

# EDUCATION SURVEY 2002

Carried out in Karen Refugee Camps  
on the Thai-Burma Border



Mae Sot, Thailand, December 2002  
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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 History	1
1.2 Objectives of the 2002 Education Survey	2
1.3 Methodology	3
1.4 Structure of the Report	4
 <b>Demographic and Social Structure</b>	 <b>5</b>
2.1 Geographic Origin of Camp Residents	5
2.2 Ethnicity, Religion and Family Size	6
2.3 Educational background of parents	7
2.4 Occupation and Income	8
 <b>The Education System</b>	 <b>11</b>
3.1. Education Overview	11
3.2. The Karen Education Department	11
3.3 School inside Burma	14
3.4 Schools inside the Karen refugee camps along the Thai - Burma border	15
3.5 School Enrolment	16
3.6 Access to Education	17
3.7 Religion in Schools	20
3.8 Gender equality	20
3.9 Curriculum, textbooks and teaching aid	23
 <b>Karen Education, the Players</b>	 <b>25</b>
4.1 Students	25
4.2 Parents	28
4.3 Teachers	32
4.4 Principals	38
4.5 Trainers	43
4.6 Education Committees in the camps	45
 <b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	 <b>47</b>
5.1 Conclusions	47
5.2 Recommendations	47
5.2.1. General	47
5.2.2. Education Administration	48
5.2.3. School Attendance	48
5.2.4. Further Education	49
5.2.5. Infrastructure	49
5.2.6. Curriculum & Language, Teaching Aids and Examination	49
5.2.7. Teacher Training	50

**'Education gives you confidence  
in yourself  
and strength to make decisions\***

**A Burmese Educator**

(From: Living Silence, Christina Fink  
London 2001)

## Introduction

In the Karen refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border, some 34,000 Karen students are in school every day. About 1,100 Teachers and Trainers join hands together daily in order to educate the Karen youth.

The Karen are the second largest ethnic group in Burma. For decades they have been involved in an armed struggle for a degree of autonomy and self-determination inside Burma. As a result, today almost 110,000 of the Karen people live in 7 refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border, located in four provinces.

Education is highly valued by the Karen people. It is a key factor in the day to day survival in the refugee camps. The education in the camps, is predominantly the result of the efforts of the Karen refugees themselves.

This Education Survey is following two surveys that were conducted respectively in 1995/1996 by the CCSDPT, and in 2000 by ZOA Refugee Care.

The main objective of the survey is to describe existing education services provided to the camps. Furthermore the survey intends to identify existing gaps in the education services. Where relevant, the outcomes of this survey will be compared to the results of the previous education survey.

In this survey, special attention is given to the perspective of students. Their ideas and opinions are of importance in the effort to form a picture of the current education that is offered in the camps.

The interviews for this survey were held between March and August 2002 in all 7 Karen refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. The Karen people make up more than 80% of the total refugee population living in the camps along the Thai Burma border.

### 1.1 History

Ethnic groups in Burma make up roughly one third of the population and live primarily in the seven ethnic minority states. Differences in ethnic origin and political aspirations have been the basis for internal conflict, which increased significantly since Burma gained its independence from Britain in 1948.

General Ne Win, who passed away recently, seized power in 1962 and established a military rule over the country. The ongoing fighting and human rights violations in Burma resulted in the flight of tens of thousands of people to the border area in Thailand since 1984. The refugees are mainly representatives of the Karen, the Karenni, the Shan and the Mon. Currently there are 13 refugee settlements along the border.

As the political situation inside Burma is very complex, it is hard to make assumptions as to how the situation inside Burma will develop. Reports on human rights abuses in Burma keep on appearing. In 'Flight, Hunger and Survival'<sup>1</sup> the continuing and appalling

<sup>1</sup> Karen Human Rights Group, October 2001

situation for the Karen people in Burma is strikingly addressed. The much welcomed release of Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi in May 2002, is not expected to bring a quick fix to the political arena and the economic situation inside Burma, which finds itself in a deteriorating state<sup>2</sup>.

Earlier this year there was a glimmer of hope that the release of Mrs. Suu Kyi would be the start of political solutions for the general malaise inside Burma, in which the ethnic groups partake. The general feeling is that *faith without deeds* is meaningless. The Burmese Authorities will be evaluated on their actions. Even the most optimistic views, think in terms of 'years' before repatriation of Karen refugees could take place.

In order to get a better understanding of the education practices inside the camps, a survey of formal and non-formal education needs of Karen displaced people along the Thai-Burmese border was carried out in 1995/6. On the basis of that survey, it was concluded that major modifications were required to basic education and training services, in order to help prepare camp members for a productive life upon their return to Burma. It emphasized maximum utilization of local resources in the camps, to encourage self-reliance in accordance with limited appropriate involvement from outside. In 2000 ZOA conducted a follow-up survey, which made important recommendations for the Karen Education.

## **1.2. Objectives of the 2002 Education Survey**

- To obtain information from the camp population about their social-demographic background, including levels of education and literacy.
- To provide information about the levels of participation of children in the education\* system and the value placed on education by the parents.
- To describe existing education services provided to the camps,
- To seek the opinion of students, teachers, principals and trainers regarding improvement of services and what needs exist for new services.
- To compare the outcomes of this Education Survey with the recommendations from in the Education Survey conducted in 2000.

<sup>2</sup> See among others *The next face off*, Time Magazine, May 13, 2002, page 12-13

### 1.3. Methodology

Interviews were conducted with 932 parents, teachers, principals, trainers, students and education committees in the camps. Additional quantitative data was collected from camp committees, regarding numbers of school aged children (5-18 years old) in the camps and from schools about enrolment levels.

Data collection involved the use of 6 structured questionnaires (students, parents, teachers, principals, trainers and education committees) to interview 932 persons aged between 12 and 81 years old. One adult per family was interviewed. Sampling was carried out by asking camp leaders and the education coordinators in the camps to provide a list of households and teachers in the camps. The number of respondents to be selected from each list was pre-determined based on the proportion of the total population of each group (households, teachers/trainers) in 7 Karen refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. Table 1.1. shows the number of interviews conducted in each camp.

**Table 1.1**      **Surveyed Population**

Table 10: Surveyed Population

CAMP	FAMILIES			Camp Committee			Teachers			Principals			Teacher trainers			Students grade 10		%	
	total	sample	%	total	sample	%	total	sample	%	total	sample	%	total	sample	%	total	sample	%	
	krc 02-02			krc 02-02			zoa 06-02			zoa 06-02			zoa 06-02			zoa 06-02			
MKK	2378	61	0.03	1	1	1.0	196	33	0.17	12	12	1.0	4	4	1.0	129	34	0.26	145
MRML	1659	39	0.02	1	1	1.0	136	25	0.18	7	7	1.0	5	5	1.0	117	30	0.26	107
ML	6987	163	0.02	1	1	1.0	434	63	0.15	21	21	1.0	12	12	1.0	260	56	0.22	316
UP	3345	69	0.02	1	1	1.0	181	30	0.16	7	7	1.0	4	4	1.0	62	19	0.31	130
NP	1909	40	0.02	1	1	1.0	120	26	0.22	7	7	1.0	3	3	1.0	45	16	0.36	93
TH	1652	38	0.02	1	1	1.0	140	36	0.25	1	1	1.0	2	2	1.0	26	14	0.54	92
DY	801	16	0.02	1	1	1.0	60	23	0.4	1	1	1.0	2	2	1.0	6	6	1.0	49
TOTAL	18731	426	0.02	7	7	1.0	1267	236	0.21	56	56	1.0	32	32	1.0	645	175	0.42	932

#### *Location*

Data collection was carried out in all the 7 Karen camps of which 2 camps are located in Mae Hong Son, 3 camps in Tak, 1 in Kanchanaburi and 1 camp in Rachaburi province.

#### *Simple random sampling*

Most of the camps host people with different religious backgrounds. All groups have been given equal opportunity to express their opinion, as a proportional and random sample was taken from the various religious groups. For example: when 5% of the camp

population is Muslim, 5% of the interviewed parents with Muslim background were chosen.

#### *Interviewers*

Three people were selected to lead the interviews, one ZOA Employee, one employee of the Karen Education Department (KED) and one free lance consultant. The ZOA employee and the KED employee received training, instruction and on the job training by ZOA. They then trained residents in the camps to participate in conducting the interviews. At the end of every day the quality of the data was monitored.

#### *Language*

The questionnaire was translated from English into Skaw Karen and Burmese. A pre-test of the questionnaire was undertaken in both languages and some changes were made to the final version to prevent misunderstanding.

*Table 1.2 Interviewers and respondents per camp*

<b>Camp</b>	<b>Interviewers</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Mae Kong Ka	9	145
Mae Ra Ma Luang	7	107
Mae La	10	316
Umpiem	9	130
Nu Po	6	93
Don Yang	5	49
Tham Hin	7	92
Total	53	932

### **1.4. Structure of the Report**

There are a total of five chapters, with the first being the introduction.

In the second chapter some social-demographic characteristics of the entire sampled population are described, including the geographic origin of camp members, length of residence in the camp, level of education and literacy, and economic activities in the camps.

The third chapter focuses on the structure of education, including levels of participation of children in the education system, with special attention to access to education, gender equality and the role of religion in schools.

In the fourth chapter the focus is placed upon the most important players in the field of education, respectively, the students, their parents, teachers, principals, trainers and the education committees.

The final chapter reviews the most important results, and reconsiders the recommendations done in the 2000 Education Survey.

## Demographic and Social Structure

### 2.1. Geographic Origin of Camp Residents

Of all the interviewed persons, 95% were born in Burma. Five percent, mainly students, were born inside Thailand. Of those born in Thailand 74% originate from:

- Pa-an (33%)
- Mutraw (19%)
- Duplaya(11%)
- Tavoy (11%)

These are the districts that are nearest to the Thai Border. Most people explicitly indicated that they came to the refugee camp in order to escape from the SPDC. A significant number of people refer to forced labor and forced relocation, which in fact are the immediate consequences of SPDC presence in the respective areas.

Figure 2.1 District of birth

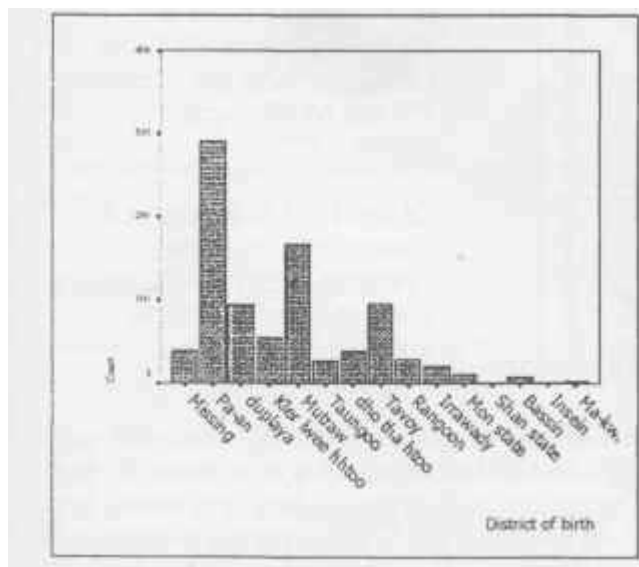


Table 2.1. Reasons for leaving Burma

Fleeing SPDC troops	54 %
Forced relocation	12 %
Forced labor	30 %
economic hardship	2 %
lack of education opport.	1 %
Member of political party	1 %

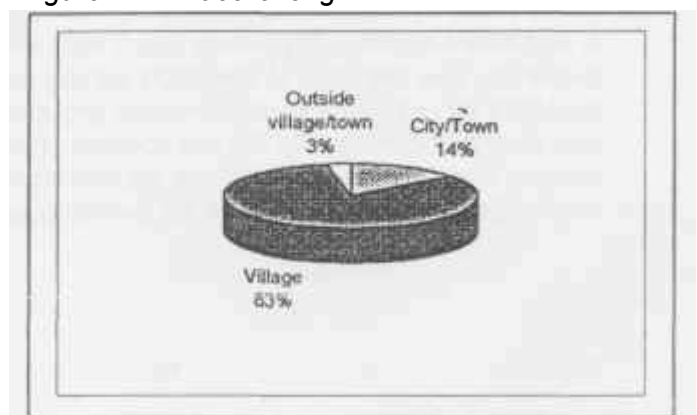
Table 2.1 is represents all the different groups that were sampled.

The Karen people living in the camps are overwhelmingly from a rural background, with 86% originating from small villages.

Before they were displaced, 54% of the population were involved in farming.

Life in the camps therefore must be a dramatic transition for most of the population. In few ways does it reflect life in the villages were the Karen people originate from.

Figure 2.2. Place of origin



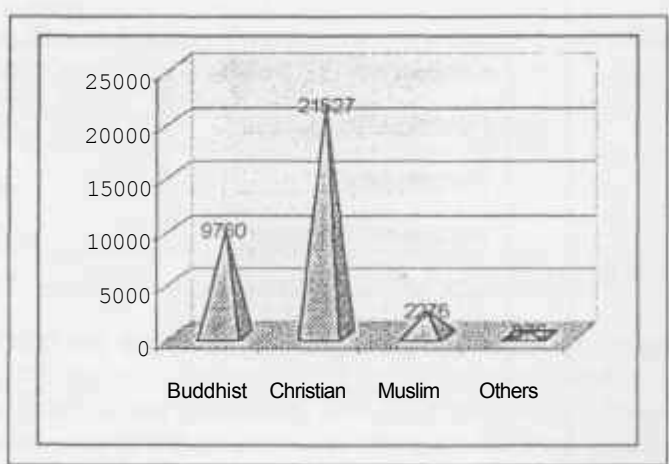


84% of the surveyed adults coming from towns and cities are now teachers, trainers or principals, while only 14% of the sampled families came from a town or city. This factor has to be taken into account whenever discussing parental involvement in the Karen schools. For most of the parents, the culture in the schools may be alien as most of the people working in the schools are from the city.

## 2.2. Ethnicity, Religion and Family Size

The Christians and the Buddhists are the two main religious groups among the Karen refugee population. The distribution of religion among the survey respondents was 65% Christian (43.4% Baptist, 2.8% Seventh Day Adventist, 2.8% Anglican or Catholic), 28% Buddhist and 11% Muslim. Four respondents considered themselves Animist while two respondents indicated they were non-religious.

Figure 2.3. Religious background of students



In the camps there are 33,938 students. 63% are Christian, 29% are Buddhist, 7% are Muslim and 1% others.

Of the 1053 teachers in the camps, 947 (90%) are Christian, 6.5% are Buddhist, 2.4% Muslim and 1.1% are animist or without religion.

Table 2.2. Religion & educational background of sampled parents

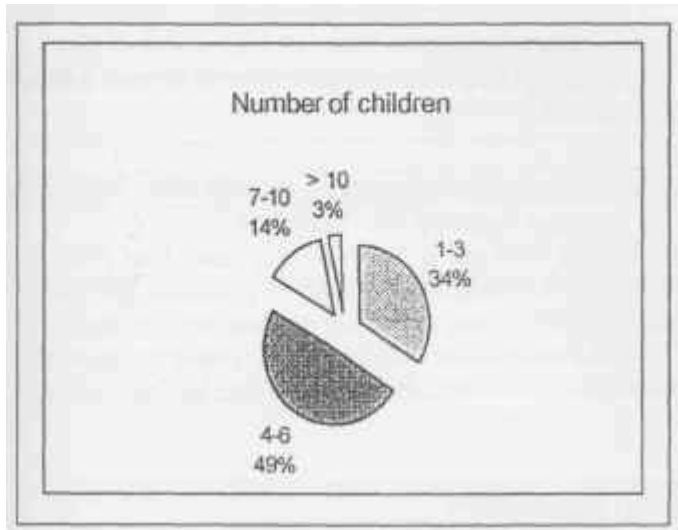
	No education	4 <sup>th</sup> standard and less
Muslims	11%	82%
Buddhists	29%	69%
Christians	0%	49%

A significant number of parents didn't receive formal education; most of this group being Buddhist. The statistics in the 2000 survey pointed out that, for various reasons, Buddhist have been a disadvantaged group in the past. A large proportion of the Muslim and Buddhist community did not continue their education after primary school. In the camps, opportunities for informal education are scarce and therefore need to be emphasized more in the future by the various stakeholders.

### Family size

In a speech by one of the Camp Commanders of the Thai Ministry of Interior, it was mentioned that the high birth rate in the camps and consequently the rapid growth of the camp population is a significant constraint in the maintaining and operating the camps at present.

Figure 2.4. Family size



Out of the 426 families sampled 66% have more than 4 children, with 17% more than 7 children. A total of 59 families reported that they adopted some children. Compared to the 2000 Education Survey, family size continues to be a significant factor in the growth of the camp population, which results in a growing pressure on school resources. Out of the total number of students enrolled in the Karen schools, **78% are enrolled in Kindergarten or Primary school.**

## 2.3. Educational background of parents

The 'Education for All' Conference held in Dakar in 2000, stated in its final declaration that: *"Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are witnessing rapid globalization"*. Furthermore the conference concluded that in 2000 about 880 million adults are illiterate and did not receive any education at all. The participants in the conference, various bi-and multi-lateral organizations, as well as private organizations, committed themselves to the goal of decreasing illiteracy rates by 50% in the coming 15 years. In the camps we see that many camp residents are still illiterate and deprived of basic education.

**Table 2.3. Educational background of the sampled parents**

	Respondents	%
no education	75	18%
Kindergarten	33	8%
grade 1	37	9%
grade 2	35	8%
grade 3	28	7%
grade 4	64	15%
grade 5	49	11%
grade 6	15	4%
grade 7	38	9%
grade 8	4	1%
grade 9	19	4%
grade 10	27	6%
College	2	0%
	426	100%

In 2002 18 % of the sampled population indicated that they did not receive any formal education, compared to almost 40 % in 2000.

65 % of the sampled population either didn't finish primary education, or discontinued their education after primary school.

Middle school was attended by 25 % of the sampled population, half of these finished Middle school.

11 % went to secondary school. Only half of this number crossed the finish line.

## 2.4. Occupation and Income

From the 2000 Education Survey it was learned that: *"Opportunities for earning income are limited and sporadic. Was day labour still available in 1995/6 for 19% of the refugees, in 2000 only 2% of the survey population is able to find labour outside the camp, due to restrictions on refugee movement imposed by the Thai authorities"*<sup>3</sup>. Since 2000, the situation concerning family income has not changed in any significant way.

**Table 2.4. Family income**

INCOME	RESPONSE	%
No income	184	43 %
20-100 Bath	101	24 %
101-300 Bath	55	13 %
301-500 Bath	39	9 %
over 500 Bath	47	11 %
	426	100 %

Almost half (43%) of the families are without regular income. Another quarter of the population earn less than 2.5 US\$ a month. The Burmese Border Consortium is providing for basic needs in terms of food and non-food items.

Apart from what refugees get provided by the Thai Authorities and NGOs, refugees do have additional daily needs for clothing, vegetables, candles, protein and so on.

<sup>3</sup> Education Survey, Maat & Taloung, December 2000

Some of the refugees without regular income get additional support from fellow refugees who do have some sort of income, or relatives living outside the camps. Some refugees do have irregular income from small businesses like raising pigs or weaving. The economic situation of refugees is influencing education in such a way that some parents cannot afford to send their children to secondary school, as these children are required to bring an income to the home, in order to provide for the basic needs of their families (see table 2.4 and paragraph 4.4).

*Table 2.5. Occupation in the camps*

Occupation	Response	%
<i>NO Occupation</i>	291	68%
<i>Section leader</i>	27	7%
<i>working with NGO</i>	42	10%
<i>Teaching</i>	14	3%
<i>Security</i>	10	2%
<i>Other (shop owner, religious leaders, Social work)</i>	42	10%

A little less than one percent of the total population receives a monthly income of 500 Bath for teaching in the schools (teachers in Laos and Cambodia earn about the same). Headmasters receive 600 Bath per month. An estimated 0.05% of the camp population is working with medical NGOs inside the camps. The payments in the medical sector are generally higher. The Muslim community is particularly involved in trade.

*Table 2.6. Percentage distribution of occupation before arriving in a camp compared to expected occupation upon return to Burma*

Occupation	Occupation before arriving in a camp	Expected occupation upon return to Burma
Teacher	4 %	3 %
Administration	2.5 %	2.6 %
Health worker	3 %	2 %
Shop owner/vendor	7.5 %	11 %
Laborer	9 %	5 %
<b>Farmer</b>	<b>54 %</b>	<b>54 %</b>
Home gardening	-	4 %
Soldier	6 %	-
Students	3 %	-
Domestic worker	2.7 %	4.1 %
Religious leader	2.7 %	4.6 %
House mother	3.5 %	4.7 %
Fisherman	0.2 %	1 %
Trader	0.7 %	1.5 %
Factory worker	1 %	1.5 %
Other (KWO)	0.2 %	1 %

54% of the family income in Burma came through farming (mainly paddy farming). Currently, due to regulations of the Thai Authorities, people are unable to do farming in and around the camps. On return to Burma, the same percentage of adults expects to pick up farming again once the situation allows them to return.

Amongst students, the interest in farming and agriculture seems minimal. When asked, none of the 170 students saw themselves involved in farming or agriculture when they return to Burma. After repatriation, agriculture will be an important source of income. This lack of interest should therefore be of concern to all stakeholders in the Karen education, but particularly to the Karen leadership.

### III The Education System

#### 3.1. Education Overview

With only a futile part of the National Budget allocated to education<sup>4</sup>, the education system inside Burma finds is deteriorating. 'The low retention rate in the schools, especially in rural areas, is the major weakness in the context of Burmese education'<sup>5</sup>. Schools are running without the necessary resources and teacher salaries are far from sufficient, to say the least. The situation in the Burmese schools at large is alarming. Even more dramatic is the situation in the rural areas and areas controlled by the opposition groups. 'The Burmese Government did operate a number of schools in Karen State, but there were almost no government schools within the rural areas, where the majority of the population lived'<sup>6</sup>. Education in these areas therefore was often the responsibility of monasteries and missionary groups.

In Karen State, education was mainly guaranteed by the Karen National Union. 'In 1970 the Karen National Union (KNU) consolidated its education system'<sup>7</sup>. Currently, the Karen Education Department (KED) is overseeing the education in the Karen schools, both inside Karen State and in the Karen refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border.

#### 3.2. The Karen Education Department

The 1995/6 survey report stated that the most serious deficiencies in the Karen administration in general were the lack of skilled, qualified or experienced manpower to fill management positions. Since then the situation has deteriorated. From 1997 till January 2000, nobody was appointed to oversee the Karen education.

In May 2000 the new minister and his advisory committee took the initiative to develop an Education Policy Plan, and established goals and innovative strategies to enforce them. A first draft of the outcomes of the meeting was presented towards the end of 2000. The policy document was of a general nature; in such a way that it contained very few priorities for the coming years.

The KED divides Karen State in 7 districts. Each district has an education officer, who takes responsibility for the management of education in the respective area. Likewise in the refugee camps there are KED/KRC officers who oversee the education. The KED is responsible for the promotion of education in townships and in the refugee camps. Furthermore they collect school records, consisting of numbers of schools, students and teachers.

<sup>4</sup> Living Silence, Christina Fink, London New York 2001, page 174

<sup>5</sup> Education in Burma (1945-2000), Thein Lwin, Chang Mai September 2000

<sup>6</sup> Education Survey, Maat & Taloung, Thailand December 2000

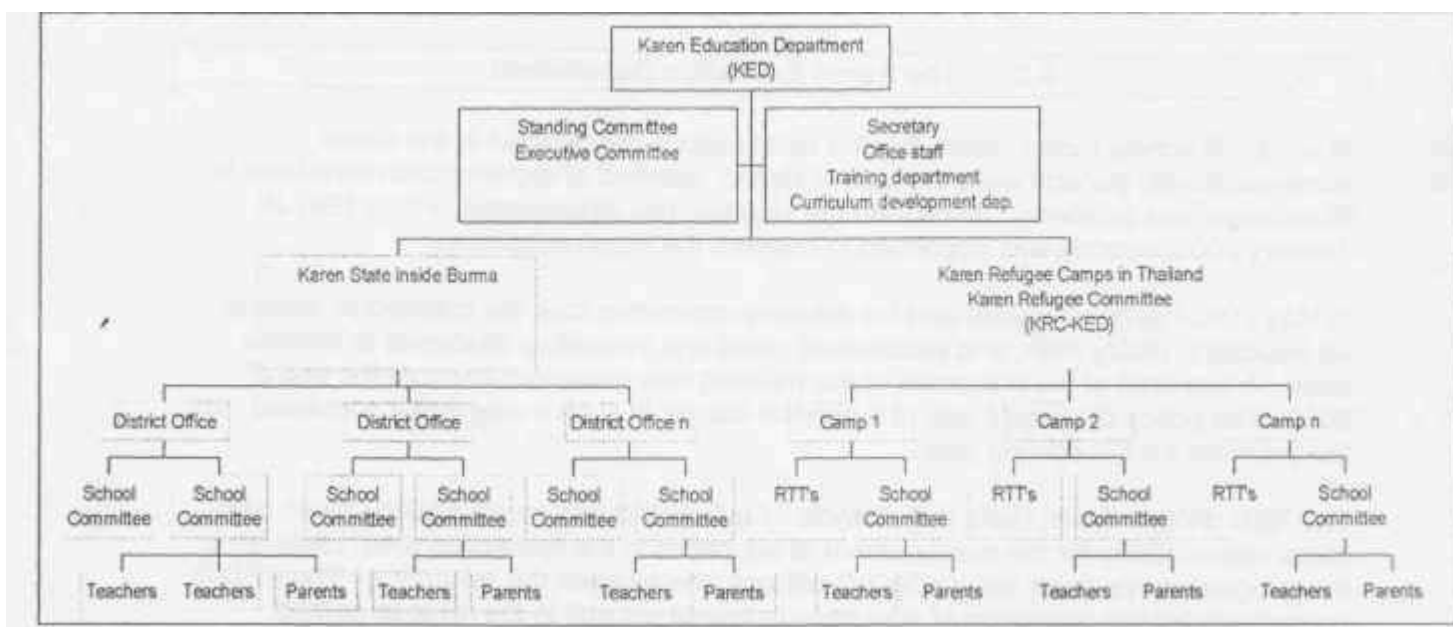
<sup>7</sup> Education Survey, Maat & Taloung, Thailand December 2000

Within the refugee camps the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) also plays a role in education. The KRC coordinates between the camp schools, the KED, NGOs and donor agencies. Another organization, playing a role in education is the National Health and Education Commission (NHEC). The NHEC is made up of members of Burmese ethnic minority groups. Among other things the NHEC organizes training in curriculum development and teacher training, and promotes a standardized approach among the different ethnic groups in Burma<sup>8</sup>.

In each refugee camp an Education Committee was set up to co-ordinate between the schools in the camp, made up of school principals and members of the Camp Committee. All schools in the Karen system also have a School Committee, which are usually made up by parents, teachers and village or camp committee members. The School Committee is overseeing the day to day management of schools.

Financing the education system has become problematic for the KED, as many parents are not able anymore to pay enrolment fees for their children. Although parental contributions are generally low, payment is rarely strictly enforced. Parents who cannot afford to pay are excepted and their children are allowed to attend at least primary school. The School Committees administer the income from school fees.

Figure 3.1. Structure Karen Education Department



All schools in the Karen system start the school year early June, break for 2 week in October and another week at Christmas, and finish in March. Exams are held late February/early March. Students study usually 35 periods of 45 minutes over 5 days.

<sup>8</sup> Education Survey, Maat & Taloung, December 2000

The duration of the primary, middle and high school cycles are standardized throughout the Karen system (see figure 3.2). The primary cycle last for 6 years starting at Kindergarten B and finishing at 4<sup>th</sup> standard. The middle cycle runs for 3 years from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> and the high school from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> standard (see figure 3.2).

*Figure 3.2. Structure of Karen Education System*

AGE	Primary/Secondary	Continuing Education	Special Needs
		Vocational Training	Leadership courses
		Teacher Training	Non-formal Education
		Religious Education	
FROM 17		Further Studies Program	
12-17	Middle & High Grade 5-7 & 8-10		
7-12	Primary Grade 1-4		Special Education
5-7	Kindergarten KGB+A		Nursery

In 2001, the KED opened an office and appointed some staff. This has increased their effectiveness. Yet, the implementing capacity remains a concern. The lack of mobility furthermore remains a serious obstacle for enhancing KED's output. Technical and financial support from outside will continue to be required for the years to come.



### 3.3. Schools inside Burma

In recent years, some organizations do focus on assistance to Karen schools inside Karen State. As a consequence, through informal structures, news and statistics regarding the Karen schools operating inside Burma, arrive on a regular basis. It is not always possible to verify all the statistics that reach the offices in Thailand. Nevertheless a picture of the schools inside is emerging.

Often schools inside are small in size and teachers combine different grades. With a lack of basic materials, economic hardship, and most of all an absence of protection, it is extremely hard to keep the schools operational. Teachers inside Burma show an incredible motivation in educating the youth. The circumstances under which they do their work are so much harder compared to the schools in the refugee camps.

The following statistics concerning the schools inside Burma were provided by the KED (October 2002).

*Table 3.1. Comparison Number of Schools inside Karen State, Burma  
School years 2000/01 and 2002/03*

District	Number of schools					
	Prim 2000	Prim 2002	Mid 2000	Mid 2002	High 2000	High 2002
1) Pa-an	29	67		2		1
2) DooPlaYa	69	132		4		
3) Kler Lwee Htoo	21	45	4	2		1
4) Mutraw	154	193	8	6	4	3
5) Taungoo	26	44	3	3		
6) Doo Tha Htoo	48	66	3	4		1
7) Tavoy	16	2				
	363	549	18	21	4	6

According to these KED statistics, the total number of schools has increased the last two years in all areas, except for the Mergui/Tavoy District. The explanation for the growth given by the KED is that the collection of statistics has become more accurate. In other words, two years ago there were more students and teachers, but they were not shown in the statistics. A local organization that visits schools inside Karen State on a regular basis, verified the statistics shown in tables 3.1 and 3.2.

*Table 3.2. Comparison Number of Students and Teachers inside Karen State, Burma - school years 2000/01 and 2002/03*

District	Number of students		Numbers of teachers	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
1) Pa-an	2,559	4,025	80	150
2) Doo Pla Ya	3,499	11,322	105	339
3) Kler Lwee Htoo	658	1,361	61	93
4) Mutraw	5,342	6,916	341	405
5) Taungoo	840	1,366	56	90
6) Doo Tha Htoo	3,925	5,692	114	185
7) Tavoy	300	50	21	2
	17,123	30,732	778	1264

Through the Karen Refugee Committee, one international organization is providing teacher subsidies in Mutraw and Khler Lwee Htoo.

### **3.4. Schools inside the Karen refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border**

The consequences a war can have on the education of children are visible in the Karen schools inside the camps. Many students, for various reasons, had to disrupt their education several times (see figure 4.5). Because of these disruptions, the age groups in classes in the Karen schools fluctuate. It is possible to see children of age 10, 11 and 12 in grade 1. Till present, new refugees arrive in the camps. Schools face the difficult challenge how to fit in students that did not have the chance to go to school inside Burma.

*Table 3.3. Comparison: Schools inside refugee camp, Thailand school year 2000/01 - 2002/03*

District	Number of schools					
	Prim 2000	Prim 2002	Mid 2000	Mid 2002	High 2000	High 2002
1) Mae Kong Ka	10	14	3	3	2	3
2) Mae Ra Ma L	8	8	3	3	2	3
3) Mae La	20	21	7	8	4	5
4) Umpiem	7	7	2	2	2	2
5) Nu Po	5	7	1	2	1	2
6) Don Yang	2	1	1	1	1	1
7) Tham Hin	3	4	1	1	1	1
	55	62	18	20	13	17

In order to absorb the growing number of students (see Table 3.4), additional schools were established in the last two years.

**Table 3.4. Comparison Number of Students and Teachers inside refugee camps school years 2000/01 and 2002/03**

District	Number of students		Number of teachers	
	2000	2002	2000	2002
1) Mae Kong Ka	3,717	5,654	145	160
2) Mae Ra Ma L	2,633	3,700	107	118
3) Mae La	10,531	11,905	314	364
4) Umpiem	4,180	4,600	145	149
5) Nu Po	2,754	3,347	77	99
6) Don Yang	1,158	1,241	34	46
7) Tham Hin	2,502	3,500	95	149
	24,475	33,947	917	1,085

During the last two years, the number of students has increased 39% while the number of teachers increased by only 18%. The main reasons for the increase in students are:

- The students of the former Maneeloy camp have moved to Tham Hin camp at the end of 2001.
- Since 2000, new students have arrived from Burma
- High birth rate of last years. Of all children that are enrolled in the camps, 38% are enrolled in Kindergarten (KGA & KGB). Compared to two years ago, a high number of these children are new, and were therefore not counted in the previous survey.

### **3.5. School Enrolment**

The Karen education leaders claim that almost all children in refugee camps attended school, and once at school few school children dropped out. This was also confirmed by the 2000 survey.

During this survey we have different reservations to verify the finding from the previous survey report. The following limiting factors were faced during this survey:

- Available population statistics  
The available population data are of such a general nature that they cannot be used to measure how many students are out of the school. The available statistics provided by the KRC are for the age groups: 0-5, 5-12 and 12 and older.
- Lack of adequate school statistics  
The number of students per grade is known. What we do not know is the number of over aged students in the schools. We know that, for various reasons, the primary schools enroll children in the age groups of 5-15.  
Schools keep enrollment statistics. However, when students leave the school, drop outs are not distinguished from those students moving to other schools. That means that even though we measure the number of students in school in June and December, we do not know whether the students really discontinued their education or whether they continued their education in another school.

Despite these limiting factors, we did measure the number of students in school in June 2002 and in December 2002.

*Table 3.5. Comparison, number of students in school June and December 2002*

	Boy	Girl	Total June 2002	Boy	Girl	Total Dec.2002	June- December	%
PRIMARY SCHOOL	7273	7023	14296	7111	6897	14008	-288	-0.02
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL	10305	10202	20507	9974	9961	19935	-572	-0.03
TOTALS	17578	17225	34803	17085	16858	33943	-860	-0.03

From this measurement it appears that relatively more students drop out in secondary schools. As the balance is negative, there is a good change that indeed this students discontinued their education. Would they have been enrolled in other schools in the camps, they would have appeared in the statistics.

When parents were asked about what the main reasons are that students discontinue their education they gave the following answers:

Parents do not consider education important	31 %
Economic reasons (help the family)	30%
Available education not appropriate for students	16%
Students get married	9%
Disciplinary reasons	4%
Become a soldier	1%
No idea	5%
Others	4%

These figures are slightly different from the outcomes of the 2000 Education Survey. New is that parents indicate that lack of interest (in parents and students) is a considerable factor for dropping out. Secondly, the lack of appropriate education is mentioned by 16% of the parents. When requested, parents told the interviewers that the language used in schools is not the mother tongue of students, or there is simply no school available at the level of the student (special education).

In order to be able to draw conclusions concerning the enrollment rate in Karen schools, in the future, there is an urgent need for accurate overall population statistics.

In paragraph 4.4. additional information about students dropping out are given from the perspective of Principals.

### **3.6. Access to education**

#### *School fees versus parental contributions*

In the various camps, school committees request parents to contribute to the costs of education. This contribution is on a voluntary basis. All interviewed education committees indicated that education in the camps is free, and that parental contribution

is not a condition for access. In other words, children of parents who cannot afford to pay the contribution, can go to school. Education Committees therefore prefer to use the term 'parental contribution' rather than 'school fee'.

Practices concerning fees vary from camp to camp, sometimes from school to school. In one camp, parents are requested to pay per child, for the first child 10 Bath, and for the second till the fifth, 5 Bath. In the following overview the practices in the other six camps are shown.

*Table 3.6. Practices concerning parental contribution*

	Comm.1	Comm.2	Comm.3	Comm.4	Comm.5	Comm.6
KG	20	5	10	20	10	40
1 <sup>st</sup> St.	30	10	10	25	10	40
2 <sup>nd</sup> St.	30	20	10	30	10	40
3 <sup>rd</sup> St.	30	30	10	35	10	40
4 <sup>th</sup> St.	30	40	10	40	10	40
5 <sup>th</sup> St.	100	50	20	45	20	50
6 <sup>th</sup> St.	100	60	20	50	20	60
7 <sup>th</sup> St.	100	70	20	55	20	70
8 <sup>th</sup> St.	150	80	30	80	30	80
9 <sup>th</sup> St.	150	90	30	90	30	90
10 St.	150	100	30	100	30	100

In most of the cases school committees take into account the size of the family. Often there are rules that the first 2 children in the family pay, while for the others no contribution is requested.

Sometimes for the first child of a family the whole amount is requested, the others are charged half. In table 4.5 the income of families is matched with the financial contribution that parent are requested to pay.

Five out of seven Education Committees in the camps are indicating that, in the case (I) NGOs would provide the money for the school funds, they would still request a parental contribution. As one committee member expressed the feeling of many: *"It is not about the money. While we are in the refugee camp, we should not forget the good practices that we had in Burma"*. Inside Burma, most parents contributed in kind. All students had to bring a certain amount of bamboo and leaves. Furthermore teacher salaries were provided for in kind, by the parents. The general feeling is that when people are 'spoon fed' by NGOs, important values will be lost.

The parental contributions are used in different ways. The most common allocations are: prizes for sports, certificates, temporary replacement of teachers and special celebrations.

#### *Distance to school and condition of the schools*

In the camps, all children live within 2 kilometers of their school. Most of the schools in the camps are very close to the community. Schools can be considered relatively transparent environments, as communities can oversee what is going on inside the schools.

Although comprehensive information concerning the average distance between home

and school inside Burma is not available, there are indications that the distance between home and school inside Burma is generally bigger.

### *School Facilities*

The majority of school buildings in the camps have wooden posts, bamboo walls and thatch roofs. The life span of such structures on average is little more than 2 years. Construction of school buildings is done on a voluntary basis by parents and the local community. Since consolidation of small refugee camps into bigger camps has taken place over a number of years, and the fact that one refugee camp is located in a national park, the Thai Government has restricted the use of forest material in order to minimize the environmental impact of refugee camps on Thai resources. As a consequence, in order to provide sufficient school buildings and classroom furniture to the camps, bamboo must be purchased from local villages or from far away commercial agencies.

Class-sizes vary from school to school in the refugee camps. While the majority has satisfactory average class sizes, 47% of the teachers, mainly in the lower grades, report classes of over 40 students. New arrivals and a strong growing population have increased the pressure on the already limited space for schools inside the refugee camps.

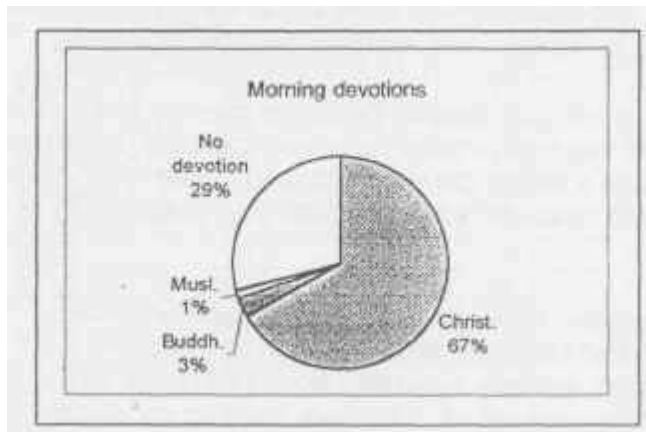
More than half of the teachers (57%) complained about the school building structures having a shortage of space. The teachers also complain about the lack of adequate sound isolation between classrooms. Classes are only separated from each other by bamboo walls, and are not separated in some cases at all. The poor building conditions create extremely high noise levels. In the majority of schools the children in the lower standards have no furniture. Where furniture exists, it is inappropriate for use in the classroom. Heavy or immovable bamboo or wooden furniture creates difficulties for any teacher who tries to introduce more student centered activities.

An increased focus on the suitability of school buildings is required by the NGOs that are supporting school construction in the camps,

### 3.7. Religion in schools

None of the schools is reported to be a religious school, according, to the Education Committees in the camps. Instead of promoting a certain religion, Education Committees in the respective camps refer to the schools as 'refugee schools'. Yet, 70% of the interviewed students indicated that morning devotions are held, according to the religion of the teacher. None of the interviewees considers morning devotions to be a constraint and 49% of the students are explicitly positive about the morning devotions.

Figure 3.3. Morning devotions in the classroom



28% of the teachers replied that there are no religious activities held in their schools. The remaining teachers indicated that religion plays a role in the classroom in the form of devotions, discussions and celebrations.

Parents confirm the same figures. Parents are unanimously positive about this. 20% of the parents responded that in the school where their children go, no special attention

is given to either one of the religions, as the school admits children from all faiths. The practice concerning the way teachers and schools deal with religion in the camp schools is, to a large extent, a continuation of school practices inside Burma.

### 3.8. Gender equality

Gender (in-)equality can manifest itself in education in various ways. Statistics show that in many parts of the world far more boys are enrolled compared to girls. When girls do make it to school, often schools have a hidden curriculum, which tends to encourage boys to achieve and, at the same time, discourages girls to develop their full potential. Sometimes the location of the schools is inappropriate for girls. In other cases the lack of proper sanitary facilities can be an obstacle for girls to come to school.

According to the statistics of the Karen Refugee Committee, the total number of men in the camps is: 51,039 and the total number of women is 48,638<sup>9</sup> (51% respectively 49%). Per area the picture is as follows:

<sup>9</sup> KRC, October 2002

*Table 3.7. Overall population by gender*

Area	Male	%	Female	%
Northern camps	13,723	52%	12,603	48%
Central camps	25,600	51%	24,431	49%
Southern camps	11,716	50%	11,607	50%
Total	51,039	51%	48,638	49%

Concerning access to education, the statistics coming from the Karen refugee camps along the Thai Burma border do not give the impression that there is a big gender divide in the camps. The number of girls enrolled in the various schools is equal to the number of boys. The same is true for the number of boys and girls passing exams (see annex III).

*Table 3.8. Number and % of male and female students enrolled per Standard as per June 2002*

Level	Male	%	Female	%	Total
<b>KGB</b>	4002	51%	3882	49%	7884
<b>KGA</b>	2527	51%	2393	49%	4920
<b>Std.1</b>	2324	50%	2287	50%	4611
<b>Std.2</b>	1829	50%	1811	50%	3640
<b>Std.3</b>	1526	50%	1509	50%	3035
<b>Std.4</b>	1226	50%	1242	50%	2468
<b>Std.5</b>	967	49%	1016	51%	1983
<b>Std.6</b>	700	49%	730	51%	1430
<b>Std.7</b>	729	53%	645	47%	1374
<b>Std.8</b>	498	49%	514	51%	1012
<b>Std.9</b>	458	48%	487	52%	945
<b>Std.10</b>	309	48%	336	52%	645
<b>TOTALS</b>	17095	50%	16852	50%	33947

Gender among the educational staff is fairly equally divided. The main differences are that there are far more female teachers compared to male teachers. More men have a role in the education committees compared to women. But even in the education committees women play a role in a way, many organizations in the Western hemisphere could take as an example (paragraph 4.6 provides more information about the role of the education committees).



Table 3.9. Educational staff & gender

	Male	%	Female	%
Education Committees	66	61%	42	39%
Principals	28	50%	28	50%
Teachers	354	33%	705	67%
Trainers	18	56%	14	44%

Not enough is known about a possible hidden curriculum in Karen schools. Nor has the formal curriculum been subjected to a gender perspective. But from the statistics, experience and observations in the camps, there is not much reason to believe that there are structural issues in education concerning a possible gender gap.

In a mid term evaluation of the Karen Education Project, an external evaluator wrote the following observations in this regard: *"More than half of the teachers are women, several headmasters met were women, the most impressing camp Educational Co-ordinator was a women, and the main liaison person with the Karen Refugee Committee is a women. The evaluator got the strong impression that women not only are respected, but are also in a position where they can influence policies. Among the interviewed students, girls were more outspoken and they tended to speak and understand English better than the male students"*<sup>10</sup>.

Presently a real concern is nonetheless, the number of mothers that have to combine teaching with their role as mother. Teachers with small babies need to be assisted in better ways. From the education committees furthermore it was learned that it is a real burden for schools to find teachers to replace women that take maternity leave, as there is no facility within the current subsidy scheme. The schools have to pay for the replacements from the school funds.

In the near future ZOA plans to organize nurseries at school level, facilitating teachers with small babies.

<sup>10</sup> ECR Report no. 43, John L Vijghen, February 2002

### 3.9. Curriculum, textbooks and teaching aid

The current curriculum in the Karen schools is shown in the following table:

*Table 3.10. Standard curriculum in Karen schools*

	KG	Primary (1-4)	Middle school (5-7)	High School (8-10)
Karen	X	X	X	X
Burmese	X	X	X	X
English	X	X	X	X
Thai	-	-	X (some)	X (some)
Mathematics	X	X	(1)	(1+2)
Mathematics (1)	-	-	X	X (till grade 8)
Mathematics (2)	-	-	-	X (grade 9+10)
Geography	-	X	X	X
Karen Social Science/History	-	X	X	X
Arts	-	X	-	-
Vocational oriented subjects	-	-	X	X
Living values	-	X (some)	X (some)	X (some)
Religious subjects (Buddha/Koran/Bible)	-		X (some)	X (some)
Hygiene	-	X	-	-
Environmental subject	-	-	X	X
Physical education		X (few)	X (few)	X (few)

Following the outcomes from the previous education surveys, and in order to make the curriculum more balanced in terms of developing a wider range of skills, new subjects have been introduced in recent years. Life skills and creative skills were introduced in the form of Hygiene, Arts and Living Values (developed by UNICEF) at primary level, and Vocational Oriented subjects at Middle and High school level.

This meant an improvement compared to the curriculum that was taken from Burma and redrafted in 1990. The curriculum at that time provided students little in terms of skills or knowledge that helped them to manage better in daily life. As many books were too difficult to understand, rote learning was widely practiced.

The new curriculum and the new teaching method put a bigger emphasis on learning for understanding. In practice this means as mentioned that new subjects are added to the curriculum and more activities are formulated in the textbooks. The shift to a more student centered method obviously is not made overnight. It is affecting practically everything in education, from teacher training and textbooks, to the way school buildings are designed. This process is on going, and will continue in the years to come.

#### *Languages in the curriculum*

At KG and primary level three languages are offered. More than half of the time is spent on learning languages. Currently, the Royal Thai Ministry of Interior is requesting schools to introduce Thai language in the curriculum, which may increase the number of

languages to four at KG and primary level. This is overkill, for all levels, and a solution must be found. The curriculum at KG with three languages is a field of concern and should be reconsidered by the KED.

Burmese language has been promoted since 2000, and efforts have been made to improve the textbooks presently available.

#### *Language of instruction*

in KG, Primary and Middle school, the language of instruction is Karen (Sgaw). This language is spoken by the vast majority of the population (see chapter 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). Pwo Karen language is offered in some schools in the form of summer courses. There are two kinds of Pwo Karen that are very different from each other.

The language of instruction in secondary school is English. In other parts of this survey it will become clear that it is extremely difficult for teachers and students to maintain the level of education when English is the medium. More emphasis on the use of the Karen and Burmese language is required.

Teachers and principals indicate that the number of subjects and the language of instruction in secondary schools are a major obstacle for learning and teaching.

Compared to 2000, many more teachers have been trained in making teaching aid materials to support teaching in the schools. The teachers as well as the Karen trainers are requesting NGOs to continue helping them develop low-cost materials such as simple charts, diagrams, posters, maps, games, storybooks, picture books, etc.

Presently there is still a shortage of textbooks in the camps. The number of students is increasing every year, and the life cycle of textbooks is short. At this moment, ZOA is looking for ways to solve the shortage of textbooks in the camps.

## IV Karen Education, the players

In this chapter more information is provided concerning the most important stakeholders in education: respectively the Students, Parents, Teachers, Principals, Trainers and Education Committees. Some themes are dealt with in every paragraph such as: information about the sample, training, motivation, language abilities, priorities, and constraints in the work and so on. Other topics were chosen that were found to be relevant to that particular stakeholder, for example the payment of school fees in the parents section, the number of periods working in the teachers section and about responsibilities in the paragraph on the Education Committees.

### 4.1. Students

As mentioned in the introduction to this survey, special attention is given to the perspective of students. In previous surveys, students were not given the opportunity to speak out.

#### *About the sample*

A total number of 175 students were interviewed. The average age of the sampled students is 17.8 years old. 49% of the sample is male and 51% female, 85% are students in secondary schools, while 15% are still in middle schools. Secondary school students were selected because it was anticipated that these students could best articulate their opinion concerning the education in the camps.

#### *Number of years in the camp*

78% of the students were born inside Burma, 22% were born in Thailand. Almost half of the students (48%) have stayed in the camp between 4-6 years.

#### *Motivation to come to school*

Students in the camp are aware that they need education to prepare themselves for the future. When asked why students go to school, 97% answered that they go in order to prepare for the labor market.

It is important, therefore, that the curriculum and the teaching in the camps relate to the students' own environment.

#### *Future plans:*

The ambitions of students are clearly influenced by the opportunities that are a reality inside the camps. Most of the students (43%) would like to become a health worker, followed at a distance by students who would like to become a teacher.

One explanation for this could be that health workers receive significantly higher payments, received by health workers in the camps. None of the students answered they would like to be involved in farming or agriculture. There might be logical explanations for this lack of interest, but, given the reality inside Burma (see paragraph 2.4) this point should be of concern to all parents, teachers and the Karen leadership.

Figure 4.1. Number of years living in the camp

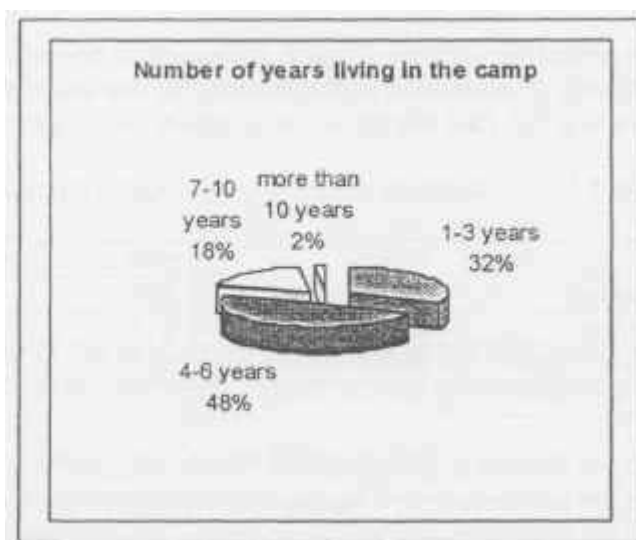
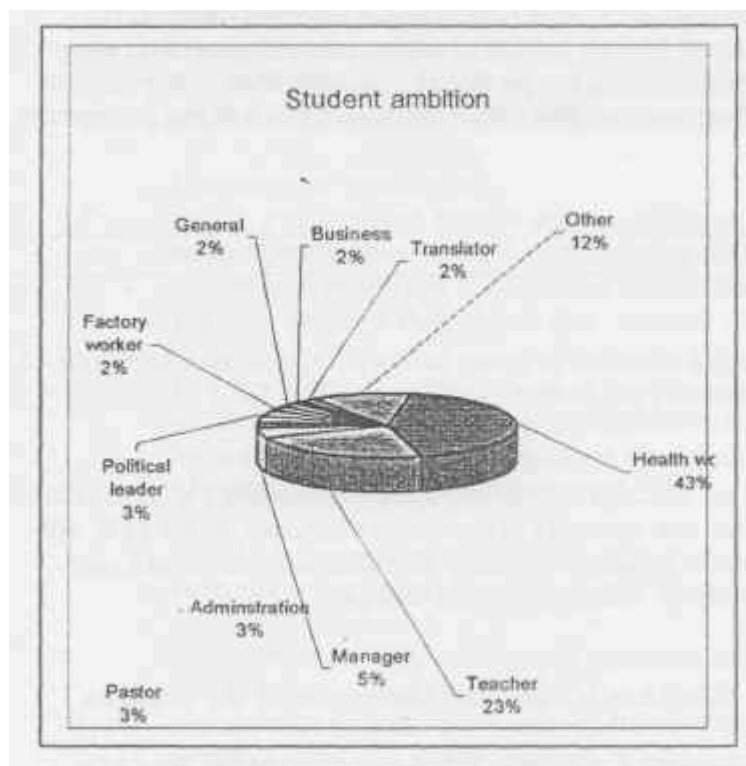


Figure 4.2. Students' Ambitions



### Level of Education

Ninety percent of the students would like to continue their education after they finish grade 10. The institutions for further studies existing in the camps are mentioned by 83% of the students. The FSP-school in Mae La is most popular; 31 % of the students indicated they would like to get an opportunity to study at the FSP. Eighty five percent of the students are confident they can reach the level of their choice. The other students are not sure whether they will pass the exam, or whether their economic situation will allow them to continue education after grade 10.

### Language

The official language of instruction for primary and middle school is (Sgaw) Karen. The Karen leadership has chosen English as the language of instruction in secondary schools. From the survey it became clear that the command of English language among the sampled population is a concern (see tables 4.1 and 4.4, figures 4.10-4.13). The majority of the students indicated that they do

have problems with the English language. It doesn't take much to imagine the consequences of this for the quality of education in the camps, for the students and also for the Karen community as a whole. There is a risk that the choice of English might eventually marginalise the Karen people.

Table 4.1. Students command of English language

	Easily	with difficulty	not at all
Speaking	15%	84%	1%
Reading	8%	91%	1%
Writing	2%	93%	5%

Equity is difficult to guarantee in Karen schools. As exams are in English, it seems that first and foremost, students are tested on language ability, favoring those with strong language skills. There is an urgent need for the Karen leadership to do an in depth inquiry into this language issue.

### Obstacles for learning

Fifty four percent of the students indicate that they experience serious problems in their education. The following problems were mentioned most frequently by these students:

1. Classrooms are noisy and crowded
2. Level of teaching is not adequate (for various reasons)
3. Subjects are taught in English
4. Students miss the support of their parents

### Peace in Burma

Students were asked what they would do if there would be peace in Burma tomorrow. An overwhelming majority (90%) anticipate they will indeed return to Burma. Only 8 % of the sampled students will try to find an opportunity to stay in Thailand, and the remaining 2% would like to find opportunities in third countries.

### Students' two most popular subjects

Students were requested to give an indication of their two most favorite subjects. English was found to be by far the most popular subject. 71 % of the students chose the following most popular subjects:

- English and Math's 29.1 %
- English and Karen 14.3%
- English and Science 11.4%
- English and Burmese 9.1 %
- English and History 6.9 %

### Homework

69% of the students get support when doing their homework. In 18% of the cases students get helped by somebody within their own family, either parents, brother or sister.

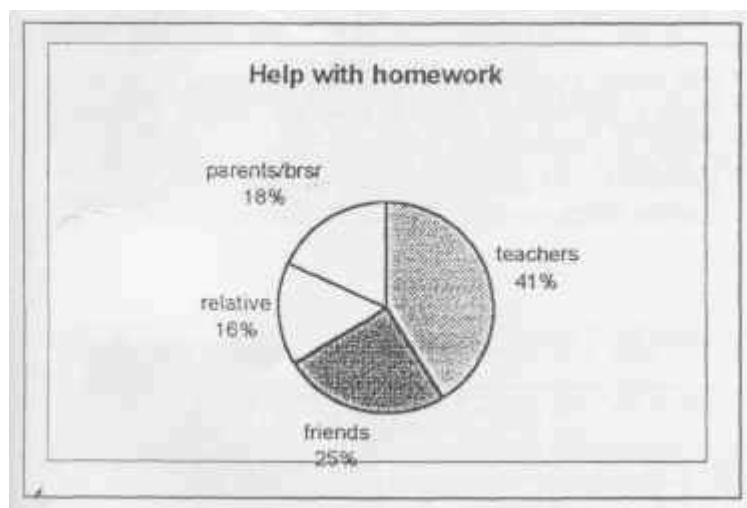


Figure 4.3. Support with homework

66% of the students stay with their parents, while 34% of the interviewees stayed with relatives, friends or in dormitories!

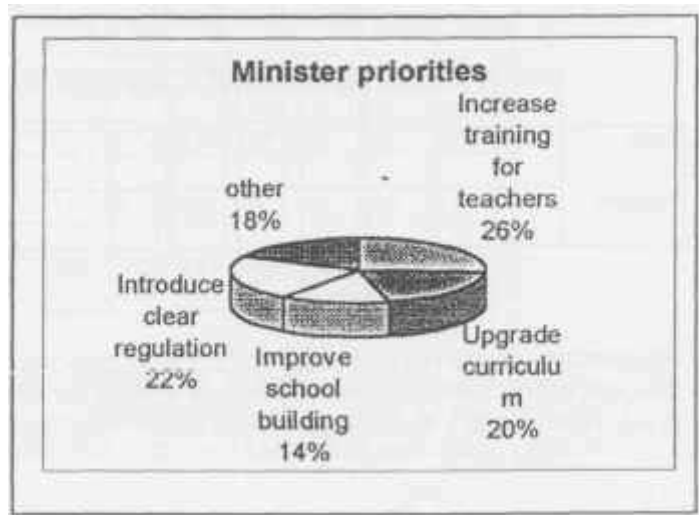
### Minister of education:

All students were given the opportunity to sit on the chair of the Minister of Education when requested: 'Suppose you are the Minister of Education: what would be the first thing in your school that you would change?'

Most of the students would like to see the level of teachers improved. The students seem to realize, that the level of their education, directly relates to the quality of the teachers in the camps. Increased teacher training in this regard would be necessary according to the students.

Interestingly, students indicate that they would like to see the rules and regulations clarified and respected by students and teachers.

Figure 4.4. On the Minister chair



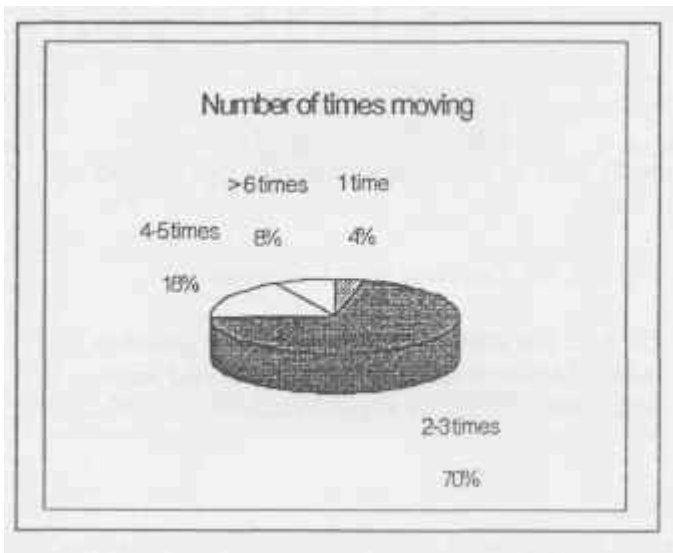
## 4.2. Parents

### About the sample

A total of 426 parents were interviewed. The average age of the sampled parents is 41.6 years old (youngest 14, eldest 75) 54% of the parents we spoke to were male, 46% female. Per family, one adult was interviewed.

In the second chapter some information was provided about the educational background and economic situation of the parents. In this paragraph more details concerning parents are given, with special attention for the relation between parents and the schools.

Figure 4.5. Number of times moving before coming to the camps



With 26% of the parents moving more than 4 times, before coming to the refugee camp, the Karen population has been highly mobile. This has its consequences for the education of children. When principals and teachers are asked why students drop out, moving location is mentioned as one of the reasons why.

For many students this means that, most likely they have experienced gaps in their education. There are various reasons why parents move. Ninety seven percent of the population has moved to the camps because of SPDC activities in their areas

Most of the parents stayed in the camp between 4 and 6 years. This means a stable start to education for those students who are now in KG and first grade. The majority of the other students had to deal with one or more transitions. As the standards in education might be slightly different from school to school, it might be very tough for students to move from one school to the other.

Table 4.2. Number of years living in the camps

1-3 years	105	24%
4-6 years	182	43%
7-9 years	111	26%
> 9 years	28	7%

Table 4.3. Parents, Education Level & gender

	KG	St.1	St.2	St.3	St.4	St.5	St.6	St.7	St.8	St.9	St.10	Post 10	College	None	monastery	Total
Male	11	20	19	16	39	15	7	21	12	10	16		1	27	16	230
Female	6	17	16	12	25	14	8	17	12	9	11	1		48		196
	17	37	35	28	64	29	15	38	24	19	27	1	1	75	16	426

Six percent of the fathers received no education at all, compared to 11% of the mothers. Twenty five percent of the fathers went to primary school for one or more years out of which only 3% finished primary level. For mothers these figures are lower. Eighteen percent were enrolled in primary school whereas only

6 % finished primary school. Those parents who made it to secondary level, found an environment that was more gender balanced. In some grades in secondary level there were relatively more girls. At present, this practice in the camp schools is the same, as more girls continue their education after grade 4 (see table 3.8). Consequently, boys are more likely to drop out after primary school.

*Table 4.4. Literacy Levels of Parents*

<b>SPEAK</b>	<b>SGAW KAREN</b>	<b>PWO KAREN</b>	<b>BURMESE</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>THAI</b>
Easily	84 %	29 %	53 %	1 %	2 %
With difficulty	8 %	12 %	31 %	27 %	11 %
Not at all	8 %	58 %	16 %	72 %	87 %
<b>READ</b>					
Easily	65 %	7 %	48 %	2 %	0 %
With difficulty	14 %	8 %	27 %	28 %	4 %
Not at all	21 %	85 %	25 %	70 %	96 %
<b>WRITE</b>					
Easily	64 %	6 %	47 %	1 %	0 %
With difficulty	14 %	7 %	28 %	28 %	3 %
Not at all	22 %	87 %	25 %	71 %	97 %

According to table 4.4. most parents do have a good command of Sgaw Karen. Pwo Karen is problematic. Compared to Pwo Karen, significantly more parents are familiar with Burmese. Only very few parents are able to speak, read and write English. The latter is one of the reasons that parents find it difficult to help their children with their homework.

*Table 4.5. Monthly income of parents & parental contribution for education*

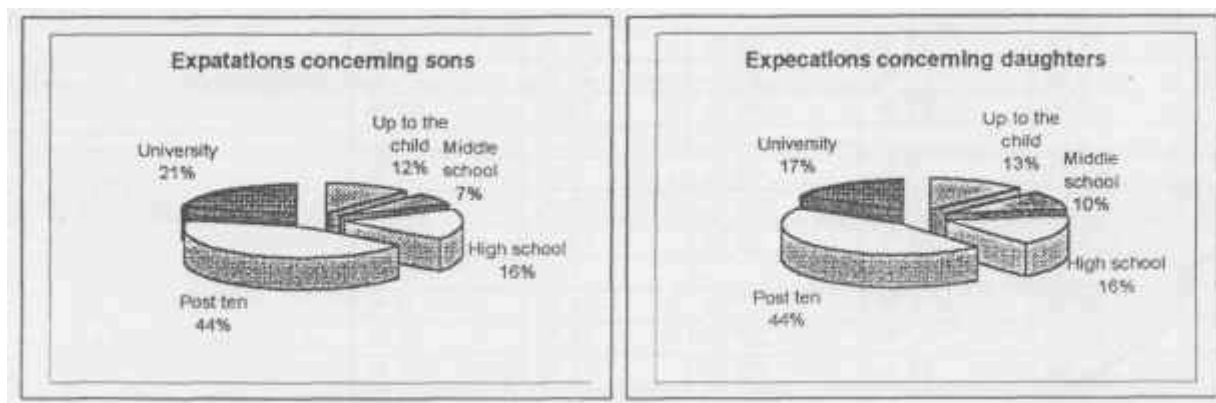
	MONTHLY INCOME (In Thai Bath)													
ANNUAL FEE (Thai Bath)	0	20	30	40	50	100	150	175	250	400	750	1250	1750	Total
	9	3							3	2	1	1	1	20
10	15	2	2		4	3		1	6	8			2	43
15	2	5	2		1				2	3	1			16
20	11	1	3		4	4	2		2	3	2			32
30	7	2	2	1	1	1		2	5		3	2		26
35	2	3			1	2	1		1	2				12
40	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	6	3	4	1		29
50	10		2	2	5	6	3	1	2	5	3	4	1	44
80	4	3	1		3	2		1	3	3	2			22
100	5	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	2	6			20
120	3		2		2		1				2	1		11
150	5	1	1		3	1	1	1	3	2	6			24
170	4													4
200	2	1	1		2				1	4			2	13
1800	2								1					3
	84	25	18	6	29	21	9	9	36	37	30	9	6	319

Seventy five percent of the parents are making parental contributions to their children's education. The table above raises a lot of questions and concerns. According to the table, 39% of the parents contribute either their entire income, or more than their actual income. Many refugees raise pigs or



chicken, or do weaving/sewing, which offers irregular income. Once a year parents sell their animals or products, and get some money from that. For the parents who make contributions, 95% pay with money, while the remaining parents pay in kind, or give labor for construction. The area of parental contributions should be a concern for the Karen Education Department. A further inquiry regarding existing practices and the development of a policy for schools on this issue is required. The issue of parental contributions is related to the access to education, and should therefore receive a high priority.

Figure 4.6. Parents Expectations concerning their children's education



Parent expectations concerning their children's education remain high. The expectations towards sons and daughters are almost identical. These findings are consistent with the education survey done in 2000.

#### Satisfaction with their children's education & involvement in schools

The majority (87%) of the parents is satisfied with the education provided for their children. 69% think their children will be able to obtain the level to which they aspire.

Eighty five percent of the parents told the interviewers that they are involved in school activities.

Table 4.6. Parents' relation with schools

	%
Help repairing school	43 %
Attending school committee meetings	19%
Help children with their homework	14%
Visit school regularly (inc. teacher)	10%
Register their children	9%
Help with special activities/celebrations	5%

#### Parental relation with schools

Most of the parents help out when the schools need to be renovated or constructed. 14% of the parents are helping the children with their homework. Most of the parents feel they are not able to help their children with their home work, because of their own educational background, here is also the language problem; textbooks for some grades are in English, which parents are unable to read.

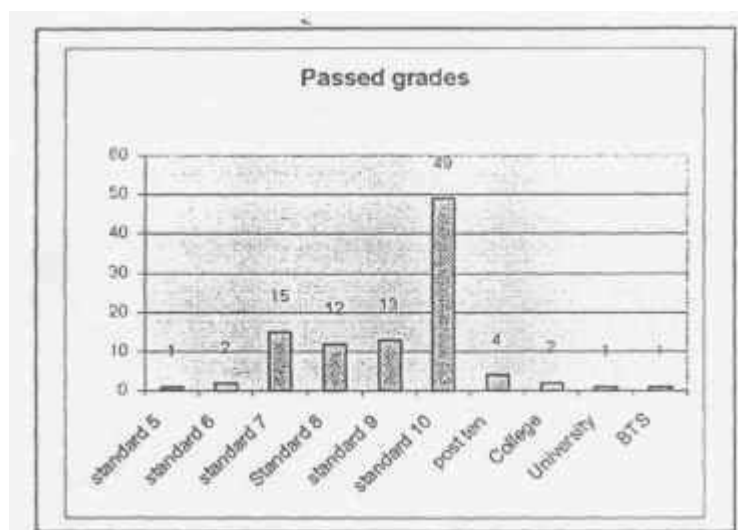
The group of parents that is not involved in their children's education in any particular way gave the following reasons for not being involved: some parents said they do not have time to be involved. Others cannot be involved in school activities because their health does not allow them to. Some parents are not involved simply because they have never been requested to by the teachers. Again others do not feel confident to be involved because of their own lack of education.

### 4.3. Teachers

#### About the sample

A total of 236 teachers was interviewed, which is about 25% of all teachers. The average age of the sampled teachers is 36.3 years old (youngest 18, eldest 81) 45% of the sample is male, 55% female.

Figure 4.7. Educational background



All the teachers that were interviewed were born in Burma. Most of the teachers (57%) passed grade 10. 43% did not finish secondary education.

41 % of the sampled teachers received some form of teacher training. In table 4.14 an overview is given of the institutions that provided the training.

Not surprisingly, 70% of the teachers stated they feel they do not have sufficient skills and knowledge for teaching. This group requests more training - specifically training about the new teaching method. It is hard for the teachers, in the given situation, to make the ideas concerning the student centered

approach practical. (Note: In the 2000 Education Survey 93% of the teachers thought their teaching skills were insufficient. The percentage of teachers indicating they lack sufficient skills has decreased significantly, but a continued focus on teacher training is necessary).

Table 4.7. Institutions that provided teacher training for teachers before arriving in the camp

Institute	Frequency
KNU	61
Personal development/principal/other teachers	15
Vocational Training Institute Burma	11
Teacher Training Institute Burma	4

The content of the training and secondly, the time spent on training varies. The majority of the teachers received training by the Karen National Union (KNU). The KNU used to organize summer courses for teachers inside Burma. Only 4 teachers went to a Teacher Training College inside Burma.

*In 1990 the Karen Teacher Training College (KTTC) was set up. The 2-year course provided classes in general teaching skills and methodology, especially in English, Mathematics, Geography, Science and History. In addition the KED has run 1-month summer courses based on a course book that was designed by the KTTC in 1989. Although the courses have been successful in teaching classroom management, there was no practical element included<sup>11</sup>. This means an emphasis on the theory of education, without giving students the opportunity to apply that theory.*

Today, in three of the 7 camps Consortium (an American NGO) runs a Teacher Preparation Course which is a pre-service training.

<sup>11</sup> Education Survey 2000, Maat & Taloung

196 teachers (83%) indicated they received teacher training inside the refugee camps.

*Table 4.15. Teacher training received in the refugee camps*

Organization	Frequency
ZOA Refugee Care Consortium	131
ABWAid	44
Other (personal development/principalAeachers)	16
	5

*Table 4.8. Content of training received in the refugee camps*

Content	Frequency
Subject training	148
Teaching skill/teaching method	30
Classroom management	14
Director training	4

*Table 4.9. What teachers learned from the training provided in the camps*

Learning outcomes	Frequency
New teaching method (student centered)	96
Subject matter	63
Lesson planning/teaching skills	28
How to prepare tests	7
Do not know	2

*Table 4.10. What teachers identify as additional training needs*

Area for additional training	Frequency
Subject training (methodology)	193/81%
Teaching skills	19/8%
Report and proposal writing	4/2%
Vocational training (for vocational oriented subjects)	2/1%
No need for additional training	18/8%

For more information on other support offered to teachers and principals in the Karen refugee camps, please refer to Annex II.

#### *Teaching experience and number of periods of teaching*

The majority of the sampled teachers (75%) have more than 5 years teaching experience. Nevertheless it is this group of relatively experienced teachers that overwhelmingly requests more training. Therefore the new and inexperienced teachers will certainly feel the need for more training;

Even though teachers have experience, most teachers do not feel confident to use the new teaching method, which puts an emphasis on a balanced use of teacher and student centered methods.

The number of periods that are taught by the teachers varies from teacher to teacher.

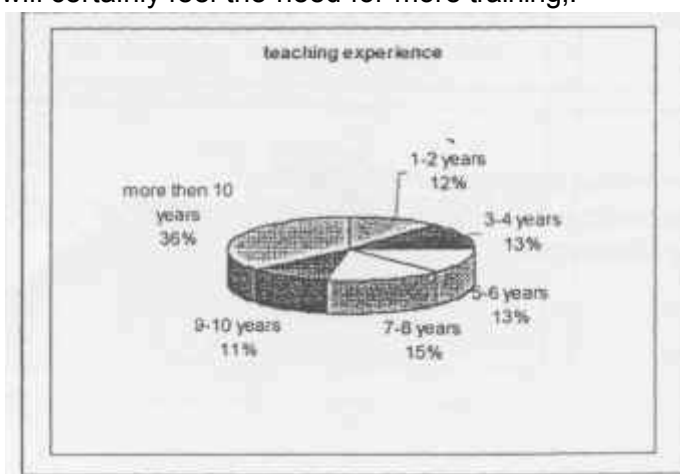


Figure 4.8. Number of years teaching experience

Table 4.11 Number of periods taught

Periods	%
10-15 periods	5%
16-20 periods	28%
21-24 periods	18%
more then 25 periods	36%
new teacher (not yet known)	13%

Most teachers (95%) teach more than 15 periods per week. Yet the difference among the teachers is quite big. Especially in the light of the fact that all teachers get rewarded in the same way.

The workload in general is high. Apart from the number of periods involved in teaching, teachers need time to prepare their lessons and teaching aid's.

#### Other responsibilities

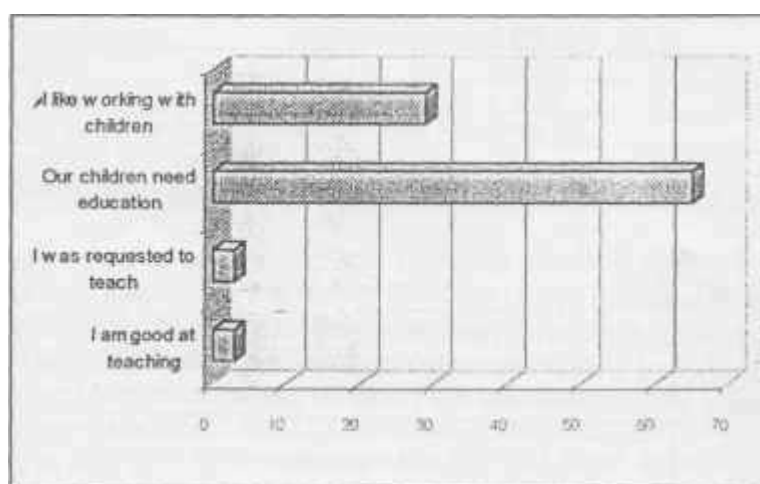
84% of the teachers do not have other responsibilities apart from teaching. With the number of periods taught, and the high number of female teachers, who combine teaching with the role of mother, this is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, this figure means that 16% do have other commitments. Most of these teachers are involved in social work, religious activities or in activities that provide extra income for their family such as; sewing, knitting, selling handicrafts & agriculture.

85% of the teachers have children. Given the fact that 55% of the sampled population is female, we can conclude that almost half (47%) are combining teaching with being a mother.

#### Motivation to become a teacher

The majority of the teachers are intrinsically motivated to be teacher. This is consistent with the outcomes of the 2000 Education survey.

Figure 4.9. Motivation of teachers



The main drive (65%) for teachers is that they see the need for the Karen children to be educated.

None of the teachers mentioned they had become teachers because of the subsidy teachers receive.

Eighty nine percent are satisfied with the job, which matches the high level of motivation and commitment.

#### Number of children in the classroom

The teacher student ratio in the Karen camps is high. The following table shows the number of children per classroom.

**Table 4.12. Number of children per classroom**

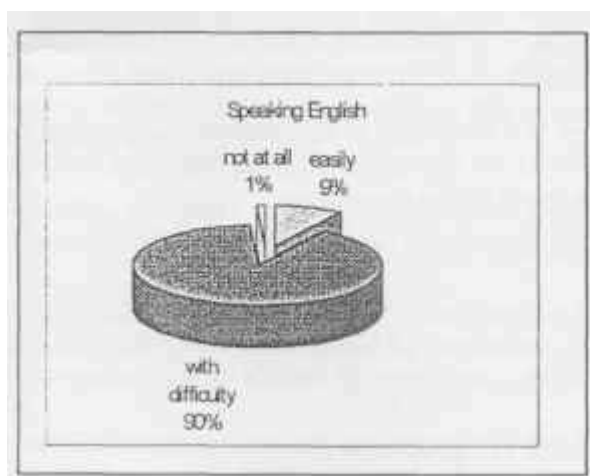
26-30 students	18 %
31-35 students	25 %
36-40 students	11 %
41-45 students	18 %
46-50 students	12 %
> 50 students	17 %

Some teachers could not answer the question as to how many students they have in the classroom. These teachers are subject teachers and change groups every period. In some schools there are class teachers that teach only one group.

From our observations in the camps we know that in many classrooms over 50 children can be counted. According to the survey, almost half of the teachers (47%) teach in classrooms with 41 children or more. Student-teacher ratios this high will without doubts have an effect on the quality of education. Given the lack of training, and the school buildings that are not a particular conducive environment for teaching, this teacher student ratio is a real burden for teachers. Even for very experienced and well-trained teachers, such groups would be too much of a challenge. Teachers in the camps deserve all the support they can get from the Karen leadership as well as from the international community.

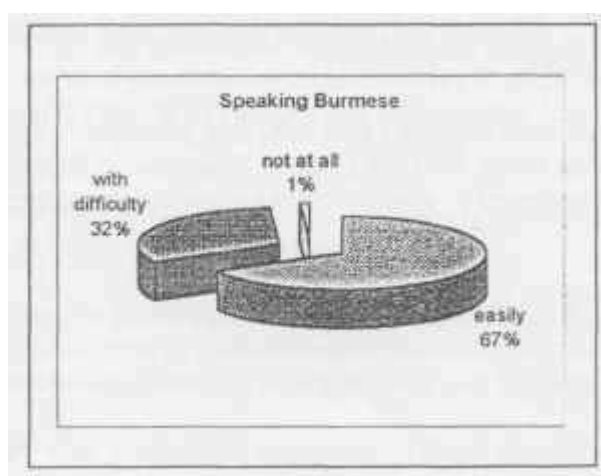
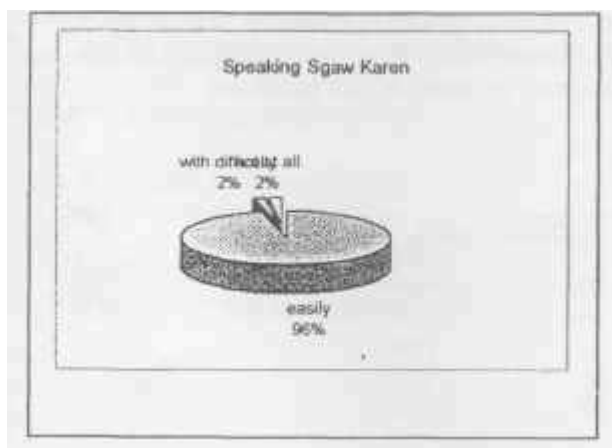
### Teachers & Language

Teachers were asked about their command of the different languages that are used on the Thai-Burma border. The results are shown in the four figures below.



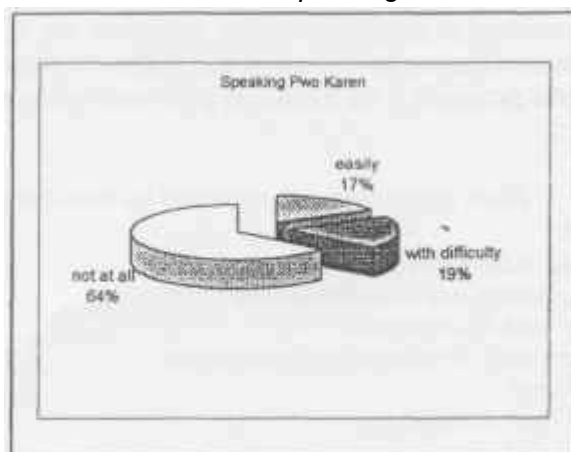
**Figures 4.10. English speaking skill**

**4.11. Sgaw Karen Speaking Skill**



**4.12. Burmese speaking skill**

**4.13. Pwo Karen speaking skill**



The languages spoken by most teachers are Burmese and Sgaw Karen. Most teachers do experience difficulties in speaking English and Pwo Karen. As for Pwo Karen, 64% of the teachers do not speak Pwo Karen at all. Since English is the language of instruction in high school, in particular, teachers in secondary schools will experience great difficulties in teaching.

In the tables on this page, more information is provided on the ability of teachers to write and read the different languages.

**Table 4.13. Teachers' ability to read languages**

Reading Skills	Sgaw Karen	Pwo Karen	Burmese	English	Thai
Read easily	227 (96%)	10 (4%)	172 (73%)	53 (23%)	0
Read with difficulty	5 (2%)	18 (8%)	63 (27%)	182 (77%)	21 (9%)
Read nothing	4 (2%)	205 (88%)	1 (-%)	1 (-%)	215 (91%)

**Table 4.14. Teachers' ability to write languages**

Writing Skills	Sgaw Karen	Pwo Karen	Burmese	English	Thai
Write easily	225 (95%)	7 (3%)	164 (70%)	38 (16%)	1 (-%)
Write with difficulty	7 (3%)	14 (6%)	72 (30%)	196 (83%)	17 (7%)
Write nothing	4 (2%)	215 (91%)	0	2 (1%)	218 (93%)

A large number of teachers have difficulties reading and writing English. The percentage of teachers that is unable to read or write Pwo Karen is very high as well. The current command of the English language of teachers (and students) will have a significant impact on the quality of education in the Karen schools. Forty percent of the teachers report that some students do not understand any English. The main suggestion of teachers to resolve the language problems is that textbooks ought to be printed in two languages (Karen and English).

Very few teachers reported that they use primarily English as the language of instruction. In most schools, Karen is used along with the English language in Standard 8-10. Of the standard 8-10 teachers that were among the sampled population, the following languages are used in the classroom:

<input type="checkbox"/> Karen	29	(36%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Karen/English	32	(40%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Karen/Burmese	6	(8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> English	6	(8%)
<input type="checkbox"/> Burmese	7	(8%)

#### *Main problems experienced*

Like any teacher in the world, teachers in the refugee camps are confronted with different problems. 65% of the teachers in the camps indicated they face problems in their daily work as teachers. Working in the specific context of a refugee camp, teachers are confronted with specific problems. Teachers were asked to mention the main problems they have to deal with in their work. They were allowed to mention more than one problem. The following problems were mentioned by most of the teachers

**Table 4.15. Main problems experienced by teachers**

Problem	Quantity	% of sample
1 Too many students in the classroom	118	50%
2 School buildings are not appropriate	102	43%
3 Students' lack of motivation	51	22%
4 Guidelines and curriculum not appropriate	43	18%
5 Low payment	36	15%
6 Need for more training	27	11%

Given the refugee context, some of the problems indicated by the teachers are difficult to influence. It is hard, for instance, to find more space for schools and construct more classrooms. On the other hand, more needs to be done (by all concerned stakeholders), to see how school buildings can be improved with the space that is currently available.

### *Evaluation*

Karen schools have their final exams in February/March. The Karen Education Department tried to set standard exams, but until now they have been unable to achieve standardization of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> standard exams. The teachers, in many cases assisted by the teacher trainers residing in the camps, usually set the final exams. After the exams, the teachers hold a meeting to discuss the results. If students have failed only marginally they are granted a pass. In most of the schools the results of the exams are put in writing in order to inform the parents about the students achievements. The practice in most schools is that there will be two or three tests in the final year that count for the final exam, with an emphasis on the last test. Most marks can be earned at the final test, which creates a situation of 'swim or sink' at the end. In practice this system could encourage (rote) learning and teaching for the final test.

### *Standards for evaluation*

Ninety one percent of the teachers prepare their own tests. The lack of standards is a concern. As a consequence, students are evaluated in different ways, depending on the insight of the respective teacher. Some students will be tested for their ability to reproduce factual knowledge, others for understanding, again others for their ability to understand the questions, which in secondary schools, are formulated in English. In many cases, it is not clear what kind of student qualities exams are measuring. In some of the camps, the preparation of exams is subjected to a sense of competition between schools. In extreme cases, teachers inform the students beforehand on what the questions in the exam will be. The leadership of the Karen acknowledges this problem and intends to introduce a border wide Board exam for standard 4 in 2003.

During 2002 progress reports from Thai schools were translated into Karen. These reports measure student achievements and will be introduced in the schools in the coming years.

In order to get more information on the standard of the Karen education in general, in 2003 a random sample of grade 10 students will be requested to sit for exams from Burma and Thailand. These exams will be translated into Karen. Exams used will be concerning Science, Mathematics and English.

In Annex III the exam results regarding the academic year 2001-2002 are given. 17% of the schools have a success rate below 60%. An equal number of boys and girls pass (and fail) the exam.

### *School facilities*

135 of the 236 interviewed teachers (57%) rate the current school buildings not appropriate for teaching.

Their main comments are:

- ☐ Lack of suitable furniture
- ☐ Location of schools not suitable
- ☐ Noise levels in schools too high
- ☐ Teacher-student ratio is too high
- ☐ Size of classrooms is not appropriate

#### 4.4. Principals

##### About the sample

All principals working in the Karen camps were interviewed. The youngest principal is 24 years old, the eldest 66. The gender balance is even with 28 principals being female and 28 principals being male.

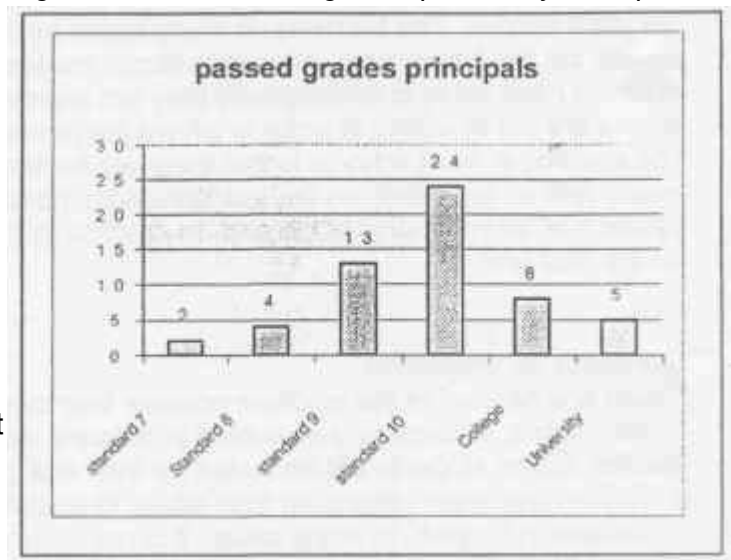
##### Educational background

The educational background of principals does not differ much from that of teachers. Compared to teachers, relatively more principals went to college and university.

Eighty eight percent of the principals feel they do not have enough skills and knowledge to perform. Nevertheless, a very high percentage (91%) feels satisfied with their job.

Most principals (64%) would like to receive additional training in school management. Eighty eight percent would like to learn more about student centered methods, and how to apply this concept in the Karen schools.

Figure 4.14. Number of grades passed by Principals



Fifty four principals received training during the last year. (2000-2001). That training was facilitated by:

- ☐ Consortium 30
- ☐ ZOA 17
- ☐ ABWAid 7

Table 4.16. What Principals learned of the training in 2000-2001

Learning outcomes	Frequency
School management skills	17
More knowledge about subjects taught in schools	28
Teaching skills	6
Living Values	3

##### Work experience

9 out of 56 principals (16%) have just picked up the job last year, but the majority has over 5 years working experience as headmaster. Principals are either assigned by the education committee, selected by the school (outgoing principal) or show their own ambition.

The work experience of the current group of principals is as follows:

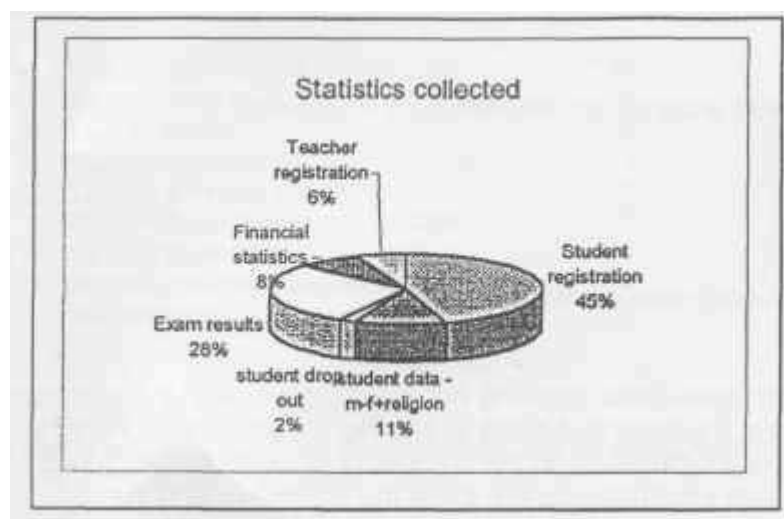
- ☐ 1-3 years 15 principals
- ☐ 5-8 years 18 principals
- ☐ 9-16 years 17 principals
- ☐ > 16 years 6 principals



### Collecting Statistics

An important task of the Principal is the collection of school statistics.

Figure 4.15. Statistics collected by Principals



It is good that principals take the initiative to collect statistics, if the statistics were more specific, they could be used as a basis for monitoring, planning & policy making. In the future there will be a need for more indicators that measure:

- Accessibility (access rate, net & gross enrolment rate, gender variance, urban & rural variance, geographical variance),
- Effectiveness (pass rate, drop-out rate, employment rate, level of demand (difference between enrolment rate and access rate) and
- Efficiency (cost of instruction per successful student, repetition rate).

Principals must be supported and instructed in this regard by the KED.

When requested if principals have other activities, 30% of the headmasters confirmed they did have other jobs (most of the principals are involved in social work, religious activities and committee work). At the same time, 95% were teaching last year. Most of the principals were teaching more than 17 periods, which means quite a workload in combination with managing a school.

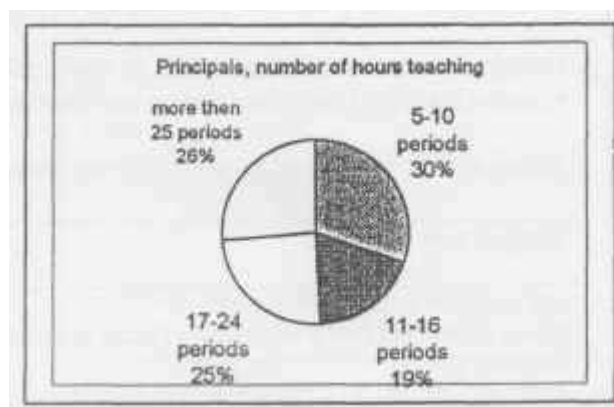


Figure 4.16. Teaching periods Principals

### Drop outs

Principals were requested whether students dropped out of their school during the last academic year. The Headmasters gave the following (very general) figures:

Table 4.17. Number of students that dropped out during the 2001-2002 academic year, according to Principal

Number of students	Frequency	Estimated average	, Total estimated drop outs
No students dropped out	7	0	0
1-10 students	22 principals	7	154
11 - 20 students	10 principals	17	170
More than 25	17	30	510
Total	56	54	834

In an attempt to extrapolate the numbers given by Headmasters, an estimated 834 students dropped out last year. That would be an estimated 2% of all students, but 6% of all primary school students, or 11 % of all secondary school students. As very detailed overall population statistics were not available so far, it is not possible to see how many children are supposed to be in certain grades. Secondly, as a consequence of war, age groups do not match with particular grades. This makes it difficult to get an understanding of the students that are enrolled in school now.

When asked for the main reasons that students dropped out, headmasters answered:

- ☐ Students move to another location
- ☐ Students get married
- ☐ Students start working
- ☐ Students are not interested in learning
- ☐ Level of teaching is not appropriate (no special education available)
- ☐ Sickness

Only 2% of the principals are keeping records on students dropping out, which means that the information given by the principals was of a general nature. Students that move to another location do not necessarily drop out of school. In order to get more accurate information on the number of students dropping out, teachers and principals need to keep records on this phenomenon. From the interviews with the Education Committees, it became clear that these committees consider drop outs a responsibility of the school. It would be good if all principals would get instructed by the KED to keep statistics on students dropping out. As a preventive measure, the KED has to establish clearer procedures in their schools concerning students that discontinue their education.

Headmasters were asked what, in their opinion, needs to be done to improve the retention rates in the Karen schools. Their responses are shown in the table below:

*Table 4.18. Principals' suggestions to improve retention rates in schools*

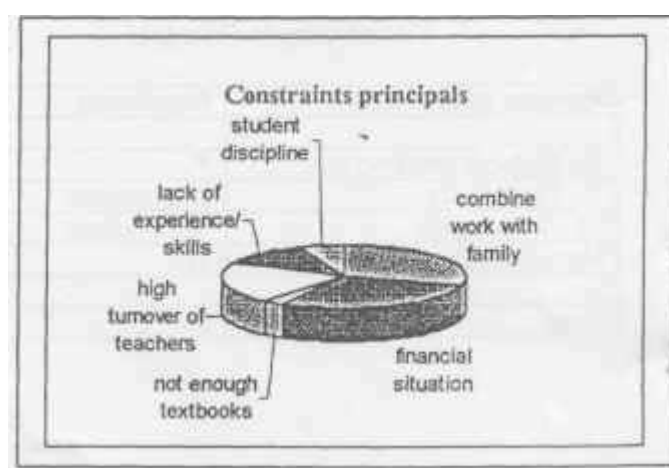
Suggestion	Number of principals	%
Increase parental involvement	19	34%
Make education more interesting (extra curricular activities, friendly teachers, better and more textbooks)	12	22%
Address root causes (for economic hardship - create jobs for parents) (offer alternative for drugs/video houses)	8	14%
Increased co-operation between education committees, schools & parents	6	11%
Convince students about the value of education	4	7%
Create more opportunities for further studies, this will motivate students	4	7%
Others (standardize curriculum-1, no idea-2)	3	5%

*Figure 4.17 Constraints experienced by principals*

Of all principals, 59% (33 principals) indicated they face problems in doing their daily work. Some headmasters referred to their personal situation, some to their professional role.

Thirty percent of the principals face problems with combining the work as principal with caring for the family. In Karen culture, it is both men and women that do care for the family.

Because of the financial situation, both parents need to work, which makes it difficult to combine 'the work with the kitchen' as one headmaster stated.



Principals are divided when asked for their opinion about the present school buildings. Fifty percent of the principals consider the existing school buildings to be appropriate, while the other half do not.

When requested what kind of problems Principals face in the schools, the following answers were given:

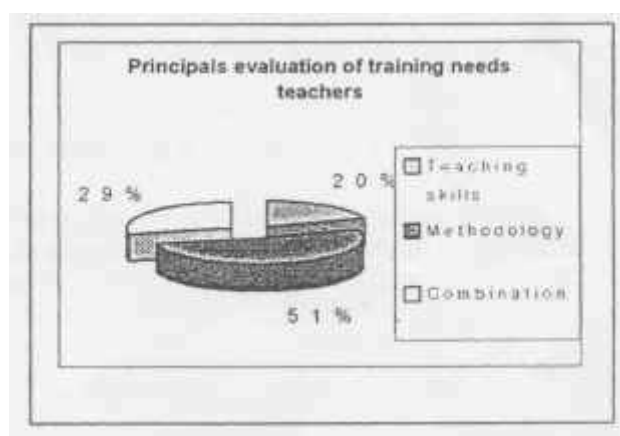
<input type="checkbox"/> Not enough training for principal	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Motivation is low <sup>12</sup>	8
<input type="checkbox"/> Low payment	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher qualification/commitment	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of parental involvement	2
<input type="checkbox"/> School buildings not appropriate	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of materials	2
<input type="checkbox"/> Student-teacher ratio not appropriate	2
<input type="checkbox"/> No problems	3

### *Training needs for teachers*

Many principals are concerned about the qualifications of (some) teachers in their schools.

Most of the principals would like to see 'their' teachers getting a better comprehension concerning the subject that they teach. In practice however, there is not such a strict distinction between the subject knowledge (or methodology) and teaching skills. Teachers have training needs in both areas.

Figure 4.18. Training need teachers



### *Parental involvement*

The vast majority of the principals (91%) indicate that parents are involved in their school activities.

According to the headmasters, there are three main areas that parents are involved in:

- ☐ School construction
- ☐ School visiting
- ☐ Special celebrations

In order to encourage parental involvement, principals have: a) meetings with parents and b) visit homes in order to convince parents on the importance of education. Sixty three percent of the headmasters would like more opportunities to meet with the parents and arrange more meetings between parents and teachers.

### *Vocational oriented subjects*

In order to make the curriculum more balanced and relevant, and secondly, in order to make the time in school more interesting for students, vocational oriented subjects were introduced. Forty five percent of the principals answered that they do offer vocational oriented subjects. From the Table 4.38 it becomes clear that vocational oriented subjects are mainly offered in middle and high school.

<sup>12</sup> Motivation is related to all other problems that were mentioned. One principal referred to a lack of encouragement from the Karen leadership (KED).

In primary schools, Arts is given two periods in the respective timetables. Materials for Arts and vocational oriented subjects are provided by ZOA.

*Table 4.19. Number of schools that include vocational oriented subjects in their curriculum*

<b>Vocation</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>Drawing</b>	<b>Carpentry</b>	<b>Sewing/knitting</b>	<b>First Aid</b>	<b>Hair cutting</b>	<b>Thai Culture &amp; language</b>
<b>Primary</b>	0 schools	5 schools	0 schools	0 schools	0 schools	0 schools	0 schools
<b>Middle</b>	3 schools	2 schools	1 school	4 schools	0 schools	1 school	1 school
<b>High</b>	9 schools	13 schools	12 schools	14 schools	8 schools	5 schools	6 schools

The number of periods that are allocated for vocational oriented subjects varies from school to school.

Some schools allocate only one period, others as many as four.

Most principals are convinced of the importance of including practical subjects in the curriculum. During the survey, principals brought forward the need for more materials and more training for trainers.

## 4.5. Trainers

### About the sample

32 trainers were interviewed. These are trainers that reside in the camps and have responsibility for in-service training. There are 18 male and 15 female trainers. Twenty eight trainers are married with children (two widowed) and 4 trainers are single.

### Educational background of trainers

Table 4.20. Trainers' level of education

Pass grade 7	1	3%
Pass grade 9	3	9%
Pass grade 10	22	69%
Post ten	5	16%
University	1	3%

Table 4.21. Training before starting the job

<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher training	50%
<input type="checkbox"/> Trainer training	13%
<input type="checkbox"/> Subject training	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> No training	3%
<input type="checkbox"/> Others	3%

Sixty six percent of the trainers feel they need more training in order to be more effective. Thirty four percent would like to get more training in the subjects that they train. Thirty one percent would like to get training such as the training for Resident Teacher Training (ZOA), which offers a combination of teaching skills and methodology.

Table 4.22. Experience before becoming a trainer

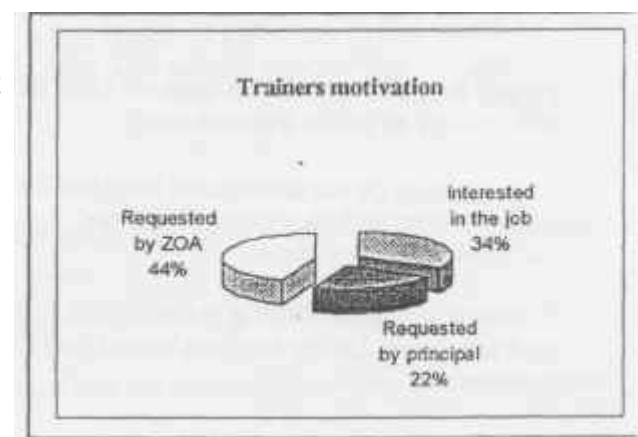
Teacher	81 %
Principal	16 %
Student	3 %

Most of the trainers (81%) have experience in teaching before they became trainer. Sixteen percent had experience as principal of a school. 97% are satisfied with the job.

### Language

The language ability of the trainers is comparable to that of teachers. Most trainers have a good command of Sgaw Karen and Burmese, respectively 91% and 88%. English and Pwo Karen are more of a constraint, with 19% of the trainers speaking Pwo Karen easily and 31% speaking English without problems.

Figure 4.19. Motivation to become a trainer



The majority was requested to become a trainer by the principal or by ZOA. Most of the trainers have started working in the last three years. Twenty five percent of the trainers have more than three years experience in training.

There are 18 trainers focussing on secondary education, While 14 trainers focus on training of primary school teachers. This is a difference from two years ago, when the trainers for secondary schools were a majority by far.

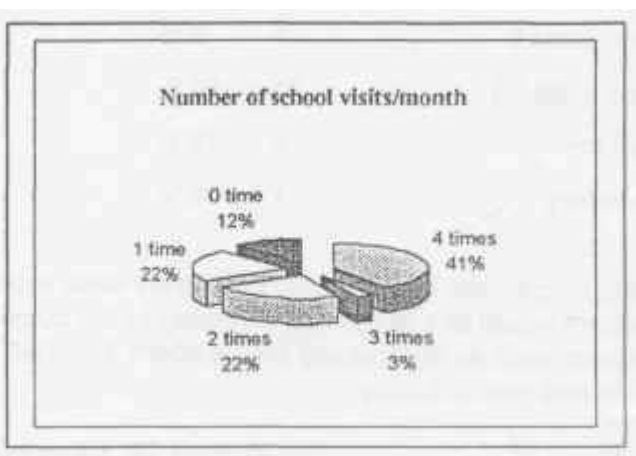
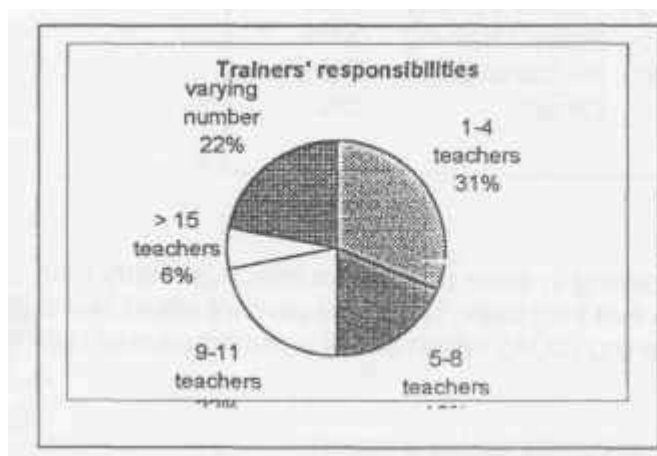
All trainers focus on a certain subject. The division is:

Primary	Secondary
English/Math's (4)	History (8)
Math's (4)	Geography (8)
English (5)	Karen (1)
Burmese (1)	Burmese (1)

25% of the trainers report that they find it difficult to combine their work as trainers with care for their family.

Figure 4.20. Responsibilities trainers

Figure 4.21. School visits per month



Most trainers are supporting between 1 and 4 teachers. School visits are made on a regular basis. There is a need to standardize school visits in the future. An observation form has been developed and will be used to get a better insight in the teachers' performance. At this moment, during their school visits trainers give attention to lesson planning, support in methodology, suggestions for teaching, and demonstration lessons. From the teachers it was learned that 93% of the teachers appreciate the school visits as being useful for them.

According to the trainers, the main problems for teachers at this moment are:

- ☐ Not enough textbooks and teacher guides
- ☐ Too many students in the classroom
- ☐ Language problems (English)
- ☐ Need more training in the new method
- ☐ Student discipline

Forty one percent of the trainers face difficulties with the existing teacher guidelines. The main constraints of these trainers are:

- ☐ Trainers do not understand the need for a new method (91% would like to get additional training)
- ☐ Trainers lack supporting resources
- ☐ Language problems

Trainers suggest printing guidebooks in both English and Karen, and providing textbooks for all students and teachers. Lastly trainers would like to see more suggestions for student activities in the teachers' guides.

#### 4.6. Education Committees in the camps

##### *About the sample*

Interviews were held with all seven Education Committees. In most of the cases, the interview was held with a part of the Education Committee. In total there are 108 committee members.

##### *School Committee versus Education Committee*

Some camps only have one school. In these camps the Education Committee and School Committee is the same. In the larger camps with more schools, there are different School Committees, with an Education Committee that oversees the different schools. This section refers to Education Committee (EC) for both situations.

Education Committees have chairpersons, and most of the committees have appointed a secretary and treasurer. The number of times that ECs meet varies from camp to camp. The most common practice is: monthly meeting (3), bi-monthly meeting (2) or quarterly meeting (2). During these meetings, decisions are made by vote in six of the seven ECs.

Six of the seven EC's produce minutes of these meetings. ECs do report to the Camp Committees (KRC). These Camp Committees have assigned an Education Co-ordinator. In 3 camps ECs also report to the Karen Education Department.

ECs are sometimes appointed by the Camp Committee (4 out of 7), sometimes they are elected by teachers and parents (3 out of 7). Parents are a part of the ECs.

Five of the EC's have a budget available to work with. This budget is used for stationary, food or to organize a seminar. In those camps where the EC and the School Committee are one, budgets are not only used for the work of the committee, but also for special activities in the schools.

##### *Role of the ECs*

The most important roles of the EC's are:

- ☐ School discipline (teachers & students) (5/7)
- ☐ Co-operation with parents (4/7)
- ☐ Policy making (3/7)
- ☐ Evaluate exam results (2/7)
- ☐ School construction (2/7)

##### *Student drop outs*

Five out of seven ECs keep lists of dropouts. One EC is keeping a detailed list with the motives for dropping out. This EC is also taking action. Officially there is a five hundred bath fine in this camp for dropping out. Furthermore dropouts in this camp are asked to help with school renovation.

The main problems that ECs experience are:

- ☐ Status of EC  
Sometimes the status and position of the EC is not clear. It is difficult to discipline teachers that are misbehaving, when there is a shortage of teachers.
- ☐ Convincing parents of the value of education  
Parents are not always encouraging their children to go to school
- ☐ Western values enter our camps  
One EC reported that they feel that (I)NGOs bring Western values into the camps (concerning discipline, rights of the child or sex education).

- Too many responsibilities for EC members
- Shortage of teachers

The shortage of teachers is a concern for most ECs. One aspect of this shortage is that there are no facilities to temporarily replace teachers when they are on sick leave or maternity leave. With many women teaching, this last situation occurs often.

#### *ECs contact with the Karen Education Department*

Three ECs sent copies of their reports to the KED. Five ECs does keep in touch with the KED. Due to lack of mobility, the KED cannot give as much support as they would like to. The ECs seem to understand this issue. Nevertheless, they feel the need for more guidance and support from the Karen leadership. In all but one camp, the ECs know the contact person for the KED in their respective camp.

#### *EC's contact with parents*

Three ECs have contact with parents whenever problems arise concerning students. The other ECs have formalized the relation with parents somehow, and organize school meetings for parents, on a regular basis (once or twice a year).

#### *Equal access to education*

All the ECs indicate that everybody in the camps has equal access to education. In the camps where minorities are a reality, in all but one, minorities take part in the ECs.



## **V Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

Ongoing conflict and accompanying human rights violations against ethnic minority civilians in Burma caused refugee outflows to the border areas in Thailand. At present there are 7 Karen camps, located in 4 border provinces, housing over 134,000<sup>13</sup> refugees. Since 1997 the refugee camps became subject to tighter controls by the Thai authorities. As a result income earning opportunities decreased and refugees became more aid dependent.

Although the Karen Education Department faces management, communication and financial difficulties the education system has continued to expand. Schools both inside Karen State and in refugee camps are teaching over 64,000 students in the year 2002. Although accurate statistics are not available on the overall population in the camps, it appears that nearly all refugee children of primary school age enroll in school. A relatively small number of children drop out of school during the school year and the majority complete their schooling at primary level. More statistics are required to get a better understanding on the number of students dropping out and the reasons why they drop out

The availability of pre-service and in-teacher training has increased since 2000. Education reform is not done overnight. It is a process that is very complicated and that will take many more years. Progress has been made in recent years. The number of teachers that know about student centered methods, and apply these methods, has increased. The awareness of the importance for education innovation has increased at all levels. Still many teachers lack confidence and experience in using the new teaching methodology, which emphasizes the student-centered approach.

More places for vocational training in agriculture and handicrafts to all the camps have been made available in the last years. Nevertheless, there remains a need for courses in areas such as administration, computing and accounting. Courses in these areas would provide Karen refugees with basic skills that will be necessary for improving their lives when they return to Burma.

Adult literacy classes are required to improve the quality of life in the camps. Increasing literacy levels should enable more camp residents to participate in community activities and more parents to become actively involved in the education of their children. In addition most of the vocational courses require literacy.

For various reasons, disadvantaged groups in the camps are the Buddhist and to a lesser extend the Muslim population, with lower levels of education and lower income opportunities. Vocational training as well as professional courses in teacher training should be specially made available for them. In the end all refugees should have similar levels of access.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

Most of the recommendations made in the 1995/6 and 2000 survey reports are still relevant for the education situation in 2002, although the improvement in curriculum reform and teacher training has continued since the last survey.

#### **5.2.1 *General***

- There should be concerned efforts, by NGOs providing education services to the camps, to reduce disparity in access to education and training between the different camps.

<sup>13</sup> Burmese Border Consortium, February 2003

- Adult literacy training should be made available to those who are interested. Efforts should be made to make courses accessible to disadvantaged groups in the camps such as women and non-Christians, specifically Muslims and Buddhists.
- Existing vocational courses in agriculture and handicraft should be made available for more camp residents and new courses established in areas of administration, computing and accounting.

### 5.2.2 *Education administration*

- There is a continuing need to train the Karen Education Department in education policy making and management to administer the education system. To enable the KED to work efficiently, financial support should be considered to recruit qualified and experienced staff to support the minister of education.
- The policy concerning English as a language of instruction for secondary schools needs to be reconsidered. A detailed inquiry into the objectives, the results and the consequences for teachers and students, should be organized by the KED.
- Efforts should be made by the KED and the KRC to improve communication with the camps, to encourage the people involved in education, as well as to keep camps informed about policy decisions.
- There is a need for the KED to collect more detailed and precise statistics. Communication with the principals in the camps needs to be improved in this regard.
- A policy needs to be developed by the KED on how to increase parental involvement
- Disciplinary rules for teachers need to be drafted by the KED. Teachers and Headmasters should be committed to these rules.

### 5.2.3 *School attendance*

- Schools should try to involve parents more actively in the education of their children by holding regular meetings to encourage parents to send their children to school as well as to discuss school management issues.
- All school principals should keep a record of school attendance of both teachers and students. In case of absenteeism the school principal should visit the teacher's or the student's home to address the attendance problem.
- In some camps there is a need to provide special education for disabled children, as most of them drop-out early or do not have access to any kind of education at all.
- To increase the transition rate from primary to secondary school efforts need to be made to enhance the quality of the school curriculum together with upgrading the skills of teachers. In this regard, the condition of the buildings need to be addressed again. Movable furniture and decent class separation needs to be considered for schools to be constructed/renovated in the near future.

#### 5.2.4 *Further education*

- In order to increase student motivation levels, more opportunities for further studies need to be created in all camps.
- The quality of the existing institutes for further studies needs to be improved. Contact with a Thai institution would be desirable, also in the process of further standardizing services between the camps.
- Vocational training should be made available for students who completed secondary school but also for those who dropped out early.

#### 5.2.5 *Infrastructure*

- The KED or KRC should advise schools on the construction of durable school buildings and movable furniture made from local materials. Environmentally friendly materials (iron poles) should be promoted.
- There is a need for more school buildings and for adequate classroom-separation to reduce noise from adjoining classrooms because it interrupts learning.
- Support is required for the production and distribution of textbooks. Although more books have been produced, the needs are not adequately met.
- To encourage people to volunteer to teach, additional financial support should be found to increase the amount of teacher subsidy payments.

#### 5.2.6 *Curriculum & language, teaching aids and examinations*

- Curriculum development workshops should continue to take place in the camps to upgrade the school curriculum. In the long term there is a need to educate a number of young people in curriculum development to re-establish a permanent curriculum and textbook development unit within the KED. Technical expertise from outside is required in order to train subject masters in the field of curriculum development.
- Burmese language teaching should include more conversation activities and creative writing, similar to the curriculum, which was produced for teaching English as a Second Language. The existing curriculum needs to be revised.
- The use of Karen (sgaw) should be promoted in secondary schools. On the short term, textbooks have to be printed in both English and Karen. For the long run a comprehensive survey is required into the rational concerning the choice for English medium in secondary school. In this regard, special emphasis should be put on the effects on student learning.
- There is a need to develop a curriculum for Social Science at primary school level, including teacher guides, textbooks and teaching aids.
- There is an ongoing need to produce teaching manuals and resource materials for secondary level.
- Education resource centers should be used in all camps, to produce suitable low-cost teaching aids, such as simple charts, maps, diagrams, posters and games.

- Physical education should be implemented in all schools.
- Efforts should be undertaken at all levels to increase students' interest in agriculture
- Efforts should be made to introduce monthly tests, which should be used as part of a cumulative assessment, so that the final exam would no longer be the only component for pass or fail. Further efforts should be made to standardize the final exams.
- School principals should encourage teachers to write student achievement reports and to discuss student learning outcomes and classroom behavior with the parents.
- The Karen (sgaw) language should be developed. Efforts need to be undertaken to develop new Karen vocabulary.

#### *5.2.7 Teacher Training*

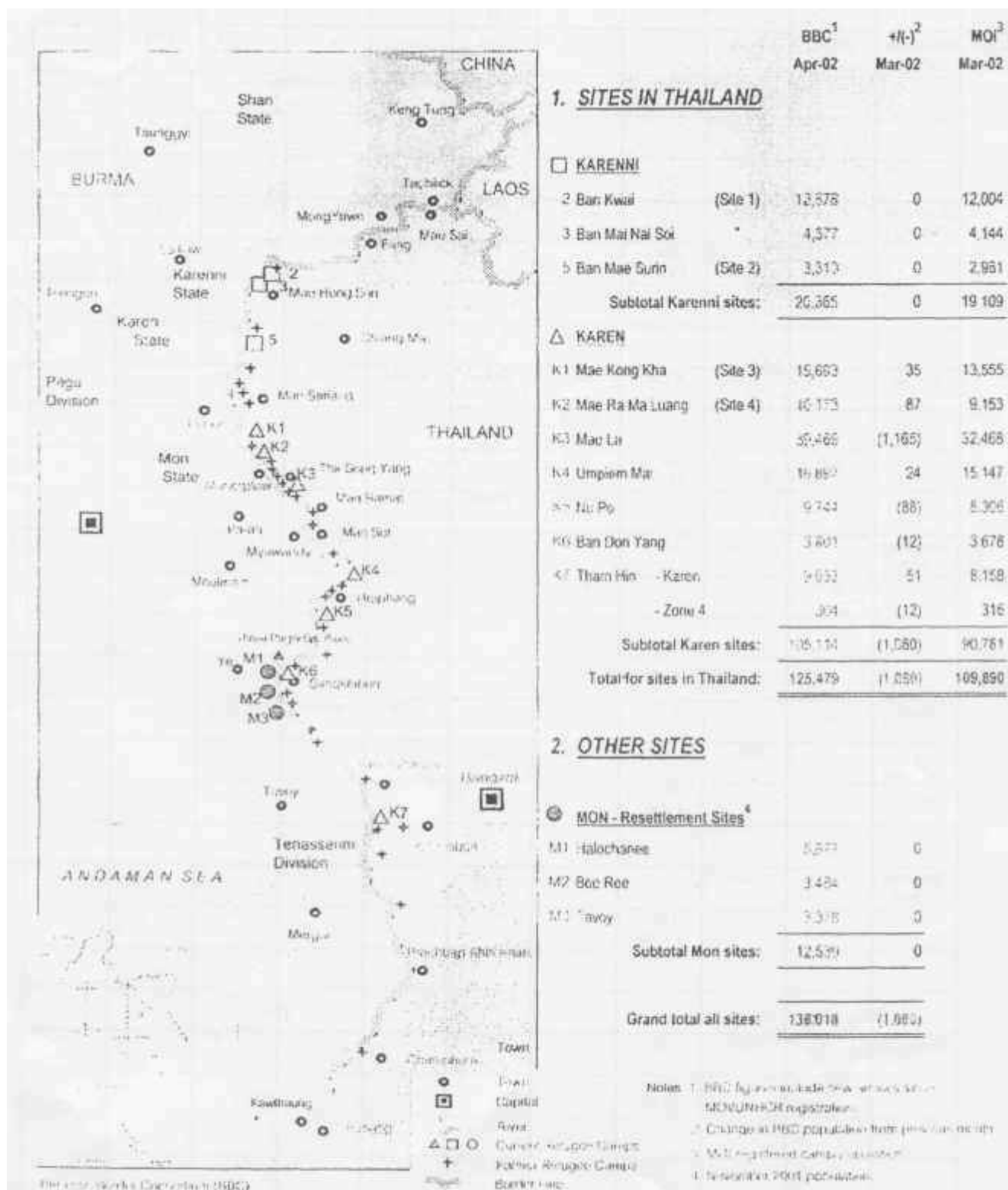
- A workshop should be held for all NGOs (together with the KED) in order to review the application of the 'Framework of Teacher Competencies'.
- Teacher training should continue to be made available to all teachers in all camps in order to upgrade qualifications and sustain professional growth of teachers.
- There is an ongoing need to provide in-service teacher training about using the new teaching methodology in accordance with the school curriculum.
- As long as high school textbooks continue to be written in English, there is a need to upgrade standards of English among teachers (see also the recommendations concerning language of instruction under 5.2.6).
- Teacher training should include a component about how to deal with parents to improve the school-parent relationship.
- School principal training in education administration and school management should be made available to all camps along the border.
- A high priority area for training is to identify more Karen teachers to become teacher trainers in the camps. More trainers are needed to train teachers that work in primary schools. Existing trainers should be better equipped to supervise schools, to provide demonstration lessons and to help teachers in the development and use of teaching materials. The training of Karen teacher trainers is seen an important tool to enhance local ownership of the initiated education reform process.
- Teachers who meet certain standards, should obtain a certificate, that is recognized by the KED and NGOs working in the field of education.

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# ANNEX I AREA MAP (BBC, APRIL 2002)

## BURMESE BORDER REFUGEE SITES WITH POPULATION FIGURES - April 2002



## ANNEX II EDUCATION SERVICES ON THAI-BURMA BORDER 2002

EDUCATION MATRIX: SERVICES												
	CAMP	Supplies /	Textbooks	Reading	Teaching	Curriculum	Literacy	Nursery	Women's	Libraries	Youth	Teacher
		Buildings		Materials	Aids	development	Materials		Ed		Centre	Subsidies
<b>KAREN</b>	MaeKhong Kha	ZOA	ZOA		ZOA	ZOA			WEAVE	SVA		
				IRC CLPG		IRC-KTWG		COSEFEB				
												CON
												ZOA
	MaeRaMa Luang	ZOA	ZOA		ZOA	ZOA		WEAVE	WEAVE	SVA		WEAVE
				IRC-CLPG		IRC-KTWG						ADRA (SDA)
												CON
												ZOA
	Mae La		ZOA	CON	ZOA	ZOA	CON	TOPS	WEAVE			TOPS(n)
					CON							CON
		ICS		IRC CLPG	ICS							ADRA (SDA)
					TOPS	TOPS						ZOA
	Umpiem Mai		ZOA	CON	CON		CON	TOPS	WEAVE			TOPS(n)
		ICS			ICS							ADRA (SDA)
												CON
					ZOA	ZOA						ZOA
	NuPo			CON	CON		CON	TOPS	WEAVE			TOPS(n)
			ZOA		ZOA	ZOA						
				IRC-CLPG								CON
		ZOA										ZOA
	Ban Don Yang		ZOA		ZOA	ZOA						
				IRC CLPG								
												CON
												ZOA
	Tham Hin		?	?	?		?					
				IRC CPLG								
												CON
		?	ZOA		ZOA	ZOA						ZOA

**ANNEX III     STUDENT PERFORMANCE RESULTS**  
**(student who passed promotion examination 2001 - 2002)**

<i>Name of School</i>	<i>No. Student</i>		<b>Total</b>	<b>No. Passed Promotion</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>		<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>		
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 1	193	188	<b>381</b>	121	117	<b>238</b>	<b>62</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 2	124	124	<b>248</b>	101	89	<b>190</b>	<b>77</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 3	80	74	<b>154</b>	51	50	<b>101</b>	<b>66</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 4	125	138	<b>263</b>	75	67	<b>142</b>	<b>54</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 5	105	123	<b>228</b>	84	99	<b>183</b>	<b>80</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 6	145	120	<b>265</b>	124	100	<b>224</b>	<b>85</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 7	108	133	<b>241</b>	38	37	<b>75</b>	<b>31</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 8	130	160	<b>290</b>	84	79	<b>163</b>	<b>56</b>
Mae Kong Kha Primary No. 9	83	64	<b>147</b>	54	51	<b>105</b>	<b>71</b>
Mae Kong Kha Secondary No. 1	325	305	<b>630</b>	297	251	<b>548</b>	<b>87</b>
Mae Kong Kha Secondary No. 2	490	479	<b>969</b>	415	362	<b>777</b>	<b>80</b>
Mae Kong Kha Secondary No. 3	623	574	<b>1197</b>	507	489	<b>996</b>	<b>83</b>
Mae Rama Luang Primary No. 1	199	163	<b>362</b>	109	111	<b>220</b>	<b>61</b>
Mae Rama Luang Primary No. 2	130	105	<b>235</b>	90	86	<b>176</b>	<b>75</b>
Mae Rama Luang Primary No. 3	248	189	<b>437</b>	172	139	<b>311</b>	<b>71</b>
Mae Rama Luang Primary No. 4	153	128	<b>281</b>	109	101	<b>210</b>	<b>75</b>
Mae Rama Luang Primary No. 5	225	218	<b>443</b>	163	186	<b>349</b>	<b>79</b>
Mae Rama Luang Primary No. 6	173	163	<b>336</b>	87	88	<b>175</b>	<b>52</b>
Mae Rama Luang Secondary No. 1	295	271	<b>566</b>	245	241	<b>486</b>	<b>86</b>
Mae Rama Luang Secondary No. 2	178	130	<b>308</b>	121	107	<b>228</b>	<b>74</b>
Mae Rama Luang Secondary No. 3	231	209	<b>440</b>	146	145	<b>291</b>	<b>66</b>
Umphiem Primary No. 1 SDA	206	185	<b>391</b>	95	110	<b>205</b>	<b>52</b>
Umphiem Primary No. 2	88	112	<b>200</b>	75	88	<b>163</b>	<b>82</b>
Umphiem Primary No. 3	135	132	<b>267</b>	82	104	<b>186</b>	<b>70</b>
Umphiem Primary No. 4 Muslim	395	404	<b>799</b>	182	201	<b>383</b>	<b>48</b>
Umphiem High No. 1	835	763	<b>1598</b>	676	636	<b>1,312</b>	<b>82</b>
Umphiem High No. 2	383	363	<b>746</b>	282	236	<b>518</b>	<b>69</b>
Umphiem Middle No. 3 SDA	207	154	<b>361</b>	131	127	<b>258</b>	<b>71</b>
Tham Hin Primary	1383	1417	<b>2800</b>	997	943	<b>1,940</b>	<b>69</b>
Tham Hin Secondary	195	247	<b>442</b>	182	223	<b>405</b>	<b>92</b>
Don Yang Primary	586	610	<b>1196</b>	245	305	<b>550</b>	<b>46</b>
Don Yang Secondary	44	80	<b>124</b>	20	51	<b>71</b>	<b>57</b>

Mae La Primary No. 1	134	145	<b>279</b>	118	121	<b>239</b>	<b>86</b>
Mae La Primary No. 2	381	356	<b>737</b>	273	259	<b>532</b>	<b>72</b>
Mae La Primary No. 3	327	342	<b>669</b>	310	304	<b>614</b>	<b>92</b>
Mae La Primary No. 4 SDA	151	182	<b>333</b>	140	173	<b>313</b>	<b>94</b>
Mae La Primary No. 5 SDA	217	195	<b>412</b>	141	141	<b>282</b>	<b>68</b>
Mae La Primary No. 6	304	318	<b>622</b>	203	251	<b>454</b>	<b>73</b>
Mae La Primary No. 7 SDA	94	114	<b>208</b>	65	86	<b>151</b>	<b>73</b>
Mae La Primary No. 8	183	190	<b>373</b>	122	127	<b>249</b>	<b>67</b>
Mae La Primary No. 9	245	261	<b>506</b>	192	190	<b>382</b>	<b>75</b>
Mae La Primary No. 10 SDA	168	174	<b>342</b>	160	166	<b>326</b>	<b>95</b>
Mae La Primary No. 11	123	112	<b>235</b>	110	95	<b>205</b>	<b>87</b>
Mae La Primary No. 12	193	165	<b>358</b>	155	127	<b>282</b>	<b>79</b>
Mae La Primary No. 13	175	162	<b>337</b>	100	115	<b>215</b>	<b>64</b>
Mae La Middle No. 1	405	287	<b>692</b>	246	222	<b>468</b>	<b>68</b>
Mae La Middle No. 2 Buddhist	297	309	<b>606</b>	268	289	<b>557</b>	<b>92</b>
Mae La Middle No. 3	245	245	<b>490</b>	203	200	<b>403</b>	<b>82</b>
Mae La Middle No. 4 Muslim	251	469	<b>720</b>	164	344	<b>508</b>	<b>71</b>
Mae La High No. 1	239	245	<b>484</b>	121	126	<b>247</b>	<b>51</b>
Mae La High No. 2	394	405	<b>799</b>	299	344	<b>643</b>	<b>80</b>
Mae La High No. 3 SDA	342	355	<b>697</b>	298	308	<b>606</b>	<b>87</b>
Mae La High No. 4	142	154	<b>296</b>	108	121	<b>229</b>	<b>77</b>
Mae La High No. 5	284	256	<b>540</b>	236	214	<b>450</b>	<b>83</b>
Nu Po Primary No. 1	278	236	<b>514</b>	203	151	<b>354</b>	<b>69</b>
Nu Po Primary No. 2	167	195	<b>362</b>	152	167	<b>319</b>	<b>88</b>
Nu Po Primary No. 3	207	206	<b>413</b>	165	152	<b>317</b>	<b>77</b>
Nu Po Primary No. 4	227	214	<b>441</b>	84	118	<b>202</b>	<b>46</b>
Nu Po Primary No. 5	200	181	<b>381</b>	149	130	<b>279</b>	<b>73</b>
Nu Po High No, 1	265	254	<b>519</b>	203	198	<b>401</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>15,429</b>	<b>15,239</b>	<b>30,668</b>	<b>11,177</b>	<b>11,271</b>	<b>22,448</b>	<b>73</b>



## List of Abbreviations

ABWAid	Australian Baptist World Aid
AMI	Aid Medicale Internationale
ARC	ARC International
ASP	Agriculture Special Program
BBC	Burmese Border Consortium
CCSDPT	Coordinating Committee for Services to Displaced People in Thailand
COERR	Catholic Organization for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation
Con	Consortium (American NGO)
DRUM	Drum Publications
EC	Education Committee
FSP	Further Studies Program
ICS	Internationaal Christelijk Steunfonds
INGOs	International Non Governmental Organizations
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
KED	Karen Education Department
KEP I	Karen Education Project 1, 1997-1999
KEP II	Karen Education Project 2, 2000-2002
KEP III	Karen Education Project 3, 2003-2005
KNFEP	Karen Northern Further Education Program
KNU	Karen National Union
KRC	Karen Refugee Committee
KTTC	Karen Teacher Training College
KWO	Karen Women Organization
MOI	Thai Ministry of Interior
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NHEC	National Health and Education Committee
RTG	Royal Thai Government
RTT	Resident Teacher Trainers
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
SVA	Shanti Volunteer Association
TOPS	Taipei Oversea Peace Service
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
UNICEF	United Nations Children Emergency Fund
ZOA	ZOA Refugee Care

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Last but not least, I would like to thank all the people living in the camps, who gave their time to answer all the questions we had.

Mae Sot, December 2002