such a process. There are further discussions on this issue in the curriculum and assessment section below.

b) Personnel and support systems

The previous section highlighted that there needs to be clear understanding of the benefits and shortcomings of the accreditation process and potential outcomes and there needs to be negotiation over the methodology of implementation of such a process. In this sense there is a responsibility for ZOA to act as an intermediary in the process to support the dissemination of information at camp level regarding the benefits and possibilities as well as to listen to the concerns of the refugee community and relay these to the RTG and those responsible for the accreditation process.

Accreditation has been seen to be more than just placing a curriculum onto a particular setting and to be related to the overall picture of the education system including facilities, values and other factors. Therefore, in developing this process there is the need to look at how the teachers’ skills fit into this accreditation process and how the teachers themselves can be relied on to provide education that is of sufficient standard to be recognised. It was not possible to meet with a staff member in ZOA who is directly responsible for curriculum due to constraints of time in the research process, however there was shown to be understanding of the need to consider the role of teachers in the accreditation process amongst other members of staff from ZOA. This has demonstrated that there is sufficient understanding of the responsibilities that will come to ZOA by working on this process. It may be necessary to support the process with a group of ZOA staff and potentially an external advisor with experience in the development of accredited education and systems within. Whether the external expertise would be needed could not be confirmed in this research as it was not possible to meet with staff responsible for this field. Some further points to note on this subject are in the next subsection of this section and there needs to be discussion within ZOA as to whether they have the expertise to carry out such assessments and then a decision can be made as to whether or not external support is needed.

Further responsibilities for ZOA which were provided by interviewees were related to the issue of working closely with MOE and there appears to be solid understanding of the appropriate ways of developing the situation. It was suggested by staff from a department within MOI that ZOA should consult with MOE to ensure that the curriculum and information presented within it is not politically problematic for relationships with Burma. This is seen by the researcher to be an opportunity to assist with the feasibility of adjusting the curriculum framework. There has also been a demonstrated understanding of the fact that the accreditation process will have an impact for school management and the methods used to ensure that the process is supported
at the refugee camp level will also have an impact for the CBOs that support education administration. There will need to be an assessment of the capacity of the actors to perform their duties in the implementation process and there will need to be an understanding of the training and support needs therefore there will be responsibilities for ZOA staff to address these issues. Thorough community participation in the development process is seen by the researcher as a way of reducing the subsequent training needs to implement the management systems for the curriculum in its accredited form. There should be investigation as to how the requirements of providing the curriculum to the standard that it can be accredited by the Thai MOE are understood at camp level. This would provide a suitable base to develop the training needs for implementation. This should also be done with involvement of the KED and as identified by ZOA staff already there must without question be better advocacy of the opportunities presented to education management stakeholders throughout the system.

c) Curriculum and assessment
The first point to raise here is the area of the negotiation and research that has been recommended in the curriculum accreditation process. The information above dealt specifically with the research that would be necessary at the refugee camp level. Here the requirements of the process are related to research into the Thai curriculum implementation and how this can be managed in light of the information above. It was said by respondents that there should be a development of the camp curriculum to match the Thai standard. In doing this it would be logical to research the implementation of the Thai curriculum in Thai schools. Look at a cross-section of situations from rural or isolated community schools to schools in Thai towns. There have been programmes to develop Karen literacy materials in Thailand such as the programme run by the Sumner Institute of Linguistics (SIL) through Payap University. (Thomas & Reyes, 2005, p18) There may be value in discussing the process and experiences of this institute but the researcher is not convinced of the relevance of the actual materials from this programme to the refugee context. This is in part due to the fact that although the camps are predominantly populated by Karen there is still a multi-ethnic population in the camps. Additionally, there is the fact that this process should be included for the Karenni refugee camps as well. Other factors that reduce the suitability of materials developed in Thailand include the use of Thai script to phonetically write other languages and the fact that the refugees in the camps are not Thai. The idiosyncrasies of their experiences, values and constructions of identity are not wholly concomitant with rural or isolated Thai communities.

Another related point to be considered is the base that will be developed for the 30% local curriculum. There is the need to consider how information about differences of opinion regarding history will be represented and the extent to which the information contained within the course syllabus would serve to exclude certain people from the target group. Furthermore the construction of histories and the lack of a land and economic base for the refugees means that the values and messages within the curriculum and contained within the hidden curriculum would be at risk of working towards construction of
'imagined identities’. This point is taken further by the following. In the case of identities that have cut across national boundaries there are often strong links to the place of origin. However in a new setting people may become obliged to come to terms with the new cultures that they inhabit or desperately aim to reinforce their culture from the homeland. Their culture has been irrevocably reshaped by the interactions with the new culture, even if merely through experience. They cannot go back to the old unified sense there is a need to re-consider the ambition to return to a ‘lost’ cultural purity or ethnic absolutism. (Hall, 1992, p310)

The points given above are provided as points to be taken note of in the development of the accreditation process. At present the process has begun and there has been a draft of the Primary curriculum framework. This is positive but there should be stages of re-evaluation of the content and set up of the framework before it is implemented and it should not be looked at as a process that will be completed and left to run. The framework has been sent to MOE and materials were planned to follow later. On 11th September KED and ZOA planned to hold the Primary level curriculum workshop and at the end of the September the framework was to be sent to MOE. The next stages are dependent on MOE approval.

d) Materials and physical resources
The materials and physical resources that will be needed to implement the changes to the curriculum have not been addressed as part of this research but in discussions with camp residents there were points made that there are not enough resources at camp level. Therefore, the adjustments to the curriculum would provide a suitable opportunity to look into the perceived shortfalls in materials. There would need to be new teaching aids and materials that are recognised as part of the accreditation process that may need to be purchased. This should be noted by ZOA and considered for development in the next stages of implementation. Furthermore there should be investigation into the classroom design and facilities within. This is likely to be addressed in the accreditation process and for subjects such as science there will have to be further discussions regarding the appropriate materials used in instruction. Also the set up of science facilities in the camp should be reviewed and discussions held with MOI about what equipment and materials can be permitted in the camps to assist with implemented a Thai accredited curriculum.

e) External, variables and opportunities
It was discussed in previous Higher Education meetings between MOE and ZOA that there will be a need to plan the intervention well. There has already been investigation into which Thai departments can support this programme. This is a positive approach from ZOA and the opportunity to develop these relationships will ultimately enhance the sustainability of the adjustments to the curriculum and the accreditation process.
A further variable that was put forward by some respondents was related to the accreditation process including the opportunities that it would potentially create and the impact of resettlement on developing this process. The impact of this process should be about creating a system that is delivering education of higher quality. This is in terms of relevance, sustainability and the overall effectiveness of the education system as delivered in the camps and not just placing the new framework onto the camp system and looking at the numbers of students attending school to rate its success in implementation. Loss of relevance to the education or disenfranchisement from the values presented within may serve to increase interest in resettlement opportunities. The relationship of resettlement to the programme to develop Higher Education opportunities for refugees will be dealt with more thoroughly in chapter eight, section one.

It has been seen that in some of the camps that are situated in more isolated places that there are students from nearby Thai villages that enrol in the camp schools. This has been the case even though the camp education has no system to be accredited by. There is the possibility that there will be increased enrolment in camp schools by students from nearby Thai villages if the education as provided in the camps is accredited. There should be discussions with the relevant departments responsible for education in rural or isolated community schools as to their view of the situation and there should be investigation of the impact of the accreditation process on the Thai rural schools and the camp schools.

The opportunity that has been presented to the refugee education system to link to the Thai education system for accreditation is a highly significant one. The problems that were discussed in chapter three are directly addressed by this process. The researcher is of the opinion that the option of the long term process of redeveloping the curriculum is the most suitable and sustainable of the two options that have been proposed. There is however, the opportunity to look at the first option as a shorter term approach to be used until the changes to the curriculum have been phased in. There has been a plan put forward by the partner organisations to test students of different ability at Post Tenth Standard level to see how their aptitude compares to the standard for entry to Thai Higher Education. This was discussed in relation to part of this research but the time constraints meant that it was not possible to do as well. The researchers both recommend that this testing be carried out and it is suggested that CP would be the most suitable organisation to carry out the testing. They have already completed a diagnostic of student ability in Post Tenth Standard schools and have the technical back-stopping in their staff to carry out the process effectively. Support for the process can be given by ZOA in terms of transportation and translation of the Thai exams and TEN can play a role to oversee the process and advise accordingly. The results of the testing will provide further information showing the adjustments that would be needed to Post Tenth Standard curriculum and its delivery.
Chapter 7 | Impact of Higher Education options on the education system in the camps

7.1 Impact of Higher Education on General Education in the camps

It has been seen that Post Tenth Standard education leads students onto work in the community, either in the camps or in Burma. However, with the introduction of places on a foundation course and Higher Education afterwards, the aims of the education provided will be affected. Within the refugee community there have been two main outcomes raised regarding where graduates will go after their course of study.

1. Students will be more effective for the community and will be able to support the implementation of the education provided in the camps.
2. Students will be likely to resettle to third countries after graduating.

More on the resettlement path is provided in chapter eight but the view provided by half of camp interviewees that students would be useful for the education system is a strong piece of supporting evidence for introducing the option of refugee access to Higher Education. This would be creating an opportunity to address the almost unanimously voiced problem that the camp education system does not meet the community needs. Additionally many camp residents said that the Higher Education programme should be used to build up the standard of camp based refugee education. The processes and methodologies that should be used were not explored in discussions, but the key point here is the strongly voiced need to improve the standard of refugee education as delivered in the camps.

7.1.1 Learners and the learning process

There have been concerns voiced regarding the impact of Higher Education on the camp education system and these have been related to the values of graduates on returning to the camp. These concerns indicated that there may be a clash of ideas between some senior educators and graduates returning to the camp to work in education. These concerns could be alleviated by ensuring that graduates have appropriate placements for work after returning to the camp and that there are strong monitoring indicators to assess the impact of graduates on the education system. This is given further substance by the fact that there should not be a blanket understanding that someone who has a degree will be a more valuable resource for the camp education system than someone with solid work experience. The use of skills acquired by students at Tertiary level should be focused into a role where they are actively incorporated to support the knowledge and skills of experienced educators in the camp education system. Internships and community research are ways that this process can be instigated.

Changes to the learning process and those involved in it have been seen to be needed to support the access to Higher Education. These were partly addressed earlier in the section on the accreditation of the school curriculum. It was recommended that the changes to the curriculum be introduced to the
camp based education system. This structure would serve to reduce the negative impact of places on Higher Education courses. Without stabilising the guiding objectives and nature of the camp based education there is the risk that some schools may increase the focus of the learning process to guide students towards these places. This may be in two forms. There are the forms associated with the curriculum and those related to the hidden curriculum. The curriculum may be at risk of being adjusted in some schools to guide students towards these academic goals at the expense of the effectiveness of the learning process for the majority of students in the school. The second point related to the hidden curriculum is concerned with the active use of the opportunities at the level of Higher Education to motivate students who have lost sight of the value of their education. The risk here is that there could be unrealistic expectations developed and there may be subsequent de-motivation of learners. Therefore the introduction of the accreditation process to Primary and Secondary schooling would serve to structure the learning process of the students.

Many people who were interviewed highlighted the need for graduates to return to work for the community. Changes to the learning process as laid out in the curriculum and guiding framework should consider this point closely. This is so that the dynamics of the learning process are set to encourage the return of students to work for the community. Effectively there needs to be promotion of the quality of general education.

7.1.2 Personnel and support systems

The accreditation process is ongoing and it is seen that the main responsibilities for adjusting the education system to be in line with the Thai system as well as to enable students to work towards access to Higher Education will need to be met by ZOA. ZOA's role in supporting camp education will mean increased monitoring responsibilities for staff to ensure that the implementation of the adjusted curriculum is being done in an effective way and to monitor the impact of the role of Higher Education on the camp education system. This may require development of skills for Field Officers in ZOA to be able to research problematic areas and produce information to assist with strategic development. The accreditation process will also have an impact for school management and the methods used to ensure that the process is supported at the refugee camp level will also have an impact for the CBOs that support education administration. This is a formidable task that will require support from Area Coordinators to support the Field Officers and from Head Office staff to support the Area Coordinators.

It was suggested in some of the camps that ZOA should have more staff to support the implementation of Higher Education. Whether this is seen to be necessary is a decision that should rest with ZOA. However, whether or not staff would be hired to work in this area does not affect to the fact that there would still need to be support for the Field Officers to ensure that they can provide information that would support the implementation of the adjusted curriculum framework.
Further responsibilities that would be taken on for general education by introducing Higher Education for refugees would be related to the CBOs and their role in supporting the programme. There have to be realistic expectations for students in the camp. CBOs must support the ZOA field staff to ensure that the access to Higher Education should not be the sole guiding influence on the nature of education in the camps. It has been proposed that a stakeholders meeting be held before any of the options are put into practice. After developing the plan for Higher Education implementation there is a need to analyse the proposed adjustments to general education in the camps with camp based stakeholders.

The next issue related to the impact of Higher Education in the camps is an area that will need to be monitored closely by NGO and CBO staff. It is related to the role and skills of the teachers themselves. At present there has been seen to be a continuing trend of teachers leaving from the camps to resettle and new teachers who in many cases are less skilled or experienced than those who have left. The filling of this void can be addressed by providing Higher Education opportunities. However there are questions here over the size of the impact that what will be a relatively small number of graduates can have on the camp education system and how efficient this is due to the time scale involved in the process. Furthermore there has been an indication from some people that these people who graduate can help to raise the standard of Post Ten education. This may be so, but the use of Higher Education graduates to support the upper end of the education system will ultimately be problematic. The problem of the weakening of the human resources for Primary and Secondary education would be likely to remain and the gulf between Secondary education and Post Ten education can be seen to logically be at risk of increasing in size.

During the course of interviews it was said that the presence of Higher Education will always take away resources from Primary and Secondary education. This can be in a number of ways. The focus and guiding influence of the education system is one of these ways. This has been discussed above. Other ways include the status of being employed at different levels of the education system.

In the refugee camps it has been seen that there is greater prestige involved in being a Post Ten Standard teacher than as a Primary teacher. The salaries paid to teachers also reflect this idea. The placement of Higher Education opportunities on the end of the academic process in the camps will affect to stretch the range of levels available in the education system and therefore the amount of human resources available to cover all of the areas. There has been information provided that in some camps there is a programme of recruiting teachers and training teachers as a resource pool to reduce the impact of resettlement. This same resource pool is logically useful to support the stretching of the parameters of the education provided in the camps.

There is a further way that could be used to address this situation and it involves investigation into the possibility of standardising teacher subsidies across Primary and Secondary education. The possibility of doing the same
for Post Ten is a harder prospect due to the independent nature of these programmes. However, raising Primary teachers’ subsidies to be in line with Secondary teachers on a rate calculated from the actual teaching time rather than as a flat rate according to the level of teaching may serve to encourage more teachers to consider teaching at Primary level. There would be greater responsibilities for the payment of teacher subsidies with this approach, but the potential to provide a more equal spread of resources, both human and financial should be considered further.

Furthermore, there needs to be a thorough investigation as to how the teachers in the camp will deliver the adjusted curriculum and support the subsequent assessment mechanisms. This is a process that should be begun immediately and there should be participatory discussions with teachers and educators to understand the best ways to deliver support for implementation of the curriculum. The concern put forward in interviews that has led to this suggestion is that there just may not be the capacity in the community to implement these changes to the standard required. Therefore it is logical that there would need to be greater support from ZOA and the Thai MOE. This reinforces further the need for ZOA to introduce changes to the general education in a highly participatory and reflexive manner.

In the proposal for KEP IV there have been planned interventions for refugee education for Primary and Secondary education support. The fifth output of the project is related to the access to education broadened through targeted educational initiatives for new beneficiary groups. Effectively there needs to be a review of the status of the other areas of the KEP project in relation to the success of ZOA in achieving results for output five and the responsibilities that it brings. This is in terms of the impact that it brings to the other areas of the project. This would serve to guide the support and alterations for staff and NGO/CBO responsibilities in the provision of general education support as well as provide CBOs with an opportunity to see the inter-related processes that would exist in the education system and thus voice their concerns about implementation. This would also be valuable as ZOA staff have said that the organisation should not be taking on too much extra work by supporting access to Higher Education.

### 7.1.3 Curriculum and assessment

The impact of providing Higher Education opportunities for refugees and the relationships that exist with the curriculum have been discussed previously. However there were some further points introduced by carrying out interviews. The first of these relates to the assessment of student learning. The current situation in the Karen camps means that there are ‘board exams’ for students finishing fourth and seventh standards. The role of these exams as a tool for assessing the learning progress of students should be re-examined. There will be a need to change the assessment systems as the equivalency to the Thai curriculum is developed. The assessment mechanisms that are implemented will need to be analysed carefully. There will need to be evaluation of what the exams are looking for in students to provide them with a pass mark. Additionally there will need to be clear demonstration as to why any areas of
the course cannot be taught in the camp environment. An example of this is the use of science practical sessions as part of any assessment process.

In terms of providing quality education where students actually meet the learning process expectations rather than just passing students through the levels of learning, there is the need to consider the assessment of students, the appropriate pass mark given and the situation regarding transition to the next level in the education system. There will need to be further discussion during the course of the accreditation process on the need for students to re-take exams or re-do a complete year of study. This will have to be done with clear development of the problems that are already faced with students on courses who are much older than their class-mates and the difficulties involved with higher numbers of students enrolled in Primary education than Secondary. It has been suggested in the camps that there should be an upgrade of Primary education first and then a development of Secondary and Post Ten afterwards. This approach implemented according to the ways that have been suggested as part of this research would serve to strengthen the education system and would serve to help in finding solutions to the issues surrounding enrolment and drop-out rates in camp schools. The participatory methods needed to implement the curriculum changes would provide an opportunity to assess community ideas to solve these issues.

7.1.4 Materials and physical resources

There were points made earlier in the report about the difficulties that may be faced in providing courses with science practical sessions as part of the assessment process. Also there have been points made regarding the perceived lack of resources at camp level. These points will not be investigated further here. It is the point of this section to highlight the fact that there is the danger that funding for resources for Higher Education may end up meaning that there is less funding available for materials to support Primary and Secondary education. There will be a need to provide materials to support the accreditation process so that pedagogic standards can be met. This should be used as an opportunity to ensure that the longer term aim of strengthening the education system is implemented with sufficient materials and physical resources at Primary and Secondary levels that it can support the sustainability and positive impact of any intervention.

7.1.5 External/ variables and opportunities

The value of the opportunity to link with the Thai system has been demonstrated already and the risk of resettlement will be looked at in chapter eight. However, there have been comments that the provision of Higher Education will serve to motivate students and teachers in the camps. This is likely but to maximise this opportunity there must be clarification of the numbers of students that will be able to reach this level and there should be greater investigation of the options presented in this report.

Approximately half of the people spoken to in the camps felt that they did not see any negative impact on the camp education system by providing
opportunities for Higher Education. This is something that will need to be addressed by NGOs and CBOs. Any solution to problems faced in providing refugee education will automatically engender new challenges to be overcome. The perception at camp level that this will be only positive will need to be addressed. The blind faith in the idea that Higher Education will be only beneficial will serve to increase the risk of disillusionment regarding the programme.

An opportunity presented by adjusting the curriculum and opening access to Higher Education should be for ZOA and community education bodies to look at the process of inclusion that is being worked on at present. This has been built into ZOA’s project planning for inclusion. (Oh et al. 2007, pp51-58) If the review of the curriculum enables more students to feel included in the education provided in the schools the process can be seen to be in part a success. Support from RTG ministries for the implementation of the curriculum in its adjusted format is a further opportunity that can be used to reduce the risk of providing non-inclusive education.

7.2 Post Ten Education

7.2.1 Impact of Higher Education on Post Ten Education

In chapter three the role of Post Ten programmes was outlined and it showed that these programmes have a role to play in the make up of the camp education system. Their presence is both relevant and logical to the education system in the camp. In interviews in the camps it was said that these opportunities should remain in the camp. However there will be changes in the dynamics of the relationships to the camp education system that they are currently serving. In effect in the long term there will need to be a re-think of Post Ten education strategy.

This is a difficult situation to manage because on the one hand the programmes serve a purpose and will continue to serve a purpose due to the number of students that would be able to access places on Higher Education courses but on the other hand the focus and dynamics of the situation will be altered through accreditation of Primary and Secondary education and delivery of students onto Higher Education courses. In the past there have been discussions about standardisation of Post Ten education and the difficulties in doing so due to the disparate nature of the courses. However, through the provision of syllabus materials CP have brought a degree of standardisation to the subject matter used by these schools. The information received as a course of the research will be presented below.

a) Learners and the learning process

In light of the clear evidence that the standard on finishing camp high school is insufficient to access Higher Education and the fact that Post Ten has such an important role in providing staff for the camp programmes, projects and schools Post Ten can be seen to have a clear and valid role. The quality of the skills of students leaving the Post Ten schools has been said to be
insufficient to supply the camp with all of its workers. Opportunities for students to learn on higher level courses that are underway can exist to fill that gap to an extent.

The changes that will be made to the school curriculum should be done in a gradual and well planned manner. Therefore, it is not seen as important to change the nature and function of Post Ten schools at present. There is still a need for graduates from Post Ten schools so the education provided within them can be seen to be relevant and meeting a community need. The enrolment rate and number of programmes demonstrate further that these schools are needed. As the dynamics of the education system are affected by changes to the curriculum there will need to be an adjustment to the function of Post Ten schools which should be based on the needs and requirements of the school education system and what it leads learners onto do afterwards. At present the level of first year Post Ten courses is directly linked to the standard or level of high school graduates. Logically if this is changed there will need to be adjustments made to the learning process for Post Ten students.

It has been said in the camps that Post Ten should be raised to meet the level of the foundation course or access to Higher Education standard. This may be logical in the future when there is greater stability in the education systems in the camps. At present the removal of resources through resettlement is adding an additional variable to the education in the camps which serves to weaken the effectiveness of the process. The instability that resettlement brings means that it will be unlikely to provide access for large numbers of refugee students to access university or Tertiary education. Therefore the need to keep Post Ten education at its current level is amplified further. When the standard can be seen that it will need to be adjusted then changes to Post Ten to make it a higher level can be considered but the CP staff have said that it should not be changed and the researcher is in agreement with this until there is a need to adjust. This would also enable refugee students to still have access to courses.

**b) Personnel and support systems**

It was said in the camps that the lack of native English speaking teachers or foreigners with strong English and teaching skills had meant that the standard of education had declined. The access of skilled English speakers to work as teachers or advisors for refugee camp education programmes is wholly dependent on the RTG. Also many actors in this situation are granted permission to be in the Kingdom of Thailand. The idea of discussing volunteers with relevant skills working at Post Ten programmes should be discussed amongst the NGO partners and a decision as to the value of using them to support programmes made. However, as with the foundation course this may result in further administrative responsibilities for ZOA. Effectively ZOA needs to decide whether the extra work to apply for paperwork for staff to support these programmes is worth the expected outcomes or there should be investigation into organisations that could support this voiced need.
The need to consider future changes to the nature, content and standard of Post Ten education was provided in the notes above on learners and the learning process. If changes are to be made to raise the level of Post Ten education it has been said that there would also be a need to find additional staff to support the changes. This staff member should be an academic learning skills specialist trainer with experience in assisting with curriculum development. Therefore, finding this person and providing training and funding for the changes would then become additional responsibilities for the NGOs involved.

Also any changes made to Post Ten at the moment should be considered against the human resources that are available to implement and monitor implementation of any changes. There would need to be increased teacher training programmes to raise the standard of those delivering the education. Questions remain as to whether the human resources are available in the camps to meet these standards.

c) Curriculum and assessment
The issues related to the curriculum used for Post Ten education are completely linked to the issues discussed above under learners and the learning process and personnel. In the short term it was reported that there may a need for further study skills courses to enhance the opportunity of students to reach education at a higher level. This would require support of a new staff member as discussed above.

The value of re-aligning the Post Ten syllabus just for a small number of students who would be able to access these courses is not seen as a productive endeavour by staff from NGO partners and by the researcher. However as indicated above there is the need to consider adjustments when the time is right. Given the current situation there have been concerns voiced that Post Ten schools themselves will try to shift to a more academic focus just to try and access opportunities. This is a risky approach and may serve to weaken the quality of the output from Post Ten schools. The best approach for Post Ten schools at present is possibly to use the same syllabus that they are currently using but as said before, as the needs change so can the syllabus.

d) Materials and physical facilities
The needs in terms of materials and physical facilities that have been raised in interviews have been primarily focused on the perceived lack of teaching aids and materials that some of the schools have. This research did not investigate the individual monitoring systems for materials and resources that are at different schools but there have been seen to be huge differences in financial resources between Post Ten schools and the subsequent resources that are purchased. The presence of greater resources has been seen to not always produce Post Ten school leavers who are more suitably qualified to support their community.
Another issue related to physical facilities is the fact that in some camps there are no Post Ten schools. Don Yang and the Karenni site near Khun Yuam do not have Post Ten schools. It was said that there is a plan to have a Post Ten school at the Khun Yuam site. If human and financial resources are available to develop Post Ten schools at these sites there would be a further opportunity for students from these camps to access higher level education.

e) External/variables and opportunities
A point raised in the interviews highlighted a further risk with adjusting Post Ten education at this point in time. Tertiary education and the attainment of access to it take away resources from Primary and Secondary education. Therefore to focus on the development of opportunities at upper end of the education system and to develop Post Ten to support this process would create a gap between High School and Post Ten. The diversion of resources away from Primary and Secondary levels would ultimately weaken the chance of achieving a long term objective of developing refugee access to Higher Education.

7.2.2 Community planning for Post Ten Education
There has been a plan developed by KED to introduce a new format to this level of education. At present many Post Ten schools run a two or three year programme to develop knowledge and skills of students to prepare them for work in their community. The plan proposed by KED will see six or seven Post Ten schools in the camps providing a two-year academic course following syllabi for Social Studies, Maths, English and Science followed by a two-year specialist programme. Nu Poe camp will specialise in economics, Umphiem in public health, Mae La in South-East Asian studies, Mae La Oon in community management and the location of the facility specialising in law has yet to be decided. The changing situation for the Teacher Preparation Courses with regard to their funding means that it is likely that there will be development of resources and materials to have a Post Ten school for Teaching and Education.

a) Learners and the learning process
The enrolment rate at Post Ten schools has been seen to show the felt need for these options to be provided at camp level. Furthermore, it has been seen that the majority of graduates go on to work in some capacity in the camps. This shows a high degree of relevance in providing these courses. However, as discussed earlier in this report there are problems with the skills and knowledge of graduates of these programmes. There has been some agreement shown in the camps to KED’s planning but there did not appear to be much knowledge about the content of courses and how the programmes will be used to directly support needs in the community. The nature of learning in these new programmes could not be described to the point where it can be said that there is full understanding of the implications and resources needed. Also the implementation policy changes to support these changes were not fully understood. The only information provided for the student selection process was that it was open to all ethnicities but with no guiding policy to
implement this and that students from high schools in the camp would be given first priority with CBO staff afterwards. There is the danger that without a strong supporting policy and curriculum base that has been thoroughly researched amongst other Post Ten stakeholders besides KED that there will be increased confusion of the role of these Post Ten schools. This would in turn weaken the learning process that the students go through on these courses.

b) Personnel and support systems
The main concern voiced by staff from a partner organisation which is seen to be a highly important issue to consider is the issue of implementation capacity within KED and less specifically in the community. There are low numbers of staff working for Post Ten schools in KED and this means that there are few human resources available to follow up and monitor the implementation progress. Reports can be sent to KED from the participating schools but there must be a clear identification of what is to be reported on and how issues are solved and learnt from for there to be the opportunity for this programme to work.

There does not appear to have been sufficient planning of the changes to the Post Ten set up by KED and there are also questions surrounding the availability of teachers to teach these subjects and the ability of those responsible for implementing the changes to monitor the content and delivery of the subjects that will be offered. Furthermore there does not appear to be enough consideration given to the training that will be required for these teachers and how it will be implemented to indicate that this will be a successful adjustment to the nature and content of Post Tenth Standard education.

It is recommended that KED carry out further discussions into the development of these opportunities especially in light of the alterations that will be made to the curriculum. This is both with NGOs responsible for the work in this area and also within KED itself to ensure that the programmes are working towards the same goal.

c) Curriculum and Assessment
The course content for these revised Post Ten programmes will be able to use the materials provided by CP for the first two years of the programme as well as KED developed materials. CP does not have all areas covered anyway so there is a need for KED to support the gaps in available materials as provided by CP. However, the second half of the programme does not have a clear curriculum framework and the guiding value appears to be that it will help students be useful for their community but without a clear demonstration of how this will be achieved.

The idea of providing a course for community management at one of the locations is seen as an appropriate subject area to proceed with as long as the materials are relevant to the lives of the learners and not just using
examples from other countries with the names changed to make them ‘more relevant’. Translation of concepts and case-studies that are understandable and in terms of the students’ general knowledge and experiences will be required to ensure that there is value in this course area.

In terms of assessment for these programmes KED has said that they do not wish to put too much emphasis on Western style selection procedures and assessment techniques. It is the right of any community body to implement policies such as this on their own, but there is the need to consider the academic ability of the students as well and the need to develop their skills with education of quality and not just providing a course for people to be on.

d) External factors/ variable and opportunities
A clear advantage to the planning from KED is that it is looking at providing opportunities for large numbers of students. The quality of the education that will be provided on these courses could not be properly assessed because the programme has not started yet. However, it should be noted that there is a need to consider the standard on entry and leaving these programmes. If not then the issues that were highlighted throughout this research regarding the value of the skills of graduates of Post Ten schools to the community are not being addressed. As this is one of the guiding theories behind the Higher Education programme and this report is assessing this particular level of education, it must be stressed that there is significant importance in ensuring the content and quality in delivery of the education in the camps, including Post Ten schools is helping to develop the level of education in the camps to higher standard.

It was said in the camps that ZOA should link together with KED Post Ten planning. However there should be better coordination of KED planning with CP. CP is a programme under TEN and it is responsible for Post Tenth Standard education. It is also a partner of ZOA and it has been observed by the researcher that KED’s planning for Post Ten was not developed with full understanding of the requirements of the schools to implement the process. This is supported by the fact that there have been concerns raised that the KED implementation process will not be done effectively and that there is the risk of Post Ten schools following the policy of KED for their programme but still managing the course in the old way and using the materials from CP or any other former source.

Other comments in relation to the planning of KED included that ZOA should listen more closely to the KED plan and advise them on the incorporation of the plan into the camp education. Staff in ZOA said that there is potential in investigating the ways that Post Ten education could grow. It is therefore suggested that this be addressed to enhance the sustainability of the Higher Education approaches that are being developed.
7.3 NFE route and the development of vocational and skill courses

A broad base of options for accredited education was identified as a potential need prior to the research and unprompted evidence to support this need was given by interviewees. The key theme in this section of the report is to consider the relationship of the size and scope of any Higher Education intervention to the number of students that attend education programmes in the camps. There has been a clear demonstration by ZOA staff that the Higher Education programme should not become a focus of the work done by ZOA. This is in part due to the human resources available to ZOA and because of the need to have an effective impact on the whole education system as provided in the camps rather than to focus on any particular type or level of intervention. The researcher is in full agreement with this viewpoint and it is the reason for advocating an alternative route for students to gain skills and to use those skills in their daily lives. This is the non-formal education or NFE route including the development of vocational and skill courses. There has already been significant work done by ZOA this area. However, the aim of this section is to show how a broad scope of opportunities should be developed to create an integrated education system.

At present in each of the camps there is an NFE Centre. This has been the result of a joint intervention between ZOA and MOE. There are accelerated learning classes, Thai language courses and other adult education courses provided at these centres. Furthermore there are many different forms of vocational training provided in the camps already. This survey did not have a focus on looking at these courses but during the course of the research process information that relates to this area of the education spectrum was provided. This section will be used to present the views of those consulted during the research. The majority of the views that are presented are those of people from the refugee community as they were the largest target group in the research. Other views have been provided to add support to the overall message that is presented in this section.

Accredited vocational education is something that ZOA has already been working towards and this is something that is seen as appropriate in the refugee community. Furthermore there were comments given to support the relevance of adult education programmes to community needs. This was supported further by representatives of UNHCR and Thai government. It was clearly stated that there should be development of a broad base of opportunities including skill development courses and not just a focus on Tertiary education.

Courses that were suggested included agriculture based courses and bookkeeping or administration courses. These are favoured by the researcher because they are in line with the idea of giving a broad skill base linked to the technical, economic and social circumstances that are present in the camps and which are likely to be present in future in Burma. It is also advisable to investigate the possibilities for providing skills for micro-finance management and linking this to the programme underway working on livelihoods.
The use of modular style courses has also been proposed by some interviewees as well as the idea of looking into commercial college courses to support these programmes. Other ideas included a closer working relationship with the NFE programmes available in Thailand. This is an appropriate longer term strategy that should be investigated. Modular courses can provide learners with a suitable pace to their learning but there can be difficulties with the lack of coherence of the courses. It is advised that strong curriculum management and adequate guidance be used to alleviate the risk of loss of coherence. These types of approaches are seen by the researcher as an essential component in any development of educational initiatives for refugees. There have been concerns about the low numbers that can access Higher Education courses, especially for the near future. Provision of alternative courses that enable refugees to gain skills that are relevant to their lives and which can be accessed more easily are vital to ensuring that the Higher Education programme does not lead to a top-heavy approach in refugee education in the camps. Also it would provide a better framework to be looking into education as an inclusive experience. This is not just inclusive in terms of the number of opportunities that are available but also in the sense that it is building into more sustainable networks that reduce the actual isolation of the education system and the skills that it provides for people.

The provision of a broader base of opportunities is a necessary part of the development of other opportunities for refugee education. There should not just be a focus on Higher Education. The need to support opportunities for the majority of people that pass through the education system to develop themselves and to acquire new skills is important. This must be enabled to ensure that there is not an overly academic focus on the education system and also to support the education system to be providing inclusive education that meets the needs of all learners and is relevant to the social and economic situation that will be faced by refugees on return to Burma.
Chapter 8 | Risks

8.1 Resettlement

Throughout the course of this research a large amount of information was provided on the topic of resettlement. The resettlement programme has been running for a few years now and there have been issues raised by all stakeholders that this is having an adverse effect on the human resources and quality of education provided in the camps.

Nearly all persons consulted stated clearly that resettlement is affecting manpower is a major issue for the camp. This was amongst NGO staff and residents of the refugee camps. Also it was said that people choose to resettle to get opportunities in education. The stripping of resources away from the camp has meant that there is an amplified need for the provision of Higher Education opportunities. However, the challenge is to understand how these qualifications and skills will be useful for the development of the community and not be taken away to 3rd countries on resettlement. There have been points raised regarding freedom of choice but the size of the task to get students to graduate means that without some guidance and development of understanding of the value of the Higher Education programme for the community as a whole there will be the risk of there being inherent weaknesses in the programme logic.

There has been evidence provided that the opportunity for refugee students to access Higher Education would help students in any of the future durable solutions for refugees as implemented by UNHCR. It was stated in the camps that there will be a reduction in the numbers that will choose resettlement if this programme is made available. It was said by a member of staff of a partner agency that they wish to reduce the impact of resettlement on the camp systems. This is highly dependent on the scale and quality of the programme for Higher Education that will be developed. However people consulted also said that the change in numbers that apply for resettlement will only be small.

On a positive note regarding the impact of resettlement, it was stated that the programme would only last for approximately another two years. If this is the case the opportunity to develop the Higher Education programme is enhanced greatly because many people felt that graduates would just simply resettle rather than return to the community for the long term. This point regarding the ongoing time-scale of the resettlement programme must be followed up and UNHCR and IOM have, without question, an obligation to provide information showing that this is the case and if there are future plans to extend the resettlement programme, these must without question be shared too. These international organisations have a direct responsibility to the NGOs, the host government and the refugee community to be transparent about the resettlement issue and to assist agencies in planning their interventions without there being massive risks imposed on the sustainability of the

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7 The ‘durable solutions’ for refugees refers to the three recognised options for refugees; Resettlement, Integration & Repatriation.
programmes on the border. Without this approach there is sufficient evidence available to state that this would be irresponsible and disrespectful to all other stakeholders.

A further point regarding the risks associated with resettlement is that the majority of people that have opted to resettle already have been teachers and other qualified persons. This has stripped the camps of their resources. However a knock-on effect for the Higher Education programme is that there will be a smaller available target group from which to select students. In this sense it appears that the resettlement programme is working directly against the development of sustainable interventions being run in the camps. This is supported further the fact that people stated that there just simply weren’t enough skilled people to replace the resettled teachers. This problem has been exacerbated by the fact that none of the resettlement countries has as a response to taking refugees been interested in training a new cadre of refugee workers. (Shukla & Olson, 2007)

The dangerous situation that resettlement presents is compounded further by the fact that refugees with recognised Tertiary level education would be likely to be able to resettle more easily than refugees without. The risk in running the Higher Education programme is that there is the danger that NGOs may be setting themselves up for a fall. Therefore the selection procedures and the amount of community focus and relationships that an individual is involved with would be an indication, but only that, of the likelihood of any given person to resettle. The issue of study contracts has been presented by a wide range of interviewees representing the community including KRC staff. Also MOI like the idea of study contracts. The problem here is the enforcement of any penalties and the blocking of any access to resettlement is highly questionable. The question of resettlement can not be ignored in relation to the Higher Education programme as it does present it with risks. Therefore clarity and transparency of information provided to NGOs must be maintained so that planning and in turn the quality of the programme is not adversely affected.

It appears that resettlement will continue for the foreseeable future and so the planning and implementation processes used by the NGOs should be made to work within this context. If the resettlement programme is brought to an end then risks to this endeavour will be automatically reduced. The impact of resettlement on the lives of refugees left in the camp has been said to be massive and that there has been little thought given to those left behind. This is in part why there is such a positive view of this new opportunity regarding Higher Education.

A further challenge to overcome on the topic of resettlement was provided by the evidence collected. MOI said that the Higher Education programme should prepare refugees for resettlement or repatriation. Integration was not cited. However a major option that will be required to enhance the potential of the Higher Education programme is the need to provide opportunities for graduates. Without these options it was felt that graduates would choose
resettlement. Therefore the opportunity to work after graduation is also seen to be linked to the resettlement issue.

8.2 NGO responsibilities
There has been some information collected as part of this research that has shown that there are still gaps in the planned service coverage according to the NGO roles. Some of these issues have been presented so far in this paper, but this distinct section has been created to underline the importance of the NGO responsibilities. It has been said that CDF will support financial requirements of the programme, ZOA logistical, operational and administrative and TEN content and technical skills. These are logically developed according to each NGOs particular situation and the skills of staff members within. However, after the implementation planning has been drawn up it is advised to investigate which gaps remain and to consider if there is the need to look at any other agency or donor involvement to ensure that the programme has a better chance of success.

ZOA is at present the only NGO that has a comprehensive logistical support staff department with vehicles in Mae Sot. This may mean that there will be responsibilities that will come to ZOA to implement the work of other partners. However it is understood that there are plans from TEN and CDF to open offices in 2008.

During the course of this research it has been clearly shown that this programme should be about quality in the education received. It must be clarified that each partner has the same goal in mind. Not just to say that they do, but to demonstrate how they understand this in terms of programme set up. There is the danger that if high levels of funding are available to send students to university or that the donors wish to see results quickly that students will be put onto courses without the appropriate support mechanisms in place to ensure that their learning process is effective.

As part of the strategic planning that will be developed for the programme there should be investigation into the gaps in service provision at regular intervals in programme implementation. An example of this is the stance of KED. They have said that they can help with selection from KED schools but do not want to be involved in selection from other schools. This will mean that another agency will have to do this work and there is an automatic duplication of work which reduces efficiency in programme implementation. This demonstrates the need for clear planning and to follow up those plans, to ensure that all aspects of the programme are covered. This should also be supported by contingency plans that can be used after there have been problems encountered.

Suggestions for the strategic make up of the programme are presented in chapter nine.
8.3 Perceptions

A further risk that has been discussed to some extent in this paper is the perception of the Higher Education programme amongst community level actors. It is important to remember that this is a programme that is being received well in the community. However, there are serious issues surrounding the how the level of content as provided on Higher Education courses is perceived through to the numbers that can actually access the courses. There will need to be a comprehensive development of accurate perceptions and numbers that can achieve these levels for the refugee community. In a workshop in Don Yang it was said that the international programme would be easy for refugee students. This was said to be because they already have been learning English at school. However refugees that have been learning English on throughout their schooling are seen to be far short of the level needed to access international programmes. This is exacerbated further by the lack of resources available in the camps to raise the level of English. For example the lack of any Post Ten school in two of the nine camps.

In terms of the content of courses there should be thorough understanding of how the courses that are suggested by refugees are perceived to be of use and how they understand the course content. After explaining the nature of the content on an economics degree to one person who had said that they thought that economics was a useful subject, they wished to change their mind. This provided an opportunity to ask information about the areas that were perceived to be contained in the content of the course and how they were meeting a community need. It appeared that this person was actually interested in book-keeping and basic financial management and not economics. Translation of concepts across language barriers needs to be well managed. If not there is the risk that nature of courses will become (the researcher is of the opinion that this has already begun) more unclear and the names of courses will become like catchphrases or jargon. This risk is a serious consideration that must be taken on board by the partner NGOs including for their own staff in some cases and the responsibility and methodology used to abate the risk agreed upon and implemented.

A further risk that has been identified has been related to the view that providing Higher Education in the camps is a realistic option. The learning environment would be seriously compromised and the materials and resources, access to training and personal development profiles for teaching and education management systems would be weak. This would result in the level and skills of graduates being affected. There is the view amongst some camp residents that placing a level of education at the top of the system will automatically raise student academic levels to a higher standard. This focus is incorrect and there should be the opportunity for access to all levels of the education system with a strong focus on ensuring that Primary level educational needs are addressed. Furthermore the lack of understanding about students’ inherent aptitude as developed within the camp education system needs to be addressed. It has been seen that many think that providing Higher Education in the camps would be good because every student could attend. This view highlights the inherent weaknesses in the
comprehension of student ability. The shortcomings that are presented by the environment leads to a weakened education system where there is not the ability to provide education that will enable people to grasp concepts or the teaching medium so as to realise their potential. Therefore the numbers that can access Higher Education from the camp environment school system would be logically smaller than if they had been given the opportunity to reach their potential.

8.4 Flaws and inaccuracy in the research process
Whilst every effort has been taken to ensure that the information presented in this report is as accurate as possible, there are likely to be some areas that contain errors. This may be due to preconceptions regarding the set up of Higher Education from the research team which could cause a leading of interviewees towards certain answers. This is a risk in any social research setting and the awareness of self of the researchers was discussed amongst the researchers prior to execution. Furthermore there were tests carried out of the questions that were used to check that there was clarity for interviewees regarding the meaning of the questions.

Points related to the meaning of language may have served to affect the data given as well. This is because many languages were used to conduct the research but the questions were written in English and the report is written in English. Translation of concepts and ideas from one language to another is a potential source of problems.

The risk of meaning being lost in translation is also appropriate to consider for the researchers. The first language of one researcher is English and the first language of the other is Karen. Discussions were held to clarify the meaning of some concepts and when the data was being analysed. This was done to reduce the potential for inaccuracies in the data received.
Chapter 9 | Guiding strategies

Below is a set of strategic recommendations for the programme implementation. Supporting information for these points in an implementation and strategy framework and recommendations specifically for ZOA have been submitted separately to this report. There have been six areas for consideration developed as a result of this research. Each strategy will be given and there are sub-strategies given as topics to follow up under each of the main points.

1. Strategy to develop access to opportunities for Higher Education
   a) Ensure that systems are in place to recruit potential students
   b) Investigate gaps in opportunity and ensure that access can be granted to a wider cross-section of refugees
   c) Ensure that there is advocacy for development of all options to relevant stakeholders and authorities
   d) Ensure that permission is granted by the RTG and there is validation of the possibilities with RTG
   e) Establish links with institutions of Higher Education, courses provided within these institutions and with governments that have experience of providing Higher Education opportunities for marginalised groups in society

2. Strategy to support learners to gain accredited education (to support student applications)
   a) Ensure that opportunities are provided for potential candidates to take their GED test as part of the short term option
   b) Ensure that opportunities are provided for potential candidates to access the medium term option of a foundation course
   c) Ensure that the process of accreditation of the school curriculum is worked towards for refugee education
   d) Ensure that there is access to a broad scope of accredited educational opportunities by means of vocational or skill development courses

3. Strategy to ensure that the programme is beneficial for the refugee education system
   a) The selection process includes criteria related to potential students having a clear community focus
   b) Ensure that sufficient funding is available from donor organisations and that there are suitable support systems for students studying on courses of Higher Education
   c) Ensure that subjects studied by students at Tertiary level contains a good sample of those that are related to needs in the community
   d) Ensure that graduates have opportunities for placements or internships after finishing their course of study, including following up advocacy to the RTG of the need for this option to be built into the programme to enhance its success
e) Ensure that monitoring indicators for the programme are developed, agreed upon and suitable for analysing the programme progress
f) Ensure that information regarding risks such as resettlement is available from relevant organisations and that strategies are developed to reduce the impact of such risks

4. Strategy to ensure access to the programme is inclusive
   a) Develop networks and relationships for conveying accurate information to the refugee population and processes are in place to assist with community participation in decision making
   b) Research the selection processes used and investigate new ways of reaching people in the target group
   c) Monitor and investigate the service provision provided for representatives of marginalised groups within the refugee community prior to and on courses of Higher Education

5. Strategy to ensure that implementation support is present at all levels
   a) Agree on programme approach planning
   b) Carry out stakeholders meetings after the programme has been agreed upon in the refugee camps
   c) Re-evaluate options against the information accrued under 'b' and agree on roles and responsibilities including the design of reporting systems
   d) Review roles and responsibilities and address gaps in service provision
   e) Community structures for implementation support are present and used and their role researched further
   f) Investigation is carried out into gaps and development of policy and other regulations is done to ensure that they are sympathetic to the learning and community needs

6. Strategy to work on sustainability and capacity building
   a) Identify staff members that will be working for this programme
   b) Identify comprehension of vision in terms of staff and community actor responsibilities
   c) Develop action strategies and plans with relevant staff members to support programme implementation and development
   d) Identify gaps and training needs for staff to fulfil their responsibilities and implement training plans to address needs
   e) Review role of training as a tool for problem solving and develop new approaches
Chapter 10 | Conclusions

The information provided by the people consulted during the research process can be seen to be extensive in nature. Therefore the report as a whole should be used to assess each constituent part of the Higher Education programme and there should not be an approach of using any one set of information as justification for its development without the consideration of how the programme will affect to the other options that are being developed for refugee Higher Education and the camp education system. Furthermore, the same is true of the recommended implementation approach.

The points provided in the last chapter are to guide the stakeholders towards an appropriate system of programme management. In terms of implementation strategy it is recommended that the three options for Higher Education be developed together This will ensure that there are sufficient people in the target group to enhance the outcome that people will return to the community and support its development, which is a logical and relevant approach. This would also support the sustainability of the intervention and the networks and partnerships developed, if managed well, would add further organisational and institutional sustainability to the planned programme. Furthermore it is felt by the researcher that having a clear implementation plan will enable negotiations into what is feasible will be easier for the partner agencies. The initial tasks should be to investigate the set up of the foundation course to assist with raising the standards of the students to the appropriate level and finding potential students for courses. During this time development of the options for distance and international programmes could be investigated further. The opportunity for Thai medium courses can be opened initially for the small number of students that may be able to make the grade and for students from rural or isolated Thai communities and is seen as an outcome of the longer term process of curriculum accreditation. Building all the options at their appropriate speed is therefore the main recommendation and conclusion from this research.

The challenge of implementing this comprehensive programme is clear to the researcher and the chart provided in Appendix II is included to provide a suggested approach to the implementation of this programme. The time scale of each of the stages will need to be discussed further amongst partner organisations, however it serves to guide the approach planning that can be used.

These conclusions have been arrived at because of the evidence collected and because it is necessary to assess education in terms of a developmental paradigm. This is in line with the view of many educators and is supported by international frameworks. Education holds immediate development potential. It should be recognised as long term social development which has an emphasis on content, community participation, cooperation with different levels of government and ministry officials, potential future scenarios (repatriation, resettlement or integration) as well as on sustainability. Therefore this multi-faceted approach incorporating various levels of education and multi-level accreditation of the course of study is very important.
This is supported further by the fact that the need and right to education is supported by the human rights paradigm. It can also be used as a key element in the provision of protection. Within this paradigm the concepts of quality and access are typical and therefore important to consider in the programme development. (INEE, undated) Also in the second chapter the right to learn was presented against various internationally agreed conventions and rights for learners. This adds further substance to the requirement of developing this opportunity by all stakeholders involved.
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Appendices |  

Appendix I
The information presented below is taken from a series of presentations on different experiences for the delivery of online learning throughout South-East Asia. The presentations were part of a seminar on distance learning at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. The use of ICT in the Education Sector in Lao P.D.R. recommended the following steps:

1. Master laws and regulations on distance education, including intellectual property laws.
2. Drafting of and overall framework for each sector to design and develop programmes
3. Planning of how to develop programmes to be initiated and provide service
4. Organise workshops and conferences on distance education curricula
5. Train trainers and administrators in the use of the programme hardware and methods
6. Design, develop, produce educational materials
7. Disseminate, provide services and re-evaluate pilot projects
8. Involve education institutions [and administrative or managerial bodies]
9. Mandate national and international inspection committees
10. Cooperate and coordinate with regional and global network

(STOU, 2007, p39)

These steps are shown to demonstrate the experience that is present in implementing programmes of this nature. Further structure can be applied to potential approaches by applying the following series or operations that are recommended from the experience of distance learning online in Viet Nam.

1. **Course sub-system**: creation, production, distribution and evaluation of instruction
2. **Student sub-system**: registration, orientation, learning assistance, allocation to courses, resolution of fee payment [or waiver], course materials and communication of expected performance
3. **Regulatory system**: practices of academic and administrative staff and bodies, governance and management and management of reward and accountability within the institution
4. **Technological subsystem**: information communication technology (ICT) in design and delivery of instruction

(STOU, 2007, p114)

The Malaysian experience has provided further recommendations that are given below:

1. There should be multiple data centres – to ensure that data is well managed and secure
2. At least two internet service providers – to ensure reduction of redundancy, continuous service and better coverage and access
3. Clustering of servers – to better manage data and applications
4. Wireless technology, paperless meetings, uploading of minutes and other documentation in a central repository
5. Better, more competent manpower – provide adequate compensation for retention purposes

(STOU, 2007, p53)
## Appendix II

### Suggested stages for implementation of Higher Education Programme

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<td>Students on Thai courses</td>
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<td><strong>Accreditation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Vocational Education</strong></td>
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NB: Time scale of stages not specified – This should be done according to resources available
**ZOA Refugee Care** (ZOA) is a Netherlands-based NGO established in 1973. It provides support to refugees, displaced people and victims of natural disasters. ZOA works in various countries in Asia and Africa. At the moment, it implements projects in Afghanistan, Angola, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand and Uganda. Since 1984, ZOA Thailand has been working with Burmese refugees living in seven refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border in the areas of general education, vocational training, and food and shelter. ZOA Thailand presently employs 64 staff members. Our main office is in Mae Sot, with field offices in Mae Sariang, Maesot and Kanchanaburi.

Since 1997, ZOA Thailand has been providing support to Burmese refugees in Thailand to enable them to manage and improve their own community education system. This support is provided through our Karen Education Project (KEP), the fourth phase of which began as per January 2006. The main intervention areas of KEP are in-service teacher training and support, curriculum and textbook development, institutional capacity building, community development, and the provision of operational services, such as school construction, payment of teacher subsidies and the provision of school supplies. The challenge for the future will be to assist in further improving the quality of education and to ensure the sustainability of project interventions in a protracted refugee situation.
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