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Thailand historical overview

Programme period

1984 – 2014: 30 years

ZOA Thailand worked in 7 camps:

- Mae Hong Son Province: Mae Ra Ma Luang and Mae La Oon refugee camps
- Tak Province: Mae La, Umpiem and Nu Po refugee camps
- Kanchanaburi Province: Don Yang refugee camp
- Ratchaburi Province: Tham Hin refugee camp

Why started

ZOA started helping refugees from Myanmar (Burma) in Thai camps on the Thai-Myanmar border in 1984. Most of them were from the Karen ethnic minority. They fled from Myanmar due to constant fighting between the Myanmar army and ethnic armed groups, violent dispossession of land, forced labor and other human right violations. After thirty years, many refugees are still living in camps. Although there are positive political developments in Myanmar, many refugees feel that it is not yet safe for them to return to their country.

Programme overview

Refugees live in isolated camps and are heavily reliant on relief organisations, having few opportunities to manage all aspects of their lives on their own. The ZOA Thailand programme focused on:

Basic education and capacity building of education actors

Over all these years, tens of thousands refugees children and (young) adults received education supported by ZOA. At its peak almost 40,000 children were receiving education in seven camps, supported by ZOA.

ZOA Thailand provided construction materials, furniture, teaching and learning materials for schools and arranged cooperation with other agencies to improve the school environment and WASH facilities in schools. All these activities were carried out with refugee teacher and parent support.

Building the capacities of all groups involved with education in the camps was the main focus of ZOA in Thailand, by creating linkages to the Thai education and training system and by empowering existing institutions with increased capacity and networks.

Livelihoods - development of agricultural activities to generate income and nutrition

Living in camps for many years resulted in the loss of essential agriculture skills and knowledge. The skills training element of the ZOA Thailand Agriculture and Livelihoods projects addressed this issue. Additional technical support for modern, organic and chemical free techniques was provided by the Thai Agriculture College and the Livestock Department. Management skills were also provided for the project participants to manage the farms outside the refugee camps.

At a given moment, these farms became income-generating entities. The cycle of dependency was broken. Staff of the farms and other supporting costs were being covered by the income from the project.

Partnering

ZOA Thailand cooperated with many other NGOs and international organisations and empowered their capacity. An overview:

- Education: BEST (SCI, ADRA, RTP, JRS)
- Health: HI, IRC, MI, PU-AMI
- WASH: SI, ARC, IRC
- Protection: COERR, UNHCR
- Livelihoods: TBC
- other CCSDPT
- Community Based Organisations: KRCEE, LCC

Thai Governmental agencies: Ministry of Education, Forestry Department, One Tambon One Product (OTOP), Agricultural Training College (TAK), Royal Project, Livestock Department, District Agriculture Department.

Outcome

- Tens of thousands refugee children received access to basic education with provision of facilities, materials, resources and support;
- Provision of basic services (teaching & learning materials, school construction);
- Support on teacher training, capacity building to CBOs, education staff and parents;
- Set up and training of management committees;
- Skill development and income generation activities of agriculture, non-agriculture and food processing activities.

Impact

- Maintained the provision of refugee education with improved standard and quality;
- Contributed to a relevant education that met the needs of refugee students;
- Enhanced capacities of livelihoods and education actors in order to manage camp livelihoods and education systems;
- Contributed to the well being of refugees by providing adequate skill training;
- Equipped refugees with skills that they can use to support their livelihoods and become less dependent on external assistance.

Funding

ZOA Thailand received donations from Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU, ECHO, UNHCR, ZOA-

Netherlands (Business Ambassadors, schools, Happy Gift).

Phasing out/end of mandate

Given ZOA's mandate of relief and rehabilitation, and the fact that our work is of a temporary nature, ZOA decided to phase over in Thailand. Three parts of ZOA's mandate influenced this decision:

1. Focus on fragile environments and preferable when displacement is conflict-related;
2. The added value that ZOA can make above and beyond what is already present;
3. Implementation preferable through local partners.

Looking at these points, ZOA concluded that it could not add enough value. Although the refugees are still there, the situation is quite stable. Other organizations are also capable to implement this programme. Therefore, ZOA handed over its education and livelihood projects to other agencies, who are continuing the comprehensive programmes.

Success stories and best practices

Providing for my family

Than Kyaw (46) lives with his wife, two daughters and one son in Umpium camp. "With ZOA's agriculture and animal husbandry training I learned how to make compost and produce and use organic pesticides. I have been trained on livestock and prevention of animal diseases. I am really pleased with this training. Now I raise pigs, ducks and chickens at home, which we can sell. Before this training I had no income at all, now I earn money for my family."

Proud of high motivation among staff

Naw Moo Day Keh, headmistress of high school no. 1 in Umpium Camp, is grateful. Things in her school changed for the better in 2012. "With ZOA's support, we were able to build a big building for teaching and learning. We have furniture for classrooms and offices, which improves teaching and learning as well. We also received school and office supplies."

To be a headmistress of a high school in a refugee camp is not an easy job. It's hard to keep teachers motivated when they can earn much more elsewhere. This explains why Naw Moo Day Keh is especially proud of the high level of attendance and motivation among her staff and students. "The teachers are committed and they are a role model to motivate the students to attend classes regularly."

Video Su Su Mon

Every year thousands of Burmese flee their homeland. Neighboring Thailand takes a large number of refugees in one of the nine refugee camps. Su Su Mon live in Mae La camp. She learned hairdressing and

realized her dream to begin with. En salon Now she teaches others the art and encourages them to use their talents and start a successful company itself.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSHL7G1SuUE&feature=player_embedded

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