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Perceptions of Access to Education: Inclusion and Exclusion for Non-Karen Refugees in Mae La Camp

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**Perceptions of Access to Education: Inclusion and Exclusion
for Non-Karen Refugees in Mae La Camp**

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PIM 69

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Art in
Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro,
Vermont, USA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBO- Community Based Organization

EFA- Education for All

INEE- Inter-Agency for Education in Emergency

KED- Karen Education Committee

KNU- Karen National Union

KRCEE- Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity

MOE- Ministry of Education

NGO- Non- Governmental Organization

RTG- Royal Thai Government

SPDC- State Peace and Development Council

TBBC- Thai-Burma Border Consortium

TCP- Teacher Certification Program

UN- United Nations

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNHCR- United Nations High Commission on Refugees

UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

VSO- Voluntary Service Overseas

WE- World Education

ZOA- ZOA Refugee Care

ABSTRACT

Mae La refugee camp on the Thai/Burma border is the largest of the seven “Karen” refugee camps in the area and is considered the center of education for refugees. Continued fighting inside Burma between the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and the ethnic armies as well as the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis in 2008 have greatly altered the demographics in Mae La refugee camp.

Perceptions of Access to Education: Inclusion and Exclusion for Non-Karen Refugees in Mae La Camp attempts to understand, through qualitative data, how non-Karen speaking refugees perceive their access to education. Is education in Mae La inclusive or exclusive?

Through a series of in-depth interviews with ethnically mixed, non-Karen, refugee students, it is discovered that non-Karen speaking refugees find education in Mae La both exclusive and inclusive. Inclusive in the sense that they can access education and enroll in school; however, it is exclusive in the sense that the language of instruction and curriculum is not appropriate culturally or linguistically. The language barrier causes segregation among ethnic groups and feelings of ill will towards each other.

INTRODUCTION

Perceptions of Access to Education: Inclusion and exclusion for non-Karen speaking refugees in Mae La camp was created as a capstone paper after an internship with World Education Thailand. This work is part of an on-going attempt by numerous non-governmental organizations (NGO) on the Thai/Burma border to improve educational systems and provide inclusive education to Burmese refugees, as well as to inform the NGO staff of issues pertaining to accessing education for non-Karen speaking refugees. *Perceptions of Access to Education* starts with two other relevant pieces of work from the Thai/Burma border, Marina Haikin's "Survey of Inclusion" and ZOA Refugee Care's "Having Their Say: Refugee camp residents and inclusive education" and builds off of those writings and recommendations while looking at micro level inclusion/exclusion, particularly in Mae La refugee camp.

RATIONALE

When I arrived in Mae Sot for my internship with World Education (WE) [September 2010-March 2011], I was placed in Mae La at the Teacher Certification Program (TCP). This was the only program that existed to train refugees to be teachers on the border. Twelve students regularly participated in the training. All of the students in TCP were Karen and the lessons were taught either in Karen or in English, depending upon the trainer. During my teaching and self-reflection, I began to ponder why there were only Karen students and no other ethnicities represented in the class and if the lack of non-Karen speaking refugees in TCP was indicative of large-scale exclusion of non-Karen speaking ethnicities in Mae La.

Mae La, the largest refugee camp in Tak province and the closest to Mae Sot, is home to a diverse array of Burmese ethnicities, however, the Karen are the omnipresent ethnic group. Karen language and culture dominate Mae La. A visitor is better off greeting a stranger with “*O su o clay?*” (How are you? in Karen) versus “*Nei kaon la?*” (Burmese- how are you?) Traditional red Karen *lungi*, or sarong, are favored by residents as are t-shirts with the likeness of Saw Ba U Gyi, national hero and the first president of the Karen National Union.

Structures and systems in place at Mae La were created by and for the Karen majority since Mae La’s inception. Karen leaders run everything from the camp management to the educational administration. If my TCP class was indicative of larger-scale educational exclusion taking place in Mae La, the issue of access to education for non-Karen speaking refugees needs to be examined and how NGO staff and local community workers can strive to create a more just and equitable education system.

HISTORY

Mae La refugee camp, located in Tha Song Yang District, Tak Province, is Thailand’s largest refugee camp. It is approximately eight kilometers east from Karen state in Burma. Due to nearly 50 years of oppression and violence against Karen (and other ethnicities) by the ruling military junta, the *Tatmadaw* (comprised primarily of ethnic Burman), refugee camps were built in Thailand to help alleviate the persecution of Karen and other people. Since its inception in 1984 and its proximity to Karen State, Burma, the majority of refugees in Mae La have been Karen, both Sgaw and Pwo, with Sgaw far outnumbering Pwo.

In 2008, the worst recorded natural disaster hit Burma. According to a May 28, 2008 New York Times article, Cyclone Nargis killed around 134,000 people with another 2.4 million people seriously affected and displaced. Continued fighting between ethnic armies and the Burmese military junta from May 2008 until May 2011 and the arrival of non-Karen ethnic groups changed the demographics of Mae La camp. (See Figure 1) Su-Ann Oh and Marc Van Der Stouwe posit, “no accurate statistics are available on the ethnic makeup of the camps. . . The issue of ethnic distribution is so sensitive that the UNHCR collects data on religion rather than on ethnicity.” (Oh & Van Der Stouwe 2008 p. 590)

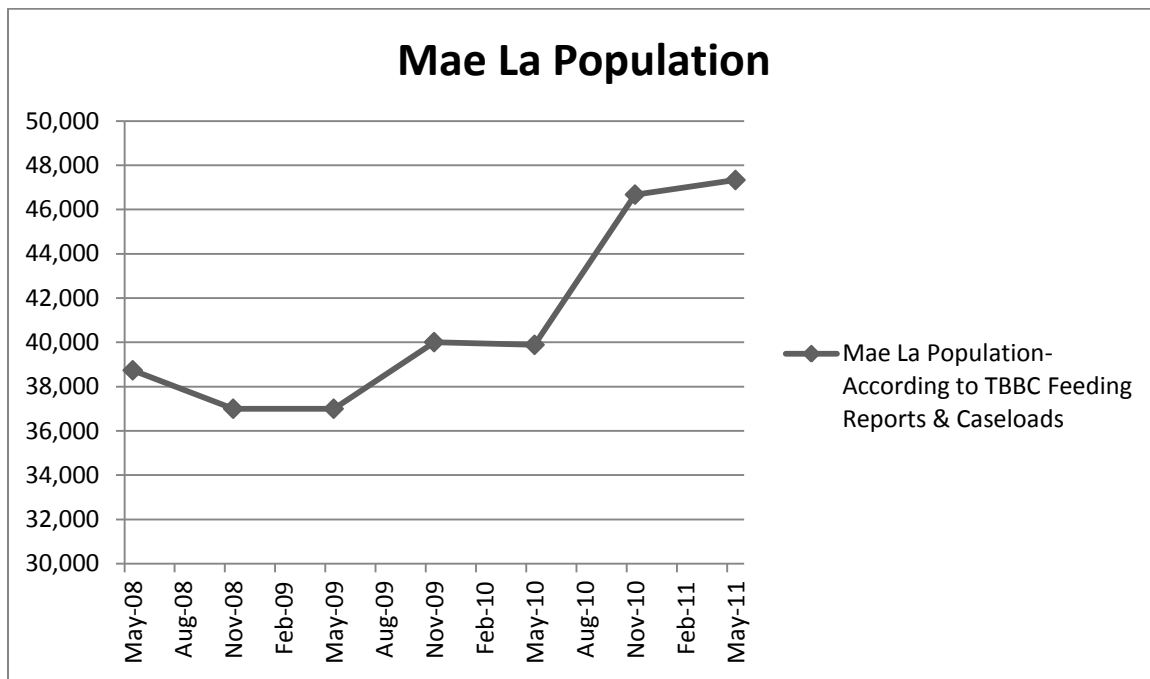


Figure 1

On the topic of ethnicity, the Thai Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) states in their July-December 2010 report that “many of the ethnicities which have arrived in camps during the past five years, namely Chin, Ghurkha, Hindu, Kachin, Lahu, Mon, Palaung and Shan, (TBBC report 2010, p 64) (See Appendix A.)

Official registration in Mae La has not taken place since 2005 and the new arrivals to Mae La, non-Karen speaking ethnicities, are unregistered and thusly minimized and pushed to the periphery of the camp. These newcomers all have Burmese as a common language and speak little to no Sgaw Karen. The Royal Thai Government's (RTG) considers any unregistered or undocumented resident an illegal immigrant and withholds rights, such as the ability to hold positions of power in the refugee camp, including the education sector.

EDUCATION IN MAE LA

According to the Thai Burma Border Consortium's (TBBC) overview of Mae La from their website, "Mae La is considered as a centre of studies for refugees, so the current population includes several thousand students who come to study in the camp (some from other camps but mostly from Burma)." Since Mae La sits on Thai soil, technically the Royal Thai Government (RTG) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) are in charge of education. However, the RTG considers the situation with Burmese refugees as only temporary and therefore leaves true administration up to the newly created Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity (KRCEE). The KRCEE administers the education system with assistance from NGOs and community based organizations (CBO). In 2009, the Karen Education Department (KED) formally turned over the administration to the KRCEE. The KED is the ministry of education for the Karen National Union (KNU), the political organization that represents the Karen people. (See Figure 2)

Chain of Educational Command

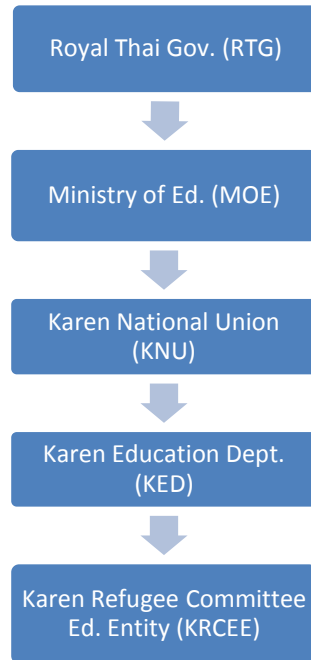


Figure 2

The TBBC very poignantly asks in their 2010 report, “How can a community, largely and historically populated by one majority ethnic group, ensure that an inclusive approach is taken to the needs and aspirations of newly-arrived members of other, mainly-unregistered ethnic groups?” (TBBC 2010, p. 65)

EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

From an international context, the idea of educational inclusion has been built upon the concept of non-discrimination. Starting in 1949, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Article 26 decreed that everyone has a right to education. In 2000, the Education for All Dakar Framework specifically spoke about disadvantaged and vulnerable children, and how education should be provided in their mother tongue. Most recently in 2010, the Inter-Agency

Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) wrote a standard on equal access and said, “Educational interventions should focus not only on providing formal and non-formal educational services, but also on addressing the obstacles, such as discrimination, school fees and language barriers, that exclude certain groups.” INEE also defined discrimination as “obstacles imposed because of poverty, gender, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, political affiliation, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, geographic location, or special education needs.”

Inclusive education, as defined by the Salamanca Statement, is that “schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities, and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.” (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2005 *First Language First: Community-based Literacy Programmes for Minority Language Contexts in Asia* illustrates through two studies why learning in one’s mother tongue is so important:

The most important conclusion from the research and experience reviewed in this paper is that when learning is the goal, including that of learning a second language, the child’s first language (i.e. his or her mother tongue) should be used as the medium of instruction in the early years of schooling. ... The first language is essential for the initial teaching of reading, and for comprehension of subject matter. It is the necessary foundation for the cognitive development upon which acquisition of the second language is based. (Dutcher & Tucker 1996, p. 36)

UNICEF’s Annual Report 1999 takes a similar position:

There is ample research showing that students are quicker to learn to read and acquire other academic skills when first taught in their mother tongue. They also learn a second language more quickly than those initially taught to read in an unfamiliar language. ... Early mother-tongue instruction is a key strategy to reach the more than 130 million children not in school – and help them succeed. (UNICEF 1999, 41, 45)

Education inclusion should embody more than just allowing someone of a different ethnicity to attend school and saying that they are free to enter the doors. It needs to tackle the issues of why someone of a marginalized population may not be attending school despite that they are technically allowed, and examining the issues surrounding their education that may lead to failure.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

On the topic of Burmese refugees, a wide body of publications exists and there have been numerous articles published in journals as well as reports, position papers, theses, and presentations on the subject matter. A good majority of the published texts are concerning the resettlement process for refugees and subject matter for non-governmental organization workers on topics like employment, healthcare, and education. Some articles report about life while in the camp and cover topics such as language, training teachers, nationalism, and barriers to education. In particular, organizations such as ZOA Refugee Care (ZOA), World Education (WE), the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have published reports and findings on education in the refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border. Very little published material exists from Burmese nationals on the subject of education and it can be difficult to find much in the way of opposition writing. There are many international treaties and protocols regarding refugees on an international level, most of them a product of the United Nations.

Thai/Burma Border NGO's

An abundant amount of published literature does not exist solely on the topic of educational inclusion and exclusion for non-Karen speaking refugees in Thai refugee camps. From conducting the literature review, only two reports truly relating to educational inclusion existed. One is a position paper by ZOA titled, "Having Their Say: Refugee camp residents and inclusive education. ZOA's commitment to educational inclusion", and the other a final report by a Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) volunteer, Marina Haikin titled "Survey of Inclusion".

These two reports are the closest in scope to the proposed research and are well written papers that are rich in information and provide a strong model for other academic research. Recommendations from both Haikin and VSO were taken into consideration when designing the methodology and conducting the research. These papers are not focused solely on Mae La camp, their scope is much larger, taking into consideration all of the refugee camps on the border as well as the migrant schools and some Thai schools.

Haikin's Survey of Inclusion asks the question "How inclusive is primary education in the nine refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, Migrant Learning Centres in Tak province, and Thai schools in Tak ESA2?" (Haikin pg. 4) Haikin found that "many children do not understand the language of instruction and/or the language in the textbooks." (Haikin pg. 5) Furthermore, Haikin found that "children were excluded from the learning process" (pg. 5) because of language and cultural/religious barriers to education with Karen language and culture governing the system. Across the nine refugee camps, Haikin found that:

Cultural differences prevent minority families, especially Muslim or Hindu, from sending their children to school or encouraging them to stay there. There is often a perception, that Muslim families are only interested in business, not in education therefore there is little outreach towards these groups. Overall, there is lack of understanding and communication between school and families, especially minority families. (pg. 19)

Ethno-linguistics or the idea of language and culture being intimately related are also uncovered by Haikin. Another important finding is that:

Due to resettlement, there is an ever-worsening shortage of Karen speaking teachers in the refugee camps. There are a significant number of educated Burmese speakers, belonging to a variety of ethnic groups, in the refugee camps who are willing to become teachers, however, they might lack camp registration, and their situation in the camps is precarious. (pg 27)

ZOA's "Having Their Say" began as a "process of developing specific strategies to address the issue of 'inclusive education'" (pg 7) and to inform the staff and bring awareness to the issues surrounding inclusive education. The study took place in six refugee camps along the border. With a firm background and belief in the United Nation Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Education for All Framework, ZOA believes it is about "actively helping the disadvantaged to become less disadvantaged, the excluded to be included, and the voiceless to have a voice". (pg. 7) To work to achieve this goal, "Having Their Say" focused on "access to education, quality and relevance of education, and management structures". (pg. 15) The survey found that:

Karen is used in the majority of the schools, and Burmese is used in the 'Muslim' schools. As mentioned above, students from the 'Muslim' schools have difficulty enrolling in the majority of schools (which use Karen as the language of instruction) at the higher levels of school because they are not proficient in Karen.

Young people who have newly arrived in the camps- 'inside' students, internally displaced persons, non-Karen –speaking peoples- will have had Burmese as the language of instruction in Burma. Although the Karen-speaking newcomers will have an understanding of Karen, they are not used to writing in Karen and using Karen for studying.

This is further complicated by the fact that some of the textbooks are written in English. Newly arrived students are disadvantaged by their not being able to use Karen as the language of instruction, as well as not having an adequate standard of English for understanding textbooks.

The literature from the Thai/Burma border (Haikin and ZOA) clearly points to the fact that educational exclusion is taking place. There is a lack of understanding amongst the ethnic groups and too few individualized resources exist to cater to each subpopulation. Karen are the

majority and not all newcomers to Mae La are provided the same opportunities in school because of language, religion, and culture. Despite international protocols calling for education for all and equal access to schooling, there is limited action taking place on the border to change current educational policy that protects and promotes one ethnic group over another.

International Organizations

In terms of international writings on refugee issues, six main documents shape my research and my work. The first document is the 1949 Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. Article 26 of the declaration states:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

The first line of article 26 states quite clearly that *everyone* has a right to education regardless of ethnicity, country of origin, or mother tongue. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the earliest written UN document that explicitly states that education is for everyone and is the basis for many other UN decrees.

The second international document is the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees. (See Appendix B) The take away from the UN Convention on Refugees is that there should be equal treatment in terms of education for both refugees and country nationals.

The next international document is the 1989 UNICEF Convention on Rights of a Child. (See Appendix C) Articles 28, 29, and 30 all deal with a child's right to education. The key points of this document are Article 29, section "c" where it mentions respect for a child's cultural identity and language and Article 30, which states that a child should be free to use his/her own language, especially if they are a linguistic minority.

In 1990, the African Union put forth the Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. (See Appendix D) Section 3, lines "d" and "e" mention taking special measures to reduce dropout rates and special measures for "disadvantaged" children.

In 2000, UNESCO met in Dakar, Senegal and composed the Education for All Framework for Action, with Goal 1 stating:

Goal 1

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

30. All young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environments that allow them to become healthy, alert and secure and be able to learn. The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality early childhood care and education, both in families and in more structured programmes, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive, focusing on all of the child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psycho-social development. They should be provided in the child's mother tongue and help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities and families can help ensure the provision of good care and education for children, especially for those most disadvantaged, through activities centred on the child, focused on the family, based within the community and supported by national, multi-sectoral policies and adequate resources.

31. Governments, through relevant ministries, have the primary responsibility of formulating early childhood care and education policies within the context of national EFA plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programmes for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal school systems. The education of parents and other caregivers in better childcare, building on traditional practices, and the systematic use of early childhood indicators, are important elements in achieving this goal.

The EFA clearly states in section 30 of Goal 1 that programs should be provided in a child's mother tongue. Furthermore, through collaborations of NGOs and governments, child-centered education should be afforded for even the most disadvantaged children. Section 31 states that it is the government's responsibility to promote flexible and adaptable programs for youth.

Lastly, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies created a Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery stating in Standard 1

Access and Learning Environment Standard 1: Equal Access

Some groups or individuals may have particular difficulties accessing education in an emergency situation. However, no individual should be denied access to education and learning opportunities because of discrimination. Education providers must assess the particular needs of vulnerable groups with special needs, such as the disabled, adolescent girls, children associated with fighting forces (CAFF), abducted children, teenage mothers, etc., to ensure that they benefit from education opportunities. Educational interventions should focus not only on providing formal and non-formal educational services, but also on addressing the obstacles, such as discrimination, school fees, and language barriers, that exclude certain groups. In particular, additional opportunities, whether formal, non-formal, or vocational, are needed to address the needs of girls and women who have not had access to education or who face obstacles to continuing their education.

Key indicators (to be read in conjunction with the guidance notes)

-No individual is denied access to education and learning opportunities because of discrimination (see guidance notes 1-2).

Guidance notes

1. Discrimination refers, but is not limited, to obstacles imposed because of poverty, gender, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, political affiliation, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, geographic location, or special education needs.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states the following:

– Article 2 recognises 'the right to education without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status';

In this standard, it is quite explicit that students should not be discriminated based on language and that educational entities should not only focus on providing schooling but should also focus

on addressing barriers that exclude certain groups of people from education. INEE clearly states the need to address discrimination in education.

Over the course of 60 years, international organizations have been reacting to situations around the world and creating decrees to protect children and other vulnerable people. Education and the quality of education are mentioned quite explicitly in many of the international documents. However well respected the documents are the ability to police and enforce these decrees in places like Mae La is minimal.

Burmese Scholars

A Burmese educator and writer, Thein Lwin has published articles on the training of Burmese teachers and teaching critical thinking. In *Critical Thinking: The Burmese Traditional Culture of Education 2010*, Thein Lwin posits that the Burmese education system does not teach students to think and that:

Teachers use an authoritative role in teaching. It seems that the regime uses education as a political tool by preventing children from learning how to think. Young people are expected to be disciplined in and out of school under the military regime. The notion of discipline invokes ideas of loyalty and the image of obedient citizens. (Lwin pg 2)

Thein Lwin speaking about the education system within the camps:

About 30,000 students attend schools in refugee camps - from primary to secondary levels. There are over 1,000 teachers. At the beginning of a school year, the number of students is higher because young people inside Burma cross the border and come into refugee camps seeking the opportunity to get an education. The education department of the Karenni ethnic armed opposition group (KNPP) controls schools in two Karenni refugee camps, and the education department of the Karen ethnic armed opposition group (KNU) controls schools in seven Karen refugee camps with the support of NGOs. Curricula were drawn-up based on political and nationalist ideas. Teachers are recruited from the refugee population and they are not well qualified. (pg 3)

Lwin concludes with the idea that the Burmese military junta is working to prevent active learning and critical thinking so as to keep control of its people but both active learning and critical thinking are inherently a part of Burmese culture because of the Buddhist Kalama Sutta:

You may well doubt, you may well be uncertain ... Do not accept anything because it is the authoritative tradition, because it is often said, because of rumor or hearsay, because it is found in the scriptures, because it agrees with a theory of which one is already convinced, because of the reputation of an individual, or because a teacher said it is thus and thus ... But experience it for yourself.

-The Lord Buddha

Education in Burma is quite different in methodology and practice from the education provided in the refugee camps. Education in Burma was used as a tool by the government to keep people in place by not teaching critical thinking or allowing students to question their teachers. Education in the refugee camps is quite different in that political parties with individual interests and ambitions are the administrators of education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Perceptions to Access is primarily a qualitative research project. It utilizes a mixed method by combining aspects of quantitative data to support the research. The research is highly participatory, as it involves interacting with communities from within Mae La. It is interpretative research, as it asks people about their perceptions on their access to education. Interpretive researchers attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them. To gain a diverse perspective and for purposes of triangulation, an online survey of NGO workers was conducted.

Research Question

Perceptions of Access to Education: Inclusion and Exclusion for Non-Karen Refugees in Mae La Camp is built around the question:

How do non-Karen speaking ethnic groups perceive their access to education?

Sub-Questions

- How do you, as a non-Karen speaking person, perceive your access (and/or your children's access) to education?
- What have you and/or your children experienced in the schools in Mae La not knowing the Karen language?
- What language, in your opinion, should be the main language of instruction in the schools in Mae La? Why?
- How does the education offered in Mae La camp compare/differ with the education you and/or your children received in Burma?

- How does the choice of language in schools influence the students' education?

(See Appendices E & F)

Data Collection Methods

This research used three (3) in-depth interviews, one (1) focus group, and one (1) online survey. The in-depth interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and the focus group lasted one (1) hour. The interviews and focus group were conducted using a translator, English to Burmese and Burmese to English. By signing a release, interviewees gave the interviewer informed consent to conduct the interviews. (See Appendix G & H) An interview guide consisted of five (5) open-ended questions for both the focus group and interviews and the online survey consisted of 10 open and closed questions.

Data was recorded by using a digital recording device and hand written notes. Once the interviews were completed, the digital recordings were given to a Burmese speaking translator/transcriber and transcripts were produced.

Sample Selection

For the purposes of this research, six (6) post-10 students were interviewed, all above the age of 18. This group was comprised of (self-reported): two (2) female Muslim Burmans, one (1) female Burman, one (1) female Shan, one (1) male Shan, and one (1) female Gorkha. Eight (8) adults with children were also interviewed. They are (self-reported): one (1) male Chin, two (2) male Muslims, two (2) male Burmans, one (1) male and one (1) female Kachin, and one (1)

male Shan. The participants were purposefully sampled so as to include salient, non-Karen ethnicities. Sixteen (16) NGO workers took part in the online survey. (See Appendix I & J)

Interview and Focus Group Participants

Ethnic Group:	Total # of Participants	Male	Female
Chin	1	1	0
Shan	3	2	1
Kachin	2	1	1
Gorkha	1	0	1
Burman	3	2	1
Muslim	2	2	0
Burman Muslim	2	0	2
	Total #: 14	8	6

Figure 3

Data Analysis Methods

As the research is primarily qualitative in nature, grounded theory was used. This methodology produced thematic codes extracted from the text of the interviews. Next, the codes were grouped together by likeness and from the codes, themes were generated. The in-depth student interviews rendered bounded phenomena. These phenomena were compared and contrasted to themes delivered from the parent focus group, the NGO survey, and the literature. The cross-referencing of data among three different sources is called triangulation, and the triangulation of data validates the analysis and findings and improves the rigor of the research, especially when using interpretative research.

Limitations of Research & Design

There are limitations that exist in the design of the methodology. First, a relatively small sample size of only 14 people was used for the interviews and focus group with six (6) different ethnicities being represented. This small sample size does not represent every non-Karen ethnicity in Mae La. Of the six (6) students interviewed, these students were all post-10/higher education students. Secondly, of the 16 NGO workers surveyed, only seven (7) completed the survey, constituting 43.8%. Thirdly, as the researcher does not have a full grasp on the Burmese language, a translator and transcriber were necessary. The researcher was unable to check personally the validity of the translations himself. Fourthly and most importantly, the inquiry question will only lead the researcher to understand the perceptions of the different ethnic groups on educational inclusion/exclusion; it will not change the current practices excluding certain groups.

THEMES

Utilizing grounded theory, the student interviews, parent focus group, and NGO survey produced themes. These themes were crosscutting, in that each interview or focus group had these ideas woven throughout. The crosscutting themes were analyzed to produce the findings.

Crosscutting Themes from Students

After reading each transcribed student interview, commonalities among the student interviewees began to surface. Below is a list of major themes from the student interviews.

- Everyone should speak English- more egalitarian for everyone to speak English rather than agreeing on Karen or Burmese
- English provides opportunities
- Difficult to learn Karen but forced to (assimilation)
- Segregation because of language
- Burmese schools very different than Mae La schools
 - Teaching style- learner-centered vs. teacher-centered
 - Cost of education- free vs. expensive
- Feeling badly about self about not being able to speak Karen
- Burmese speaking students have to seek out opportunities for Burmese language, Karen is majority

The consensus among the students was that students were forced to assimilate to the Karen culture and learn the Karen language if they wanted to succeed in Mae La. If English was the language of instruction, it would be much more egalitarian and the segregation due to language would not be such a large factor.

Crosscutting Themes from Parents

Even with a diverse array of ethnicities represented at the parent focus group, common themes emerged. The themes are as follows:

- Students had to repeat grades because could not speak Karen
- Difficult to learn Karen
- Children are upset about not being able to understand language in school
- Have to seek out opportunities for Burmese education (paying)
- Divide between Karen and Burmese (Karen do not want to speak Burmese)
- Should use a mixture of languages for education- English not as important

- School in Mae La is very different than Burma
 - No need to pay in Mae La
 - Worse teachers in Mae La
 - More opportunities for education in Mae La but not for higher education
- More skilled, better paid teachers with language skills

The parents were in mutual agreement that not being able to speak Karen made it difficult for their children to succeed in school. Parents had to search out opportunities on their own and school failure and grade level repetition in the Karen classes was rampant for non-Karen speaking students.

Crosscutting Themes from NGO Survey

NGO employees working in Mae La shed some insight to the issues faced in Mae La in regards to education. Below are the themes from the survey.

- Camp education is only “Somewhat inclusive”
- Camp education includes a diverse array of people
- Non-Karen speakers are excluded from education but also those with special needs
- Burman and Muslim are largest populations in Mae La after Karen
- Karen dominates language of instruction
- Language is a major factor in inclusive/exclusive education
- A mixture of languages needs to be used in education

NGO staff familiar to the education issues in Mae La concluded that education in Mae La is only somewhat inclusive. Karen language is ubiquitous in Mae La, especially in the schools and that language is a major factor in inclusive/exclusive education.

ANALYSIS

In response to the inquiry question of, “*How do non-Karen speaking ethnic groups perceive their access to education?*”, the data was analyzed utilizing methodological triangulation, or involving more than one method of data collection i.e., focus group, interviews, survey. Triangulation, as a methodology, increases validity and credibility of qualitative research. The student interviews were first cross-examined with the literature, so as to compare and contrast previous research with the data from *Perceptions of Access to Education*. Next, the findings were compared to the responses given during the parent focus group. Lastly, the findings of the student interviews were compared and contrasted with the results of the NGO survey.

**Note: Quotes from the student interviews are taken directly from the transcription. The grammatical mistakes are left intentionally.*

Findings from the Student Interviews Compared to the Literature: Language as a Barrier to Education

International decrees and proclamations put forth by the UN, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on Refugees, and Conventions on Rights of a Child all mention that everyone has a right to education and that education should be provided for all, regardless of ethnic identity. These mandates are being followed in Mae La with Burmese refugees having access to education. Students from all ethnic groups are allowed to enter school grounds and access education. Even ethnicities such as Gorkha, from remote parts of India and Nepal are being afforded an education. A student interviewee corroborated this information, “*In*

Mae La camp, all the people are refugees and also everyone has right to learn education. All the students can attend the school. . .”

The INEE standards and the Education for All, Dakar Framework, take the idea of educational inclusion a step further. They state that not only should education be provided for all, but education for disadvantaged and vulnerable children should be expanded and provided in a child’s mother tongue and those obstacles that exclude certain groups, such as language barriers and other acts of discrimination, should be addressed in the educational system. A Burman Muslim female explained how she was able to access education in Mae La but language was still a barrier to receiving high quality education,

I went and joined to the school when I just arrived to the camp. At that time, I do not understand Karen language and everyone speak Karen. Therefore, I was downhearted for it. I considered learning Karen as much as I could because I did not understand Karen. Later on, even I could not do as Karen speaker but I got it. I thought that great effort is important in this case. Nowadays, I can do and understand well.

In terms of literature published from the Thai/Burma border, Marina Haikin’s “*Survey of Inclusion*” found that inclusive education is important but factors such as culture and language greatly affect access to education. Haikin found that new arrivals to the refugee camps attend school but are deterred because of linguistic barriers. Haikin posits that too many languages are being used and that the language of curriculum does not match the needs of the students. This situation equates to a disadvantage for non-Karen speaking students. ZOA echoes this belief in their position paper “*Having Their Say*”. The students interviewed in *Perceptions of Access to Education* agreed with the Haikin in that there are many languages being spoken in Mae La. However, the interviewees clearly stated that only one language should be used as the language of instruction, and that language is English. “*English is very useful wherever we go and it has more opportunity than other language,*” stated one interviewee. Another interviewee said,

If we can speak English, when we go back to Burma or we go to third country, it will be very useful for us. In Burma, the person who can speak English is very useful for professional businesses.

Comparing the student interviews with the literature, it is evident that language is a major barrier to accessing education despite international decrees stating education should be for all. Many languages are spoken in Mae La, yet a common language for education does not exist. The students feel that English should be the common language for instruction, as it is a language of opportunity and an international language.

Findings from the Student Interviews Compared to the Focus Group: A Generation Gap and a Language Divide

Findings from the focus group show that non-Karen, ethnic minority Burmese parents in Mae La perceive their children's access to education as a difficult process. Students need to repeat grades due to the fact they are unable to understand the language of instruction and parents need to seek out and pay additional fees for Burmese speaking schools and/or Karen teachers. A Kachin parent echoes the sentiment of educational inclusion being difficult and a challenge,

My family is in Burma now. It is difficult to learn Karen language. In the school, other subjects are easy to learn but Karen subject is difficult. My children also already passed grade 6 but because of Karen language, my children have to begin from grade 1.

A Shan father expounds on the plight of his children having to repeat grades due to language, but with acquisition of the Karen language, they are finding success.

I have three children. The oldest one has already passed Grade 6 in Shan state, Burma. In Mae La camp, he has to begin from Grade 1 because he cannot speak and write Karen language. Now he can speak and write Karen, so he sit he entrance exam and passed grade 7. Next one has already passed Grade 1. She has to attend Grade 2 next year.

Parents of the focus group agreed that the education offered in Mae La is extremely different from the educational system in their home state in Burma, and that in regards to the language of instruction, there was no consensus. To avoid any further trauma experienced by their children in school, there should be a mixture of languages offered. *“For me, it (the language of instruction) should be Thai, Burmese, and English,”* said a parent from the focus group. The same parent further explained:

Now we are staying in Thailand so if we cannot speak Thai, it can be more difficult. Most of the Thai cannot understand English. Therefore, students should learn these three languages starting from primary school.

When asked about experiences of their children at school, a parent replied,

My children did not want to go to school because he could not speak Karen. He cried so I took him and send to another school, which is using Burmese and Karen languages. Now he knows just a little Karen language because my neighbors are Karen, so he is so happy to go to school.

When further asked about the experience for students, a parent bridged the political/ethno-linguistic divide by sharing,

Karen students do not want to learn Burmese language. They understand Burmese but they do not want to speak Burmese because they hate Burmese soldiers.

The long fought war between the State Peace and Restoration Council (SPDC) and the ethnic armies is still very fresh in many parents' minds.

In comparison to the parents, the students agreed that education in Mae La is difficult and that not speaking Karen makes it even more complicated. Feeling badly about oneself because of a language barrier and the fact that education in Mae La is very different from what students had received in Burma, students have to find a school that is appropriate for them and their learning needs as they adapt to a new culture. This is no easy feat. A student interviewee shared their perception on education,

Karen is not my native language, and also I don't have high school experiences. So I had to stay with Karen people very closely and tried to be adaptable because every class was Karen students. When I communicated by Burmese language with them, some Karen students don't want to talk with me but some students spoke with me. For me, I tried to understand and tried to be adapted.

In contrast to the parent focus group, the students agreed that English should be the language of instruction. Feeling the segregation due to language but not directly involved in fighting the SPDC as their parents' generation was, the students do not hold the ethno-linguistic pride as their parents may but instead see the practicality behind the politics of everyone learning English. As one Muslim Burman student so eloquently stated,

I think English (should be the language of instruction) because everyone uses English as international language. You can see that English is the main language at every place. English also influence to worldwide. If you can write and speak English, you can solve problems on the way even you cannot speak Karen and Burmese. Moreover, every educated people can speak English around the world and we can solve our problem by English.

Students see English as an equalizer, making learning much more egalitarian for all. To have truly inclusive education, English ought to be the language of instruction. A student further explained,

If teachers teach with Karen language, other ethnic students cannot be understood and satisfied. And also, if teachers teach with Burmese language, Karen students cannot understand and satisfy. Therefore, in my opinion, English is the best language to communicate between the ethnic groups. All the students came to school to promote their education. When we access equal education, it is very important to be effective for all the students.

Parents and students came to many of the same conclusions when asked about access to education. Both said that Karen is difficult to learn and because of this difficulty, they were made to feel badly about themselves and forced to seek out alternative education. However, in stark contrast to each other, students loudly declared that English should be the language of instruction while parents could come to no agreement.

Findings from the Student Interviews Compared to the NGO Survey: More Languages Requires More Perseverance

Findings from the NGO survey show that 64.3% of respondents claim that education in Mae La is “somewhat inclusive” however, the majority of NGO staff report that Karen is the language of instruction and that language is a major factor in the inclusivity/exclusivity in education in Mae La. A Muslim Burman female postulated,

If it is just one language for teaching, it will be problem for students. Moreover, if teacher explain students by Burmese, Karen students will get trouble. Also, if teacher teach to the students by Karen, we will face same problem like Burmese. Therefore, if teacher can teach both languages is more suitable for us. In college, we want English rather than other because I think every student can speak English and it is good for Karen and Burmese speaker as well.

In contrast to the students, the NGO workers responded that they thought a variety of languages should be used as the language of instruction. The NGO workers were split between Karen, Burmese, English, and any other mother tongue spoken as the desired language of instruction for students. The students feel the difficulty in not speaking the same language but know that regardless of the language of instruction, they need to persevere. As a Muslim Burman female explained,

We will see problems when we are doing everything, educational situation as well. In this case, we have to be patient and interested for our education. If we do like that, we will be improving and it is not playing game for fun. In Mae La camp, we can see developing about educational situation. That is why we have to try hard like other students. I faced problems and I was upset for Karen Language at first. For this reason, I have been trying hard for it like other students and I can do that now. Nowadays, we do not see so many problems for studying at school because we are supported about materials and it is very difference from situation in Burma.

NGO workers believe that many languages should be used as the language of instruction and that this will help make education in Mae La more inclusive. However, students realize that

regardless of the language of instruction, everyone will suffer in some way and it is best to persevere.

CONCLUSION

Non-Karen speaking Burmese ethnicities perceive their access to education as a struggle fraught with segregation and forced assimilation. The separation between the Karen and other Burmese ethnic groups can cause emotional trauma from feeling badly about oneself for not being able to speak Karen. Not being able to understand each other's language can cause mistrust between the ethnic groups and with new ethnic groups entering Mae La daily, the Karen hold on power is threatened. Since new arrivals to Mae La are not technically registered and lacking resources and services, they lack the voice to speak out to the KRCEE about educational exclusion.

Regardless of international decrees and proclamations from the UN, exclusionary education continues to exist in Mae La. These decrees are broad and wide-ranging, without contextualized specificity. Children may technically be able to access education, that is, to register and enroll in school in Mae La, but the language of instruction and curriculum prohibits student success. Parents need to use their own limited funds and resources to obtain schooling for their children in a language they can understand, Burmese or English.

The language of instruction and the language of education are predominantly Sgaw Karen. This language severely limits other Burmese ethnicities from receiving an inclusive education in Mae La. While Burmese is the national language and can be spoken and understood by a diverse amount of Burmese people, Burmese alone does not constitute an inclusive

language of instruction. The English language is thought of as an equalizer among ethnicities and is favored by many non-Karen speaking people.

Although Mae La refugee camp is the center of education for refugees, education offered is overall exclusionary for non-Karen speaking people. Non-Karen speaking students can technically access education and enroll in class, but without having a command of the language they struggle to excel in class. For those students with perseverance and a drive for knowledge, they assimilate and learn Karen to the best of their ability until they reach post-10, where at this advanced level, students feel English should be the language of instruction.

There has been some investigation into the idea of educational inclusion in the refugee camps. International NGOs are working to create new curriculum that reflect learner-centered teaching methods that are employed in schools within Mae La. INEE standards in education reflect the most recent trends in education and strive to offer a truly inclusive education. Progress in education is taking place in Mae La; however, changing demographics because of continued fighting from within Burma make it necessary to work towards creating and offering the most inclusive education possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To work towards truly inclusive education in Mae La, the Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity needs to diversify their staff to include non-Karen educational administrators. For this to happen, Mae La officials need to begin formally registering new arrivals in the camp and documenting their ethnicity and primary and secondary language. Once this is established, the curriculum needs to be rewritten from Karen to either Burmese or English to reflect the needs of the students within Mae La.

- The Royal Thai Government needs to recognize the needs of the Burmese people on the border and contribute politically and financially to the cause
- New arrivals to Mae La need to be formally registered and given refugee status
- An accurate and up to date census needs to be taken in Mae La with classifications such as “ethnicity” and “first and second languages spoken”
- If the KRCEE continues to administer education in Mae La and other camps, they need to diversify with new hires representing the new arrivals to Mae La
- The language of instruction and the language of curriculum need to match the needs of the student population
- Burmese should be the language of instruction for primary grades and English should be the language for secondary and post-10 education
- INEE standards need to be enforced for all education in Mae La

Further studies with a larger sample size that reflects the true diversity of Mae La is suggested for follow up research. More of a non-Karen voice needs to be heard and considered in the education process. The entire education system needs to be evaluated for inclusivity from the teachers to the curriculum to the education management and administration.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: TBBC Population Database

Figure A.4 TBBC Population Database: December 2010

		Site 1	Site 2	Mae La Oon	Mae Ra Ma Luang	Mae La	Umpiem Mai	NuPo	Don Yang	Tham Hin	Total
Verified Caseload		14,313	3,505	14,988	17,257	45,692	17,491	15,543	4,104	7,559	140,452
Status	Registered	11,358	1,992	10,698	10,754	24,638	9,239	8,138	2,734	3,610	83,161
	Unregistered	2,955	1,513	4,290	6,503	21,054	8,252	7,405	1,370	3,949	57,291
	% unregistered	20.6%	43.2%	28.6%	37.7%	46.1%	47.2%	47.6%	33.4%	52.2%	40.8%
Gender	Female	6,867	1,708	7,367	8,607	22,671	8,506	7,613	2,114	3,880	69,333
	% of verified caseload	48.0%	48.7%	49.2%	49.9%	49.6%	48.6%	49.0%	51.5%	51.3%	49.4%
	Male	7,446	1,797	7,621	8,650	23,021	8,985	7,930	1,990	3,679	71,119
	% of verified caseload	52.0%	51.3%	50.8%	50.1%	50.4%	51.4%	51.0%	48.5%	48.7%	50.6%
Age	New Born - 6 months	185	25	78	88	125	77	83	38	75	774
	% of verified caseload	1.3%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.9%	1.0%	0.6%
	6 months - < 5 years old	1,458	351	2,073	2,231	5,607	1,963	1,974	454	865	16,976
	% of verified caseload	10.2%	10.0%	13.8%	12.9%	12.3%	11.2%	12.7%	11.1%	11.4%	12.1%
	5 years - < 18 years old	4,574	1,309	5,545	6,822	16,329	5,851	5,286	1,446	2,509	49,671
	% of verified caseload	32.0%	37.3%	37.0%	39.5%	35.7%	33.5%	34.0%	35.2%	33.2%	35.4%
18 years old up	8,096	1,820	7,292	8,116	23,631	9,600	8,200	2,166	4,110	73,031	
	% of verified caseload	56.6%	51.9%	48.7%	47.0%	51.7%	54.9%	52.8%	52.8%	54.4%	52.0%
Boarding House Students Status	Registered	117	14	76	31	150	61	20	0	0	469
	Unregistered	205	66	420	578	1,340	463	461	24	36	3,593
	% unregistered	63.7%	82.5%	84.7%	94.9%	89.9%	88.4%	95.8%	100%	100%	88.5%
Boarding House Students Gender	Female	115	39	213	320	606	236	244	12	25	1,810
	Male	207	41	283	289	884	288	237	12	11	2,252
Ethnicity	Burman	28	2	142	9	1,283	2,528	1,609	104	87	5,792
	% of verified caseload	0.2%	0.1%	0.9%	0.1%	2.8%	14.5%	10.4%	2.5%	1.2%	4.1%
	Chin	2	1	0	0	105	192	237	1	0	538
	% of verified caseload	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	1.1%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
	Kachin	2	7	0	0	215	146	65	0	1	436
	% of verified caseload	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.8%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
	Karen	438	2,924	14,827	17,244	38,733	13,223	11,879	3,870	7,435	110,573
	% of verified caseload	3.1%	83.4%	98.9%	99.9%	84.8%	75.6%	76.4%	94.3%	98.4%	78.7%
	Karenni	13,311	542	2	0	44	15	9	0	0	13,923
	% of verified caseload	93.0%	15.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
	Mon	3	0	1	0	309	673	292	105	33	1,416
	% of verified caseload	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	3.8%	1.9%	2.6%	0.4%	1.0%
	Rakhine	1	0	0	0	116	206	242	2	0	567
	% of verified caseload	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
	Shan	488	29	4	0	91	76	67	1	0	756
% of verified caseload	3.4%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	
Other	40	0	12	4	4,796	432	1,143	21	3	6,451	
% of verified caseload	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	10.5%	2.5%	7.4%	0.5%	0.0%	4.6%	

Figure 4

(TBBC 2010, p. 115)

Appendix B: 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees

Article 22

Public Education

1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education.

2. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships.

Appendix C: 1989 UNICEF Convention on Rights of a Child

Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principle set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Appendix D: 1990 African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

Article 11: Education

1. Every child shall have the right to an education.
2. The education of the child shall be directed to:
 - (a) the promotion and development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
 - (b) fostering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms with particular reference to those set out in the provisions of various African instruments on human and peoples' rights and international human rights declarations and conventions;
 - (c) the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures;
 - (d) the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples ethnic, tribal and religious groups;
 - (e) the preservation of national independence and territorial integrity;
 - (f) the promotion and achievements of African Unity and Solidarity;
 - (g) the development of respect for the environment and natural resources;
 - (h) the promotion of the child's understanding of primary health care.
3. States Parties to the present Charter shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realization of this right and shall in particular:
 - (a) provide free and compulsory basic education;
 - (b) encourage the development of secondary education in its different forms and to progressively make it free and accessible to all;
 - (c) make the higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity and ability by every appropriate means;
 - (d) take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates;
 - (e) take special measures in respect of female, gifted, and disadvantaged children, to ensure equal access to education for all sections of the community.
4. States Parties to the present Charter shall respect the rights and duties of parents, and where applicable, of legal guardians to choose for their children's schools, other than those established by public authorities, which conform to such minimum standards may be approved by the State, to ensure the religious and moral education of the child in a manner with the evolving capacities of the child.
5. States Parties to the present Charter shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is subjected to schools or parental discipline shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the child and in conformity with the present Charter.
6. States Parties to the present Charter shall have all appropriate measures to ensure that children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability.

7. No part of this Article shall be construed as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions subject to the observance of the principles set out in paragraph I of this Article and the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the States.

Appendix E: Interview Guide:

Initial open-ended interview questions:

- How do you, as a non-Karen speaking person, perceive your access (and/or your children's access) to education?
- What have you and/or your children experienced in the schools in Mae La not knowing the Karen language?
- What language, in your opinion, should be the main language of instruction in the schools in Mae La? Why?
- How does the education offered in Mae La camp compare/differ with the education you and/or your children received in Burma?
- How does the choice of language in schools influence the students' education?

Questions to help build upon the interviewees responses:

- "Can you elaborate upon what you mentioned before?"
- "Can you expand upon. . .?"
- "Can you enlighten me with your experience?"
- "So how are you dealing with these situations?"

Appendix F: Burmese Translation of Interview Guide

တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းမှုလမ်းညွှန်

လူတွေစစ်ဆေးမှုတွင် အသုံးပြုမည်ဖြစ်သော မေးခွန်းများ

၁။ ကရင်စကားမပြောနိုင်သော လူတစ်ယောက်အနေနှင့် မယ်လဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းတွင် လူကြီးမင်း၏သားသမီး ပညာသင်ယူနိုင်မှုအနေအထား မည်ကဲ့သို့ သိမြင်နားလည်ပါသနည်း။

၂။ မယ်လဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းရှိသောကျောင်း၌ ကရင်စကားမပြောနိုင်သော လူကြီးမင်း၏ သားသမီးများသည် မည်ကဲ့သို့ သော အတွေ့အကြုံများကို ရရှိခဲ့ပါသနည်း။

၃။ လူကြီးမင်း၏ ထင်မြင်ယူဆချက်အရ မယ်လဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းရှိသော ကျောင်းများတွင် ကျောင်းသားများအား ညွှန်ကြားချက်ပေးသည့်နေရာတွင် မည်သည့်ဘာသာစကားသည် အဓိကဘာသာစကား ဖြစ်သင့်ပါသနည်း။

၄။ မယ်လဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းတွင် ရှိသောပညာရေးစနစ်သည် လူကြီးမင်း၏ သားသမီး မြန်မာနိုင်ငံတွင် ရရှိခဲ့သော ပညာရေးနှင့် မည်သို့ ကွာခြားပါသနည်း။

၅။ ကျောင်းများတွင်သင်ကြားရန်အတွက် ဘာသာစကား ရွေးချယ်မှုသည် ကျောင်းသူကျောင်းသားများ၏ ပညာရေးအပေါ်တွင် မည်ကဲ့သို့ လွှမ်းမိုးနိုင် (အကျိုးသက်ရောက်မှုရှိနိုင်) ပါသနည်း။

တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းခံရသူ၏ တုံ့ပြန်မှုအပေါ် ဖြည့်စွက်ရမည့် မေးခွန်းများ

- “လူကြီးမင်းပြောပြသော အကြောင်းအရာအား အသေးစိတ်ပြောပြပေးနိုင်မလားခင်ဗျာ”
- “နည်းနည်းအကျယ်ချဲ့ ပြီးပြောပြပေးနိုင်မလား”
- “လူကြီးမင်းတွင်ရှိသောအတွေ့အကြုံများနှင့်ကျွန်တော့်၏သုသေသနအား ကူညီထောက်ပံ့ပေးနိုင် မလား”
- “ဒါဆိုရင် ဒီအခြေအနေတွေမှာ ဘယ်လိုမျိုးပါဝင်ပတ်သက်ပါသလဲ”

Appendix G: Informed Consent

I, Matthew Gross, am a School for International Training graduate student working on my capstone/thesis in Mae Sot, Thailand with World Education. I am conducting qualitative research and would like you to partake in an interview and assist me with my project.

The title of my research is- Perceptions of Access to Education: Inclusion and Exclusion for Non-Karen refugees in Mae La camp. I am interested in learning from non-Karen speaking refugees in Mae La what they think and feel about their ability to access education. No individual person will be the focus of this research.

Your participation in the research will involve an in-depth interview lasting no longer than 30 minutes. With your consent, I will record the interview, only audio, no video. A transcript will be produced and brought back to you for verification.

All identities will be protected and pseudonyms will be used in all reports, publications, and presentations. Anonymous quotations will be used within the final report. All transcripts, information, data, and media will be stored securely and then destroyed. Please understand that you may withdraw from this study at any time without any retribution.

I thank you for your time and for your willingness to work with me while I explore your perceptions about your access to education in Mae La. Please feel free to contact me if you should have any questions or need clarification on anything. Matt Gross- 085-722-1477, matthew2.gross@mail.sit.edu).

Thank you,

Matt Gross

I have read the above and understand the study. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions of the researcher. I agree to participate.

(Signature)

(Date)

Appendix H: Burmese translation of Informed Consent

အသိပေးခြင်းဆိုင်ရာ သဘောတူညီချက်

ကျွန်တော်၏ အမည်မှာ မတ်သူးဂရော့စ် (Matthew Gross) ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ကျွန်တော်သည် အပြည်ပြည်ဆိုင်ရာ နည်းပြသင်တန်း ဘွဲ့ ရကျောင်းသားတစ်ယောက်ဖြစ်ပြီး ကျွန်တော်၏ ဒီပလိုမာ၊ ဒီဂရီစသည် တို့အတွက် ပြုစုတင်သွင်းရမည့် စာတမ်းအတွက် ထိုင်းနိုင်ငံ၊ မဲဆောက်မြို့တွင် ရှိသော ကမ္ဘာ့ပညာရေးအဖွဲ့နှင့်အတူ အလုပ်လုပ်နေပါသည်။ ကျွန်တော်သည် ကျွန်တော်၏ အလုပ်နှင့် သက်ဆိုင်ပြီး အရည်အချင်းဆိုင်ရာ သုတေသနလုပ်ငန်းကို လုပ်ကိုင်နေ၍ ကျွန်တော်၏ စီမံကိန်းကို ထောက်ပံ့ကူညီသော အနေဖြင့် တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းခြင်း တွင် ပါဝင်စေလိုပါသည်။

ကျွန်တော်၏ သုတေသနခေါင်းစဉ်မှာ “ပညာသင်ကြားနိုင်ရန်အတွက် အခွင့်အလမ်းများကို သိမြင်နားလည်ခြင်း” ဖြစ်ပြီး ထိုသုတေသနတွင် မယ်လဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းရှိ ကရင်လူမျိုးမဟုတ်သော ဒုက္ခသည်များအနေဖြင့် ပညာရေးပိုင်းတွင် ပါဝင်သင်ကြားခွင့်ရရှိခြင်းနှင့် ပါဝင်သင်ကြားခွင့် မရရှိခြင်း တို့ကို သုတေသန ပြုမည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ မယ်လဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းမှ ကရင်စကားမပြောတတ်သည့် ဒုက္ခသည်များအနေဖြင့် ပညာသင်ကြားနိုင်ရန် အရည်အသွေးများနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ သူတို့၏ ထင်မြင်ယူဆချက်များနှင့် စိတ်ခံစားချက်များကို ထိုသူများထံမှ လေ့လာရန် အထူးပင်စိတ်ဝင်စားပါသည်။ ဤသုတေသနပြုမှုအတွက် လူပုဂ္ဂိုလ်တစ်ဦးချင်းစီကို သီးခြားပစ်မှတ်ပြုထားခြင်း မရှိပါ။

ကျွန်တော်၏ သုတေသနလုပ်ငန်းဖြစ်သည့် တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းမှုတွင် သင်တို့ ပါဝင်ဆွေးနွေးရမည့် အချိန်သည် မိနစ် (၃၀)ထက်ပိုမည်မဟုတ်ပါ။ လူကြီးမင်းများ၏ အသံများကိုလည်း အသံဖမ်းဆက်ဖြင့်သာ ဖမ်းယူ၍ မှတ်တမ်း တင်ထားမည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ဗီဒီယို လုံးဝရိုက်မည်မဟုတ်ပါ။ ဤမှတ်တမ်းများကို ဟုတ်မှန်ကြောင်း သက်သေ ပြရန်အတွက် ထုတ်ပြီးသည်နှင့် တပြိုင်နက် လူကြီးမင်းထံသို့ ပြန်လည်ယူဆောင်လာပါမည်။

လူကြီးမင်းတို့နှင့် တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းမှုနှင့်ပတ်သက်သော အစီရင်ခံစာ၊ ပုံနှိပ်ထုတ်ဝေခြင်းနှင့် ကိုယ်စားပြုတင်ပြခြင်းတို့တွင် လူကြီးမင်းတို့၏ အမည်များအား လျှို့ဝှက်ထားမည်ဖြစ်ပြီး အခြားအမည်များဖြင့်သာ အသုံးပြုမည် ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ကျွန်တော်၏ နောက်ဆုံး အစီရင်ခံစာတွင်လည်း အမည်မပါသော ကိုးကားချက်များကိုသာ လျှင် အသုံးပြုမည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ လူကြီးမင်းထံမှ ရရှိသော သုတေသနသတင်းအချက်အလက်များအားလုံးကို လုံခြုံစွာ သိမ်းဆည်းထားမည်ဖြစ်ပြီး သုတေသနပြီးသည်နှင့် တပြိုင်နက်ဖျက်ဆီးပစ်မည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။ လူကြီးမင်းအနေဖြင့် ဤသုတေသနပြုသည့် တွေ့ဆုံမေးမြန်းမှုကို အချိန်မရွေးပယ်ဖျက်ခွင့်ရှိကြောင်းကို နားလည်စေချင်ပါသည်။ ထိုသို့ ပယ်ဖျက်ခြင်းကြောင့် မည်သည့်အကျိုးသက်ရောက်မှုမှ ရှိမလာနိုင်ပါ။

မယ်လဒုက္ခသည်စခန်းတွင် ကျွန်တော်၏ ပညာရေးသင်ကြားနိုင်ရန်အတွက် အခွင့်အလမ်းများကို သိမြင်နိုင်ခြင်း နှင့် ပတ်သက်သော သုတေသနပြုလုပ်နေစဉ်အတွင်း ပူးပေါင်းပါဝင်မည့် သင်၏ အချိန်နှင့် သင်၏ စိတ်အားထက်သန်သော ပါဝင်ဆွေးနွေးမှုများအား အထူးပင် ကျေးဇူးတင်ရှိပါသည်။

အကယ်၍ လူကြီးမင်း၌ ကျွန်တော်၏ သုတေသနနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ သိလိုသော မေးခွန်းများနှင့် ရှင်းလင်းချက်များအား အသေးစိတ်သိလိုလျှင် ကျွန်တော့်အား မည်သည့်အချိန်တွင်မဆို လွတ်လပ်စွာ ဆက်သွယ် မေးမြန်းစုံစမ်းနိုင်ပါသည်။

ဆက်သွယ်စုံစမ်းရမည့် လိပ်စာ

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ကျေးဇူးအထူးတင်ရှိစွာဖြင့်၊
မတ်ဂရေ့စ်

ကျွန်တော်သည် အထက်ပါအကြောင်းအရာအား ရှင်းလင်းစွာနားလည်ပါသည်။ သုသေသနပြုသူအား မည်ကဲ့သို့သောမေးခွန်းကိုမဆို မေးနိုင်သည့်အခွင့်အရေးရှိသည်ကိုလည်း သိရှိပြီးဖြစ်ပါသည်။ ထို့ကြောင့် သုသေသနပြုမှုတွင် ပူးပေါင်းပါဝင်ဆောင်ရွက်ရန် သဘောတူပါသည်။

(လက်မှတ်)

(ရက်စွဲ)

Appendix I: Survey of NGO workers in Mae La Questions

1. Name of organization working with:
2. Position held with organization:
3. How inclusive is the education offered in Mae La camp?
 1. Very Inclusive
 2. Somewhat Inclusive
 3. Somewhat Exclusive
 4. Very Exclusive
 5. No opinion
4. What groups are included in education in Mae La?
5. What groups are excluded from education in Mae La?
6. After the Karen, which ethnic groups constitute the next 5 largest percentages in Mae La camp?
7. What language is predominantly used in Mae La for education?
8. Is language a major factor in the inclusivity/exclusivity in education in Mae La?
9. Which language do you think should be used for education in Mae La?
10. Additional comments:

Appendix J: Survey Monkey Survey

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5J9BHKW>

Total Started Survey: 16

Total Completed Survey: 7 (43.8%)

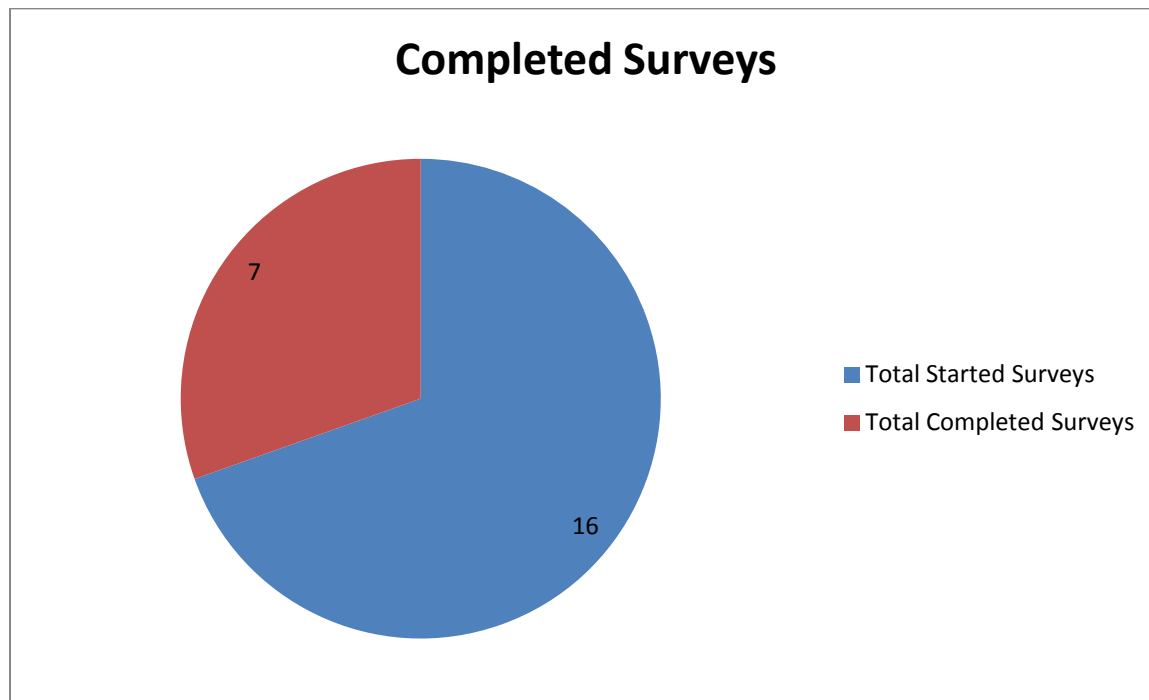


Figure 5

1. What organization do you work with?

Answered question: **16**

Skipped question: **0**

- IRC- 1
- ZOA Refugee Care- 3
- World Education- 6
- GBS- 3
- VSO (with TOPS) -1
- The Curriculum Project- 1
- Shoklo Malaria Research Unit- 1

2. Position held with organization?

Answered question: **15**

Skipped question: **1**

- Volunteer
- Program Officer
- Student- 3
- Education advisor- 2
- Senior Advisor
- Financial Manager
- Programme Administrator
- midwife
- Director
- trainer
- Education officer- 2

3. How inclusive is the education offered in Mae La camp?

Answered question: **14**

Skipped question: **2**

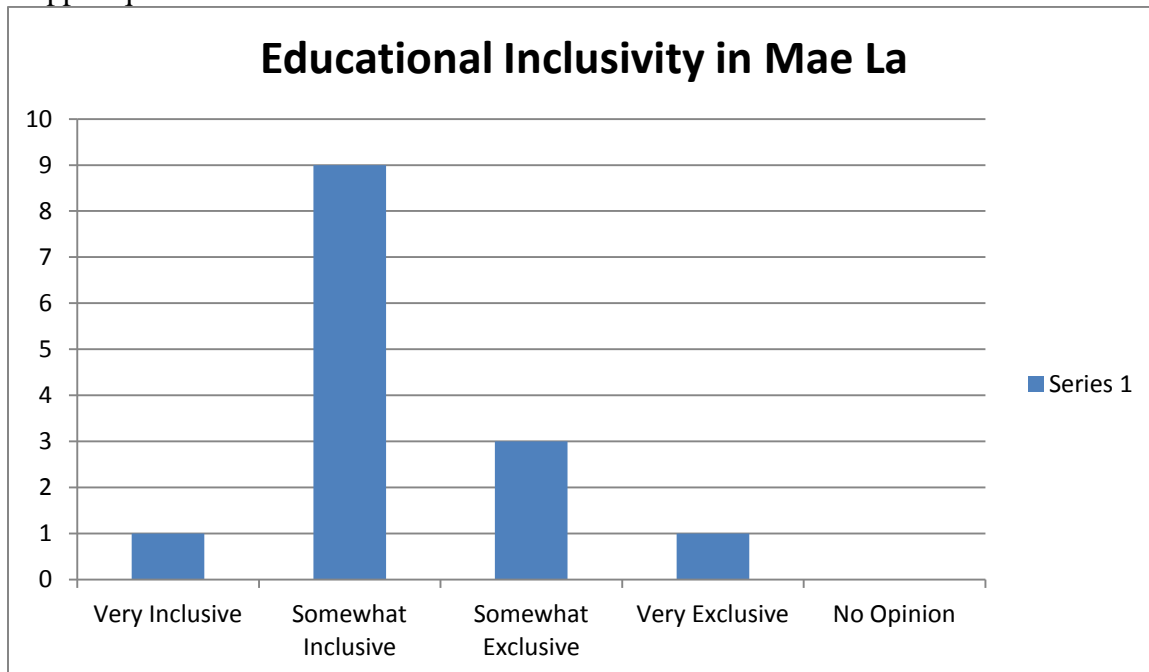


Figure 6

- Very Inclusive 7.1% (1)
- Somewhat Inclusive 64.3% (9)
- Somewhat Exclusive 21.4% (3)

- Very Exclusive 7.1% (1)
- No opinion 0.0% (0)

4. What groups are included in education in Mae La? (able to provide up to 5 responses per person)

Answered question: **12**

Skipped question: **4**

- all ethnic groups
- different ethnic groups
- Non-Karen
- Sgaw Karen
- Karen primarily (KRCEE)- 4
- Pwo Karen- 2
- Karenni
- Kachin
- Muslim- 3
- Burmese- 3
- Other Burmese
- Burmese speaking
- Christians, Buddhists
- all religions, though Muslim education is separate
- different religions- 2
- children
- students
- men
- women
- old men
- old women
- Primary
- special needs children and adults- 3
- teachers
- Secondary
- Language
- organization
- Some Further Education
- Parents- 2
- both genders- 2
- poor and very poor, many siblings

5. What groups are excluded from education in Mae La? (able to provide up to 5 responses per person)

Answered question: **11**

Skipped question: **5**

- Non Karen speakers
- Mon
- Shan
- Language can be a barrier to including all groups
- It has been noted that Muslims sometimes don't feel comfortable participating in events that are primarily in Karen when they usually use Burmese language
- Those with strong non Christian beliefs (e.g. Muslims)
- old people
- sick people
- Married or those with children are often excluded or given different education opportunities
- kids
- girls who get pregnant- 2
- Those with disabilities- 4
- prisoners
- Although many have increased awareness of the potential for special needs children there is still reluctance to mainstream special needs children- 2
- Those who have not had previous education experience (non catch up classes for new arrivals from Burma)- 2
- mad man
- Those who cannot afford the school registration fees, school uniforms and exam fees

6. After the Karen, which ethnic groups constitute the next 5 largest percentages in Mae La camp? (able to provide up to 5 responses per person)

Answered question: **10**

Skipped question: **6**

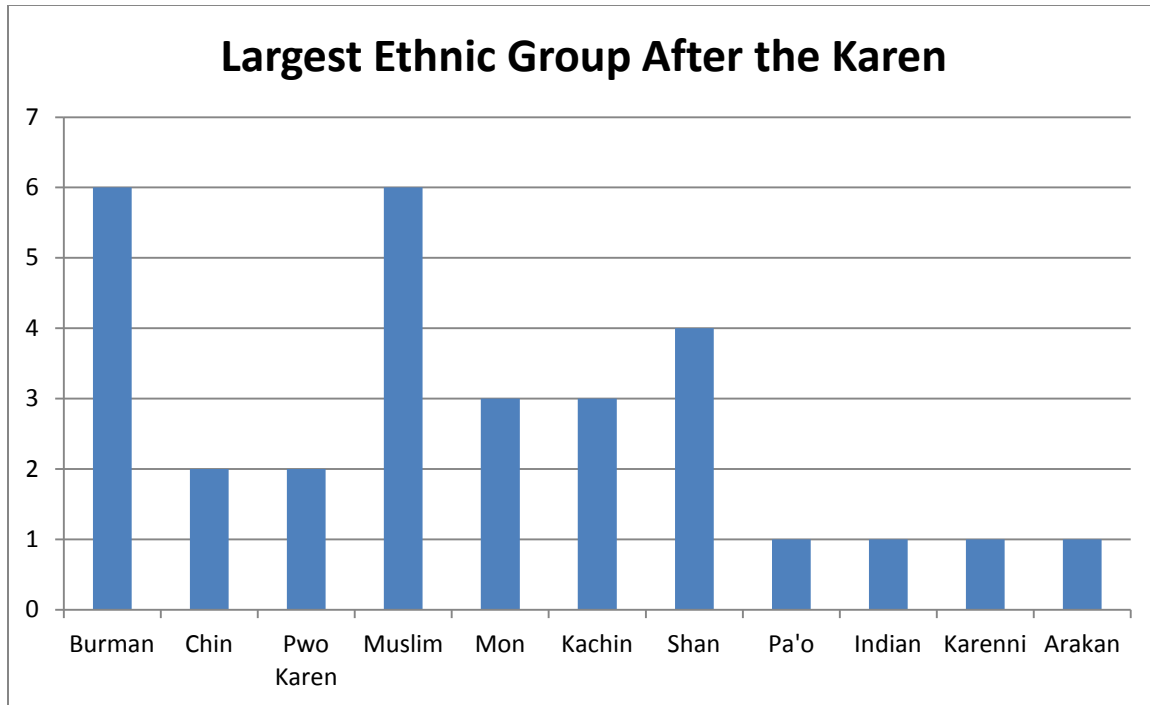


Figure 7

- Burman- 6
- Chin-2
- Arakan
- Pwo Karen (Skaw Karen is largest group)- 2
- Muslim- 6
- Mon- 3
- Kachin- 3
- Shan- 4
- Pa'o
- Indian
- Karenni

7. What language is predominantly used in Mae La for education?

Answered question: **10**

Skipped question: **6**

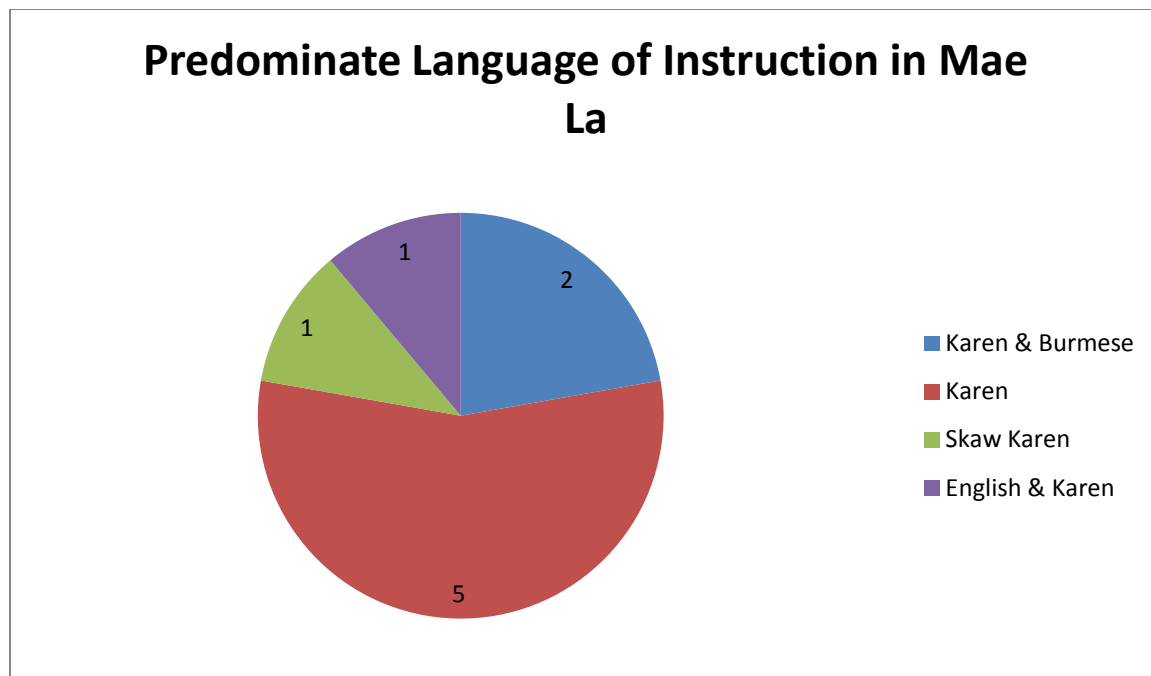


Figure 8

- Karen & Burmese- 2
- Karen- 5
- Skaw Karen
- English – Karen

8. Is language a major factor in the inclusivity/exclusivity in education in Mae La?

Answered question: **10**

Skipped question: **6**

- probably, which is why the KRCEE are translating their curriculum into Burmese
- yes- 4
- It has been in previous years though education staff are more aware of the issue
- One of the major factors
- No- 2

9. Which language do you think should be used for education in Mae La?

Answered question: **10**

Skipped question: **6**

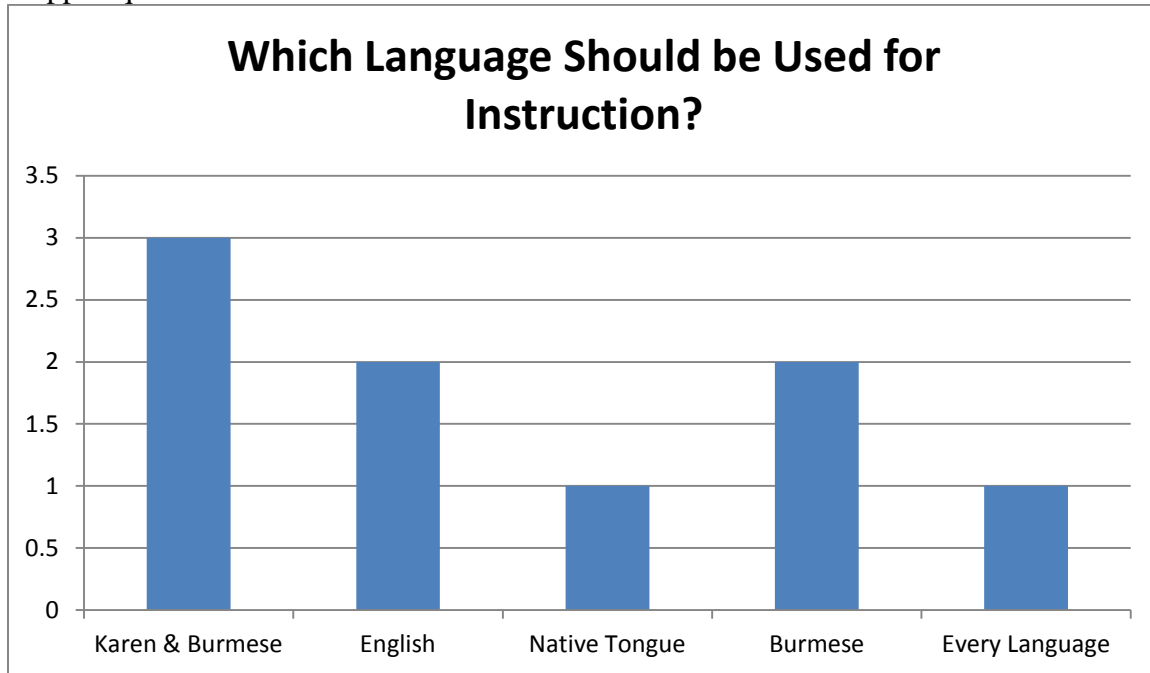


Figure 9

- Karen and Burmese at basic, primary, secondary, & non-formal. For Higher Education there is a desire for English to be the language of instruction
- English- 2
- The first language of the learners, whatever that is
- Burmese- 2
- Karen and Burmese- 2
- every language

10. Additional Comments

Answered question: **6**

Skipped question: **10**

- If you haven't done so yet, you might review VSO's inclusive education report which was completed and distributed last year
- See ZOA Education Survey 2010 for all facts and figures (most accurate and up to date information), plus VSO Inclusive Education Survey.

- another difficulty teachers hired who only speak Burmese yet the children are Karen with poor understanding of Burmese language
- very good
- Not sure with some answers as I rarely work in Mae La
- after 2005 resettlement program many people from Burma come to Refugee camp and also many refugees resettled to 3rd country. From that time, NGOs and CBOs working for Refugees Education start identifying the difficulties they faced in their work, which includes also the language of teaching in school. After that based on the needs NGOs and CBOs are doing their best with the resources available to address to this language of teaching needs.