

**The Learning Landscape**  
Adult learning in seven refugee camps along  
the Thai-Burmese border

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with Toe Toe Parkdeekhunthum  
November 2007



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## Acronyms

AMI	Aide Médicale Internationale
ARC	American Refugee Committee
BGET	Border Green Energy Team
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CFC	Common Facilities Computer (Room)
CHE	Community Health Education
COERR	Catholic Organization for Emergency Relief and Refugees
DARE	Drug Awareness Rehabilitation Education
ESP	Engineering Studies Programme
HI	Handicap International
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization of Migration
Kawsawnaw	Nonformal Education Department of the Ministry of Education
KED	Karen Education Department
KEP	Karen Education Project
KEWG	Karen Education Workers' Group
KHWA	Karen Health and Welfare Association
KSNG	Karen Students' Network Group
KTWG	Karen Teachers Working Group
KWO	Karen Women's Organization
KYO	Karen Youth Organization
LLN	Literacy, language and numeracy
MInt.	Malteser International
NFE	Nonformal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPAT	Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand
REK	Resident Employee Karen Education Project
RTT	Resident Teacher Trainer
SMRU	Shoklo Malaria Research Unit
SVA	Shanti Volunteer Association
TBBC	Thai-Burmese Border Consortium
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
VT	Vocational Training
VTP	Vocational Training Programme
WEAVE	Women Education for Advancement and Empowerment
WE/C	World Education/Consortium

## Executive Summary

This assessment set out to

- 1 **map the learning landscape** in the seven refugee camps served by ZOA, showing points of learning, and if and how they are connected and/or integrated
- 2 **identify learning needs and interests** of the camp communities, including but not exclusively literacy, foreign language learning and resettlement needs
- 3 **understand the barriers** that learners face in gaining access to learning.

Fieldwork was conducted in the seven camps served by ZOA. The sample of respondents was selected using both random and snowball sampling.

### **The provision of adult learning activities**

The bulk of learning activities available are languages (English and Thai), technical skills training (agriculture automechanics, sewing), professional development and community issues. There is some provision for literacy, numeracy, and basic and continuing education for adults but that is patchy.

### **Learning needs and interests**

Refugees in the camps need literacy, numeracy, workplace skills and general education to upgrade their basic skills and to enable them to grasp and master technical and craft skills, English for resettlement and Thai for possible integration. The majority of respondents were interested in learning English, Thai, computing, agriculture and sewing.

### **Barriers to learning**

The most common barriers to learning were misconceptions about the content, form and relevance of learning programmes, the scheduling of the programmes and the lack of widely available course information.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that ZOA

- A uses current provision more efficiently and effectively
- B adds literacy, numeracy and workplace skills to current provision
- C expands basic and general education provision for adults and young people.

# 1 Grounding the Concepts

In November 2006, ZOA Refugee Care Thailand commissioned an assessment of existing learning activities and the types of nonformal learning activities residents would like to attend in the seven predominantly Karen refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border. The assessment was completed in March 2007.

The assessment consisted of the following:

- 1 **mapping the (nonformal) learning landscape** in the seven refugee camps served by ZOA, showing points of learning, and if and how they are connected and/or integrated. This excluded the general education system (nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary and post-secondary learning) and involved compiling an inventory of the adult training sessions, workshops, learning activities, programmes and courses already taking place in the camps.
- 2 **identification of the learning needs and interests** of the camp communities, including but not focusing exclusively on literacy, foreign language learning and resettlement needs.
- 3 **understanding the practical, structural and attitudinal barriers** that learners face in gaining access to learning.

Fieldwork was conducted in the seven camps served by ZOA: Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin. By building on the data already collected in the ZOA Education Survey 2005 and the Inclusion Assessment conducted in 2006, we were able to look at learning needs in more depth during the fieldwork. Individuals of certain target groups who had participated in the ZOA Education Survey 2005 were randomly selected and interviewed again in this assessment. Camp residents belonging to certain target groups who had not been involved in the ZOA Education Survey 2005 were also interviewed.

This report sets out the findings and recommendations from the assessment. The assessment was conducted using a holistic approach to learning in the camps so that there would not be a narrow focus on what is normally considered 'nonformal education'. The following section describes the conceptual framework used to understand 'nonformal education' in the context of adults and young people in the refugee camps.

### **What is nonformal education?**

The Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) good practice guide, *Assessing and analyzing community non-formal educational needs* (INEE, 2006) gives the following as examples of nonformal educational activities:

- Women's literacy and development programmes
- Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes for persons with disability
- Language programmes to facilitate the integration of refugees or minorities
- Accelerated education programmes for young people who have missed school
- Community information campaigns using drama, radio, newspapers, television
- Community newsletters.

These examples are a mixture of tools (drama, radio, newsletters) and organized learning activities that do not take place in the mainstream schooling system (literacy and accelerated programmes). The criteria for their 'nonformal' nature are not clearly defined. Similarly, in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border, the term 'nonformal education' is used loosely. For example, the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) has a literacy programme and a programme which teaches social science, mathematics and other subjects. The former is called the literacy programme and the latter is called the nonformal education programme. Also, there are some technical training programmes which cater to the learning needs of disabled people but they are labelled vocational training.

It is often the case, in the camps (and in other places around the world), that the term 'nonformal education' is not clearly defined. General education in school settings is commonly classified as formal education. In contradistinction, any other organized or non-organized type of learning activity which does not take place in school is grouped under the umbrella term 'nonformal education'. Before trying to define 'nonformal education', it might help to clarify the definition of 'education' used in this report.

**Education  
as a concept**

Education involves the 'transmission' of a selection of the knowledge, skills, values, social norms and behaviour that are valued in a society. These relate to different aspects of society, for example, family, religion, work and so on. Each society constructs and delivers 'education' differently depending on what outcomes and processes are valued in that society. For example, in Japanese society, group effort is given priority over individual endeavour. In the USA, on the other hand, individual freedom and choice are given greater emphasis in children's socialization.

Often, the term 'education' is used synonymously with the school curriculum. However, the school curriculum, made up of subject knowledge, values and skills, is a subset of all the components of education. For example, understanding personal finances is an important component of education but it is not usually found in the school curriculum.

Each society has developed different practices (teaching methods, management), institutions (secondary schools, universities) and infrastructure (school buildings, libraries, lecture halls) to facilitate the education of its population. In many cases, these practices, institutions and infrastructure are used interchangeably with the term 'education'. For example, many people tend to think of schools and blackboard teaching when they hear the word 'education'. However, education does not only take place in school buildings; it occurs in many locations and settings – in the family, in religious institutions, in public areas, to name a few – and the teaching and learning practices vary by location, setting and individual.

How we 'acquire' education is through a process of learning. All things equal, we have the ability to learn a wide range of knowledge, practices and skills but we are usually encouraged to learn what is valued in society. How learning occurs is highly contested: there are behaviourist, constructivist and social theories of learning (see Smith (1999) for an overview). Whichever theory we subscribe to, the value of understanding the nature of learning is to identify methods of learning as determined by setting, context, location, objects, people and processes which will enable us to learn and to teach better. It is argued here that these theories provide us with an understanding of the range of tools that can be used to facilitate learning and that they should be used in combination rather than in isolation.

**Formal, nonformal and informal learning: is the distinction useful?**

What defines learning as formal, nonformal or informal? This is how these three modes are usually differentiated from one another:

Formal education: the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system', running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programmes and institutions for full-time technical and professional training.

Informal education: the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment — from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, the library and the mass media.

Non-formal education: any organized educational activity outside the established formal system — whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity — that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives (Coombs, 1973, quoted in Fordham et al., 1979: 210-11).

When we look at what makes one mode different from another, we start to see the overlaps among them and the difficulty of separating them. This is because we teach and organize educational events as part of our everyday experience, whether for one or many persons, in parks or classrooms, with chalkboards or computers.

How scholars have tried to address these distinctions is by setting out definitions of what makes an educational event/activity formal, nonformal or informal. Colley et al (2002) examined the literature and identified the definitions that scholars have used to differentiate formal from informal learning (leftmost column in Table 1). Colley et al (2002) then laid out what are often considered formal and informal learning ideal-types according to the literature surveyed. For example, if the learning activity consists of a teacher and s/he is seen as having authority over the knowledge and teaching, this is considered a formal learning situation. On the other hand, if there is no teacher involved, this is often taken to be informal learning.

**Table 1 Definitions of formal and informal learning and possible ideal types**

<b>Definitions of formal and informal learning</b>	<b>Possible ideal-types of formal and informal learning</b>	
	<b>Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
Teacher – learner relations	Teacher as authority	No teacher involved
Location (e.g. educational or community premises)	Educational premises	Non-educational premises
Learner/teacher intentionality/activity (voluntarism)	Teacher control	Learner control
Extent of planning or intentional structuring	Planned and structured	Organic and evolving
Nature and extent of assessment & accreditation	Summative assessment/accreditation	No assessment
External determination or not	Externally determined objectives/outcomes	Internally determined objectives
Purposes and interests to meet needs of dominant or marginalized groups	Interests of powerful and dominant groups	Interests of oppressed groups
The nature of knowledge	Open to all groups, according to published criteria	Preserves inequality and sponsorship
Whether learning is seen as embodied or just 'head stuff'	Propositional knowledge	Practical and process knowledge
The status of the knowledge & learning	High status	Low status
Education or non-education	Education	Not education [sic]
Part of a course or not	Part of a course	Not part of a course
Whether outcomes can be measured	Measured outcomes	Outcomes imprecise/ immeasurable
Whether learning is collective/collaborative or individual	Learning predominantly individual	Learning predominantly communal
The purposes of learning	Learning to preserve status quo	Learning for resistance & empowerment
Pedagogical approaches	Pedagogy of transmission & control	Learner-centred, negotiated pedagogy
The mediation of learning – by whom and how	Learning mediated through agents of authority	Learning mediated through learner democracy
The time-frames of learning	Fixed and limited time-frame	Open-ended engagement
The extent to which learning is tacit or explicit	Learning is the main explicit purpose	Learning is either of secondary significance or is implicit
The extent to which learning is context-specific or generalizable/ transferable	Learning is applicable in a range of contexts	Learning is context-specific

Adapted from Colley et al (2002)

As with all ideal types, reality does not always fit: boundaries are never always so clearly defined in the real world. Moreover, some of the definitions and ideal types seem to be ideologically driven and value-based. Colley et al (2002) point out correctly that

Many of the criteria used to draw up the ideal-types are contested

Many of the criteria are imprecise

Some of the 'polar opposites' can actually co-exist

At least one [criterion] is read in diametrically opposite ways by different writers

How many of the criteria should count – are some inappropriate?

Should all criteria be equally important, as this approach would imply?

How can criteria be labelled in ways that avoid ideological implications of inherent virtue or blame? (Formal = bad, informal = good, or vice versa.) (Colley et al, 2002)

It is argued here that there is no real practical benefit in laying out which dimensions are better at defining the formality or informality of a location, teaching technique or assessment method or for arguing whether an educational activity should be classified as formal, informal or nonformal. Instead, it is recognized that formal, nonformal and informal (however they are defined) learning activities/methods/locations are used in different proportions and combinations, and for different purposes in all learning events.

Following from this, learning programmes in the camps have not been classified as formal, nonformal or informal in this report. Instead, the term 'adult learning programmes' is used to refer to those programmes/learning activities which cater specifically to adults and young people who are not involved in mainstream schools providing nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary and post-secondary learning.

How does this discussion apply to this assessment and how does it relate to the implementation of programmes run by ZOA? It shows that, in essence, there are different factors and approaches we can use to design learning and each learning activity/event will have a combination of these factors. The task at hand is to identify current and potential future learning activities and to determine which combination of process, location, setting, purpose and content is best suited to a particular group of learners given the constraints of a refugee camp. Through this, ZOA will be able to make better decisions about its current and future learning programmes in terms of content, delivery, resourcing and scheduling.

## Scope and parameters of the assessment

The scope of the assessment was determined by both the conceptual framework set out above and the requirements that ZOA had in commissioning this work. Firstly, the focus was on the types of programmes and learning occurring outside mainstream education in the seven predominantly Karen camps (Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin) in 2006 and 2007. Hence, the type of learning that occurs in nurseries, kindergartens, primary, middle, secondary and post-secondary (post-10) schools offering general education was not included.

Learning events/activities that do not occur within an organized learning setting were not explicitly included. An example of this would be learning how to weave from a friend. This is because it is difficult to record all the incidents of this happening around the camps. However, this learning is important to document and harness and has been taken into account in the assessment. We noted such learning events/activities in the data and in the analysis when we were able to identify them.

Secondly, a variety of locations and settings within the camps was visited and explored as possible learning sites: school buildings, training centres, homes, offices, hospitals, clinics and so on.

Thirdly, the groups targeted were adolescents who were no longer in school, and adults who are not participating in learning programmes following the KED school curriculum, i.e. general education. In particular, we spoke with pregnant and married adolescents, people who are not literate in Burmese or Karen, people who have little or no formal schooling, people with higher levels of schooling, people working in low-skill and high-skill work, and those awaiting or considering resettlement. We included men and women of different religions, and those who are physically disabled. Table 2 in the next chapter gives details of these target groups. Children and adolescents who were still at school were excluded from the study.

Fourthly, the content of the learning that was explored was not confined to a particular set of skills or knowledge.

This chapter has served as an introduction to the assessment by providing the conceptual framework. This has helped to determine the type of information we collected and the learning activities investigated. The following chapter looks at data collection methods. Chapters 3 to 5 look specifically at the different learning activities in the seven refugee camps, camp residents' participation in learning, their learning needs and interests and the barriers they face in gaining access to learning programmes. Recommendations for programme improvement and implementation are made alongside these findings. The report concludes with a summary of the assessment and the recommendations made.

## 2 Surveying the Landscape: Data Collection

The aims of the assessment were to collect information on the

- 1 **provision of adult learning programmes** in the seven refugee camps
- 2 **learning needs and interests** of the camp communities, and
- 3 **attitudinal, practical and structural barriers** faced in addressing those needs.

In order to do this, the following questions were considered:

- What are the different population groups?
- What are the learning needs and interests of the different population groups?
- Are there learning activities that already address their learning needs? What are these activities?
- What are the barriers to gaining access to learning activities?
- What are the factors which enhance learning?
- What are the best pedagogical techniques for each group and for the subject matter?

The data collected in the ZOA Education Survey 2005 and in the ZOA Inclusion Assessment (2006) was included in the overall research design. The ZOA Education Survey 2005 provided large-scale statistical data on the different groups in the camps. This information was used to contextualize the new data collected. Also, almost half of the participants in this current assessment were randomly selected from the sample in the ZOA Education Survey 2005. This was done to enable us to delve more deeply into the issues surrounding people's motivation to learn, their learning needs and interests and the barriers they face in achieving them.

### **Collecting data on the provision of adult learning programmes**

The first step was to define what would be included in the learning landscape and what would not. In coming up with some parameters, a list of training sessions, workshops, courses and programmes delivered in the camps was drawn up. Interviews were conducted with representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), the nonformal learning branch of the Thai Ministry of Education (Kawsawnaw) and camp organizations/bodies.

It was then decided that only organized learning activities would be included for the comprehensive list but that learning that is not organized would be added if it came up during the research. This is because there are innumerable learning activities that have been set up by camp residents (such as tuition for school subjects) and that occur in diverse circumstances; a bigger project would be needed to document all of these.

The next step was to collect the details of the learning activities:

- learning activity purpose and content
- name of learning activity
- implementing body
- curriculum used
- learning levels and opportunities for progression
- teaching methods
- entry requirements
- target groups
- camps where learning activity is available
- number of participants
- teaching methods
- teaching locations
- duration and scheduling.

Finally, an attempt was made to identify the horizontal and vertical progression paths between the courses and programmes identified. Vertical progression occurs when a learner acquires enough skill and knowledge to move to higher levels of learning in the same specialization. Horizontal progression happens when a learner moves from one specialization to another along the same level of difficulty and complexity. Charting progression enables us to see the possibilities that a learner has in increasing knowledge and skills over a period of time.

The information was collected from interviews with staff members of NGOs, CBOs, other relevant organizations, teachers, trainers and learners. The organizations are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2 Organizations and individuals interviewed for information about adult learning programmes**

NGOs and CBOs working along the border (some camp-based staff and some central level staff)	Representatives from ARC, AMI, COERR, DARE, HI, KEWG, KHWA, KSNG, KWO, KYO, RTP, SVA, TBBC, WEAVE, World Education/Consortium
MOE Nonformal education department (Kawsawnaw)	Thai teachers and students in the camps
Vocational training programmes	ZOA camp-based trainers and students, ZOA teacher trainers
Tham Hin Special English programme	Teachers in the camps
Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang Night Schools	Teachers and students in the camps
KWO literacy programme	Teachers and students in the camps, KWO Maesot
Medical facilities	AMI Hospital Nu Po and Mae La SMRU Clinic Mae La

### **Collecting data on learning needs and interests, and barriers to learning**

In order to understand the learning needs and motivation of the groups within the camps, we first identified the target groups. Then, we asked them about their everyday needs, work skills and other learning interests. ZOA had also requested that the assessment include learning needs relating to language acquisition and resettlement.

The data was collected through interviews and secondary sources with respondents from the target groups set out in Table 3. These target groups were selected because they do not have regular access to education in the schools. The list of names for each sample population came from a variety of sources, as described in the right column in Table 3.

**Table 3 Target populations**

Target population	Sample population list taken from
Pregnant and married adolescents, including different ethnic and religious groups, and young people, 13-20 years old, who dropped out of school	ZOA Education Survey 2005 database Shoklo Malaria Research Unit (SMRU) for Mae La camp
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups who are not literate (in Skaw Karen or Burmese)	ZOA Education Survey 2005 database Snowball sample
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups with low educational levels, who are literate but did not complete primary level, working inside camp, including the disabled	ZOA Education Survey 2005 database Snowball sample
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups with low educational levels, who are literate but did not complete primary level, working outside camp	ZOA Education Survey 2005 database Snowball sample
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups with low educational levels, who are literate but did not complete primary level, not working, including the disabled	ZOA Education Survey 2005 database Snowball sample
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups with higher levels of education and working with CBOs, NGOs, committees, including teachers, resident teacher trainers (RTTs), vocational trainers and health workers	ZOA Education Survey 2005 database Snowball sample

**Interviews** Focus group and individual interviews were conducted in all seven camps that ZOA works in. A combination of random and snowball sampling was used to identify respondents. The number of respondents interviewed in each camp is listed in Table 4. The sample size is small for each camp. This was done so that more in-depth information could be discussed with respondents. Wider patterns and generalizations were taken from the findings in the ZOA Education Survey 2005.

In addition to respondents from the target populations, interviews were also conducted with learners who were currently attending or had previously attended adult learning programmes in the camps (see Table 4).

**Secondary data** Primary data from the interviews was supplemented by secondary data from the ZOA Education Survey 2005 and the ZOA Inclusion Assessment (2006).

**Analysis** Themes and patterns were pulled out from the primary data collected and then compared with the broader information base provided by the ZOA Education Survey 2005.

The data collected was analyzed and organized into the three focal areas of the assessment: the provision of adult learning programmes in the seven refugee camps, the learning needs of the camp community, and the barriers they face in gaining access to learning activities.

**Table 4 Number of respondents interviewed by target group and by camp**

Target population	Target population							Total
	Ban Don Yang	Tham Hin	Mae La	Umphiem-Mai	Nu Po	Mae La Oon	Mae Ra Ma Luang	
Pregnant and married adolescents, including different ethnic and religious groups, 13-20 years old, who dropped out of school	0	1	11	9	5	6	3	35
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups who are not literate (in Karen or Burmese)	1	3	7	5	4	2	3	25
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups with low educational levels, who are literate but did not complete primary schooling, working inside camp, including the disabled	7	2	0	1	0	1	0	11
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups with low educational levels, who are literate but did not complete primary schooling, working outside camp	0	0	2	3	4	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	9
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups with low educational levels, who are literate but did not complete primary schooling, not working, including the disabled	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	19
Men and women of different ethnic and religious groups who completed primary education and who work with CBOs, NGOs, committees, including teachers, resident teacher trainers (RTTs), vocational trainers and health workers	10	11	17	14	12	15	19	98
<b>Other respondents</b>								
Students attending or who had attended vocational training, Thai courses and Night School	11	6	9	4	10	6	7	53
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>250</b>

<sup>a</sup> There are fewer people working outside these camps because they are in remote locations.

The data is set out in the next three chapters and arranged according to the three focal areas mentioned above. The first area is discussed in the following chapter, specifically the types of learning activities currently available in the camps.

## 3 Mapping the Learning Landscape: the Provision of Adult Learning Activities

There is a plethora of organized learning activities available to adults and young people in the camps. Where are they located in the learning landscape? And how are they connected to one another? This chapter sets out the learning activities in the seven refugee camps served by ZOA and attempts to plot the progression paths within and between the activities.

### Provision

The assessment revealed that adult learning activities are roughly categorized into vocational training courses, craft programmes, language and literacy courses, community awareness-raising programmes and general education. These categories are based on administrative distinctions made by CBOs and NGOs. For example, a few NGOs provide training programmes and sessions for agriculture but only one is called vocational training. This terminology is useful for programme implementation and funding, but in order to ascertain accurately what is already provided in the camps, the learning activities have been re-categorized by content. This does away with administrative terms that each organization uses differently.

To obtain a clearer picture of the learning activities available, if and how they are connected to one another, and their progression paths, the content areas and their corresponding learning activities are grouped as follows:

- Literacy and numeracy (Tables 5 and 6)
- Foreign languages (Table 7)
- General education for non-school goers (Table 8)
- Technical and craft skills (Table 9)
- Professional development and job-related training (Table 10).
- Community issues (Table 11)

Most of the learning activities captured in the tables are organized programmes and courses provided by organizations working in the camps. However, information on *ad hoc*, irregular, one-off training sessions and non-organized forms of learning has also been included where available. The latter is written in italics in the tables<sup>1</sup>.

## Progression

What is progression and why is it necessary in learning? Progression occurs when learners successfully complete one level of learning and move on to a higher level. This can happen within a given programme or between programmes. The existence of higher levels often acts as an incentive for learners to progress to higher levels. It is argued here that in the camp context, the availability of more advanced levels of learning is important. First, camp residents have limited activities to engage in. A course of learning which provides refugees with the opportunity to use newly-acquired skills and to master them enables them to have some control over their immediate circumstances even if they have little control over external ones. Furthermore, because they have few opportunities and lack the resources and materials for practising and using craft and technical skills, they often end up feeling frustrated. More advanced levels of learning help to counteract some of that frustration but, admittedly, only up to a certain point.

Vertical progression occurs when a learner acquires enough skill and knowledge to move to higher levels of learning in the same specialization. Horizontal progression happens when a learner moves from one specialization to another along the same level of difficulty and complexity. Charting progression enables us to see the possibilities that a learner has in increasing knowledge and skills over a period of time.

In the following sections, provision and progression paths will be discussed for each content area.

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<sup>1</sup> The information in the tables is accurate at the time of printing.

## **Literacy and numeracy (Tables 5 and 6)**

**Provision** The Karen Women's Organization (KWO)<sup>2</sup> provides the main adult literacy course in six of the seven predominantly Karen camps (there is not enough interest in Tham Hin). The course was initiated in 2001 and teaches basic literacy in Skaw Karen. It receives material support from World Education/Consortium. Thus far, 900 learners have graduated. In an interview with KWO staff, it was estimated that 35% of learners drop out. Also, it was mentioned that there are not many learners who attend the course in Nu Po and Umphiem-Mai. In addition, there seems to be a misconception among camp residents that the classes are only for women.

There is little provision for the other major home languages – Burmese and Pwo Karen. The percentage of Burmese speakers is highest in the Tak camps ranging from 12 to 24% (UNHCR, 2006), while Pwo Karen speakers make up about 20 to 30% of the population.

Several years ago, at the request of the community in Nu Po, World Education/Consortium (WE/C) implemented a new literacy programme in that camp, teaching Karen, Burmese, Urdu and Arabic. Once the KWO became operational in Nu Po, WE/C handed responsibility for the programme over to the KWO, and continues to support it through a sub-grant. However, the KWO stopped the Burmese classes.

The KYO provided Pwo Karen classes in the summer but this has been discontinued because of a lack of funding.

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<sup>2</sup> We would like to thank the KWO and World Education/Consortium for providing this information.

**Table 5 Literacy learning activities**

Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Curriculum	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
<b>Language</b>	<b>Skaw Karen</b>									
Adult literacy course	KWO	KWO curriculum	3 levels in 6 months Level 1: writing and reading Level 2: able to read an article and present Level 3: Human rights, women's rights, children's rights	None	Non-literate adults	All 7* except Tham Hin	20-30 per class	Teacher-led classes	In houses, KWO offices	3 days a week for 6 months

\* The 7 camps referred to here are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang.

**Table 6 Numeracy learning activities**

Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Curriculum	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Adult literacy course	KWO	KWO curriculum	3 levels in 6 months Level 1: writing and reading Level 2: able to read an article and present Level 3: Human rights, women's rights, children's rights	None	Non-literate adults	All 7* except Tham Hin	20-30 per class	Teacher-led classes	In houses, KWO offices	3 days a week for 6 months
Nonformal Education (NFE ) programme	KWO	KWO curriculum	One level	Able to read and write	All adults	All 7* except Tham Hin	10-15 per class	Teacher-led classes	In houses, KWO offices	3 days a week
<i>VTP sewing, automechanics, cooking and baking courses</i>	<i>Supervised by VT Committee Supported by ZOA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Practical</i>	<i>VTP Training Centres</i>	<i>NA</i>

Activities printed in italics have numeracy as an unintended learning outcome.

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang.

VTP – vocational training programme

VT - vocational training

Numeracy is taught in the KWO Adult Literacy and KWO Nonformal Education programmes as an intended outcome. The focus is on understanding ordinality, cardinality and basic mathematical principles. In the sewing, automechanics, cooking and baking courses, learning numeracy is an unintended but important learning outcome. For example, learners learn how to multiply, divide, and to use ratios while learning to sew. They are taught mathematical principles so that they can make garments of different sizes.

In summary, there is some provision for literacy and numeracy learning for adults. However, the number of learners is small compared to the number of people who are not literate in their home language. The rates of illiteracy are high: in 2005, about a fifth of Skaw Karen speakers interviewed could not read or write Skaw Karen. For Burmese speakers, almost a quarter could not read or write Burmese (Oh, 2006). Is this due to a lack of desire to learn their home language or is it because there is not enough provision? The responses given by interviewees in Chapter 4 will give us a better idea.

**Progression** The KWO Nonformal Education programme provides progression in learning for learners who have completed the Adult Literacy course. This is beneficial because it provides opportunities for newly literate adults to use their literacy skills. Furthermore, it is the next step towards acquiring more knowledge and new skills.

However, there needs to be some way of showing the equivalence of this learning to the general education system run by the KED so that adults' learning achievements are easily recognized and valued by the community.

### **Foreign languages (Table 7)**

**Provision** There are English and Thai programmes in the seven predominantly Karen camps initiated by the community, the NGOs and the Thai Ministry of Education. English is the most extensive of all the learning programmes provided in the camps. In both the ZOA Education Survey 2005 (Oh, 2006) and this current assessment, English was by far the most popular course across all target groups. All interviewees said that it would enable them to communicate with the different organizations that work in the camps (UNHCR, NGOs) and foreigners about their living conditions and their life experiences. In addition, they believed that it would help them to obtain NGO jobs and prepare them for resettlement in English-speaking countries.

Looking at the range of English courses available, the majority of courses cluster around the basic level. ZOA is planning on introducing a pre-beginner's course. This is a good idea which will enable more people to learn English.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are few advanced English courses. Admittedly, the more advanced the course, the fewer learners there will be. However, it is the case that many of the respondents who wanted to attend more advanced English courses are highly motivated. It may be possible to use a variety of methods: teacher support combined with tapes/CDs, books/magazines, and English clubs where learners get together regularly to practise English.

Thai language classes have been delivered by the Office of the Non-formal Education Commission (Kawsannaw) of the Ministry of Education since 2006. They are funded by the UNHCR (ONFEC, 2007) and implemented in all refugee camps. Learners interviewed were, on the whole, enthusiastic about the language skills they were acquiring.

Nu Po camp has the only Thai language course that is not implemented by the Kawsannaw. This course has been running for four years and is taught by three Karen refugees who studied in Thai schools before moving to Nu Po camp. These classes were initiated and organized by the Thai camp commander; teaching subsidies and materials are provided by ZOA. The learners have progressed from complete beginners to studying primary textbooks used by the Thai education system. The teachers would like to continue teaching Thai but they were unsure about whether they would be able to do so when the Kawsannaw teachers began teaching Thai in Nu Po. In addition, they are worried that they do not have enough skill and knowledge to teach higher levels.

World Education/Consortium<sup>3</sup> had previously supported organizations in the camps that taught Arabic but the support has been discontinued. Arabic is currently taught in Koranic schools.

**Progression** While there are opportunities for progression, these tend to cluster around the basic and intermediate levels. In addition, there are few vertical connections between the English courses taught at different levels. A learner who takes the Special English Class in Tham Hin may not be able to progress to the Night School unless s/he has passed the exam to enter Standard 8 (the lowest Standard being offered by the Night School at present). Similarly, there are post-10 institutions in these camps that provide English lessons but adult learners who have not passed Standard 10 are not eligible to attend.

The Thai course, appropriately, concentrates on the needs of the complete beginner. However, there needs to be some thought given to 1) the next levels of learning and 2) entry into the Thai education system.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Fred Ligon, World Education/Consortium.

The Thai language course in Nu Po, on the other hand, has already started using Thai textbooks and introducing progression into the Thai school curriculum, something which has not occurred in other programmes.

**Table 7 Foreign language learning activities**

<b>Name of learning activity</b>	<b>Implementing body</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>Entry requirements</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Camps</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Teaching location</b>	<b>Duration and scheduling</b>
English course	KWO	KWO curriculum	Basic and intermediate	None	All	All 7*	10-15	In houses, KWO offices	Ongoing
Special English class	A group of school teachers	No set curriculum, use KED textbooks	All levels	None	All	Tham Hin	8-10 learners	Schools, after school hours	Ongoing
Non-formal Education (NFE) English Programme	ZOA	ZOA NFE English conversation curriculum	Beginner (people who can read and write English) and elementary. A pre-beginner course is being developed	Current available levels require students to have basic English literacy skills	All, but some camps have restricted it so that school staff are not eligible to attend	All 7* as of June 2007	20 per class, 6-8 classes per day	ZOA NFE buildings	3 months, ongoing
English class	AMI	No set curriculum: practical basic vocabulary and pronunciation lessons	All levels	None	AMI staff, camp staff volunteers	1 part-time English teacher in Nu Po, 2 in Umphiem-Mai and 5 in Mae La; all paid by AMI	20-35 learners per teacher	AMI settings such as hospital meeting room, team house	Roughly 10 to 18 hours per week, after work hours
English course	KHWA Care Villa	No set curriculum	Basic	None	Disabled living in Care Villa	Mae La	10-15 learners	KHWA Care Villa	Usually ongoing, but suspended because teacher unavailable

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Curriculum	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	Number of participants	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
English course (new)	KYO	SEP curriculum	Basic	None	All	Umphiem-Mai	20-25	KYO office	10 days during summer
English writing competitions	KSNG	No set curriculum	Basic	None	KSNG members and camp resident	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	20	NA	1-4 times a year
English tuition/help given by certain camp residents to students and adults	Individuals	According to learners' needs	Basic and intermediate	None	All	All 7*	Varies	Homes	Ongoing
Thai language course	Kawsawnaw	Kawsawnaw curriculum	Basic	None	Camp residents above 16 years, but Ban Don Yang has implemented teaching in secondary levels in school	All 7*	20-60 per class	ZOA buildings, school buildings	3 months
Thai language course	Organized by the Palad, ZOA pays teacher subsidy of 3 teachers	Thai education system curriculum	Basic and intermediate	None	All	Nu Po	About 10	ZOA buildings	Ongoing

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

## General education for non-school goers (Tables 8)

In this report, general education is narrowly defined as the learning content set out in the Karen Education Department (KED) curriculum. This generally refers to content taught in the primary, middle and secondary schools.

### Provision and Progression

The opportunities for young people and adults to continue general education outside the schooling system are limited. At present, the Night School and the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) Nonformal Education (NFE) programme are the only organizations that do actually provide support to learners pursuing general education outside the school system.

However, the Night School is limited in its scope and reach. It only provides teaching for secondary levels, i.e., Standards 8 to 10, and it only operates regularly in two camps. On the other end of the spectrum, the KWO NFE programme caters to learners with low levels of schooling. It is able to reach more people and it operates in all the predominantly Karen camps.

The gap in provision seems to be the lack of general education activities for non-school goers who have the basics but do not qualify for secondary level courses. There are few opportunities for people who drop out of school to continue their studies using an alternative route. The Night School is intended to address that. However, it does not reach all learners who dropped out as it only provides teaching for Standards 8 to 10.

The KWO course however, does take students who dropped out of school and that is one of its strengths.

The 'distance learning/self-study' option is intended to enable young people who drop out in Standard 10 to complete their secondary education. However, this is not effective as learners do not get enough support in their learning. They are given textbooks to study from and are not allowed to attend school. Few learners take this route.

**Table 8** General education for non-school goers

Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Curriculum	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Night school	Education Committees of Tham Hin, Ban Don Yang and Mae La	KED	Currently only Standards 8- 10	Need to have passed previous levels	Students who dropped out, NGO/CBO workers, students who were late registering in the mainstream school	Ban Don Yang, Tham Hin and irregular in Mae La	20 students in Tham Hin, less than 10 in Ban Don Yang	Teaching methods same as in school, Same exams as in school, but in Ban Don Yang they set fewer exam questions.	School buildings	One school year per standard 5-8pm Monday to Friday
'Distance learning'/ 'self-study'	Schools	KED	Standard 10 only	Need to have passed previous levels	Standard 10 students who dropped out of school in the middle of the school year	All 7*, varies by school	Few	School teachers give students textbooks to study on their own so that they can take the school exam	None	One school year
Nonformal Education (NFE) programme	KWO	KWO curriculum (Geography, History, Maths, Karen, English)	Roughly equivalent to primary and middle levels of the KED curriculum	Need to be literate and numerate	All including pregnant adolescents and young people who dropped out of school	All 7*	10-15	Teachers work with groups of students using a blackboard and textbooks	KWO office	3 days a week

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

## Technical and craft skills (Table 9)

**Provision** There are many organized programmes offering training on technical and craft skills. The majority of them are supported by ZOA. The coverage is not even across all camps. For example, the basket weaving course is only available in Mae Ra Ma Luang. This is due to a lack of skilled trainers and/or interest. Also, there are several agriculture programmes run by different organizations at the same time but the connections between them are not immediately apparent. For example, ZOA, COERR and the TBBC provide agriculture training in one form or another. The differences between these programmes seem to be related to purpose (teaching as opposed to supplementing the diet) and target groups (all groups as opposed to extremely vulnerable individuals) (see Table 9).

The courses in this category are very useful and relevant to residents' needs. Many of the respondents were satisfied with the programmes. However, the external constraints imposed on the refugees has an impact on the effectiveness of the programmes. Many learners were not able to use their newly-acquired skills for their own purposes, to generate income, or to further develop their skills. This was because of the lack of space, materials, equipment and capital, as well as the restriction on employment and livelihoods.

There are limited income-generating opportunities linked to the skills programmes: lungyis are commissioned from the weaving and sewing course and food made in the cooking and baking course is sold in the ZOA vocational training restaurants. There is also an unprecedented livelihoods programme initiated by the UNHCR that will combine agricultural skills and income-generation. These endeavours are beneficial and necessary and it is hoped that they will be expanded and extended.

**Progression** It is not always the case that learners want to develop their skills further or that this desire would be spread evenly across all technical disciplines. However, for those who do, there is hardly any possibility of advancing beyond the intermediate levels offered by the skills programmes. The post-secondary programmes offering Automechanics (at the Engineering Studies Programme (ESP), Mae La), agriculture, animal-raising and computing (at the Vocational Training (VT) College, Umphiem-Mai) are not open to learners who have not completed Standard 10. Learners who were currently in the vocational training automechanics course expressed frustration at not being able to use their skills or to learn about more sophisticated engines.

**Table 9 Technical and craft skills**

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	Teaching methods	No. of participants	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
<b>Agriculture</b>										
Vegetable and mushroom-growing, making fertilizer and compost	VTP <sup>^</sup> Agriculture	Supervised by VT <sup>o</sup> Committee supported by ZOA	None	None	All	Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae La	Some theory in classroom, demonstration and practice	20-25 per course	VTP Agriculture Training Centre	2 weeks to 6 months
Setting up household gardens, seeds, fertilizers, edible trees, mushrooms making compost (Distribute seeds and tools)	Agriculture and Environment	COERR	None	None	Extremely vulnerable individuals, residents who have space for growing vegetables	All 7*	Mostly theory, no practical	30-40 per session	COERR Agriculture office, COERR demonstration gardens in some camps	3 days frequency dependent on demand and weather
Setting up kitchen gardens to enhance food basket	Community Agriculture and Nutrition Project (CAN)	TBBC	None	None	All	Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae La there are plans for Tham Hin	Demonstration	25 per course; 7360 since inception	CAN demonstration gardens	5 days 4 times a year

VTP – Vocational Training Programme

VT - vocational training

\* The 7 camps referred to here are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name learning activity	Implementing body	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	Teaching methods	No. of participants	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Vegetable growing and selling, animal raising, making and selling the compost, technical skills to set up agricultural plot	Agriculture and income-generation pilot project (part of the Livelihoods programme supported by the UNHCR)	ARC, ZOA, possibly TBBC	None	Mixed	Those who completed VTP Agriculture course; those not being resettled; the disabled; those interested in agriculture but have no training; men and women; those with no space to grow near their houses	Mae La pilot, 2 other camps to be involved in the future	Practical training, some theory	80	Agricultural plot outside camp	3 weeks training (fish raising, mushroom) Contract for 1 year to work in the field
<b>Animal raising</b>										
Fish raising, pig and goat rearing	VTP Animal raising	Supervised by VT Committee, supported by ZOA	None	None	All	Umphiem-Mai, Mae Ra Ma Luang	Practical training, some theory	10 to 30 per course	VTP Agriculture Training Centre	2-month, 6-month and 2-year courses
Fish raising	Agriculture and income-generation pilot project	ARC, ZOA, possibly TBBC	None	Mixed	Those who completed VTP Agriculture course; those not being resettled; the disabled; those interested in agriculture but have no training; men and women; those with no space to grow near their houses	Mae La pilot, 2 other camps to be involved in the future	Practical training, some theory	80	Agricultural plot outside camp	3 weeks training (fish raising, mushroom) Contract for 1 year to work in the field
Pig breeding	Pilot pig-breeding project	TBBC	None	None	Boarding schools, CBOs, IDP sections, orphanages	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	Practical	Varies	Boarding schools, CBOs, IDP sections, orphanages	NA

VT - vocational training

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	Teaching methods	No. of participants	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
<b>Food preparation</b>										
Cooking and baking	VTP Cooking and Bakery	Supervised by VT Committee, supported by ZOA	None	None	All	All 7* except Nu Po but VT Committee proposing	Some theory, demonstration, practical cooking and/or baking	10-15 per course	VTP Cooking and Baking Training Centre	1-3 month courses, 2/3 courses a year depending on camp
Preparation of and cooking food in a restaurant, serving and collecting money, managing restaurant	VTP Cooking and bakery practice sessions	Supervised by VT Committee, supported by ZOA	None	Must have completed cooking and baking course	All	All 7* except Nu Po	Working in a ZOA-supported restaurant	6	ZOA vocational training restaurants	Ongoing
Nutrition for women and children	Mother and Child Care	ARC	None	None	Women	Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Ban Don Yang,	CHE staff train community using group discussions, posters, demonstration, home visits	Variable	ARC premises	Variable
Nutrition	AsiaMix and other cooking	TBBC	None	None	All	All 7*	Demonstrations	Variable	Variable	Variable
<i>Preparation of and cooking food</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>All 7*</i>	<i>Workplace learning, learning from family and peers</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NGO/CBO premises, homes, restaurants</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

Activities printed in italics have the stated learning content as an unintended learning outcome.

VTP – Vocational Training Programme

VT - vocational training

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA: Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
<b>Textile crafts</b>										
Sewing	VTP Sewing Course	In some camps, supervised by VT Committee, supported by ZOA. In others, supervised by KWO	Basic and intermediate	Maths and literacy skills needed	Dropout students, adults without access to other learning programmes, all other groups	All 7*	17-50	Theory and demonstration	VTP Sewing Training Centre	2-, 3-, 6-month courses
Sewing	VTP Sewing Practice Session	In some camps, supervised by VT Committee, supported by ZOA. In others, supervised by KWO	Basic and intermediate	Must have completed VTP sewing course	Those who have completed all sewing courses and have been selected for sewing practice	All 7*	10	Practice and on-the-job learning	VTP Sewing Practice Session Centre	1-3 months depending on the camp
Weaving	VTP Weaving course	Supervised by VT Committee, supported by ZOA	One	None	All	Mae La Oon	15	Practice and some theory	VTP Weaving Training Centre	6 months, twice a year
Crocheting and embroidery	VTP Knitting and Embroidery Course	Supervised by VT Committee, supported by ZOA	One level	None	All	Only Mae La	20	Practice	VTP Knitting and Embroidery Training Centre, trainer's house	2 3-month courses per year

VTP – Vocational Training Programme

VT - vocational training

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA: Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	Teaching methods	No. of participants	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Soap and candle making courses and workshops	Soap and candle making	COERR	None	None	Widows and extremely vulnerable individuals	All 7*	Practical	More than a 100 per month	COERR office	The courses and workshops take place when there are materials. There are fewer courses now because many people know how to make them; they now conduct workshops. The products are given to orphans and unaccompanied minors.
Basket weaving	VTP Basket Weaving	VT Committee supported by ZOA	3 levels from Aug 2007	None	All	Mae Ra Ma Luang	Practical	10 per course	VTP Basket Weaving Training Centre	45 days for 1 course 6 courses
<b>Music</b>										
Playing the guitar	VTP Guitar	VT Committee supported by ZOA	None	Literate	Dropout students and adults	Nu Po, Mae Ra Ma Luang	Practical	30	VTP Music Training Centre, trainer's house	Ongoing
Playing the keyboard	VTP Keyboard	VT Committee supported by ZOA	John Thompson book beginner to Grade 3	Literate	Dropout students and adults	Mae La, Nu Po, Mae Ra Ma Luang	Practical	165	VTP Music Training Centre, trainer's house	Ongoing

VTP – Vocational Training Programme

VT - vocational training

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	Methods used	No. of participants	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
<b>Computing</b>										
Basic computer applications	VTP Computer course	VT Committee supported by ZOA	Basic	Literate	All	All 7*	Classroom teaching	20-30 per course	VTP Computer Training Centre	6-week to 5-month courses
Computer practice	Common Facility Computer (CFC) rooms	VT Committee supported by ZOA	None	In Nu Po, only residents with Standard 10 qualifications are allowed to use the room	All	All 7*	Practice on own time with some help	Depends on number of computers	Common Facility Computer (CFC) rooms	Ongoing
Welding, motorcycle and car engine repair	VTP Automechanic course	VT Committee supported by ZOA	Basic	Standard 4, varies by camp: some require Standard 6	All	All 7* except Umphiem-Mai and Mae Ra Ma Luang	Theory and practical	15-20 per course	VTP Auto-mechanic Training Centre	1 course from 3 months to 3 years depending on camp
Radio repair	VTP Radio Mechanic Course	VT Committee supported by ZOA	Basic	Standard 4	All	Mae La only All 7* in 2008	Theory and practical	10-15 per course	VTP Radio mechanic Training Centre	Two 6-month courses
Solar panel installation and ramp installation	NA	Border Green Energy Team (BGET)	NA	NA	ESP students	All 7*	Theory and practical	7	On site	One-off

VTP – Vocational Training Programme

VT - vocational training

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Levels	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	Methods used	No. of participants	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Radio programming	KSNG Radio programme	KSNG	NA	NA	KSNG members	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La Oon	Learning from expert and peers	40-50	KSNG office	Ongoing
Blacksmithing	VTP Blacksmith	VT Committee supported by ZOA	Basic	None	All	Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	Practical	5-10 per course	VTP Blacksmith Training Centre	2 months 5 courses per year
Tinsmithing	VTP Tinsmith	VT Committee supported by ZOA	Basic	None	All	Mae Ra Ma Luang and Mae La Oon Ban Don Yang	Practical	10 per course	VTP Tinsmith Training Centre	2 months 5 courses per year
Stovemaking	VTP Stovemaking	VT Committee supported by ZOA	Basic	None	All	Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La Oon, Umphiem-Mai, Ban Don Yang	Practical	9-12 per course	VTP Stove-making Training Centre	1 to 6 months 1 per year in all except 2 in Ban Don Yang
Carpentry	VTP Carpentry	VT Committee supported by ZOA	Basic	None	All	Umphiem-Mai Ban Don Yang	Practical	15 per course	VTP Carpentry Training Centre	6 months 1 per year

VTP – Vocational Training Programme

VT - vocational training

## **Professional development and job-related training (Table 10)**

**Provision** In this category, the learning activities are directly related to developing the skills of people who are already in skilled or semi-skilled professions in the camps. The NGOs and CBOs provide professional development and training to health workers (medics, nurses and midwives), education staff (teachers and trainers), managerial and administrative staff. There are ongoing training programmes for these groups of people. However, the frequency of training is changing as staff turnover increases as a result of resettlement.

**Progression** The need for progression is not urgent but there needs to be some way of developing the skills of staff who are employed in lower skilled work.

**Table 10 Professional development and job-related training**

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Midwifery	Midwife training	ARC	At least Standard 8	Midwives	Umphiem -Mai, Nu Po, Ban Don Yang	29	Theory and practical	ARC office	one 3-month course per year, 9-3pm Monday to Saturday followed by 6 months of practical learning
Midwifery	Midwife training	MInt.	At least Standard 8 or have experience	Midwives	Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	20-25	Theory and practical	MI premises and hospital	3 months theory 6 months practice in the hospital
Midwifery (using gloves, hygiene)	Traditional birth attendant training	ARC	Experience	Traditional birth attendants	Umphiem -Mai, Nu Po, Ban Don Yang	20	Some theory, practical	ARC office	Fortnightly meetings
General health	Home visitor training	AMI	AMI staff	Home visitors	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	Unconfirmed	Some theory, practical	AMI premises	1 month
	CHW training	MInt.	At least standard 6		Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	25-30	Theory	MInt. Premises	2 weeks theory and refresher course every 2 months

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Nutrition	Nutrition worker	MInt.	At least standard 6		Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	10	Theory and practice	MInt. premises	2 weeks theory and practice Refresher course every 3 months
Laboratory research	Laboratory technician training	AMI	Selected internally and/or pass a selection test	Previous health care workers	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	20 to 25	Initial short training and refresher training Theoretical followed by practical	AMI premises	3 h twice a month 2+1months
	Lab training	MInt.	At least standard 8		Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	15-20	Theory and practice	MI premises and hospital	2 months theory 6 month practice in the hospital
Nursing	Nurse training	AMI	Selected internally and/or pass a selection test	Previous health care workers	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	20 to 25	Initial short training and refresher training Theoretical followed by practical	AMI Hospital, Mae Tao Clinic, on-the-job learning	3 h twice a month 2+2 months
Medicine	Medic training by	ARC	Selected internally	Medics, nurses	Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Ban Don Yang	Variable	Initial and in-service practical training	ARC clinic in camp	Variable
	Medic Training	AMI	Selected internally and/or pass a selection test	Medics, nurses	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	20 to 25 2 courses	Initial short training and refresher training Theoretical followed by practical	AMI Hospital, Mae Tao Clinic, on-the-job learning	3 h twice a month 4+3 months
	Nurse/ medic training	MInt.	Selected internally	At least standard 8 or have experience	Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	25-30	Theory and practice	MInt. Premises, hospital sometimes Mae Tao clinic	2 months theory 4 months practice in the hospital

<b>Learning content</b>	<b>Name of learning activity</b>	<b>Implementing body</b>	<b>Entry requirements</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Camps</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Teaching methods</b>	<b>Course location</b>	<b>Duration and scheduling</b>
Prosthetics	training for prosthetic technicians	HI	None	HI trainers	Mae La	5	Practical and peer learning	HI workshop	2 months (one-off because all trainers were resettled) Refresher training 2 or 3 days
Rehabilitation physiotherapy	Training for rehabilitation staff	HI	None	HI trainers	All 7*	5 or 6	Mostly practical, some theory	HI office	1 or 2 days a month
Mine risk	Mine risk education	HI	None	HI trainers	All 7*	About 5 per camp	Some theory, use videos, maps	HI office	Receive basic training when begin Ongoing training 1 or 2 days a month

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

<b>Learning content</b>	<b>Name of learning activity</b>	<b>Imple-menting body</b>	<b>Entry require-ments</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Camps</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Teaching methods</b>	<b>Teaching location</b>	<b>Duration and scheduling</b>
Teaching	Summer break teacher training	ZOA	None	Teachers	All 7*	All teachers	Workshops	ZOA Education Centre	10 days Once a year
Teaching	Teacher training follow up	ZOA	None	Teachers	All 7*	All teachers	Workshops	ZOA Education Centre	Ongoing
Teaching	In-service teacher training	ZOA	None	Teachers	All 7*	All teachers	Discussions, mentoring	Schools, ZOA Education Centre	Ongoing
Teaching	Special education	KWO	None	Teachers	All 7*	Some teachers	Theory and practical	KWO premises	Weekly or monthly
Incorporating library and books into teaching	Library Training	SVA	None	Teachers	All 7*	Some teachers	Practical	Libraries	Once a year
Addressing students psychosocial needs	COPE	WE/C , KED ZOA (will be integrated into ZOA in-service teacher training)	None	Resident teacher trainers, teachers and education management staff	All 7*	Variable	Theory and practical	Schools	Twice a year

WE/C – World Education/Consortium

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
<b>Administrative skills</b> accounting, typing, filing, administration writing proposals, reports, articles project management, organizational development	Basic Administration Training	KSNG	None	KSNG members	Tham Hin (irregular), Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La Oon	10-40 per session	Training from KSNG central level	KSNG office	2 times a year for 10 days
	Process Documentation	KSNG	None	KSNG staff and members	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La Oon	10-40 per session	Training from KSNG central level	KSNG office	1 week Twice a year
	Leadership training	KYO	None	KYO members	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Tham Hin, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	15 per session	KYO camp secretary and leaders give training	KYO office	1 week a year
	Women's education	WEAVE	None	Women and young girls	Mae La, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	Varies	Workshops	Weave premises	10 months
	<i>Workplace learning*</i>	<i>CBOs and NGOs</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Staff working in NGOs and CBOs</i>	<i>All 7*</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Workplace learning in NGOs and CBOs*</i>	<i>Workplace</i>	<i>NA</i>

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Activities printed in italics have the stated learning content as an unintended learning outcome.

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Entry requirements	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
<b>Organising skills</b> Managing the camp, community management, management in general, leadership skills, managing activities, facilitating meetings	Leadership management training (includes Interpersonal Communication Skills Training)	KSNG	None	KSNG staff	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La Oon	10-40 per session	Flipcharts, videos, asserts	KSNG office	2 times a year for 2 or 3 days
	Leadership training	KYO	None	KYO members	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Tham Hin, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	15 per session	KYO camp secretary and leaders give training	KYO office	1 week a year
	Women and leadership training	KWO	None	Women	All 7*	Varies	KWO camp secretary and leaders give training	KWO office	1-week training, once a year
	Capacity building for camp education management	ZOA	None	Camp education management staff	All 7*	Varies	Mentoring, discussions, action research	ZOA Education Centre	Ongoing
	<i>Workplace learning*</i>	<i>CBOs and NGOs</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Staff working in NGOs and CBOs</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Workplace learning in NGOs and CBOs*</i>	<i>Workplace</i>	<i>NA</i>

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Activities printed in italics have the stated learning content as an unintended learning outcome.

### **Community issues (Table 11)**

**Provision** There is a myriad of awareness-raising and public education activities targeted at the communities in the camps. The range of topics covered is extensive and relevant to the context of the camps and the needs of camp residents, ranging from health to political to social issues. These are also the most extensive programmes and reach the most number of people.

**Table 11 Community issues**

<b>Learning content</b>	<b>Name of learning activity</b>	<b>Implementing body</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Camps</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Teaching methods</b>	<b>Teaching location</b>	<b>Duration and scheduling</b>
HIV awareness	HIV training	KEWG in cooperation with PPAT	18-40 years old	Tham Hin (works only in Umphiem), Mae La, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	20-30 per group	Workshop and discussion	KEWG premises	3 times a year
	Adolescent reproductive health	KYO in cooperation with PPAT	Young people	Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	30 per group	Workshop and discussions	Either KYO office or PPAT office	2 times a week
Reproductive health	Family planning	PPAT	All	Tham Hin(works only in Umphiem), Mae La, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	8-10 per group	Students share with friends	PPAT premises	52 times a year
	Reproductive health	ARC	All	Ban Don Yang, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	Variable	Variable	ARC premises	Variable
	Youth sex education	KEWG	Young people	All 7*	Variable	Variable	KEWG premises	5 days
	Adolescent reproductive health	KYO in cooperation with PPAT	Young people	Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	30 per group	Workshop and discussions	Either KYO office or PPAT office	2times a week

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Health	Nonformal Education programme	KWO	All	All 7* except Tham Hin	10-15 per class	Teacher-led classes	In houses, KWO offices	3 days a week
	Health	ARC	All	Ban Don Yang, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	Variable	Variable	ARC premises	Variable
	Health	MI	All	Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	Variable	Variable	MI premises	Variable
	KSNG Drama Programme	KSNG	All	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	Variable	Drama, theatre	Variable	Depends on camp
	Health	AMI	All	All 7*	Variable	Health Messenger magazine for adults and children	All	Variable
	Health	AMI	All	All 7*	Variable	Bird flu game	Schools	Variable
Nutrition	Mother and Child Care	ARC	Mothers and children	Ban Don Yang, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	Variable	CHE staff train community using group discussion, poster, demonstration, home visits	ARC premises	Variable
	Community Health Education (CHE)	ARC	Young people	Ban Don Yang, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po	20-30 per session	Trainer trains CHE staff, CHE staff train community using group discussion, poster, demonstration, home visits	ARC premises	Twice a month, one day each
	Nutrition	TBBC	All	All 7*	Variable	Cooking demonstrations	Variable	Once a week

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Drugs	Drugs	KSNG	Young people	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin	20-30 per group	Drama, concerts, speeches	Variable	Variable
	Drugs	DARE	All	All 7*	20-30 per group	Men and women given training separately, they teach others in their section	Variable	Variable
Physical rehabilitation	Physical rehabilitation	HI	People with a risk of disability	All 7*	10-15 per group	Videos, some theory, practical	HI office	1 or 2 days a month
Everyday living for the disabled	Physical rehabilitation	HI	Family members and People who have a disability	All 7*	10-15 per group	Practical	HI office and home visits	1 day
Living with disability	Physical rehabilitation	HI	Amputees	All 7*	In groups or with individuals	Practical	HI office and workshop	1 day
Mine awareness	Mine Risk Education	HI	All	All 7*	15-20 per session	Small group discussion, text, materials, mine risk park, followed up by home visits	HI office	1 day a week

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

Learning content	Name of learning activity	Implementing body	Target groups	Camps	No. of participants	Teaching methods	Teaching location	Duration and scheduling
Family problems	Domestic violence	KWO	Women	All 7*	Variable	Discussion group – how to solve domestic issues	KWO premises	Variable
	Women exchange	KWO	Women	All 7*	Variable	Discussion group – how to solve domestic issues	KWO premises	Variable
Psychosocial intervention	Healing of memory	COERR	Adults and children	All 7*	40 adults per workshop 50 children per workshop	Workshop	COERR office	1 or 2 days
	COPE	WE/C , KED ZOA (will be integrated into ZOA in-service teacher training)	Resident teacher trainers, teachers and education management staff	All 7*	Variable	Theory and practical	Variable	Twice a year
Resettlement	Cultural Orientation	IOM, but not all resettling countries ask IOM to do this	Those who are being resettled	All 7*	Variable	Group lecture and presentations	Variable	Approximately 25 hours, depending on country programme

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

<b>Learning content</b>	<b>Name of learning activity</b>	<b>Implementing body</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Camps</b>	<b>No. of participants</b>	<b>Teaching methods</b>	<b>Teaching location</b>	<b>Duration and scheduling</b>
<b>Human rights</b>	Human rights, NFE	KWO	All	All 7*	10-15	Teachers work with groups of students using a blackboard and textbooks	KWO office	3 days a week
	Youth Capacity Building	KYO	Young people	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin	20 per session	Workshops	KYO office	10 days Once a year
	KSNG Drama Programme	KSNG	All	Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang	Variable	Drama, theatre	Variable	Depends on carp
<b>Women's rights</b>	NFE	KWO	All	All 7*	10-15	Teachers work with groups of students using a blackboard and textbooks	KWO office	3 days a week
<b>Protection for girls</b> how to protect themselves, where to go for help	Girls' education	KWO	All	All 7*	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable
<b>Child protection</b> how to protect themselves from violence	Child protection	COERR	Children under 18, CBOs, caregivers, community	All 7*	50-10 each workshop	Workshops	COERR office Camp hall	1 day, 1/2 for each target group in each quarter

\* The 7 camps referred to are those served by ZOA, namely, Mae La, Umphiem-Mai, Nu Po, Mae La Oon, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Tham Hin and Ban Don Yang

## Conclusion

At present, the bulk of learning activities available in the camps focuses on languages (English and Thai), technical skills training (agriculture automechanics, sewing), professional development and community issues. This makes sense in the context of resettlement (language needs and the need to train people to take over from those who leave) and possible integration into Thai society.

However, mother tongue literacy and numeracy provision is limited. Moreover, there is a gap in basic education and continuing education for adults. The Night Schools in Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin only cater to secondary-level learners. Also, at present, the Thai language course is not linked to the Thai education system.

Another strength of the learning programmes provided is the array of technical and craft programmes available. The next step in strengthening these programmes is to link them to income-generation and further education opportunities, thereby providing learners with both technical and transferable skills. The latter could be done by embedding literacy, numeracy and basic skills into technical and craft programmes.

Professional development and work-related learning programmes are well provided especially for skilled NGO employees. The content is directly linked to work-related needs. It is important though to consider the professional development of unskilled NGO employees or those who are employed in less skilled work.

Education on health, protection and social issues is widely covered by the activities implemented by the CBOs and NGOs. Moreover, they use interesting and varied media to communicate their ideas and to reinforce practices. This work is relevant and timely. However, it is not clear how effective the messages are. Assessing their effectiveness, however, is not in the scope of this project.

Looking at the organized and non-organized learning as a whole, there is good linkage within courses but little linkage between courses and little progression. There are more opportunities for horizontal than vertical progression - learners finish one type of course and then start another type of course, rather than move up along the same skill set. This is largely because 1) the vertical progression paths for many of the courses are limited, and 2) learners are not adequately prepared to move upwards along the general education path.

Now that we have an overview of the provision for adult learning in the camps, we shall turn to an examination of residents' learning needs and interests.

## 4 Camp Residents' Learning Needs and Interests

In this chapter, the learning needs and interests of different groups of respondents are identified and explored. Learning is situated and contextualized in the daily lives of individuals, taking into account their previous educational experience and personal concerns. Table 12 lists and describes the target groups covered in this study.

**Table 12 Target groups from which individuals were interviewed**

Target groups		
Young people whose education has been interrupted because of	Pregnancy Marriage Other reasons	Men, women Different religious and ethnic backgrounds
Adults who are not literate in their home language	Skaw Karen Burmese	Men, women Disabled Different religious and ethnic backgrounds
Adults who are literate with little or no schooling	Working	Low-skill work in camp Working outside camp } Men, women } Disabled } Different religious and ethnic backgrounds
	Not working	
Adults with higher levels of schooling (beyond primary level)	Working in skilled jobs in the camp	} Men, women } Disabled } Different religious and ethnic backgrounds
	Not working	

In the next section, the patterns of participation and learning interests of camp residents (as reported in the ZOA Education Survey 2005) are presented. This is followed by data from the current assessment examining the motivations of and barriers to learning faced by each target group. Specific recommendations are made for each target group. The chapter ends with a discussion of the crosscutting issues of resettlement and disability.

## Patterns in participation and learning interests

Information from the ZOA Education Survey 2005 gives us an overview of camp residents' participation patterns and learning interests. First, there is uneven and unequal participation in learning programmes: young adults, people with higher levels of schooling and people in high-skill occupations take greatest advantage of learning opportunities. Teachers and respondents who had dropped out of school were very interested in attending courses: about 90% of the former wanted to attend a language course and 90% of the latter wanted to attend a vocational course. On the other hand, only about 50% of the general population wanted to attend courses (Oh, 2006). In fact, this is not unique to the refugee camps; it is a common phenomenon in other countries (OECD, 2003).

What type of courses had survey respondents already attended? It was reported that 44% (1369 out of 3062) had attended an awareness-raising course (e.g., HIV awareness, mine risk education, domestic violence and first aid in descending order). For language courses, 30% (915 out of 2990) had attended, in descending order, Skaw Karen, Burmese, English and Thai. The vocational courses had attracted 27% (832 out of 3048) of the respondents; sewing (almost a third of respondents), agriculture and medical courses had been attended by the most number of people (Oh, 2006).

What type of courses did respondents want to attend? The most popular vocational courses were: sewing (36% of 2012 respondents), animal raising (26%), agriculture and medical courses (23% each), computers (22%) and automechanics (15%).

For awareness-raising programmes, the most popular option was first aid with 56% of all respondents, followed by domestic violence (44%), HIV (36%) and mine risk education (31%). The other courses that respondents wanted to attend were

- 1) socio-political awareness courses on the environment, politics, constitution, globalization, leadership skills, peace, psychology, advocacy, psychosocial issues, social affairs, women's rights, children's rights and human rights, and
- 2) health-related courses about drugs, child care, bird flu, health education, mental health and nursing.

Language choices with the highest percentage of responses were English at 83% of 1761 respondents and Thai at 40%. About a fifth wanted to learn Skaw Karen and Burmese.

Some caution has to be used in interpreting these figures. The patterns of attendance and choice are dependent on interest, availability of course and selection procedures. These figures do not accurately report the preferred choices of the respondents. Nonetheless, the data gives us some idea of respondents' learning choices: the courses that the majority of people reported attending and wanting to attend were agriculture, sewing, medical knowledge and English. This was reinforced in the current assessment: English ranked highly on the list, together with Thai, computer skills, agriculture and sewing.

Having looked at the broad patterns of participation and learning interests for the general population, we now turn to a more nuanced examination of the motivations of each target group and the barriers they face using data collected from the current assessment.

### **Young people who left school because of marriage or pregnancy**

We interviewed 35 young people who dropped out of school under the age of 20 in six camps. Of these, 27 were female and 28 stopped attending school because they had 'gotten married'. The sample was drawn from the Education Survey 2005 (using a snowball sample for this group) and from the Shoklo Malaria Research Unit (SMRU) where pregnant women go for regular antenatal checkups in Mae La. There were no respondents from Ban Don Yang.

The focus was on those who had dropped out because of marriage or pregnancy. We spoke to young women at different stages of marriage and pregnancy: those who were married without children, those who were pregnant, those who had just given birth, and those whose children were six months to one year old.

In the ZOA Education Survey 2005, marriage (followed by problems with learning at school and having to help family by working) was the main reason why young people dropped out of school. The majority of those who had dropped out because of marriage were young women.

We do not have figures of the number of young women who dropped out of school because of marriage or pregnancy but we can estimate using data from a study conducted by the American Refugee Committee (ARC). In 2005, 90 and 75 pregnant women under age 20 went to ARC for antenatal care in Umphiem-Mai and Nu Po respectively (Walsh and Hendy, 2006).

In this assessment, the young people stopped going to school either because they got married, became pregnant, were afraid that their reputations would suffer because they were seen with a boyfriend and/or became sexually active. All of the young people in our sample voluntarily stopped going to school; they felt ashamed and embarrassed at having to face their teachers and fellow classmates. Many also reported that they felt embarrassed because the neighbours and the people in their community talked about them.

The KED does not have an explicit policy on young people who marry before completing their studies. Also, there is no school policy stating that young people who become sexually active or marry are not allowed to continue attending school. However, there is an implicit understanding between the schools and their students that young people who marry are not allowed to attend school. Some schools allow students to take the end-of-year exam if they drop out in Standard 10, but they are not allowed to attend school. They have to study on their own.

The implicit rule that students who marry are not allowed to attend school tends to have more detrimental effects on young women than men because young women tend to marry men who are older than them (Walsh and Hendy, 2006). In addition, young men who drop out of school because of marriage have the possibility of attending school in another camp.

**Motivations** For the majority of the young people interviewed, the desire to complete their studies was high. One young woman said that when she stopped attending school, she had dreams of returning. In our sample, all except three of the young women had at least completed Standard 7. In other words, they had started on their secondary schooling before dropping out.

In the ZOA Education Survey 2005, all the young people interviewed about this reported that they wanted to complete their secondary level studies. One and a half years on, the ones we followed up on still wanted to do so. Completing Standard 10 is seen as a way of raising their standing in the community. They also felt that they could serve their community better if they had more education. In addition, many mentioned that it is easier to gain employment with Standard 10 qualifications. Employment is becoming more competitive now and Standard 10 qualifications seem to be the minimum requirement for many jobs offered by CBOs and NGOs.

Besides the desire to complete their studies, the young people in this assessment were interested in taking English, computer and sewing lessons.

**Barriers to learning** Young women who become pregnant face considerable barriers to continuing their schooling and to attending other courses. First, some of them experience discomfort during the first few months of their pregnancy. This affects their ability and willingness to attend learning activities. Second, their freedom may be restricted by their husbands or parents-in-law. On the other hand, the parents of the majority of pregnant women we spoke to were generally very disappointed that their daughter had had to stop school and hoped that she would be able to continue in one way or another.

Young pregnant women also tend to face isolation – they are no longer part of their school community. They often end up staying at home. This means that socially, they are cut off from people of their own age. There are few opportunities for young women to leave the home and to come across information on learning activities. In addition, women with young babies have more childcare concerns. They may also be looking after other family members.

#### **Recommendations for this group**

##### **1 Establish youth centres and youth clubs in collaboration with KSNG, KYO and Right to Play**

There may already be some youth clubs and centres in the camps, and these have to be identified. These would be places where young people can attend sports leagues and cultural activities and become involved in learning activities which would enable them to continue their studies or to acquire the skills they need for gaining employment. They would also be able to hold meetings, keep shared resources and meet friends.

It is also possible to exploit the locations where young people gather. In Tham Hin, for example, one of these places is near the ZOA Education Centre. It would be possible to provide young people with enjoyable activities and to incorporate messages relating to health, sex education and social issues. This could be modelled along the lines of the Right to Play sports programmes for children.

##### **2 Provide further opportunities to enable young people to continue their education**

The KWO provides a 'nonformal education' course and all camps offer vocational courses. Night Schools only run in two camps and only provide classes for Standards 8 to 10. There are few opportunities for young people to continue general education outside the schooling system. Some thought should be given to widening the scope and scale of the Night School programmes available in Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin camps. These could be grouped under the term 'Adult School' where young people (as well as adults) can attend accelerated learning programmes.

**3 Address the constraints faced by young pregnant women**

For young pregnant women, it is necessary to look at their situation over a longer time period, taking into account their pregnancy, birth and childcare obligations once the child is born. Often, if they have supportive parents and husbands, they will be able to attend learning activities during the whole period, with intermittent breaks. Once the child is weaned off breastmilk, and with support from relatives, young women are able to attend learning activities on a full-time basis.

This means that learning activities for this particular population have to take into account and accommodate their familial obligations. Many of them reported that the best time to attend a learning activity is either in the morning (9am-12pm) or in the afternoon (1pm-3pm).

In addition, there needs to be some efforts targeted at changing attitudes towards teenage sexuality and pregnancy, and measures to work towards enabling young people to continue their education.

**Case study: A learning centre in an antenatal clinic**

During the assessment, the possibility of setting up a learning centre at the Shoklo Malaria Research Unit (SMRU) antenatal clinic in Mae La was explored. The learning centre would be located in the antenatal clinic waiting room where pregnant women wait for about an hour before they see the doctor.

Pregnant women visit the antenatal clinic once every week from their eighth week of pregnancy to delivery. On average, they wait for about an hour for their morning appointment. This means that they have a free hour every week for about 24 to 28 weeks (six to seven months altogether). The clinic is open between 9am and 12pm, Monday to Friday. All pregnant women go to one particular SMRU clinic in Mae La. On average there are 80 women at the clinic everyday. They sit and chat while waiting. Some bring their children with them.

Regular attendance for six to seven months means that it will be possible to have some continuity in learning. Also, young women who are restricted from moving around the camp by their families have a legitimate reason to be at the clinic.

This could act as a one-stop learning centre, the purpose of which would be to

- provide information, guidance and lessons on pregnancy, childcare and nutrition
- provide outreach and information on learning activities to all pregnant women
- provide a social environment where being pregnant is the norm and completely acceptable. This reduces the shame and embarrassment that young pregnant women face, and provides them with a community of people going through the same changes as they are. If the SMRU is willing to implement group pregnancy appointments, pregnant women will have a stable group of women with whom they will have joint appointments weekly and this will provide them with a stable learning community.
- provide resources (books, materials, teachers) to enable women to continue their studies, take a course in English, and/or learn how to knit and crochet (they should be able to complete a piece of clothing for their child in six months)
- provide child-friendly spaces for their children so that they will be comfortable, be able to play safely and have access to learning resources

- provide resources for learning and gaining information for the relatives and friends who accompany pregnant women
- act as an information centre where information can be posted (for example, about other people's resettlement experiences)
- provide nutritious food
- serve as a drop-in centre where pregnant women can go to even if they do not have an appointment at the antenatal clinic
- provide counselling services (on alcoholism, domestic abuse, work opportunities and so on).

It would be necessary to recruit a teacher or teachers with multiple skills.

The centre should be pregnant-woman- and child-friendly: comfortable, nicely decorated, and filled with flowers and plants. It is suggested that it be called something which would appeal to them, for example, Lotus Garden.

1. A visit was made to the SMRU antenatal clinic where we spoke to medical staff and the people in charge of the clinic. SMRU is making plans to change parts of its compound and there are possibilities of collaborating with them in building or adapting buildings to create a waiting room for pregnant women where the learning centre could be located. This would be a good time to collaborate with them as they are also planning to make infrastructure changes. SMRU is thinking of constructing a building which would serve as a dining room (for SMRU use in the early morning and late afternoon) at the back of the antenatal clinic. This would be available for use as a waiting room/learning centre for pregnant women. This site is currently empty and would serve well as a waiting area - it is shaded, there is water supply, and there are possibilities for child-friendly areas.
2. SMRU is thinking of transforming one of the staff houses into a training area and office, and the training area may be used as a waiting room/learning centre for pregnant women.

SMRU has no concrete plans and these plans have to be approved by the management.

### Adults who are not literate in their home language (Skaw Karen and Burmese)

Data from the ZOA Education Survey 2005 (Table 13) shows that the majority (74%) of the camp residents interviewed speak Skaw Karen at home, followed by Pwo Karen (13%) and Burmese (11%). Respondents' levels of literacy were self-reported.

**Table 13 Language used at home**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Skaw Karen</b>	1946	74.8
<b>Pwo Karen</b>	351	13.5
<b>Burmese</b>	295	11.3
<b>Other</b>	11	0.4
<b>Total</b>	2603	100

Source: Education Survey 2005

Of the 1946 respondents whose home language was Skaw Karen, about a fifth reported not being able to read or write Skaw Karen. For Burmese speakers, about a quarter could not read or write Burmese (Oh, 2006).

**Table 14 Percentage of respondents who read and write their mother tongue with difficulty or not at all**

<b>Skaw Karen-speaking respondents</b>	<b>With difficulty</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
Reading ability in Skaw Karen	8	18.8
Writing ability in Skaw Karen	8	20.3
<b>Burmese-speaking respondents</b>		
Reading ability in Burmese	11.2	23.4
Writing ability in Burmese	11.2	25.4

Source: Education Survey 2005

The number of people interviewed in the ZOA Education Survey 2005 who have Burmese as their home language is greatest in the Tak camps. These camps have the largest percentage of Muslim<sup>4</sup> residents whose home language is usually Burmese.

<sup>4</sup> This group of refugees identifies itself socially, ethnically and religiously as Muslim.

For both Skaw Karen and Burmese, the reading and writing abilities of women was lower than that of men across all levels. When we compare the reading and writing abilities of both groups of women, the percentage of Burmese-speaking women who could not read or write at all is lower than that of Skaw Karen-speaking women.

**Motivations** In the current assessment, we interviewed people who were not literate in their home language (Skaw Karen or Burmese). Even though Pwo Karen-speakers make up the second largest group in the camps, we did not include Pwo Karen speakers as we decided to concentrate on the working languages in the camps. We interviewed 19 Skaw Karen-speaking adults who could not read and write Skaw Karen, and 6 adults who could not read and write Burmese, their mother tongue. Of the former group, 9 wanted to learn to read and write Karen. In the latter group, half wanted to learn to read and write.

We also interviewed learners who are currently attending the KWO literacy course. This provided us with a very good understanding of adults' reasons for learning to read and write. The reasons respondents (those who were attending literacy classes and those who were not) gave for wanting to learn to read and write are very specific, namely to

- help their children with homework
- be able to read posters
- be able to sign their names when they collect rations at the godown/warehouse
- make sure they are given the right amount of rations, check their ration books
- be able to read their own language
- not feel embarrassed when with friends
- be able to write letters to friends
- be sure that they are not being cheated
- know their rights
- to make notes at meetings
- to read the Bible.

Learners who were attending the KWO literacy course were enthusiastic and excited about being able to read and write. In addition, they were interested in continuing beyond learning to read and write and were considering going on to the Nonformal Education (NFE) programme offered by the KWO.

Besides literacy courses, we asked the respondents what they would like to learn. Many were interested in attending agriculture, sewing, cooking and baking, and English language courses. A small proportion wanted to complete their studies. It is often the case that Standard 10 qualifications are required in order to qualify for NGO jobs. Besides its use value, Standard 10 qualifications are perceived as increasing one's status in the community.

**Barriers to learning**

The barriers to learning cited in this study were: lack of childcare, lack of time, too old, no education, having to support family income and health-related problems. Learning needs are often, naturally, pushed aside when people are confronted with urgent concerns. However, we also found that the greatest barrier was how they perceived themselves and the learning process.

Those who did not want to learn to read and write usually reported facing practical barriers. However, on further discussion, we found that they would express the desire to learn how to read and write. This is because many perceived attending courses as something that children did, and that was not relevant to their immediate circumstances. Second, many of them felt embarrassed and self-conscious about attending courses because they felt that they were not educated enough.

In addition, many of the respondents took it personally if they were not accepted on a course or not asked to attend a course. They need a lot of encouragement and support to persist in registering for a course. They have less confidence in their learning abilities and are more likely to withdraw from attempting to attend courses if they believe that they are being discriminated against because of their lack of education.

Moreover, the way in which course recruitment is done affects their eagerness to attend. In Umphiem-Mai, the section leader selects course participants from each section. This is based on practical and other considerations. However, if the selection criteria are not clear and transparent to all, these learners tend to believe that they are not being chosen because of their lack of ability.

Further, the course requirements for certain vocational training courses are a real barrier to these learners. In some camps (Mae Ra Ma Luang for example), it is perceived that in order to attend vocational training courses, learners need to have completed Standard 4 or 5.

Another point to note is that those with low levels of schooling may have unrealistic expectations about learning. One Burmese-speaking woman believed that she would be able to read and write Burmese and English (with no prior knowledge) in six months.

Besides attitudinal and structural barriers, these learners face very real practical barriers. First, information about courses and learning activities is not easily accessible to them. They cannot read posters; for Burmese speakers in Mae La, information is announced in Karen using the loudspeaker. It is often the case that the loudspeaker is not clear and it does not reach all houses.

Second, there is a misconception that the KWO literacy courses are only for women learners. This discourages men from attending.

For the minority groups, there is even less provision. There are no literacy courses provided by the Muslim community in Mae La and Umphiem-Mai, although there had previously been a literacy programme run by the Muslim Women's Organization in Umphiem-Mai.

**Case study: Illiterate adults with little or no schooling working in high skill jobs**

An interesting example of people whose work is highly skilled and have low education levels is traditional birth attendants. Many of them cannot read or write. An AMI representative reported that those below 40 years of age are more likely to be interested to learn to read and write, whereas those older than 40 see very little point in it. It was reported that those who cannot read and write have difficulty remembering parts of the training that AMI provides because they cannot take notes. The older respondents also had eye problems associated with old age.

Besides attitudinal barriers, practical barriers make it difficult for them to attend learning activities regularly - their work is irregular and they have to provide midwife services whenever people call for them.

**Recommendations for this group**

Make literacy a priority in the camps. This is important because the ability to read and write in one's own language opens up more work and life opportunities, enables adults to be self-sufficient and helps to boost their confidence.

Increasing and sustaining literacy in the camps can be achieved through a myriad of activities, events and campaigns.

## 1 **Outreach programmes**

Attitudinal barriers are the most important thing to overcome for this group. People who are not literate need someone they can talk to about their needs and to show them how to go about getting the resources to resolve their learning and other problems. It is necessary to explain what the courses are and how they will be relevant to their needs, and how they will be taught. This could be done at places that adults regularly go to – church/ temple/ mosque, godown/warehouse, meeting places and so on.

## 2 **Create literacy-rich environments through camp-wide activities and campaigns**

Literacy should be part of everyday life. Roads, buildings, plants, trees and so on should be labelled in Karen, Burmese, English and Thai. In addition, all ZOA courses (vocational training or otherwise) should create literacy- and numeracy-rich classrooms and environments. For example, the vegetable plots in the agriculture courses could be labelled in the four languages.

More can be done to exploit the camp libraries run by the Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA). The SVA already has parent-child reading activities, Karen poem activities for the elderly, and puppetry for young people. The library could be used for outreach as well as a place to conduct literacy activities and events.

Fun-filled activities such as spelling competitions by camp section with prizes, literacy clubs stocked with literacy and numeracy games for adults, drama, and computer games could be used to promote literacy in the camps.

## 3 **Identify and target specific literacy and numeracy skills and/or knowledge relevant to learners' needs**

The specific literacy needs of camp residents were identified above. There could be other ones such as going to the doctor, reading instructions for medicine, voting and so on. Once these are identified, the outreach activities and literacy programmes can be tailored to help learners achieve these goals.

## 4 **Support literacy courses**

It is important to ensure that literacy programmes are sustainable. Malone and Arnove (1998) list the features that make literacy programmes sustainable: wise use of human, material and financial resources, co-operative relationships among supporting agencies, institutionalized infrastructure and opportunities for ongoing education.

It is recommended that KWO and KYO are supported in their efforts in providing literacy and adult learning programmes. The KWO has been running its literacy programme since 2001 and has had 900 learners in all the camps except Tham Hin. That is an average of 25 learners per year. The KYO representative in Ban Don Yang reported that the KYO has been planning to introduce literacy programmes, but this has been on hold due to a lack of funding.

Although there are more women than men who are illiterate, it is easier for them to gain access to learning activities. First, the majority of learners in the KWO literacy programme are women because there is a tendency for learners to think that the KWO programme is only for women. Second, men tend to work in irregular, low-paying jobs which make it difficult for them to attend regular classes.

Another gap that needs to be addressed is the lack of opportunities for those whose first language is Burmese. There is scope to include men and Burmese speakers by setting up classes in different locations (in people's houses and workplaces) using different learning techniques (market visits, daily life experiences) catered to people's specific learning needs.

## **5 Embed literacy and numeracy in vocational training and other courses**

In the assessment, camp-based vocational trainers reported that literate learners tend to perform better than non-literate learners in vocational programmes. Non-literate learners' rates of retention are low as they cannot take and refer to notes. They also find the theoretical parts of the course more difficult. Consequently, they retain less knowledge and sometimes repeat the same course several times.

Research shows that embedding literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) into vocational programmes is linked to more positive outcomes for learners than courses for which the LLN provision is separate (Casey et al, 2006).

What is embedding? Embedding literacy, language and numeracy into a vocational course means that learning about reading, writing, language use and mathematical principles occurs as part of a programme of skills training. Casey et al (2006) developed a scale which describes, from the learner's perspective, the extent to which literacy, language and numeracy are embedded, ranging from non-embedded to fully embedded.

At its simplest, for learners on a non-embedded course, any connection between their vocational study and their LLN learning would be made only by the learners themselves. They may, for example, take a mathematical problem from their vocational study to a numeracy or maths teacher, but the learner would be the one making the connection. A fully embedded or integrated course may or may not include structural features that have often been associated with embedding, such as two teachers timetabled to teach together, or one teacher teaching more than one subject area. In some cases embedding was being achieved through separate LLN sessions within an integrated whole (Casey et al, 2006, p8).

Casey et al (2006) explored the impact of embedded approaches to literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) learning on 79 vocational programmes in 15 further education colleges in England. The 1,916 learners who took part in the research were preparing for national vocational qualifications at Levels 1 or 2 in one of five areas of learning: Health and Social Care, Hair and Beauty Therapy, Construction, Business, Engineering. The findings showed clearly that

- retention on programmes was higher, particularly at Level 2
- success rates in the vocational subject were higher
- learners were more likely to achieve literacy and language qualifications
- learners were more likely to achieve numeracy qualifications
- learners believed that they were better prepared for their work in the future.

Certain features were attributed to successful embedding.

**Teamwork between LLN teachers and vocational teachers** ensured that learners benefited from being taught by teams of staff, each with their own different areas of expertise, working closely together. In fact, where a single teacher was asked to take responsibility for teaching both vocational skills and LLN, the probability of learners succeeding with literacy and numeracy qualifications was lower (Casey et al, 2006).

**A common understanding of and commitment to embedding** with the support of senior management increases the chances of successful embedding. Senior managers need to fully understand the practical and pedagogical implications of embedding (Casey et al, 2006).

**Teaching and learning that connect LLN to vocational content** supports successful embedding. LLN teachers need opportunities to become familiar with the content and style of vocational teaching and learning so that they can learn how LLN are used both for the particular

job and in the vocational classroom (NRDC, undated). Vocational teachers also need to understand the role of LLN skills in learning and work for their vocational areas. Directly linking LLN to a practical task and ensuring that there is an opportunity for LLN support at the time of the practical task is particularly effective (NRDC, undated).

**Institutional level policies and organisational features** need to be put in place to support general and specific good practice in teaching LLN (Casey et al, 2006).

**Linking the value of LLN to learners' aspirations and developing learners 'professional' identity** supports successful embedding. This is because learners value LLN when they can see that it is an integral part of the learning for the job that they are aspiring to. This can be done by demonstrating how aspects of literacy, language and numeracy form integral parts of the professional working practices of different occupations (NRDC, undated).

#### 6 **Introduce clear progression pathways**

There should be basic skills and progression pathways for adult learning, which could be a combination of skills and subjects. Learners could then take the KED board exams to obtain primary and secondary school qualifications, if they wanted to. ZOA is currently looking into accreditation of the school curriculum using the Thai system. Linking the adult learning curriculum to this would ensure that children and adults obtain nationally recognized qualifications.

## **Literate adults with little or no schooling working in the lower-skill jobs**

Working adults with low education levels tend to be involved in irregular, low-skill and low-pay work. Respondents in this target group work outside the camp, and as day labourers carrying building materials and rations in the camp.

Work that can be found outside the camp typically involves harvesting crops, clearing fields and other agricultural tasks. This work is irregular as it depends on the season and the political climate. It requires some travelling and leaves the refugees open to arrest by Thai authorities. Some residents leave the camp for a few days at a stretch, and they do this two or three times a year.

### **Motivations and barriers to learning**

For this group, they often do not see the practical value of education or training for themselves as they need to provide an income for their families. It is also difficult for them to see the practical use in the long-term. Moreover, there is an opportunity cost associated with attending a course (the loss of daily wages) which may or may not be offset by an increase in earning ability after a skill has been acquired. In addition, they are not always in the camp and cannot always attend courses when they are in camp.

### **Recommendations for this group**

In such cases, it is very important to link skills training to income generation, and to show people the practical value of the training programme. In addition, linking concrete needs to learning activities would cater to their learning needs and encourage them to attend. For example, some respondents reported needing to learn Thai so that they could speak to Thai authorities when they work outside the camp. For them, a series of short, flexible learning activities which concentrate on Thai for talking to Thai authorities and employers would be useful. This could also act as a stepping stone to further learning.

## **Literate adults with little or no schooling and not working**

### **Motivations and barriers to learning**

The majority of people stay at home. Those with little schooling are less likely to attend education courses and programmes because they may be embarrassed about their low levels of education, they do not have access to information, they do not have the confidence to register to courses, and/or they do not understand or see the practical use of education and training. Also, many of them think of adult learning as going back to school which is full-time, disempowering and un motivating. When a different form of learning - flexible, relevant to their immediate needs - was outlined and described to them, they became more interested in participating.

There is also a group of lowly educated people who are very interested in continuing their studies. ‘*Ye aiddor malo*’ (I want to learn/study) was a common refrain, but they were unable to articulate what it was that they wanted to learn. For this group, raising their education level is important for their self-esteem and status in society.

### **Recommendations for this group**

#### **1 Implement an outreach programme**

For adults who are not literate and/or have low levels of schooling, there needs to be an outreach programme based in places where adults gather for recreational or learning purposes (social clubs, for example). This outreach programme would explain what adult learning means and give information about training programmes and courses available in the camps. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

#### **2 Design learning around income-generation and livelihood activities**

Many respondents in this group were interested in trade; learning activities should support them in gaining skills, capital and knowledge to earn an income. This is done by WEAVE and a new initiative on livelihood strategies is currently being spearheaded by the UNHCR. These are positive steps towards linking skills training and income generation.

#### **3 Introduce continuing education for young people and adults**

Besides the KWO literacy and NFE programme, there are no programmes that focus on basic skills (improving reading, writing, numeracy, map reading and so on) and continuing education for adults. For most of the respondents, the idea of an adult school where they could learn English and/or continue with their studies was appealing. This does not have to be an actual school building. The school itself would be an adult learning institution incorporating the different adult learning programmes that exist, providing relevant programme content for progression.

### **Adults with high levels of schooling and who work**

Adults with high levels of schooling are defined as those who completed Standards 8 to 10 or the equivalent. We interviewed ZOA Resident Employees of the Karen Education Project (REK), ZOA caretakers, teachers, Resident Teacher Trainers (RTTs), vocational trainers and adults working with CBOs and NGOs.

**Motivations** They have a great desire to attend courses and to further their studies. Furthermore, they are more likely to have the resources and the know-how to do so. In addition, those who are working in high-skill jobs are focussed on enhancing and improving the skills needed for work. This group of people identifies highly with their profession and their motivation to learn is high.

**ZOA REKs** were very interested in learning skills and knowledge that would help them to work more effectively, such as:

- how to mobilize, organize and manage the community (Mae La)
- how to deal more easily with the Thai authorities (Mae La, Nu Po)
- education management skills, such as forming a school, managing a school, policy, aims and objectives, explaining job descriptions to teachers (Mae Ra Ma Luang)
- English (Mae La, Mae La Oon)
- computer skills (Nu Po)
- accounting and finance (Mae La Oon)
- how to write reports and proposals (Mae La)
- how to drive (Mae La).

**ZOA caretakers** reported wanting to learn about agriculture (Mae La), knitting/crocheting (Mae La), and the following skills to improve their work abilities:

- English (Umphiem-Mai, Mae Ra Ma Luang, Nu Po)
- computer skills (Nu Po, Mae La Oon)
- leadership skills (Mae La Oon)
- management skills (Mae La Oon).

**Teachers and RTTs** wanted to attend English classes, computer training and Thai classes but many were unable to because these classes take place during school hours. Many of them also wanted to enhance their computer skills so as to improve their administrative work. Other courses that teachers were interested in were cooking and baking, and sewing.

**Vocational trainers** were interested in increasing their knowledge and skill in the courses that they teach. They need ongoing professional development. They were also interested in English, Thai and computer lessons. Like the teachers, they had difficulty attending classes because they work full-time.

**CBO and NGO employees**, like the other groups, were interested in skills which would enhance their productivity and efficiency at work. They were interested in leadership, management and community organization skills. They had many more interests than the other groups: English, Thai, computers, refugee rights, self-development, leadership for girls, how to manage a library, how to look after children, managing relationships with parents, knitting, T-shirt printing and being creative.

**Barriers to learning**

While this group of learners is best able to analyze and articulate their learning needs, they are, however, the group with the least amount of time to attend learning activities because they work full-time. Nevertheless, because their motivation is high, they are ready to overcome these barriers. They do this in a few ways: by quitting their job and starting full-time courses (many teachers reported doing this in the ZOA Education Survey 2005) and/or building time into their busy schedules to attend courses.

**Recommendations for this group**

The learning needs of learners with higher levels of education working in highly skilled full-time jobs are often very specific to their work needs. Hence, learning activities have to be designed in accordance with these and the time restrictions they face.

- 1 **Encourage NGOs, camp bodies and schools to work with their staff to identify the exact nature of the learning they require**  
This ensures that the staff members learn what will be useful to their work. For example, the respondents in this study have already identified Thai, English and computer skills as the things they would like to learn. Thai lessons could be geared towards negotiating and discussing with the Thai authorities, English for report writing, and computer skills for simplifying administrative tasks and increasing efficiency.
- 2 **NGOs, camp bodies and schools can support their staff by providing more structured (rather than *ad hoc*) ways of improving skill levels**  
This can be done through mentoring, coaching and regular follow-ups. A good example of this is the English lessons provided by AMI in its hospital to staff during work hours in Nu Po. This is regular and occurs at a time which is convenient to the staff.
- 3 **ZOA should review its job description for caretakers to fully exploit their potential and to increase their learning**  
At the moment, ZOA caretakers cook, clean and prepare rooms for meetings, among other manual tasks. As the majority of them have completed Standard 10, they have the ability and willingness to undertake more computer-based and administrative tasks.
- 4 **Redesign and develop current courses so that they meet the needs of the different learning groups**  
For example, computer courses for teachers should be designed to help teachers with their administrative work and with teaching delivery.
- 5 **Build flexibility into course times and schedules**  
All courses (except ZOA NFE English and Thai) are full-time courses (9am-3pm, Monday to Friday). Different course scheduling could include part-time courses, courses during the summer break, Saturday classes, and classes after 3pm on weekdays.

## 6 **Introduce support for self-directed learning**

For people who are highly educated and highly motivated, it may be possible to provide resources such as cassette and books for learning languages and other skills. This, however, cannot be the only form of support they receive – they will need teaching and learning support which can be provided by regular workshops and learning sessions, and a stable community of learners.

### **Adults with high levels of schooling and not working**

**Motivations** In our assessment, adults who completed Standard 10 and are not working tend to have attended courses already or are currently attending them. They are the ones who have both the educational capacity and time to take advantage of the various courses available in the camps.

**Barriers to learning** The most common barrier cited was the lack of childcare, and family responsibilities.

#### **Recommendations for this group**

For these learners, it is important to ensure that they are able to master the skills and knowledge that they learn through continued practice and further opportunities to deepen their knowledge. More intermediate and advanced courses linked to income-generation and livelihood strategies need to be developed.

### **Crosscutting issues: resettlement and disability**

#### **Resettlement**

The resettlement process takes a long time and is plagued with uncertainties. Even when a refugee is accepted for resettlement, there is no guarantee that s/he will actually be resettled. The majority of the respondents who were considering resettlement were not making any preparations for resettlement. This is understandable because there are few resources in the camp and the uncertainty of whether they will actually be resettled is great. Also, many of them were unable to think of what to do to prepare for resettlement.

Of those who were preparing for resettlement, they were

- learning English on a course
- learning English on their own through books and dictionaries
- attending vocational training courses (sewing, computers)
- practising the skills that they acquired through vocational training courses
- trying to obtain more information about the receiving countries.

At present, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides a Cultural Orientation programme for certain countries. Once the refugees are accepted, they attend about 25 hours of sessions on the cultural, legal and social aspects of their receiving country. The IOM is contracted by certain countries to conduct the Cultural Orientation programmes.

ZOA provides a conversational English course based on the language needs of people who are being resettled. Currently, it requires learners to be able to read and write English. ZOA has plans to begin a pre-beginner course that teaches literacy in English.

### **Recommendations for this group**

It would be useful to provide resources and materials for self-study, including books, films and documentaries on the places that residents are resettling to. This would be particularly useful to refugees resettling to Norway, Sweden and Denmark (residents in Nu Po) who have no opportunities to learn Norwegian and Danish. Resources and materials (books, cassettes and CDs) on the languages and cultures of these countries would help to partially address this gap.

Another measure to help prepare residents for resettlement is to strengthen the informal channels of information that are already present. Letters and pictures sent back to the camp from families that have already been resettled can be displayed in permanent exhibitions and on signboards in schools and places where people gather.

In addition, more could be done to coordinate informal group support amongst the refugees – a place where people can gather and exchange information and examine concerns to deal with the life changes that they are facing.

### **Disability**

Most disabled adults are mine victims. Many of them are blind and/or have lost limbs. The majority are not employed. In addition, they often have very little formal schooling. This is because mines are usually planted in the border areas; villagers and soldiers tend to be lowly educated in these areas.

Their physical and social circumstances mean that their learning needs are very different from those who are able-bodied. For example, the Karen Handicapped Workers Association (KHWA) in Mae La set up radio mechanic vocational programmes for the disabled. However, when these programmes were taken over by ZOA trainers and other learners were encouraged to attend, the number of disabled participants fell dramatically and there are no longer any in the programmes that were originally set up for them.

This group of learners has low confidence in their abilities, as many have lost the ability to generate income or even to look after themselves physically. When asked what they wanted to learn, they all agreed that they wanted to learn English. Being able to speak English is important because it raises their self-esteem and worth in their society – the ability to speak English is highly sought after because it enables camp residents to speak with foreigners about their living conditions and to communicate with donors.

**Recommendations for this group**

The KHWA runs a Care Villa which accommodates 16 disabled men. Half of them live there and the rest visit everyday; they often stay over. A learning programme runs on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the Care Villa where they are taught how to read and write, use Braille, play music and to work on craft for sale. They also have English lessons but these have been suspended because the teacher is no longer able to continue with the lessons. It is recommended that an English teacher is recruited to teach English at the Care Villa, and to ensure that there is continuity in the learning experience.

It is also recommended that this format of communal living combined with learning is replicated more widely. This type of learning programme can be replicated easily as it is not necessary to have teachers with specialized skills.

The motivations and interests of the different target groups were examined in this chapter. We also examined the barriers to learning that they face. The findings show clearly that each group of learners has different motivations for learning and that they face different barriers. It is apparent that one size does not fit all. Nevertheless, it is still possible to implement common solutions which can help the majority. In the next chapter, the barriers are grouped together and analyzed, and recommendations to overcome them are presented.

## 5 Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Learning

As the previous chapter showed, there are numerous reasons why learners find it difficult to attend learning programmes and activities. In this chapter, these reasons are assembled and categorized into three main groups.

**Attitudinal barriers** include vague and inaccurate perceptions of education and learning, negative attitudes towards learning, lack of confidence in one's ability to learn and lack of motivation.

**Practical or material** barriers refer to the direct (fees) and indirect (income foregone, books, equipment) costs of learning, lack of time, lack of childcare or family care, physical distance, health-related issues and the lack of information.

**Structural barriers** encompass the lack of appropriate education or training opportunities, age or qualification restrictions, and inconsistent selection procedures.

Undoubtedly, the reasons are inter-related. However, categorizing them helps to simplify and structure the information so that it is easier to find targeted solutions.

We have information about the specific barriers that people face in gaining access to and taking up learning opportunities from the ZOA Education Survey 2005. Over 2000 respondents were given a list of the barriers that they faced in attending courses. They were then asked to choose all which were relevant to their situation. Table 15 shows the percentage of respondents who chose each option.

**Table 15 Barriers to attending a learning course**

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
No time	46.7
Lack of money	32.7
Look after children	28.3
I don't have any education	22.7
Too old	21.7
Courses not held at a convenient time	12.3
No interest	5.8
Haven't thought about it	4.1
Courses not held at a convenient place	4.1
Other	3.5
Look after relatives	2.6
Family doesn't want	.7

Source: ZOA Education Survey 2005

This information gives us some idea of the type of barriers that respondents faced, mainly practical barriers: 'No time', 'Lack of money', 'Courses not held at a convenient time and place', the need to look after relatives and children. The figures show that 'no time', 'lack of money', and 'need to look after children' were the most common barriers chosen.

However, the information is limited. Only one option, 'I don't have any education', seems to fall into the structural barriers category. For the attitudinal barrier category, the options were: 'No interest' and 'Too old'.

The interviews conducted in the current assessment were used to contextualize the reasons chosen and to uncover other structural and attitudinal barriers that learners face.

In our discussions with participants, we found that while practical and structural barriers do affect learners' opportunities to attend courses, they are surmountable. Attitudinal barriers, on the other hand, are much more deeply entrenched and need more time and creativity to address.

We found that those who had little or no schooling were more likely to cite practical barriers as a cover for attitudinal barriers. On further investigation, the attitudinal barriers tended to be due to circumstantial issues or to a lack of accurate information.

The more highly educated respondents were already looking for ways to overcome the practical and structural barriers they faced because they were motivated to attend learning activities. For both groups, providing solutions to overcome practical and structural barriers is crucial. However, for the former group, this has to be combined with initiatives that clearly and thoroughly address the assumptions and misinformation underlying attitudinal barriers.

In the rest of this chapter, we look at the three groups of barriers as situated in the daily lives of the learners. Suggestions and recommendations on how to overcome them are offered for each category.

### **Attitudinal barriers**

In our interviews, we often found that those with little or no schooling thought of their school experiences or their children's schooling when they were asked to identify their learning needs. In other words, they associated learning and education with the content (e.g., Maths, Science) and form (classrooms with desks and a teacher in front of the board) of learning that takes place in schools. Further, many adults who are not literate do not enrol in existing programmes either because they do not feel confident about their ability to learn or they have limited knowledge about the exact nature of courses and programmes and how these can benefit them in practical and concrete ways.

In addition, many of the respondents mentioned that they often wait to be invited to attend courses because they believe that that is how it is done. This has implications on access and enrolment procedures.

There are two main ways of dealing with attitudinal barriers. First, outreach activities can help learners to identify their learning needs. Second, it is crucial to design learning activities which are specific to the immediate social and economic needs of adult learners.

**Outreach activities to address perceptions**

For people with low levels of schooling (which is the majority), an outreach programme would help to address inaccurate perceptions of learning and provide them with relevant course information. This would consist of activities that

- clarify and address perceptions about learning
- explain the practical value, relevance and benefits of the learning programmes in the camps
- advise people about which programmes would best suit them
- provide reassurance to people about livelihoods, skill acquisition, and their ability to succeed in the programme
- provide information about course content, times, location and teaching style.

This could be done in a variety of ways.

- 1 Use existing groups, clubs, church/temple/mosque gatherings and regular social activities as settings in which information and advice can be given to participants. This will require greater coordination with CBOs and NGOs.
- 2 Initiate regular social activities in places like schools and libraries for parents where they can gather to play chess, read, exchange information (for resettlement, for example), and through that, start the process of learning other skills and obtaining advice for individual courses.
- 3 Identify and enlist individuals who are well-respected and well-connected to different social networks in the community to encourage people to attend learning programmes.
- 4 Recruit current and former vocational, Thai language and Night School students to spread information through formal and informal social networks.
- 5 Recruit health workers and security people to spread information about learning activities when they conduct their regular house visits.
- 6 Incorporate outreach and programme information dissemination into camp-based staff duties in NGOs. For example, ZOA caretakers could take this on.
- 7 Use the (regular and *ad hoc*) social activities organized by NGOs and CBOs, e.g., ZOA education seminars, as outreach opportunities.
- 8 Organize regular taster sessions of learning programmes where people are invited to take part in a programme for a day so that they can try out a programme before enrolling.

- 9 Organize open days where people are invited to come and talk to the teachers and students, visit the buildings and try out the equipment.
- 10 Create resources and materials with pictures and information about courses so that the information is available to all.

The outreach activities have to take place regularly and in designated areas that adults go to for recreational purposes. It would be good for ZOA or the KED to appoint someone as an outreach officer, who has the responsibility to work with adults and to advise them on their learning. It would also be useful to recruit sports team leaders and coaches as they meet up with their team mates regularly and can give them information and advice on learning.

Camp-wide measures also need to be implemented to raise awareness about the relevance and benefits of increased participation in learning. This could be combined with awareness-raising about social inclusion issues.

**Make content relevant to immediate needs of learners**

Adult learners have family, work and income-generation obligations and are looking for specific solutions to very specific challenges arising from the different aspects of their lives. In other words, they are looking to learn skills and acquire knowledge which have *immediate relevance* to their work and everyday lives. For example, many non-literate respondents said that they wanted to learn to read and write because they wanted to help their children with their homework.

Many of the courses provided in the camps reflect the learning needs and interests of the residents. For example, many respondents were interested in attending the agriculture courses because this would enable them to feed their families by supplementing the rations that they received. However, in many camps, learners quickly lost interest in their newly acquired skills because they were not able to grow vegetables due to the lack of space, equipment, plants and/or seeds.

In addition, adults seek out learning experiences in order to cope with specific *life-changing events* such as marriage, pregnancy, divorce, a new job, and so on (Zemke and Zemke, 1984). A good example of this type of change that camp residents face is resettlement. For life-changing events, adults are generally willing to engage in learning experiences before, after, or even during the actual life change event (Zemke and Zemke, 1984). This is borne out by respondents' desire to know more about the countries they are resettling to.

Another factor which motivates adults to seek out learning experiences is the desire to increase or maintain one's sense of self-esteem and pleasure. For example, many respondents with varying levels of schooling wanted to attend courses because they felt ashamed that they were poorly educated.

These motivating factors show that, often, adults seek learning as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. It is important to take this into account when reviewing current and creating new learning programmes.

### **Practical or material barriers**

The most common practical barriers were the lack of time, lack of childcare, the lack of information and for those in manual labour, the loss of income. This last barrier greatly affects adults' desire to engage in learning – this is addressed in the next section on structural barriers.

Often, when respondents said that they did not have enough time, this was because they worked in the home and were unable to attend full-time courses that run from 9am-3pm during the week. This time period is, in theory, good for most of the camp population - almost 50% of them work at home. However, they also have family and other obligations. In addition, those who are working full-time or part-time are unable to attend full-time courses.

#### **Flexible timing and scheduling**

It is recommended that more flexibility be built into the programme schedules, duration and timing so that it is easier for adults to gain access to courses. One of the most important factors to providing courses is to make it convenient for learners to attend. This would mean scheduling them around their other commitments. The most common commitments mentioned were work, family obligations, income generation and religious obligations. For the Muslim community, it is necessary to take into account prayer meetings, religious festivals and Ramadan when planning a course. In Mae La, some members of the Muslim community suggested that classes that take place between 2pm and 4pm, Monday to Friday would be feasible. They said that they would not be able to attend courses during Ramadan and some religious festivals.

Also, when the activities are offered during the day should be considered carefully to avoid conflicts with meal preparation, water or food distribution, and heat.

For teachers, classes during the summer break would be more convenient. For those who are working, classes after work (4-6pm), with the possibility of having weekly or twice-weekly classes, might be more suitable.

It is also necessary to fully exploit the potential of these courses. Many of them only run once or twice a year, and many are three- or six-month courses. Moreover, it is necessary to have more short courses over the year, tailored to the needs of each population group. The trainers would have to be given more support in planning and scheduling different courses for different populations and their learning needs.

**Convenient and conducive locations** The location of classes may have some bearing on the ability of learners to attend, although it is not always the pivotal factor. Classes should be offered in areas that are easily accessible (such as churches, meeting halls, schools or under trees), that provide childcare spaces, are well ventilated, and are designated areas with course resources and materials.

It would also be worthwhile to introduce more structured learning in the workplace. For example, instructors can go to places of work. In addition, NGOs, CBOs, committees and other organizations and bodies within the camps could, as part of their organizational policy, provide recognized, structured and relevant on-the-job-training for their staff in both basic and higher level skills. AMI does this with the English course that is provided to staff at the hospital in Nu Po.

**Appropriate course duration** Courses of varying time periods would make learning more accessible to adults. In the cooking and baking course, it would be possible to have short courses for those who only want to learn to cook some types of dishes and longer courses for others who want to deepen their knowledge and master their skills.

**Accessible course information** The ZOA Education Survey 2005 showed that the majority of respondents was aware of educational and learning activities within the camps. However, our interviews during this assessment showed that while they were aware that there were activities, they were not always aware of specific courses, their scheduling and/or location.

There are specific populations with little access to course information: the non-literate, those with low education levels, those who do not work outside the home, Burmese-speaking residents (in Mae La), and people who live in places where the loudspeakers are not audible.

Those populations with greater access to information about courses are people who work in schools and are involved in education committees, CBOs and NGOs.

The usual routes of information dissemination are:

- the Camp Committee is notified, the information is passed on to the Education Committee/Vocational Training Committee and then to the section leaders who call a meeting of all or some representatives and/or select participants
- loudspeakers
- word of mouth.

We have found that the mechanisms for spreading information about courses are limited. They work well on a one-off basis, but there are gaps in coverage: the loudspeakers are not audible in all parts of the camp, and the less educated do not have access to information networks that the more well-educated have access to.

It is highly recommended that existing channels of information are upgraded and new ones added to make it easier for people in the camps to gain reliable and comprehensive information about learning activities and their aims. The following are some recommendations based on the information gathered in the assessment.

- 1 As mentioned in the above section, for the less educated, it is not enough just to give information. They need to have the programmes and activities explained to them so that they can see the relevance of the programmes. This is particularly useful for those who are not literate.
- 2 Maximize the informal information channels currently being used – exploit social gatherings, encourage people to pass on information.
- 3 Publish the schedule of the learning programmes and their details in the magazines that residents read – RTT newsletter, School Education Research Journal, Karen Newsletter (KIC News), Inside News (Karen and Burmese) from CIDKP, Kantarawaddy Times, Thoo Lei Kaw Wei, Kwe Ka Lu (Karen), Kyit Pya (The New Era Journal), the Mon Forum, Phru Pweo (KTWG Newsletter), Burma Issues, Burma Briefing Issues and Concerns (English and Burmese), Karenni Students Newsletter.
- 4 Print course information, course provider and the benefits of the courses on everyday items such as umbrellas, t-shirts, bags and on the covers of ration books and notebooks.
- 5 Make better use of existing bulletin boards and set up new ones in places where people gather. For example, in Tham Hin, young people gather near the ZOA Education Centre. This would be a good place for a board which posts information that young people would be interested in. Maximize the signboards and space in locations where information on courses can be put up: the godowns/warehouses, water pump areas, churches/temples/mosques and so on.

- There should be designated boards where education information is displayed so that people know where to go for this information. It is better to have designated areas than to put posters up in random locations.
- When asked, most people said that they do not read the bulletin boards regularly because the information is not updated. The most important thing about a bulletin board is its function as an up-to-date information space. The board could be kept fresh by having a small section which is updated daily or weekly: jokes and/or comics or cartoons (to attract young adults), games, puzzles, brain teasers, optical illusions, interesting and comical pictures, and/or relevant news articles (on resettlement, for example) and a space for camp residents to make comments or exchange information.
- Posters should have an expiry date on them and be taken down when expired to keep the information on the board up-to-date.
- There should be a designated colour for the paper used to announce course or programme announcements that is the same for all bulletin boards in all the camps. This acts as a clear signal to readers so that they do not have to read through everything to find out about course information.
- A poster illustrating the different learning programmes by different providers should be displayed on the boards permanently so that residents will know where and when to register for courses.
- The bulletin boards should be placed in areas where people gather, at a comfortable reading height and with big font so that people can read them.
- The bulletin boards should be weather proof, and fitted with an awning so that people can shelter under them during the rainy season and take a break from the sun during the hot season.
- There should be one person or a team of people in charge of the bulletin boards who/that also makes sure that people are aware of the purpose of the bulletin boards.

**Address  
health-related  
barriers**

The other obstacles mentioned were health-related problems and old age. In particular, many camp residents reported that eye problems make it difficult for them to read or concentrate. Many of these eye problems can be remedied through simple, everyday eye care routines. Also, many of the eye complaints were about the inability to see small type. Textbooks and other resources can easily be designed with bigger font.

Some of the older respondents mentioned age-related health issues, such as arthritis and rheumatism, as barriers to learning. Most of the respondents said that if these health issues could be remedied, they would be enthusiastic about attending learning activities.

## Structural barriers

The common structural barriers that respondents face are a lack of appropriate education or training opportunities, qualification barriers and inconsistent selection procedures. This could be resolved by exploring different forms of learning, integrating the learning activities to ensure progression, and re-examining course requirements.

### Different forms of learning activities and events

There are three ways of introducing different learning activities: by adding to a programme, making current learning components more explicit, and by starting a new course/programme. There are already many programmes offered in the camps and the following recommendations try to strike a balance between improving the relevance of current programmes and offering new ones.

#### 1 **Link training to livelihoods in current vocational courses**

Adults seek learning for specific challenges they face, so learning for the sake of learning is not a motivating factor. The learning programmes have to address their income-generation and work needs. This means that skills training programmes have to be linked to employment and/or some kind of income generation. It would be timely to begin doing this in light of the livelihoods initiative being implemented by the UNHCR.

In Mae Ra Ma Luang, the vocational training students chose a vocational training course according to whether their levels of education fit with the course requirements, their interests and the amount of money they needed to invest in order to earn some income from using the skill learnt. Many of the respondents mentioned that they wanted to go into trade. Embedding small business skills relating to costing, pricing, shop and office management skills in current courses would be useful.

In addition, the courses are a good opportunity for learners to come together to brainstorm microcredit schemes and cooperatives if they are given appropriate support for this.

#### 2 **Introduce workplace skills in current programmes**

The vocational training programmes adequately provide learners with technical skills but learners lack the communication and workplace skills necessary to obtain employment in Thailand and in the countries they resettle in. Basic communication and workplace skills could be added to existing training and learning programmes to address this.

For example, young women who are learning about childcare and pregnancy could also be given training on working with children in the childcare industry. Examples of everyday tasks for childcare employees would include talking with children, their parents and other staff, sorting out disputes between children, helping children with their feeding and toileting, completing records and passing on information to colleagues and other professionals. They would need certain reading and writing skills

(obtaining information from tables and charts, e.g., weight/height charts, completing children's files accurately), and number skills (measuring weight and height, using a stopwatch). This could be added to the series of programmes that already exists in the camps, for example training programmes run by medical and health NGOs, programmes for pregnant women, and training programmes run by TOPS for nursery teachers. Other possible workplace skills that could be incorporated into current programmes are catering and hospitality<sup>5</sup>.

The idea behind points 1 and 2 is to provide learners with a package of transferable skills alongside specific vocational or technical skills. This would enable them to use the transferable skills if they are not able to use the technical skills they acquire because of a lack of equipment or materials.

In order to do this, it would be necessary to support trainers in upgrading their abilities to teach workplace and small business skills and/or to train other people to provide this training.

- 3 **Introduce basic foreign language skills in current programmes**  
Being able to speak several languages is essential for refugees. Language learning for Karen, Burmese, English and Thai should be incorporated into existing and future programmes. For example, materials, equipment and other resources should be labelled in four languages: Karen, Burmese, English and Thai. This would help learners to recognize and learn the names of equipment and materials for whichever circumstances they find themselves in (staying in Thailand, repatriation or resettlement).
- 4 **Embed literacy, language and numeracy in current programmes (see Chapter 4)**
- 5 **Expand the scope of the literacy programme run by the KWO (see Chapter 4)**
- 6 **Link Thai lessons to the Thai education curriculum**  
According to the ZOA Education Survey 2005, before the Kawsawnaw introduced Thai language classes into the camps, almost 41% of those who were interviewed wanted to attend Thai classes. The demand was also high in this assessment but not as high as for English lessons.

There are Thai classes being conducted by the Kawsawnaw at the moment. Current content is relevant to residents' needs – a focus on learning the alphabet and basic conversation. It is necessary to take into account the specific needs of the learners, specifically, how to speak to the Thai authorities, how to read road and place signs, and how to speak to

<sup>5</sup> The Basic Skills Agency has produced a series of leaflets on the basic skills needed in 25 different industries, see <http://www.basic-skills.co.uk/resources/resourcessearchresults/detail.php?ResourceID=917936642>.

the Thais they meet while travelling. The concern is for the future – there should be arrangements made to enable learners to gain access to the Thai education curriculum and to have their learning recognized and accredited.

It is recommended that the Thai lessons provided by the Karen teachers in Nu Po are continued in collaboration with the Thai Kawsawnaw teachers. It is necessary to use the skills already available in the camps and to support community efforts in learning and teaching. ZOA should also look into enabling learners to take school exams offered by Thai schools so that this learning is officially recognized and accredited.

#### **7 Establish learning centres in locations and spaces which are part of people's daily lives**

Some examples of these have already been discussed in this report, for example, learning centres in antenatal clinic waiting rooms (see Chapter 4), youth clubs (see Chapter 4), and more structured and focused on-the-job learning (see Chapter 4). In this way, learning becomes part of camp residents' social activities and daily lives rather than a stand-alone activity, thereby making it more accessible and relevant.

#### **8 Make learning sustainable**

Learning can be made sustainable if learners have opportunities to practise and master the skills they are taught. The difficulty with computer courses in the camps is that learners cannot remember the skills that they have acquired if they do not use them regularly. The Common Facilities Computer (CFC) rooms were established to address this issue. However, in Nu Po, the Vocational Training Committee has restricted the use of the room to people who have completed Standard 10. This policy disadvantages learners who have not acquired Standard 10.

The CFC room is an invaluable resource which could be better managed and utilized. The use of computers could be incorporated into the other learning programmes that are available in the camp. There needs to be a more systematic way of coordinating its use, and greater efforts to increase the capacity of trainers and teachers to use computers in their teaching.

Another way of making learning sustainable is to teach people to teach others and to encourage them to do so. This is particularly important because many camp residents are leaving for resettlement. Individuals with specialist skills and knowledge are leaving the camps and this means that there is a substantial brain drain within a short period of time. In order to maintain levels of skill and knowledge in the camps, it would be useful to help and encourage learners to teach others, and to give them the tools to do so.

**Re-examine  
course  
requirements**

For certain courses, a minimum level of education is necessary before a learner can fully engage in the learning. For example, teachers are more likely to attend computer courses because they have the basic skills needed to learn to use computers. This means that those who are more educated have access to a wider range of educational activities.

Officially, there are few entry requirements for most adult courses, except for the night schools in Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin. However, the nature of certain vocational training courses (for example, automechanic training) is such that learners need to have completed primary level schooling. In addition, in some of the camps, the Vocational Training Committee and/or the service provider sets a certain standard in their selection criteria. The sewing course run by the KWO in Umphiem-Mai tests learners in Mathematics and measuring, and only selects those who pass.

This affects those who are less educated as they have little possibility of enrolling in the courses and acquiring skills which may help them to raise their education and income levels. It is the case that for certain courses such as automechanic training and sewing, it is very difficult for people with low education levels to keep up in the class. In such cases, future programmes should incorporate literacy and numeracy into the vocational training course so that the less educated are able to gain access to these skills, learn new literacy and numeracy skills and progress to higher levels of learning. It is recognized that this is already happening in some of the courses – the idea here is to make this learning more explicit and to make it one of the intended learning outcomes of the course.

In summary, there are many ways to surmount the barriers to learning that camp residents face. Some require long term commitment, others require extra resources. The CBOs and NGOs are already providing a wide range of learning activities in the camps. Thus, the recommendations given in this chapter have focused on maximizing the effectiveness of current provision, given resource and camp constraints, rather than on providing new learning activities.

## 6 The Lie of the Land

This assessment set out to

1. map the learning landscape in the seven refugee camps that ZOA operates in, showing points of learning and if and how they are connected and/or integrated.
2. identify the learning needs and interests of the camp communities, and
3. ascertain the practical, socio-economic and pedagogical barriers to learning.

It was also agreed that besides looking at learning needs in general, the assessment would delve more deeply into the literacy, language and resettlement needs of camp residents.

The findings from the assessment show that the learning landscape in the refugee camps is relatively densely populated with programmes and activities. However, there are some areas which are duplicated, for example, agricultural programmes, and some areas which are not adequately covered – literacy and basic skills for adults. There are clusters of programmes around the basic and intermediate levels, but few before basic and after intermediate. The intended and unintended learning outcomes of the programmes need to be better integrated across all programmes to encourage and promote horizontal and vertical progression.

To this end, it is highly recommended that a variety of teaching and learning methods and settings are introduced and/or incorporated into existing programmes. In addition, there needs to be more tailor-made courses for particular target groups and greater flexibility in the scheduling and timing of learning activities.

The learning needs of certain populations within the camps derive from their personal circumstances and their living conditions. For many, these needs are related to income-generation, self-improvement and professional development. The learning programmes at present provide important technical skills but in order for the refugees to address their learning needs, there needs to be more thought put into helping them acquire the communication and work-related skills needed to use their technical skills in a work setting either in Thailand or in the countries they

resettle in. To this end, incorporating English and Thai vocabulary, and workplace skills into the learning activities and workshop sessions is crucial.

While practical and structural barriers may affect access to learning, they are surmountable. Attitudinal barriers are much more deeply entrenched and need more time and creativity to address. Addressing attitudinal barriers is a much better long-term solution because people in the camps are more able to overcome practical and structural barriers if they are motivated to do so. This is where community outreach is extremely important and opportunities for these should be integrated into daily life and organized social activities.

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**ZOA Refugee Care** (ZOA) is a Netherlands-based NGO established in 1973. It provides support to refugees, displaced people and victims of natural disasters. ZOA works in various countries in Asia and Africa. At the moment, it implements projects in Afghanistan, Angola, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand and Uganda. Since 1984, ZOA Thailand has been working with Burmese refugees living in seven refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border in the areas of general education, vocational training, and food and shelter. ZOA Thailand presently employs 64 staff members. Our main office is in Mae Sot, with field offices in Mae Sariang, Maesot and Kanchanaburi.

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



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