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# The Survey of Thai Public Opinion toward Myanmar Refugees and Migrant Workers: An Overview

- Malee Sunpuwan
- Sakkarin Niyomsilpa

Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University  
Supported by World Health Organization and the European Union



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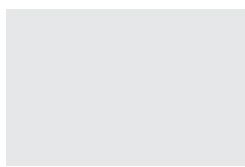
## PREFACE

Refugees are people who are victims of forced migration. Ethnic conflicts and fighting between government forces and minority groups in many parts of Myanmar during the past few decades have caused high casualties and brought about damage to infrastructure and public service systems across the country. Political suppression of ‘pro-democracy’ groups further drove many people outside of the country’s boundaries. Since the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of people in Myanmar have been forced to leave their homes and villages, looking for safe areas elsewhere. Many have become internally displaced persons (IDPs) trying to survive from a subsistence economy. Many chose to cross borders and look for safe havens in neighbouring countries. As a result, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar have lived in Thailand and Bangladesh. Others have found their way to India, Malaysia and elsewhere. According to the Thailand Burma Border Consortium report, as of early 2012, more than 130,000 refugees from Myanmar were living in nine refugee camps in four Thai-Myanmar border provinces. Around 200,000 out-of-camp refugees also live in northern Thai provinces. In addition to the influx of the refugees, estimates suggest more than two million migrants from Myanmar have also migrated to Thailand.

The presence of millions of refugees and migrants creates concerns about provision of protection and assistance to those refugees and migrants. To discern this situation, this study aims at uncovering current attitudes of Thai people toward refugees, registered and non-registered migrants from Myanmar that covers major dimensions, namely, Personal Security, Human Rights; Labour Protection; Economics; Socio-cultural; Human Settlement and Naturalisation; Future of Myanmar Displaced Persons and Migrant Workers in Thailand; and Policy Views on Public Services including education and healthcare services.

This study is a small step that attempted to find out Thai public attitudes toward refugees and migrants and provide a litmus test on their views on the issues of protection and assistance. Results of the study show that Thai people are quite positive toward migrants in certain areas such as human rights and public services but have prejudices against them on some issues such as personal safety and local integration. In general, urban residents have a more negative view than rural residents while community leaders have more positive opinions on refugees and registered migrants but less to non-registered migrants when compared with their villagers.

The report begins with Part I, which explores the overall situation of refugees in Thailand and details and the study's objectives. Part II outlines the study's conceptual framework and provides a literature review of previous studies on refugees and public service issues. Part III provides details on the research methods for this study, which included a large survey of 2,000 persons and qualitative work focusing on 44 in-depth interviews and eight focus group discussions. Part IV is an overview of Thai public opinions on refugees and migrants from Myanmar. Part V provides an analysis of this project's findings and its conclusion as well as policy recommendations and proposed action programmes that the research team considers for improving public opinions of Thai people toward refugees and migrants.



## FOREWORD

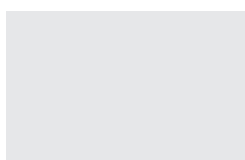
During the past few decades, armed conflicts and forced migration had caused an exodus of refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar into Thailand. Major reasons which drove these people out of their homes included denial of citizenship rights, armed conflicts between the government and ethnic groups, forced labour, physical abuse and forced relocation of ethnic minorities. Thus hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to leave their homes and villages, seeking for safe place and economic opportunity elsewhere. Many of them have some places in their original country to stay and become internally displaced persons (IDPs) while many of them chose to cross borders and look for safe places and better economic condition in neighbouring countries and become Myanmar displaces persons (MDPs).

Thailand is one place of safer destination and hundreds of thousands of MDPs have moved to. It was estimated that more than 130,000 refugees from Myanmar were living in nine refugee camps in four Thai-Myanmar border provinces and four millions of migrant residing in Thailand. It is also estimated that half of migrant are undocumented migrant workers and their dependants.

Hosting millions of refugees and migrant from Myanmar creates public concerns over their protection and aid distribution. Thus public opinion of natives is important as it plays a crucial role on these matters. In addition it enables changes to be made in these aspects as well as gains the support of the other people in society hence making implementation of change easier.

This study is a small step to find out Thai public attitudes toward refugees and migrants and provide recommendations on interventions to correct misunderstandings and reduce prejudice. It is our hope that the information and findings of this report are useful for policy makers to understand the mechanisms that drive public opinion on the subject and thus equip them to deal with any resurgence of hostile attitudes toward refugees and migrants.

Associate Professor Dr. Sureeporn Punpuing  
Director, Institute for Population and Social Research  
Mahidol University



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the kind support and help of many individuals and organisations. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of them for their participation.

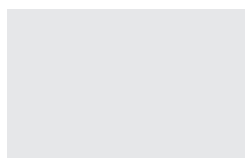
We would like to express our gratitude toward all participants in our study for their kind co-operation and for providing necessary information which turned the project from a challenge to a meaningful task.

We would like to express our special gratitude and thanks to the stakeholders at a workshop and conference during all stages of the study for their useful recommendations.

We wish to express our appreciation to Professor Dr. Aphichat Chamrathirong, research advisor, and Associate Professor Dr. Sureeporn Punpuing, IPSR Director, for their guidance and constant supervision throughout the research process. Our special thanks go to our colleague in developing the project, Dr. Charnporn Holomyong. Also our thanks go to our field supervisors and interviewers who committed their best efforts toward the project's success.

Lastly, our thanks and appreciations also go to the European Union and the Office of the WHO Representative to Thailand who paid considerable attention to this research topic through several meetings. The project would not have been possible without their financial support and we would like especially thank WHO staff, Dr. Brenton Burkholder, Programme Officer, Ms. Aree Mounsookjareoun, National Professional Officer and Ms. Sushera Bunluesin, Programme Assistant, who have not only given support but also thoughtful suggestions.

The Research Team





## ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to uncover current attitudes of Thai people toward Myanmar displaced persons (MDPs) (includes refugees registered and non-registered migrants) with a view to providing recommendations on interventions to address any perceived misunderstandings. Any improvement in Thai attitudes toward Myanmar refugees and displaced persons will potentially strengthen the political will to support policies and mechanisms to improve social and healthcare services provided to displaced persons and migrants. Specific goals of this research included the following: 1) Mapping the Thai community attitudes toward Myanmar displaced persons in four border provinces, namely Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Tak and Mae Hong Son; 2) Assessing Thai community views on public health policy improvements targeting Myanmar displaced persons; and 3) Providing recommendations regarding potential interventions to improve Thai public attitudes toward Myanmar displaced persons.

This project used qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore Thai public opinions on Myanmar refugees, displaced persons and migrant workers in Thailand as well as assessing Thai public opinion on public services, especially education and healthcare services, which should be provided to them. Major activities undertaken as part of this research included: a literature review; research design; drafting of a questionnaire & interview guidelines; a workshop and meeting with key stakeholders; pre-testing the questionnaire; field research and data collection consisting of 2,000 questionnaires undertaken in four border provinces; interviews with community leaders, government agencies, and local media; focus group discussions with village health volunteers; data entry and analysis and finally report writing.

### Project Results

The survey on Thai public opinions on Myanmar displaced persons and migrants covered the following major dimensions: security; human rights; labour protection; economics; socio-cultural; human settlement and naturalisation; future of Myanmar displaced persons and migrant workers in Thailand; and policy views on public services, including education and healthcare. Major findings of the research project are as follows:



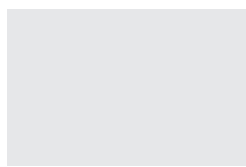
1. The location of Thai residents as well as position in their community had an influence on perceptions of Myanmar displaced persons (MDPs). People who were community leaders and those who lived close to camps are more familiar with refugees and migrants than people who lived in city areas. Such people tended to have a better understanding of refugees and migrants and also have a more positive view on migrants than city residents.
2. Thai people displayed prejudice against irregular migrant workers. All residents had a more positive view of registered migrant workers and refugees than non-registered migrant workers. This was also observed among community leaders and villagers. Perception of non-registered migrant workers was heavily influenced by ‘the fear of the unknown’ and ‘the fear of numbers’.
3. Personal safety issues were a major concern for all respondents in all provinces when asked about refugees and migrant workers. Over half of all respondents in all provinces perceived that migrants and refugees were a threat to their lives and property. A higher percentage of respondents viewed non-registered migrant workers as the greatest threat. This negative view had been heavily influenced by negative media reports regarding refugees and immigrants in Thailand.
4. Regarding human rights, the majority of respondents in all provinces supported humanitarian assistance given to refugees in camps. Respondents agreed that refugees and migrants should be entitled to the basic necessities of life.
5. Regarding labour protection, half of the respondents considered that registered migrant workers should have the same labour protection as Thais. In contrast, the other half of respondents did not want registered or non-registered migrant workers to have the same minimum wages as Thais.
6. Regarding economics, job competition and competition for land and natural resources were a major concern to Thai people. Regarding job competition, over 60% of respondents considered that non-registered migrant workers competed with Thais for jobs. Almost half of the respondents also considered registered migrants competed with Thais for jobs. On the issue of competition for land and natural resources, over half of respondents thought that refugees and non-registered migrant workers competed with them for land and natural resources use. Local villagers were more concerned about this issue than that of community leaders.
7. Regarding socio-cultural issues, the majority of respondents reported that they would prefer use of the Thai language with refugees and migrant workers. Most respondents considered that refugees and migrant workers should learn Thai at the same time as learning their own ethnic language. In addition, most respondents considered that Thais living in border areas should also learn ethnic languages of refugees and migrant workers. Such language skills could support cultural exchange with refugees and migrant workers.

8. Regarding education, the majority of respondents thought that the Thai language should be taught in schools attended by refugees and migrant workers whilst accreditation of education provided to children of refugees and registered migrant workers was also supported. Over half of the respondents agreed that Thai school attendance of children of refugees and registered migrant workers was a positive thing.
9. Regarding health, the majority of respondents supported the same standard of healthcare services provided to Thais, refugees and registered migrant workers. However, most reported that they preferred separate healthcare facilities for refugees and all migrant workers. The majority of respondents considered that registered migrant workers and refugees should be entitled to the same standard of healthcare services provided to Thais, consisting of health promotion, health prevention, disease diagnosis, treatment services and rehabilitation services. However, a majority considered that refugees and all migrant workers should self-finance such healthcare services. Most respondents did not think that the Thai government should finance healthcare services provided to refugees and migrant workers. However, they did agree that United Nations agencies and non-government organisations should support healthcare cost of refugees.
10. Regarding human settlement and local integration, the majority of respondents did not support granting of permanent residence to refugees, regardless of their length of stay in Thailand. In addition, respondents did not support granting of permanent residence to refugees and migrant workers marrying Thais as well as to children of refugees and migrant workers born in Thailand.
11. In general, community leaders have more positive opinions on refugees and registered migrants but less to non-registered migrants when compared with their villagers.

## Policy Recommendations

1. Human Rights Policy and Protection of Refugees: as most Thais support human rights assistance and better protection of refugees, there is much room for the Thai government to improve its policy support to refugees, including the provision of public services such as healthcare and education.
2. Protection of Life and Property: as the majority of Thais are highly concerned for their lives and property in response to the inflow of migrant workers, the Thai authority should provide better protection to these people in order to relieve their concerns. Public safety and improved law enforcement would help to reduce prejudice against migrant workers.
3. Economic opportunities should be provided to refugees. Although job competition and competition for natural resources with migrant workers are still a major concern for Thais, the majority of Thais agree that refugees should be allowed to work to increase their self-reliance. Respondents considered that refugees would need to work to acquire skills necessary to earn a living upon their return to Myanmar.

4. Education policy should be improved with a view to equipping refugees and children of migrant workers with skills and accreditation for supporting their future careers. Results of this survey have shown that Thai people support the improvement of educational services provided to refugees and children of migrant workers.
5. Thai people support standard health services provided to refugees and migrant workers. However, most respondents did not consider that the Thai government should finance health programs for these people. The Thai authorities, international organisations and aid agencies should therefore conduct a thorough study on health policy and health financing issues regarding refugees and migrant workers. Improved public access to healthcare services for refugees and migrant workers should be the primary concern of decision makers.
6. Misperceptions and prejudice toward refugees and migrant workers still prevails in Thailand. Since prejudice is much influenced by media and press reporting, training programmes for media officials and public agencies should be undertaken to ensure a more balanced view toward refugees and migrant workers. There should be more reporting on the positive contribution of migrant worker as most Thais are unaware of such aspects such as migrant workers economic contribution to the economy of Thailand.
7. Given the prevailing prejudice against migrant workers despite their growing number, social cohesion should be a long-term goal of Thailand. Community involvement in refugee and immigration policy development should be considered. Importantly, social and cultural exchanges between Thais and migrant workers should be promoted by Thai authorities and local governments. Local integration should be further explored regarding potential settlement of certain groups of migrant workers.



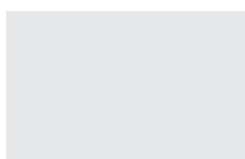
# LIST OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	i
FOREWORD.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
LIST OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF FIGURE .....	xi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	xv
 PART I INTRODUCTION.....	 1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Objectives of the Study.....	3
 PART II THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW.....	 5
2.1 Theories and Concepts.....	5
2.1.1 Individual level theories.....	5
2.1.2 Contextual level theories.....	6
2.2 Background: Myanmar Refugees.....	6
2.3 Refugee Status in Thailand.....	7
2.4 Main Actors in Immigration and Refugee-related Policies.....	8
2.5 Rights of Refugees and Migrant Workers.....	9
2.6 Migrant Registration and Nationality Verification of Migrant Workers.....	10
2.7 Perception of Refugees and Migrants.....	11
2.8 Hypotheses.....	11

<b>PART III RESEARCH METHODS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Research Design.....	13
3.2 Population and Sampling.....	13
3.3 Data Collection Process.....	15
3.4 Data Quality Control .....	16
3.5 Data Analysis.....	16
3.6 Ethical Considerations.....	16
3.7 Terminology.....	17
<b>PART IV AN OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 Respondents' Profile.....	19
4.2 Knowledge and Understanding of Refugees.....	21
4.3 Thai Public Opinion on Refugees and Displaced Persons from Myanmar.....	23
4.3.1 Human Safety .....	23
4.3.2 Human Rights Dimension .....	24
4.3.3 Labour Protection Dimension .....	24
4.3.4 Economic Dimension.....	25
4.3.5 Socio-cultural Dimension .....	27
4.3.6 Education Dimension .....	27
4.3.7 Human Settlement and Naturalisation Dimension .....	28
4.3.8 Health Care Dimension.....	29
4.4. The Future of Refugees .....	33
<b>PART V CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1. Summary of Key Findings in Relation to Hypotheses.....	35
5.2 Conclusions.....	36
5.2 Policy Recommendations.....	38
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>44</b>

## LIST OF FIGURE

<b>Figure 1.1</b> Total number of refugees residing in all camps in Thailand, 1998-2012 .....	2
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## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 3.1:</b>	Sample allocation by types of individuals.....	14
<b>Table 3.2:</b>	Sample allocation for in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and brain storming workshop.....	14
<b>Table 4.1:</b>	Respondents' profile by position and location .....	20
<b>Table 4.2:</b>	Experience of respondents in visiting refugee camps by position and location .....	21
<b>Table 4.3:</b>	Having friends/known persons in camps by position and location .....	22
<b>Table 4.4:</b>	Place of knowing refugees by position and location .....	22
<b>Table 4.5:</b>	Sources of information about refugees .....	23
<b>Table 4.6:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees and migrant workers pose a threat to your life and property by position and location.....	24
<b>Table 4.7:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that humanitarian assistance and shelter should be given to refugees by position and location.....	24
<b>Table 4.8:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrant workers should have the same labour protection and receive the same wage as Thai workers by position and location.....	25
<b>Table 4.9:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrants from Myanmar compete for jobs by position and location.....	25
<b>Table 4.10:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrants from Myanmar compete for land and natural resources by position and location .....	26
<b>Table 4.11:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees should be allowed to work to increase their self-reliance by position and location .....	26
<b>Table 4.12:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrants should use the Thai language to communicate with Thais and use ethnic languages to disseminate information by position and location .....	27
<b>Table 4.13:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees and migrants should learn Thai together with their own language in school and should be allowed to study in Thai schools by position and location .....	28



<b>Table 4.14:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that permanent residency should be given by position and location .....	29
<b>Table 4.15:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that standard healthcare services should be provided and health facilities should be separated by position and location .....	30
<b>Table 4.16:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees and migrants should receive the same health care services as Thais by position and location.....	30
<b>Table 4.17:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents who perceived that healthcare services provided to groups of MPDs should be improved by position and location.....	31
<b>Table 4.18:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that financial support should come from by position and location.....	32
<b>Table 4.19:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents that viewed refugees and migrants as disease carriers by position and location .....	33
<b>Table 4.20:</b>	Percentage distribution of respondents perceiving whether refugees should be allowed to live and work in Thailand permanently or sent back to their origins by position and location.....	33
<b>Table 4.21:</b>	Reasons for sending refugees back to their origin or allowing them to live and work permanently by position and location .....	34
<b>Table 5.1</b>	Action Programmes to Correct Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice .....	42



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this study was to find out the current attitudes of Thai people toward Myanmar refugees and displaced persons (MDPs) (including registered and non-registered migrants) with a view to providing recommendations on interventions to improve any misunderstandings. Any improvement in Thai attitudes toward Myanmar refugees and displaced persons will potentially strengthen political will to support policies and mechanisms to improve social and healthcare services provided to displaced persons and migrants. Specific goals of this research included the followings: 1) Mapping Thai community attitudes toward Myanmar displaced persons in four border provinces, namely Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Tak and Mae Hong Son; 2) Assessing Thai community views on public health policy improvements targeting Myanmar displaced persons; and 3) Providing recommendations regarding potential interventions to improve Thai public attitudes toward Myanmar displaced persons.

This project employed quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore Thai public opinions toward Myanmar refugees, displaced persons and migrant workers in Thailand as well as assessing Thai public opinion on public services, especially education and healthcare services, which should be provided to them. Major activities undertaken as part of this research included: a literature review; research design; drafting of a questionnaire and interview guidelines; a workshop and meeting with key stakeholders; pre-testing the questionnaire; field research and data collection of 2,000 questionnaires undertaken in four border provinces; interviews of community leaders, government and non-government agencies and local media; a focus group discussion with health-service volunteers; data entry and analysis; and finally report writing.

### Project Results

The survey on Thai public opinions on Myanmar displaced persons and migrants covered the following major dimensions: security; human rights; labour protection; economics; socio-cultural; human settlement and naturalisation; future of Myanmar displaced persons and migrant workers in Thailand; and policy views on public services, including education and healthcare.

## Major Findings of the Research Project

1. The location of Thai residents had an influence on perceptions of Myanmar Displaced Persons (MDPs). People who lived close to camps are more familiar with refugees and migrants than people who lived in cities. Such people tended to have better understandings of refugees and migrants and also have a more positive view on migrants than city residents.
2. Thai people displayed prejudice against irregular migrant workers. Both urban residents and those living close to camps had a more positive view of registered migrant workers and refugees than non-registered migrant workers. Perception of irregular migrant workers was influenced by ‘the fear of the unknown’ and ‘the fear of numbers’.
3. Personal safety issues were a major concern for all respondents in all provinces when asked about refugees and migrant workers. Over half of all respondents in all provinces perceived that migrants and refugees were a threat to their lives and property. A higher percentage of respondents viewed non-registered migrant workers as the greatest threat. This negative view is heavily influenced by negative media reports regarding refugees and immigrants in Thailand.
4. Relating to human rights, the majority of respondents in all provinces supported humanitarian assistance given to refugees in camps. Respondents agreed that refugees and migrants should be entitled to the basic necessities of life.
5. With respect to labour protection, half of respondents considered that registered migrant workers should have the same labour protection as Thais. In contrast, the remaining half of respondents did not want migrant workers, registered or non-registered, to have the same minimum wages as Thais.
6. Regarding economics, job competition and competition for land and natural resources were a major concern to Thai people. Regarding job competition, over 60% of respondents considered that illegal migrant workers competed with Thais for jobs. Almost half of respondents considered registered migrants competed with them for jobs. On the issue of competition for land and natural resources, over half of respondents thought that refugees and non-registered migrant workers competed with them for land and natural resources use.
7. With regard to socio-cultural issues, the majority of respondents reported that they would prefer use of Thai language for refugees and migrant workers. Most respondents considered that refugees and migrant workers should learn the Thai language at the same time as learning their own ethnic language. In addition, most respondents considered that Thais living in border areas should learn ethnic languages of refugees and migrant workers. Such language skills could support cultural exchanges with refugees and migrant workers.

8. On the issue of education, the majority of respondents thought that the Thai language should be taught in schools attended by refugees and migrant workers whilst accreditation of education provided to children of refugees and registered migrant workers was also supported. Over half of respondents agreed that Thai school attendance of children of refugees and registered migrant workers was a positive thing.
9. Relating to health concerns, the majority of respondents supported the same standard of healthcare services provided to Thais, refugees and registered migrant workers. However, most reported that they preferred separate healthcare facilities for refugees and all migrant workers. The majority of respondents considered that registered migrant workers and refugees should be entitled to the same standard healthcare services provided to Thais, consisting of health promotion, health prevention, disease diagnosis, treatment services and rehabilitation services. However, the majority considered that refugees and all migrant workers should self-finance such healthcare services. Most respondents did not think that the Thai government should finance healthcare services provided to refugees and migrant workers.
10. With respect to human settlement and local integration, the majority of respondents did not support granting of permanent residence to refugees, regardless of their length of stay in Thailand. In addition, respondents did not support granting of permanent residence to refugees and migrant workers marrying Thais as well as to children of refugees and migrant workers born in Thailand.
11. In general, community leaders had more positive opinions toward refugees and registered migrants but less to non-registered migrants when compared to their villagers.

## Policy Recommendations

1. Human Rights Policy and Protection of Refugees: as most Thais support human rights assistance and better protection of refugees, there is much room for the Thai government to improve its policy support to refugees, including the provision of public services such as healthcare and education.
2. Protection of Life and Property: as the majority of Thais are highly concerned for their lives and property in response to the inflow of migrant workers, the Thai authority should provide better protection to these people in order to relieve their concerns. Public safety and improved law enforcement would help to reduce prejudice against migrant workers.
3. Economic opportunities should be provided to refugees. Although job competition and competition for natural resources with migrant workers are still a major concern for Thais, the majority of Thais agree that refugees should be allowed to work to increase their self-reliance. Respondents considered that refugees would need to work to acquire skills necessary to earn a living upon their return to Myanmar.

4. Education policy should be improved with a view to equipping refugees and children of migrant workers with skills and accreditation for supporting their future careers. Results of this survey have shown that Thai people do support the improvement of educational services provided to refugees and children of migrant workers.
5. Thai people support standard health services provided to refugees and migrant workers. However, most respondents felt that the Thai government should not finance health programs for these people. The Thai authorities, international organisations and aid agencies should therefore conduct a thorough study on health policy and health financing issues regarding refugees and migrant workers. Improved public access to healthcare services for refugees and migrant workers should be given high priority by decision makers.
6. Misperceptions and prejudice toward refugees and migrant workers still prevail in Thailand. Since prejudice is influenced by media and press reporting, training programmes for media officials and public agencies should be undertaken to ensure a more balanced view toward refugees and migrant workers. There should be more reporting on the positive contribution of migrant worker as most Thais are unaware of such aspects such as migrant workers economic contribution to the economy of Thailand.
7. Given the prevailing prejudice against migrant workers despite their growing number, social cohesion should be a long-term goal for Thailand. Community involvement in refugee and immigration policy development should be considered. Importantly, social and cultural exchanges between Thais and migrant workers should be promoted by Thai authorities and local governments. Local integration should be further explored regarding potential settlement of certain groups of migrant workers.

## Action Programmes to Correct Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice

Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice	Recommendation/Action
More threat from refugees and migrants than other strangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media training on issues related to refugees and migrant workers</li> <li>- Research on the economic contribution of migrants</li> </ul>
Irregular migrant workers deserve less protection than other workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universal protection policy should be promoted</li> <li>- Campaign against discrimination</li> <li>- Legal support for migrants</li> </ul>
Different labour standards should be applied to irregular migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campaign against discrimination</li> <li>- Coordination with employers' associations and Thai officials to ensure universal labour protection coverage</li> </ul>
Migrant workers should have lower wages than Thais	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campaigns against discrimination</li> <li>- Coordination with employers' associations and Thai officials to ensure universal labour protection</li> </ul>
City residents are more concerned with job competition from migrant workers than those in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More balanced information on refugees reported by the media</li> <li>- Research on economic contribution of migrant workers to provide empirical evidence</li> </ul>
Concern on competition for land and resources from non-registered migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better management of collective resources in border areas</li> <li>- Community involvement in migration policy</li> </ul>
Refugees and migrant workers are a burden on Thai public finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Correcting misinformation and informing the public that most financing for refugees and non-registered migrant workers comes from international organisation and aid agencies</li> </ul>
Little support for the preservation of migrants' culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of multiculturalism and sensitivity to minorities' cultural practices</li> </ul>
Children of non-registered migrants should be excluded from universal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universal education policy should be genuinely implemented and promoted</li> </ul>
Separate healthcare facilities should be set up for refugees and migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better management of healthcare services to reduce congestion such as setting up mobile health units to visit migrant areas</li> </ul>
Refugees and migrant workers should self-finance healthcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health financing programmes should be undertaken to consider cover for different groups of migrants</li> <li>- More contribution from employers, migrant workers and aid agencies</li> </ul>



## Action Programmes to Correct Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice (Cont'd)

Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice	Recommendation/Action
Little support for Royal Thai Government's health financing for refugees and migrant workers	- Providing information on direct and indirect tax contribution from migrant workers (VAT, registration fees)
Children of refugees and migrants should not be given Thai permanent residence	- Exploring the possibility of local integration measures for stateless children

# PART I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

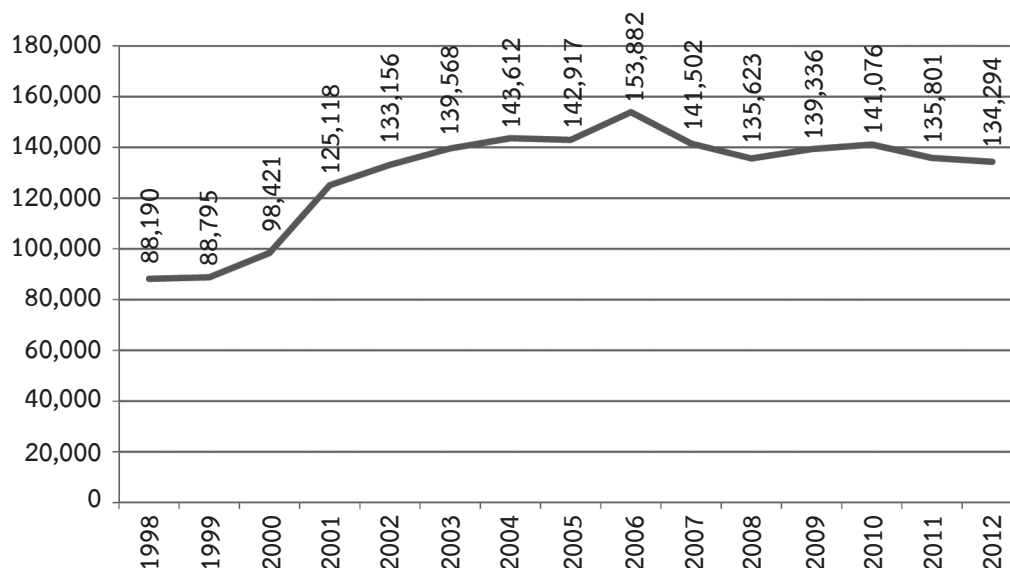
Thailand has been a country of first asylum for refugees for many decades. During the 1970s and 1980s, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled Indochina due to war, to Thailand and other ASEAN countries. International efforts led to a Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) that solved Indochinese refugee challenges by resettling these people in the third countries or returning and re-settling them in their countries of origin. By the mid-1990s, all camps housing Indochinese refugees were closed down in Thailand. The end of the Cold War and political reforms across Southeast Asia contributed to political reconciliation and a peaceful environment for Indochinese refugees. As refugees from the eastern border disappeared, waves of refugees from the western border then crossed into Thailand during the past decade. Refugees from Myanmar (or Burma), mostly from ethnic groups fighting to maintain their semi-autonomy status from the Myanmar government, grew in number from 88,190 persons in 1998 to 125,118 persons in 2001 before reaching 153,882 persons in 2006. The number of official refugees from Myanmar in Thailand has since remained around 140,000 persons.

The influx of refugees into Thailand took place despite the fact that Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Thailand also has not committed itself to the international practice of 'non-refoulement' of refugees. However, humanitarian considerations have always been a major part of the Thai foreign policy. Thailand thus allowed nine temporary shelters (commonly known as refugee camps) to be set up in the four Myanmar-Thai border provinces of Mae Hong Son, Tak, Kanchanaburi and Ratchaburi to house displaced persons from Myanmar. In early 2012, there were still 134,294 refugees living in nine camps with Mae La camp in Tak province being the largest with 48,721 persons. Moreover, there are around 200,000 refugees, mostly from Shan state, living outside camps in northern Thai provinces. Given the concern over drug smuggling from Shan state, the Thai government does not allow the establishment of shelters for Shan people. In addition to camp refugees and out-of-camp refugees, Thailand hosted 2,455,744 migrant workers from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar in the country by the end of 2009. It is currently estimated to be four millions migrants and half of them are non-registered migrant workers

and their dependants. The largest number of migrant workers in Thailand is from Myanmar, consisting of over a million people.

Mixed migration flows between political refugees and economic migrants and the presence of a large number of migrant workers from Myanmar mean it is more practical to study the protection and aids issues of both refugees and migrant workers together. It is noted that the influx of refugees and migrant workers from neighbouring countries into Thailand has caused alarm for the Thai government and Thai people regarding security and health concern. There were occurrences of emerging infectious diseases such as malaria in border provinces. Some diseases which had disappeared in Thailand also began to re-emerge. Moreover, there appeared an increased tendency for drug resistance in diseases such as TB and Malaria because of poor health treatment in the border regions. Universal healthcare services in Thailand are only provided to Thai citizens. While documented migrant workers are under the Compulsory Migrant Health Insurance (CMHI) and they are required to pay for such insurance during the migrant worker application process. Many refugees and non-registered migrant workers still do not have access to standard healthcare services as a result. As Thailand has served as a major international gateway to Asia, the health risks in border provinces can pose a serious problem not only to refugees and migrant workers but also to all people living in Thailand and beyond.

Figure 1.1 Total number of refugees residing in all camps in Thailand, 1998-2012



Source: Thailand Burma Border Consortium (2012)

Strengthening of health security in Thailand will also require improvement of the health status of refugees and migrants. The strengthening of health status of people who live in border provinces would benefit not only migrants but also millions of Thais, visiting tourists and other persons. In order to improve health security for refugees and migrants, proper policy guidelines and appropriate

mechanisms need to be improved and developed. Public opinion and input from Thai society toward refugees and displaced persons should also be sought to enable the development of suitable health policies and guidelines. Public acceptance is crucial to obtain political support from the Thai government and other international bodies for such measures. This survey of public opinions in Thailand on general perception of refugees and migrant workers, policy preferences regarding healthcare and other social services, economic issues, labour issues and local integration issues should be undertaken in a systematic manner to gauge Thai attitudes toward refugees and migrant workers. A large survey on such issues will contribute to a comprehensive knowledge on these issues and be instrumental in designing appropriate healthcare programmes and policy suggestions aimed at improving healthcare services for refugees and migrant workers.

As a result of such considerations, this project, “the Survey of Thai Public Opinion toward Myanmar Refugees and Migrant Workers” administered by Thailand’s Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) and funded by the European Union, was undertaken. This project consisted of a survey of 2,000 Thai people in four western border provinces of Thailand, namely Ratchaburi, Kanchanaburi, Tak and Mae Hong Son. In each province, samplings included city/urban respondents and respondents in villages situated close to refugee camps (rural area). In addition to a quantitative survey, a qualitative analysis was also carried out to provide an analytical explanation of the results. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with community leaders and other key informants in each of the four provinces brought important detailed understanding and results to the survey. The results of this study contribute to increase understandings of Thai public attitude and perception toward Myanmar refugees and migrant workers, both registered and non-registered and elements and factors which could influence their public perception. These understandings can help in future policy improvement work in areas of healthcare and social services to be provided to refugees and migrant workers. However, since this project only focuses on four border provinces, the results cannot be said to represent the view of all Thai people. Similar public opinion surveys should therefore be carried out in the future in other provinces where migrant communities are located.

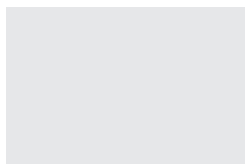
## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

### *General*

To conduct an assessment in order to identify the current attitudes of Thai society toward Myanmar refugees and migrant workers with a view to providing recommendations on interventions to correct misunderstandings and reduce prejudice, if any. The improvement of Thai attitudes toward refugees and migrant workers will contribute to a political will that would lend support to policies and mechanisms to improve universal healthcare services in Thailand.

### *Specific*

- To examine Thai community attitudes toward Myanmar refugees and migrant workers in four border provinces, namely Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Tak and Mae Hong Son.
- To understand Thai community views on public health policy improvements targeting Myanmar refugees and migrant workers.
- To provide recommendations on interventions to improve Thai public attitudes toward Myanmar refugees and migrant workers.



## PART II

# THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This part explores theories and concepts and previous work that contribute to the understanding of public attitudes toward migrants and migration.

### 2.1 Theories and Concepts

Most research on attitudes on migration issues focus on two kinds of attitudes, namely, attitudes toward immigrants, and attitudes on immigration. The former attitude is measured in terms of reaction toward an individual (immigrant) while the latter attitude is measured as reactions toward the migration phenomenon. To understand attitudes toward migrant and migration, two sets of theories are widely applied: firstly, theories at an individual level that are based upon micro-sociological perspectives; and secondly, theories at a contextual level that focus on structural factors (Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010).

#### 2.1.1 Individual level theories

Three well-known perspectives from micro-sociology are frequently used when considering theories at an individual level, including: a) socioeconomic correlates and self-interests; b) identities and values; and c) contact with out-group members. The socioeconomic correlates and self-interests ideas explain individual trajectories in fear of competition with rational actors. Such thinking can lead local people to hold negative attitudes that legitimate their own positions when competing with immigrants over jobs or natural resources, in particular during the period of economic crisis (Olzak, 1994; Sears & Funk, 1991).

In terms of identities and values perspective, these ideas refer to the process of attitude formation that is influenced by values and identities of a group. It follows that a person favours themselves and the group that they belong to such that the positive impression of their own identity brings about negative attitudes toward outsiders or others (Mummendey, Klink, & Brown, 2001).

Finally, in terms of theories or perspectives regarding contact with out-group members, these ideas draw upon contact theory which predicts that contact promotes positive attitudes toward out-group members. Though favorable attitudes can occur, prejudice against minorities may result because of negative and faulty stereotypes (Flashman, 2009).

### 2.1.2 Contextual level theories

Theories at a contextual or structural level explain why certain groups are prone to developing particular attitudes toward outsiders. A major theory that is widely used in the study of attitudes at the macro level is the group threat theory. This theory explains that more contact between majority groups and ethnic minority groups brings about competition for resources and power and creates a feeling of otherness between groups (Flashman, 2009; Olzak, 1994; Quillian, 1995).

## 2.2 Background: Myanmar Refugees

Refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar residing in Thailand are a result of forced migration that has occurred in the past few decades. Denial of citizenship rights, armed conflicts between the Myanmar government and ethnic groups, forced labour, physical abuse and forced relocation of ethnic minorities are causes of the cross-border flow of Myanmar refugees into neighbouring countries. Armed conflicts between the Myanmar army and other ethnic groups escalated after the independence of Myanmar from the British colonial rule. The Panglong Agreement in 1947 arranged by the British colonial powers gave minority groups certain autonomy, except for the right to secession. Shan, Karen, Karenni, Mon and other ethnic groups controlled certain areas close to the Myanmar-Thai borders. However, policy changes in Yangon led to a Myanmar army offensive against ethnic groups with the aim of extending the Myanmar government's political and economic control since the 1980s. Major conflicts opposite Tak province in Thailand drove thousands of refugees into Thailand. Further occupation of indigenous areas and human rights violations by the Myanmar army forced tens of thousands of refugees and asylum seekers into neighbouring countries. In the late 1980s, prosecution and persecution of members of the National League for Democracy political party and a crackdown on pro-democracy movements forced Myanmar students and refugees into Thailand. More suppression of pro-democracy groups drove more Myanmar refugees into Thailand in the 1990s also. Forced relocation of ethnic villagers in Myanmar also affected hundreds of thousands of ethnic villagers inside the country. As a result an estimated 270,000 people in Eastern Myanmar become internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in temporary shelters (Kraft, 2004).

Most displaced persons living in refugee camps in Thailand consist of small family groups. Until 1995, these individuals could leave the camps to procure food and other goods to use in the camps. However, eventually Thai authorities prohibited refugees from travelling, farming or collecting firewood outside the camps. Moreover, income-generating activities are not permitted and vocational training was limited. Refugees therefore had to depend on humanitarian assistance for food, shelter materials,



cooking oil, blankets and other supplies. These restrictions had an adverse impact on the self-sufficiency of refugees, their morale as well as their mental health. Another group of refugees, mainly from Shan State, lived outside refugee camps. Around 200,000 to 300,000 refugees from Shan State fled Myanmar military attacks and prosecution into Northern Thailand. The Thai government did not allow refugee camps to be set up for these individuals however. There is only a small informal camp for Shan refugees run by Jesuit Refugee Services or JRS (Kalnin, 2010). As a result, most Shan refugees have had no access to formal international protection and have been considered by the Thai government as illegal migrant workers.

For Myanmar students and intellectuals, until 2004 UNHCR considered them as an urban refugee population in need of protection. However, the seizure of the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok and other incidents such as protests by Myanmar students on Bangkok streets led to a policy change by the Thai government which announced that all individuals receiving international protection and assistance must be in the border camps. For those living outside the camps, the Thai government announced that they would be considered as either labour migrants or illegal migrants. The majority of general migrant workers are concentrated in border provinces, areas with large-scale agricultural production, industrial cities, Bangkok and its surrounding provinces and coastal areas with developed fishing industries. For registered migrant workers from Myanmar, many are employed in manufacturing industries, construction, agricultural sectors, labour-intensive industries and services (Feinstein International Center, 2011).

### 2.3 Refugee Status in Thailand

There are many push factors which result in people becoming refugees such as human rights abuse (forced labour, political prosecution), economic hardship (due to economic mismanagement, corruption), and discrimination (based on race and ideology). In Myanmar, ethnic conflict and political prosecution often led to forced relocation of minority groups. Sometimes forced relocations were caused by urban development, exploitation of natural resources, the eradication of poppy fields to reduce economic potential of insurgents, and forced labour. As conflict continued or forced relocation took place, people fled from their homes and/or adopted risk-diversification strategies by sending some family members to other cities or even neighbouring countries. Regardless of their political backgrounds and intentions, there are no clear criteria in Thailand for making a distinction between refugees, asylum seekers or irregular migrant workers. Such persons' status depend less on the circumstances that urged them to leave their country and more on their status when they arrived in Thailand and the existence of any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on labour import Thailand has signed with neighbouring countries. Basically, Thailand has inconsistent policies that determine different types of migrant persons based on time, place and bilateral agreements (Feinstein International Center, 2011). In the case of Myanmar refugees, encamped migrants are considered temporarily displaced persons and out-of-camp migrants are mostly irregular migrants. No migrants settling outside of the nine border camps are considered refugees or asylum seekers by the Thai

government. But in reality the situation is quite different. In a 2006 survey of 1,700 migrants from Myanmar who lived in three Thai provinces outside of camps, over half of respondents in Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son reported leaving Myanmar due to political reasons such as forced labour, forced relocation and appropriation of land and assets (Green, et al., 2008). In another survey of 772 respondents in Mae Sot, 58 percent of whom were migrants and 41 percent who were Thai citizens, 14 percent of migrant respondents came to Mae Sot because of armed conflicts and/or political persecution (Feinstein International Center, 2011).

As a result of these mixed migration flows, it is difficult to differentiate refugees from other migrants. The status of Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand could also serve as a pull factor in converting some refugees into migrant workers. While refugees are kept in camps with limited income-generating activities and little freedom of movement, registered foreign workers are allowed to work in Thailand, can access low-cost healthcare and other social services, enjoy some freedom of movement and in theory can get labour rights protection. But non-registered migrant workers face many challenges in getting fair wages, workers' compensation for injuries and seeking labour rights protection (Feinstein International Center, 2011).

## 2.4 Main Actors in Immigration and Refugee-related Policies

In Thailand, there are several agencies involved in migration law and the implementation of migration control. Previously, the Royal Thai Armed Forces and the Border Patrol Police (BPP) were major players in Thailand's migration policy. However, since the 1990s, the National Security Council (NSC), under direct control of the Prime Minister, has played a significant role in defining Thailand's border policy and the country's stance on displaced persons from Myanmar. Since the 1990s, the NSC has shifted its policy focus from Khmer refugees to refugees and migrants from Myanmar. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) is the highest ministerial authority dealing with immigration matters. The Immigration Act authorizes the MOI to grant entry permits to aliens and to allow asylum seekers to seek shelter in Thailand. The Border Patrol Police (BPP) deals with many security issues including drug smuggling, border crime, trafficking, illegal immigration and intelligence gathering. The Royal Thai Armed Forces are in charge of relocations of refugee camps and repatriation processes. The Ministry of Labour, established in 1993, issues temporary work permits to irregular migrant workers. The Office of the Administrative Commission on Irregular Workers (OAW), established by the NSC in 2001, deals with issues related to irregular workers. It consists of 29 representatives from various government agencies. Aside from Thai agencies, international organizations and NGOs also play an important role in the affairs of migrants and refugees. In the late 1990s, the UNHCR was asked to establish standards relating to refugee status determination procedures, resulting in the registration of some individuals as Persons of Concern. The UNHCR also works with the Thai government and other humanitarian agencies in providing assistance to refugees whilst facilitating voluntary repatriation of refugees. For human rights NGOs, the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) works to coordinate various NGOs'

activities and programmes and aims to protect legal rights of forced migrants and provide relief supply as well as medical care to refugees. These human rights NGOs also engage in humanitarian work for Thai communities around the camps (Baek & Subramaniam, 2008).

In relation to healthcare, NGO programmes focus on primary health care (preventive and curative) services. Healthcare training for service and management is also provided to Myanmar refugees. Educational services are provided in refugee camps, to migrants outside the camps and to IDPs within Myanmar. The main organisations offering educational services in the camps, with limited out-of-camp and IDP involvement, include the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Consortium (World Education). In October 2004, the Thai Ministry of Education received cabinet approval to guarantee 12 years of schooling to all children and in August 2005 the “Education for All” policy has been adopted by the Thai Government. Therefore, regardless of their nationality, birth or parental registration status, all children have rights to access to education provided in Thailand. Some migrants also attend Thai schools but the majority of out-of-camp migrant children do not receive any formal education. Some migrant children go to schools set up by NGOs (learning centers). The camps provide education up until grade 10 also. The majority of camp students are not allowed by the Thai government to receive tertiary education in Thailand afterwards. Only a small number of the best students are permitted to attend the Burmese Teacher Training programme and other programmes in Thailand to prepare for Thai tertiary education. But the camps are allowed to provide post-10 programmes in English, computers, and distance education in management and leadership. There were negotiations with Thai authorities to allow vocational skills training and income generating activities for refugees which did not materialize. However, there had been trainings in the camps on agriculture, weaving and sewing and making of cooking stoves (Kraft, 2004).

## 2.5 Rights of Refugees and Migrant Workers

Thailand is party to many human rights conventions including the Children’s Rights Convention (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Feinstein International Center, 2011). But Thailand has not ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. As a result, there are no formal policies for the protection of refugees nor for refugee status determination. All asylum seekers and irregular migrants are considered illegal immigrants. Moreover, Thailand does not formally respect customary international law regarding non-refoulement. Occasionally, the repatriation of some asylum seekers and migrants takes place. However, the Thai government has provided nine shelters for displaced persons from Myanmar along the border provinces of Mae Hong Son, Tak, Kanchanaburi and Ratchaburi. The 1979 Immigration Act allows the Ministry of Interior, with approval from the Cabinet, to allow irregular migrants temporary stay permission in Thailand. For migrant

workers, the Labour Protection Act of 1998 and its amendments, and Criminal and Civil Codes, provide workplace protection both for registered and unregistered persons. Migrant workers have the right to fair wages, eight-hour work days, humane working conditions and equal treatment between men and women. The 2008 Alien Employment Act provides permission to work temporarily for irregular migrants pending deportation provided that they are documented, whereas undocumented migrants can be jailed up to five years and/or fined up to 100,000 THB. Thai citizens employing undocumented migrants can also be fined or imprisoned. Individuals who inform authorities of the whereabouts of undocumented migrants can be rewarded.

## 2.6 Migrant Registration and Nationality Verification of Migrant Workers

Migrant workers depend on their employers to apply on their behalf for work permits and health insurance. Migrants must undergo a health check and profiling which involves photographing and fingerprinting. Employers are required to submit records of their own household registration, maps showing the worksites of employees, photos of workers, IDs, and work permit applications as part of this process. These documents are usually submitted at the provincial level. The application process costs around 2,980 to 3,880 THB for a one-year period. Documented migrants must keep all registration documents with them and employers should report migrants' employment status on a quarterly basis. Registered migrants are not allowed to travel outside the province in which they are employed and they can only change jobs with consent from their employer or under certain conditions such as the death of the employer, the termination of business enterprise, abuse or breach of the labour law. In practice, it is difficult for migrants to change jobs legally as employers do not want their employees to leave them.

Since 2009, Thai authorities have required registered Myanmar migrant workers to have their nationality verified by their country of origin (the process began in 2006 for migrants from Cambodia and Lao PDR). In effect, Myanmar migrants had to return to Myanmar to obtain passports. In 2010, the Thai and Myanmar governments agreed to open a Nationality Verification (NV) and Temporary Passport Issuance Center in Ranong province and later in Takhilek and Myawaddy in Myanmar. As of August 2011, just over half of migrants eligible for NV had completed the process (450,000 out of 812,984). Upon receiving NV, migrants are entitled to a longer working visa, greater freedom of movement and access to workers' compensation. In June 2012, Thai authorities extended the NV period for another six months until December 2012. At present, 5 additional NV centers are established in Bangkok, Samut Prakarn, Surat Thani, Chiang Mai, and Samut Sakhon along with border NV centers in Kawthuang port opposite Ranong, Tachilek opposite Mae Sai in Chiang Rai, and Myawaddy opposite Mae Sot in Tak (Ministry of Labour, 2012).

## 2.7 Perception of Refugees and Migrants

In general, Myanmar refugees and migrants are seen by security agencies and the local population as a threat to personal safety, social order and public health. Thai media reports often portray refugees as trouble makers and a burden to Thailand. Insensitive comments by the media and politicians are frequent. Myanmar persons are often seen as overburdening the local health system and spreading diseases. The seizure of the Myanmar Embassy in Bangkok by Myanmar students in 1999 and the hostage taking in Ratchaburi hospital by armed insurgent forces fighting the Myanmar government in the year 2000 led to policy changes in Thailand regarding the treatment of refugees and caused more public negative attitude toward refugees. Apart from political concerns, negative perceptions of refugees also result from economic issues such as deforestation related to the hiring of refugees and migrants as loggers and competition for collective resources such as bamboo shoots, mushrooms and firewood. Typically, limited contact with refugees and migrants limit exchange of knowledge on Thai government regulations and Thai customary practices resulting in misunderstandings and misgivings between Thais and refugees (Brees, 2010). Despite the fact that Myanmar refugees have made a significant contribution to the local Thai economy in terms of local procurement of food supply and other materials, and also development projects of Thai communities close to the refugee camps, such information is hardly mentioned in the Thai media. As a matter of fact, the Thai government has been promoting the relocation of labour-intensive industries to border provinces with Myanmar with investment incentives, infrastructure development and soft loans. Thailand has enjoyed economic benefits from refugees and migrants without due recognition and credit given to them.

## 2.8 Hypotheses

Based on the theories and literature review we hypothesised as follows:

1. Close contact with MDPs is related to more positive opinions toward MDPs.
2. A competition for resources between local residents and MDPs is associated with negative opinions toward MDPs.
3. A feeling of otherness is related to negative opinions toward MDPs.
4. The positive opinions toward MDPs are associated with the human rights principle.



## PART III

# RESEARCH METHODS

This part presents information on research methods used in this study including research design, population and sampling, data collection process, data quality control, data analysis and ethical considerations.

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative method included an opinion survey by using a structured questionnaire and face-to face interviews. The qualitative aspect utilized in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders using guidelines. The stakeholders involved in this research included community leaders, government officials and representatives from non-governmental organisations from both local and international agencies.

### 3.2 Population and Sampling

This study collected data at an individual level from two groups of people. First, general people aged 18 and above and second community leaders. In relation to the general population of any area or country, their opinions are believed to have a power to change policy (Burstein, 2003). Community leaders are a part of policy formation which can be a bridge between a government and the general population (Munro, Skelcher, & Roberts, 2006). The study area for this research included Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Mae Hong Son and Tak provinces where refugee camps are located.

This study consisted of surveying 400 general people and 100 community leaders in each province. All in all, there were 1,600 general people and 400 community leaders from four provinces interviewed (see Table 3.1). The study began with a stratified sampling strategy by dividing areas into strata which included sub-districts where refugee camps are located which are defined as rural areas and sub-districts where the city hall was located which is defined as urban or city area. Subsequently, five villages from each sub-district were randomly selected. Forty people aged 18 and over were randomly selected from each village while ten community leaders were purposively selected. The community leaders consisted of one village head, two community committee members, and another seven



community leaders which included members of sub-district administrative offices and leaders of important groups in the community (e.g. leaders of income generating group, monks and school principals).

Table 3.1: Sample allocation by types of individuals

Types	Sample	
	Respondents in Each Province	Total Respondents in four Provinces
General People or Villagers	400	1,600
Community Leaders	100	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2,000</b>

The qualitative data was obtained by using qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing, focus groups discussions and brainstorming workshops. The sample allocation of key informants for the qualitative research was also considered. Key informants were stakeholders including community leaders, government and non-government agencies, health volunteers and local media. The inclusion criteria for selecting key informants were those directly involved with refugees and irregular/registered migrants. Allocation of key informants is presented in the table below.

Table 3.2: Sample allocation for in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and brain storming workshops

Key informants	Sample		
	In-depth Interview	Focus Group	Brain storming Workshop
Community Leaders	10	-	
Government Officials (army officers, policemen, immigration officers, health officers, District heads)	23	-	1
NGOs/ INGOs (related to health issues)	10	-	
Health Workers	-	8	
Local Media	4	-	

### 3.3 Data Collection Process

This study considered individuals as the entry point. General people and community leaders were initially identified through the inclusion criteria mentioned above. After this, information at the individual level was collected by using structured questionnaires and face-to-face interviews.

This study began by preparing questionnaires for individuals as well as interview guidelines. The questionnaires and guidelines were then tested. The pre-test of questionnaires was conducted twice, first in Ratchaburi province and then for a second time in Kanchanaburi province. Villages selected for the pre-test questionnaire were homogeneous but not included in the study. Results of the first pre-test indicated a problem of validity and reliability of the five points typical Likert scale range from strongly disagree to strongly agree where Cronbach's alpha of the total score was at 0.35. A modified Likert scale ranging from agree slightly, agree somewhat, agree moderately, agree very much and agree totally was then applied at the second pre-test and the analysis of reliability revealed that Cronbach's alpha of total scores was high and at an acceptable level of 0.86.

Collection of data began by establishing the size of the target population through approaching community leaders, general people and key informants. After the target population was identified, collection of data began using a survey and in-depth interviews. Quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire whilst qualitative data was collected by using interview guidelines.

All respondents were informed in advance about the research and written informed consent was sought. The survey focused on the socio-demographic data of individuals, knowledge and understanding of refugees and migrant workers from Myanmar, attitudes toward social services provided to refugees and migrant workers, attitudes toward the benefit of refugees and migrant workers and policy suggestions for the Thai government regarding refugees and migrant workers.

Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the process of interview, the confidentiality of the data and their rights to participate or to refuse to participate in the process of survey interviewing, in-depth interviewing and focus group discussion. The respondents who decided to participate in the survey, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion were asked to sign a consent form before an interview took place.

Termination of participation in this study was undertaken where respondents did not want to answer questions and they were not compelled to do so. In addition, respondents could end the interview at any time they wanted to. In case of the termination of participation, the same criteria of individual selection was then used.

This project commenced during the second quarter of 2011. The actual field survey was carried out in the third and fourth quarters of 2012. However, storms in northern and western Thailand, and subsequent floods in many parts of Thailand in 2012, disrupted and delayed the field survey. Soon after the end of the flood, the field survey was completed and consisted of quantitative data collection, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews of key informants.

### 3.4 Data Quality Control

As quality control of data collection is important, only 10 interviewers who completed at least a bachelor degree with skills necessary for interview were selected. In addition, interviewers were monitored throughout the period of data collection by researchers.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data was collected using structured questionnaires and interview guidelines. Data entry was conducted by omitting entry of personal identifying information. Socio-demographic data of individuals, knowledge and understanding of refugees and migrant workers from Myanmar, attitudes toward social services provided to refugees and migrant workers, attitudes toward benefits of refugees and migrant workers, policy suggestions for the Thai government on refugees and migrant workers were compared using percentage and cross tabulation.

As the study focused on attitudes of Thai people toward refugees, non-registered migrants and registered migrants, a modified Likert scale was applied to this study. The measurement of opinions or attitudes was measured by ordering level of agreement range from agree slightly, agree somewhat, agree moderately, agree very much or agree totally. The study mainly focused on a high level of agreement by taking ratings of agree very much and agree totally into consideration.

Qualitative data was conducted by using content analysis (a bundle of techniques for systematic text analysis) in order to understand the overall picture of Thai public opinions on refugees and migrant workers. In addition, qualitative findings were used to supplement findings for the survey.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study was approved taking into account the following ethical considerations:

- Gaining a clear understanding from the respondents and key informants as to why this research was being undertaken and getting permission to participate with full knowledge of the right to refuse to answer any questions or stop the exchange at any time.
- Ensuring contact with respondents would not get them into trouble with neighbours. Gaining necessary permission or safe access for their participation was crucial.

- Agreeing on a method for recording information with which the participant was comfortable. Requesting permission to take notes or using a tape recorder for in-depth interviews and focus group discussion was required.
- Remaining open and no judgment of interactions with the participants.
- Selecting a convenient time and day for the interviews that did not interfere with other demands on the participant.
- Being sensitive to the surroundings and circumstances in which interviews or discussions would take place.
- Being willing to terminate discussions if any sign of discomfort or insecurity arose.
- Developing a system for coding all personal information such as the names or addresses of participants.
- Keeping all data locked and confidential.
- Providing small gifts of thanks to those who provided their time for lengthy interviews.

The present study followed several steps to address ethical issues. The research protocol and IRB submission forms were submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Mahidol University. The study received documentary proof of Mahidol University Institutional Review Board No. MU-SSIRB 2011/068.1803.

### 3.7 Terminology

**Myanmar:** Any of the peoples of Myanmar, regardless of ethnic group.

**Myanmar Displaced Persons (MDPs):** Any of the peoples of Myanmar who is refugee or non-registered migrants or registered migrants, residing in Thailand, regardless of ethnic group.

**Refugees:** A person from Myanmar who has fled conditions of conflict or persecution and residing in camps in four border provinces (Tak, Mae Hong Son, Kanchanaburi and Ratchaburi) in Thailand.

**Non-registered migrant:** A migrant from Myanmar who has not registered themselves with the Royal Thai Government during any of the previous registration periods and therefore whose presence working in Thailand is illegal.

**Registered migrant:** A migrant from Myanmar who has registered their presence with the Thai Government during one of the organized registration periods, and therefore is legally entitled to stay and work in Thailand. See 'registration'.

**Registration:** A process that undocumented migrant workers from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR have periodically been able to legalise their status in Thailand by registering their presence with local

authorities (Provincial Administration Department, the Ministry of Interior). This operates like an ‘amnesty’ for migrant workers. According to the Immigration Regulations, when the Royal Thai Government permits registration (usually for a period of 30 days) then undocumented migrants should report for a temporary residence card (Tor-ror 38/1).

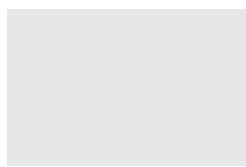
**Stateless:** A person who is an ‘alien or person without Thai nationality’ which does not have documents for personal legal status; they are ethnic minorities and rootless persons or those without civil registration record.

**Villager or general people:** A person who is a member of a community but not in a position of village head, community committee member and community leader (including village health volunteers and community group leaders).

**Community leader:** A person who is in a position of village head, community committee members and community leader (including village health volunteers and community group leaders).

**Rural/camp area:** An area surrounding camp, located within sub-district where a refugee camp is located.

**Urban/city area:** An area surrounding city hall, located within sub-district where the city hall is located.



## PART IV

### AN OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Respondents' Profile

The present study interviewed 400 community leaders and 1,600 villagers aged 18 years old and above in the four provinces of Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi, Tak and Mae Hong Son. Around half of the surveyed respondents were male (50.3 %) and the rest were female (49.7%). Comparison amongst areas showed that the proportion of male respondents in rural area was slightly higher than in urban location. This is also observed among leaders and villagers which show that 57.5 percent of leaders were males.

The average age of surveyed respondents was 43.0 years old. Respondents from the age group of 60 years and above were slightly less in number in the research than other groups while the age groups of 30-39 years old and 40-49 years old were a majority. Respondents from urban areas were older than those in rural areas with an average age of 44.4 versus 41.6 years old. Considering the average age of community leaders, it was slightly higher than that of villagers (46.4 versus 42.2 years old).

With regard to religion, the majority of respondents were Buddhist (96.7%), followed by Christian (3.2%) and Muslim (0.1%) respectively. Among Christian respondents in rural areas, their proportion was higher than in city areas (5.2 versus 1.2 percent). As the majority was Buddhist, the observation among community leaders and villagers also found similar findings.

In terms of the ethnicity of respondent's parents, a majority were Thai while other ethnicities were concentrated in rural areas. Those respondents whose parents were of other ethnicities reported that their parents were Karen and Shan.

With respect to the marital status of respondents, slightly more than three thirds reported that they were married, followed by single and others (separated and divorced).

In terms of educational level, slightly more than two-fifths (41.9%) of the respondents had completed primary school whereas those who had completed high school made up around 30 percent. Comparing rural and urban areas, there were some differences in education level of respondents as urban respondents and leaders were more educated than their rural counterparts. It is important to note that the proportion of respondents with no formal education was higher among respondents from rural areas.

Over 80 of respondents were employed with a higher proportion of employment among rural dwellers compared to that of urban persons (94.1 versus 86.5 percent).

Table 4.1: Respondents' profile by position and location

Respondents' profile	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
<b>Sex</b>					
- Male	57.5%	47.7%	53.1%	46.2%	49.7%
- Female	42.5%	52.3%	46.9%	53.8%	50.3%
<b>Age group</b>					
- 18-29 years	11.8%	23.1%	22.8%	18.9%	20.9%
- 30-39 years	14.3%	22.9%	24.0%	18.4%	21.2%
- 40-49 years	29.0%	22.0%	24.6%	22.2%	23.4%
- 50-59 years	29.5%	16.9%	16.2%	22.7%	19.5%
- >=60 years	15.5%	15.0%	12.4%	17.8%	15.1%
<b>Average age (years)</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>44.4</b>	<b>43.0</b>
<b>Religion</b>					
- Buddhist	98.8%	96.2%	94.8%	98.6%	96.7%
- Christian	1.3%	3.7%	5.2%	1.2%	3.2%
- Muslim	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
<b>Ethnicity of parents</b>					
- Thai	81.8%	84.1%	72.4%	94.9%	83.7%
- Karen	8.8%	11.4%	21.1%	.7%	10.9%
- Shan	10.0%	6.4%	10.2%	4.1%	7.2%
- Chinese	.8%	1.7%	1.1%	1.9%	1.5%
- Others	.5%	1.1%	1.6%	.4%	1.0%
<b>Marital status</b>					
- Single	12.5%	20.6%	14.9%	23.0%	19.0%
- Married	85.8%	74.8%	82.7%	71.2%	77.0%
- Others*	1.8%	4.7%	2.4%	5.8%	4.1%

Table 4.1: Respondents' profile by position and location (Cont'd)

Respondents' profile	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
<b>Education</b>					
- Not enrolled school	.3%	9.6%	12.3%	3.2%	7.8%
- Primary	45.8%	40.9%	47.3%	36.5%	41.9%
- Secondary	54.0%	49.4%	40.4%	60.3%	50.4%
<b>Employment status</b>					
- Unemployed	13.0%	8.9%	5.9%	13.5%	9.7%
- Employed	87.0%	91.1%	94.1%	86.5%	90.3%

\* Remark others = Widowed/Divorced/Separated

## 4.2 Knowledge and Understanding of Refugees

This section describes the response to questions on respondents knowledge about refugees. The question on 'Have you ever been to refugee camps?' revealed that slightly more than one-fourth of respondents had actually been in a refugee camp. However, there was a difference between rural and urban respondents as slightly more than two-fifths of rural respondents had been in a camp compared with only around one-tenth of urban respondents (see Table 4.2). It was also observed that leaders were more likely to have experience in visiting refugee camps when compared to villagers (39.3 versus 24.0 percent).

Table 4.2: Experience of respondents in visiting refugee camps by position and location

Experience in visiting refugee camps	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Yes	39.3%	24.0%	43.2%	10.9%	27.1%
No	60.8%	76.0%	56.8%	89.1%	73.0%

The second question on 'Do you have friends who are refugees or know any refugee?' was asked in order to explore how respondents were familiar to refugees. Almost one-fifth of respondents knew refugees but there was a notable difference between rural and urban respondents. Table 4.3 shows that respondents residing near refugee camps were more likely to know refugees compared to those residing in urban areas. It is also observed that the proportion of leaders who know persons in camps was higher when compared to their villagers.



Table 4.3: Having friends/ knowing persons in camps by position and location

Having friends/known persons in camps	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Yes	30.8%	13.9%	29.2%	5.3%	17.3%
No	69.3%	86.1%	70.8%	94.7%	82.8%

The question on ‘how do you know refugees?’ was also asked during the interviews. The most likely place that respondents got to know refugees was in the refugee camps where refugees lived and in their communities (see Table 4.4). This may indicate that refugees do travel outside camps to villages nearby.

Table 4.4: Place of knowing refugees by position and location\*

Place of knowing refugees	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
At community	23.0%	6.4%	16.9%	2.5%	9.7%
At workplace	2.0%	2.3%	2.9%	1.5%	2.2%
At school	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
At refugee's camp	15.0%	9.5%	18.3%	2.9%	10.6%
In family	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.1%

\*Those that have friends/known persons in camp

One question asked during the survey was the main sources of information about refugees, by respondents. The most popular channel of information was television (66.5%), followed by relatives/ friends (60.6%), direct experience (29.2%) and print media (17.3%). It was observed that sources of information between community leaders and villagers were not much different, but there was a difference between camp and urban dwellers in terms of much lower sources information from television and print media (see Table 4.5). It is important to note that media plays a crucial role in distributing information on refugees.

Table 4.5: Sources of information about refugees

Sources of information	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Self	37.8%	27.0%	46.5%	11.8%	29.2%
Friends/relatives	65.0%	59.5%	71.2%	50.0%	60.6%
Radio 14.3%	5.9%	3.7%	11.4%	7.6%	
Television	67.8%	66.2%	49.8%	83.2%	66.5%
Print media	27.5%	14.8%	5.8%	28.8%	17.3%
Authorities	20.5%	10.4%	15.9%	8.9%	12.4%
Internet	0.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%

### 4.3 Thai Public Opinion on Refugees and Displaced Persons from Myanmar

This section explores Thai public opinion on refugees and displaced persons from Myanmar. It covers major dimensions as follows: 1) Security; 2) Human Rights; 3) Labour Protection; 4) Economics; 5) Socio-cultural; 6) Human Settlement & Naturalisation; 7) Future of Myanmar Displaced Persons and Migrant Workers in Thailand; and 8) Policy Views on Public Services including education and healthcare services. Major findings can be summarised as follows:

#### 4.3.1 Human Safety

Thai people in the four border provinces surveyed were quite concerned about the threat of human safety caused by the inflow of refugees and migrant workers, especially the threat to their lives and property. Judging from the high level of agreement (agree very much and agree totally), almost half (47.1%) of all respondents thought that registered migrant workers were a threat to their human safety whereas around 76.5 percent thought that non-registered migrant workers were a threat. Just over half (51.5%) of respondents viewed that refugees in the camps posed a threat to their lives and properties. There was a discernible difference of answers to this issue between urban and border residents as well as between community leaders and villagers.

Table 4.6: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees and migrant workers pose a threat to your life and property by position and location

Type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Refugees	46.0%*	54.5%*	51.0%	54.5%	51.5%
Non-registered migrants	79.8%*	74.8%*	73.6%*	77.9%*	76.5%
Registered migrants	40.3%*	50.8%*	45.5%*	51.8%*	47.1%

\* Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

### 4.3.2 Human Rights Dimension

On the issue of humanitarian assistance given to refugees, 57.8 percent of all respondents strongly supported the provision of shelter and humanitarian assistance to refugees in Thailand. However, residents living close to the camps and leaders were more sympathetic to refugees than city people, with 65.7 percent of respondents in the camp areas supporting such assistance compared with 49.0 percent from city respondents. Closer encounters between people living close to the border and refugees contributed to a more positive view. In addition, leaders seemed to have a more positive view than their villagers (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that humanitarian assistance and shelter should be given to refugees by position and location

Opinion	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Humanitarian assistance and shelter should be given to refugees	60.5%	55.8%	65.7%*	49.0%*	57.8%

\* Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

### 4.3.3 Labour Protection Dimension

As Thailand relies more on foreign workers in labour intensive industries and services, Thai people tend to view that standard labour protection should be applied to registered migrant workers. Around half of all respondents strongly agreed that registered migrant workers should have the same labour protection as Thai workers. However, only 17.9 percent of respondents thought that non-registered migrant workers should enjoy such protection. Ironically, there was very little support for the same minimum wages between Thai and foreign migrant workers. However, it was noted that community leaders were more likely to have more positive views toward registered migrants than to

non-registered migrants when compared to villagers. In addition rural residents had positive attitude toward migrant workers than that of urban residents(see Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrant workers should have the same labour protection and receive the same wage as Thai workers by position and location**

Opinion and type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
<b>Same labour protection as Thai workers</b>					
- Non-registered migrants	15.0%	19.5%	20.7%	16.4%	17.9%
- Registered migrants	56.8%*	49.9%*	54.3%*	48.1%*	52.3%
<b>Same wage as Thai workers</b>					
- Non-registered migrants	4.0%	6.4%	5.7%	6.1%	5.6%
- Registered migrants	15.01%*	19.4%*	20.7%*	16.4%*	18.6%

\* Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

#### 4.3.4 Economic Dimension

It is quite clear that Thai people tend to have a negative view toward Myanmar migrant workers in relation to the issue of competition for jobs and natural resources. Around 40 percent of respondents considered that refugees competed with national workers for jobs despite the fact that refugees were not allowed to work. However, 45.0 percent of villagers and 36.4 percent of respondents in camp areas agreed that there was such competition compared with 31.5 percent of leaders and 48.0 percent of city respondents. But most respondents considered that job competition was fierce with non-registered migrants. Over 60 percent of all respondents considered that non-registered migrant workers competed with them for jobs. Almost half also have a similar view with registered migrants. In all cases, people in the city areas and villagers were worried of job competition from migrants to a greater extent than respondents in camp areas and leaders (see Table 4.9). As migrants tend to look for employment opportunities in the city, city respondents would be well aware of their presence.

**Table 4.9: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrants from Myanmar compete for jobs by position and location**

Type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Refugees	31.5%*	45.0%*	36.4%*	48.0%*	40.2%
Non-registered migrants	63.5%	62.6%	55.3%*	70.2%*	62.9%
Registered migrants	40.3%*	51.2%*	44.0%*	53.9%*	47.3%

\* Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

On the issue of competition for land and natural resources such as water, around half of respondents thought that there was such competition with refugees, and almost 60 percent perceived such competition with non-registered migrants. Less than half of respondents viewed such competition with registered migrants as most of them were not employed in the agricultural sector. City respondents and villagers had a more negative view on this issue than people living in the camp areas however (see Table 4.10).

**Table 4.10: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrants from Myanmar compete for land and natural resources by position and location**

Type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Refugees	40.0%*	52.4%*	50.3%	49.5%	48.1%
Non-registered migrants	58.8%	57.4%	53.6%*	61.7%*	57.9%
Registered migrants	34.5%*	47.5%*	40.0%*	49.7%*	42.9%

\* Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

An important economic issue is whether refugees should be allowed to work to increase self-reliance. Although the Thai government does not allow employment of refugees, there are ongoing debates that employment would equip refugees with skills needed when resettlement to their home countries takes place in the future. Around half of all respondents strongly agreed with legal employment for refugees. Interestingly, respondents living close to the camp areas and being leaders gave more support to the employment of refugees than their city peers (see Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees should be allowed to work to increase their self-reliance by position and location**

Opinion	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Refugees should be allowed to work to increase their self-reliance	61.3%	56.7%	57.2%*	47.4%*	55.6%

\* Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

### 4.3.5 Socio-cultural Dimension

Over 70 percent of all respondents strongly considered that refugees and all migrant workers should learn and use the Thai language in their communications with Thais. Rural residents and leaders provided more support than urban residents and villagers. In addition, over 60 percent of all respondents strongly supported the use of ethnic languages to disseminate information on Thailand (such as Thai customs, Thai laws, and health information) to refugees and migrants. It is noted that villagers and rural residents were more likely to support this than that of leaders and urban residents.

**Table 4.12: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that migrants should use the Thai language to communicate with Thais and use ethnic languages to disseminate information by position and location**

Opinion and type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
MDPs should use Thai language to communicate with Thais					
- Refugees	83.3%*	76.6%*	90.1%*	78.4%*	82.1%
- Non-registered migrants	76.3%*	66.2%*	83.5%*	67.6%*	73.4%
- Registered migrants	90.2%*	80.0%*	91.2%*	80.1%*	83.9%
Use ethnic languages to disseminate information					
- Refugees	71.8%*	77.1%*	80.8%*	71.2%*	75.2%
- Non-registered migrants	58.3%*	68.9%*	74.6%*	59.0%*	65.2%

\* Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

### 4.3.6 Education Dimension

Around 70 percent of respondents strongly supported teaching of Thai language together with the ethnic language of registered migrants and refugees in schools. However, just over half gave similar support to the teaching of Thai for non-registered migrants. Regarding education for children of refugees and migrants in Thailand, 63.2 percent of respondents strongly supported Thai school enrolment of children of registered migrants, 56.3 percent strongly supported Thai school enrolment of children of refugees, but only 31.9 percent would support Thai school enrolment of children of non-registered migrants. It is noted that leaders and those living in camp areas are more positive than those villagers residing in urban areas.

Table 4.13: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees and migrants should learn Thai together with their own language in school and should be allowed to study in Thai schools by position and location

Opinion and type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Refugees and migrants should learn Thai together with their own language in school					
- Refugees	74.5%	77.0%	76.3%*	66.6%*	72.6%
- Non-registered migrants	53.8%	55.8%	60.3%*	50.4%*	55.4%
- Registered migrants	66.2%	68.8%	71.4%*	65.2%*	68.3%
Refugees and migrants should be allowed to study in Thai schools					
- Refugees	59.5%	54.7%	63.2%	48.0%	56.3%
- Non-registered migrants	33.3%	31.2%	37.2%	26.0%	31.9%
- Registered migrants	64.5%	62.5%	71.0%	54.7%	63.2%

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

#### 4.3.7 Human Settlement and Naturalisation Dimension

Regarding local integration, a very small proportion of Thai respondents supported the legal settlement of refugees and migrants in Thailand. When asked if refugees and migrants who had lived in Thailand for at least ten years should be given permanent residence status, around one-fifth said they would support the grant of permanent residence status to long-term migrant workers and refugees. Respondents who were leaders and villagers shared a similar view on this issue while there was a difference between camp and city residents which revealed that respondents from camp areas were more positive than those from urban areas.

This survey revealed that Thai people are quite sensitive on human settlement issues for refugees and migrants. Just one-fourth of respondents would support the grant of permanent residence to children of refugees and registered migrants also, whereas only 6.0 percent gave support to children of non-registered migrants being granted this status. It is important to note that over half of the respondents agreed to grant such status to stateless persons whereas community leaders and camp residents provided a more positive view (see Table 4.14).

On the issue of marriage which is viewed as one aspect of the integration process, only two-fifths of respondents strongly agreed that permanent residence status should be granted to registered migrants and refugees who married Thais. It was observed that camp residents were more likely to be positive than their urban counterparts while there was a subtle difference between leaders and villagers (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that permanent residency should be given by position and location

Opinion and type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
PR should be granted to those who have lived in Thailand for 10 years or more	18.5%	18.1%	23.2%*	13.2%*	18.2%
PR should be granted to those were born in Thailand					
- Refugees	22.5%	27.0%	31.2%*	20.9%*	25.4%
- Non-registered migrants	9.3%	10.4%	2.9%	1.5%	6.0%
- Registered migrants	24.0%	24.1%	29.3%*	18.8%*	24.1%
Citizenship should be granted to stateless persons	66.3%*	52.1%*	65.8%*	44.0%*	57.0%
PR should be granted to those who marry a Thai					
- Refugees	41.8%	40.0%	51.5%*	29.1%*	40.6%
- Non-registered migrants	16.3%	14.0%	20.3%*	8.5%*	14.8%
- Registered migrants	44.5%*	35.5%*	46.8%*	27.7%*	38.6%

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

## 4.3.8 Health Care Dimension

### 4.3.8.1 Healthcare services

The majority of Thai respondents strongly supported universal health care services to be provided to refugees and registered migrants, with 62.9 and 71.2 percent supporting this respectively. However, only 39.7 percent of respondents supported the same standard health care services to non-registered migrants. Over half of the respondents considered that refugees and both groups of migrant workers should have separate health facilities from Thais. However, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions suggested that congestion at hospitals and the lack of hygiene of migrants were major reasons for the preference for separate facilities. It is noted that camp residents were more likely to have positive attitudes than urban residents. Community leaders were more positive about health care services to refugees and registered migrants but less to non-registered migrants when compared to their villagers (see Table 4.15).

Generally speaking, the overwhelming majority (70 or more percent) of all respondents strongly supported the provision of standard healthcare services (which include health promotion, health prevention, disease diagnosis, health care treatment and health rehabilitation services) to refugees



and registered migrants. In contrast, less than half of all respondents would give similar support to non-registered migrant workers. It is also revealed that camp residents and villagers were more likely to be positive in these issues compared to urban residents and community leaders (see Table 4.16).

**Table 4.15: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that standard healthcare services should be provided and health facilities should be separated by position and location**

Opinion and type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Should get standard treatment as Thais					
Refugees	62.5%	63.1%	67.3%*	58.6%*	62.9%
Non-registered migrants	28.0%*	58.9%*	40.4%*	31.5%*	39.7%
Registered migrants	69.5%	72.2%	77.1%*	66.1%*	71.2%
Should get treatment at health facilities that separate from Thais					
Refugees	53.0%*	60.5%*	57.8%	60.1%	57.8%
Non-registered migrants	63.3%*	68.9%*	68.3%	67.1%	66.9%
Registered migrants	35.5%*	58.1%*	54.4%	52.7%	50.2%

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

**Table 4.16: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that refugees and migrants should receive the same health care services as Thais by position and location**

Opinion on healthcare service	Refugees		Non-registered migrants		Registered migrants	
	Camp	City	Camp	City	Camp	City
<b>By location</b>						
Health promotion	75.2%	72.8%	45.1%	43.5%	82.1%	80.8%
Health prevention	78.6%	76.2%	46.6%	47.7%	83.1%	82.2%
Disease diagnosis	74.4%	72.7%	42.4%	41.7%	79.0%	78.7%
Treatment	74.4%	72.2%	43.0%	42.7%	81.1%	79.7%
Rehabilitation services	70.6%	68.1%	39.1%	37.3%	76.1%	74.1%
<b>By position</b>						
Health promotion	69.0%*	75.3%*	32.8%*	47.2%*	76.5%*	82.8%*
Health prevention	73.5%*	78.4%*	32.5%*	50.9%*	78.3%*	83.8%*
Disease diagnosis	68.8%*	74.8%*	29.5%*	45.2%*	73.3%*	80.3%*
Treatment	67.8%*	74.7%*	29.5%*	46.3%*	75.8%*	81.6%*
Rehabilitation services	64.3%*	70.7%*	27.5%*	40.9%*	70.8%*	76.3%*

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

#### 4.3.8.2 Improvement of healthcare for refugees and migrants

Though a majority of respondents agreed to the provision of healthcare services to refugees and MPDs, they tended to have diverse views regarding the improvement of healthcare services to different groups of migrants. Table below indicates that healthcare services provided to registered migrants should be improved (88.6%), followed by families of registered migrants (66.0%), refugees (38.7%), non-registered migrants (11.3%) and families of non-registered migrants (10.1%), respectively. Although the pattern of agreeing was quite similar between leaders and villagers as well as rural and urban residents, proportion of leaders agreeing to improve healthcare services to families of registered migrants was higher than their villagers while opinion of camp residents were more positive than urban residents.

**Table 4.17: Percentage distribution of respondents who perceived that healthcare services provided to groups of MPDs should be improved by position and location**

Type of MPDs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Refugees	40.5%	37.8%	40.1%	36.5%	38.7%
Non-registered migrant workers	10.3%	11.8%	13.8%*	9.2%*	11.3%
Registered migrant workers	89.3%	88.3%	88.8%	88.1%	88.6%
Families of non-registered migrant workers	9.8%	10.3%	13.0%*	7.4%*	10.1%
Families of registered migrant workers	78.5%*	59.3%*	67.3%*	58.9%*	66.0%

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

#### 4.3.8.3 Healthcare financing

On the issue of healthcare financing, the majority of respondents considered that refugees and migrants should self-finance their healthcare services. Over 80 percent of respondents thought that both groups of migrant workers should pay for their healthcare services. Over 60 percent similarly, considered that refugees should self-finance their healthcare services. Residents of camp areas were more likely to encourage MPDs to pay from their own pocket than urban residents. Among community leaders and villagers it was revealed that villagers did agree for refugees and non-registered migrants but less for registered migrants when compared with community leaders (see Table 4.18).

Around 20 percent of respondents indicated that they would support the Thai government's healthcare financing to registered migrant workers and refugees whereas only 8.1 percent supported health subsidies to non-registered migrant workers. It also showed that villagers and urban dwellers were more likely to agree with such healthcare costs (see Table 4.18).

More than four-fifths of respondents agreed that non-government organisations as well as United Nations agencies should support healthcare financing for refugees. However, only two-thirds of the respondents agreed that non-government organisations should take care of healthcare financing for non-registered migrants (see Table 4.18).

**Table 4.18: Percentage distribution of respondents agreeing that financial support should come from by position and location**

Healthcare financing and type of MDPs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
<b>Self-funds</b>					
Refugees	64.5%	67.2%	67.2%	66.0%	66.6%
Non-registered migrants	79.8%*	86.4%*	88.4%*	81.6%*	85.0%
Registered migrants	85.5%	83.7%	85.6%	82.5%	84.0 %
<b>Royal Thai Government</b>					
Refugees	12.5%*	20.5%*	17.3%	20.4%	18.8 %
Non-registered migrants	4.5%*	8.0%*	6.4%	8.1%	7.2 %
Registered migrants	13.8%*	22.2%*	19.2%	21.7%	20.4 %
<b>NGO and INGO</b>					
Refugees	84.0%*	87.8%*	88.5%*	85.5%*	87.0 %
Non-registered migrants	58.0%*	69.9%*	67.9%	67.2%	67.6%
<b>United Nations agencies</b>					
Refugees	95.4%	92.7%	96.7%*	92.2%*	94.4 %

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

#### 4.3.8.4 Disease carriers

Fear of diseases from abroad is presented in receiving countries and can lead to prejudice against migrants (Kraut, 2010). A question was asked on disease carriers as part of this survey. Table 4.19 shows that more than four-fifths of respondents viewed non-registered migrants and their families as disease carriers. Slightly less than four-fifths viewed refugees as such while only about one-third viewed registered migrants and their families as disease carriers. This contrasting response may be due to the fact that registered migrants have undertaken health screening process before applying for a work permit.

Considering location, it is revealed that camp residents viewed MDPs as diseases carriers compared to that of urban residents. Among villagers and their community leaders, proportion of villagers viewed refugees, registered migrants and their families as disease carriers was higher than those of community leaders but less for non-registered migrants and their families when compared with community leaders.

**Table 4.19: Percentage distribution of respondents that viewed refugees and migrants as disease carriers by position and location**

MPDs	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Refugees	79.3%	82.9%	85.5%*	78.9%*	81.7%
Non-registered migrant workers	94.5%*	90.1%*	92.6%*	89.3%*	91.6%
Registered migrant workers	26.5%*	41.6%*	40.8%*	36.4%*	36.3%
Families of non-registered migrant workers	95.0%*	83.1%*	90.2%*	80.7%*	87.3%
Families of registered migrant workers	28.3%*	39.5%*	40.1%*	34.4%*	35.6%

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

#### 4.4. The Future of Refugees

Since many refugees from Myanmar have lived in refugee camps for many years, a crucial question concerning their future is whether they should be allowed to live and work in Thailand permanently. The majority of Thai respondents disagreed with the idea with 81.6 percent of respondents saying no and 18.4 percent of them saying yes (see Table 4.20). This answer confirms the previous view on human settlement dimensions theories that most Thais do not want to give permanent residency status to long-term refugees and migrants and their children. Such a negative view needs more explanation and exploration. Both villagers and community leaders showed a similar view whereas camp residents were more likely to allow refugees to live and work in Thailand. The results from qualitative data supported that camp residents would like to hire refugees to work in the community as daily workers.

**Table 4.20: Percentage distribution of respondents perceiving whether refugees should be allowed to live and work in Thailand permanently or sent back to their origins by position and location**

Opinion	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Allow refugees to live and work in Thailand permanently	19.0%	18.1%	24.4%*	12.2%*	18.4%
Send back to their origins	81.0%	81.9%	75.6%*	87.8%*	81.6%

\*Chi-square was statistically significant at p.05

According to the table below, major reasons for sending MDPs back to their country of origin included job competition (18.0%), personal safety concerns (17.3%), competition for land and natural resources (15.1%), burdens on public finance (14.4%), illegal status (8.3%), the fear of their growing numbers (5.9%) and national security concerns (4.8%). The reasons why some respondents agreed with the idea of allowing these individuals to live and work permanently related to humanitarian assistance (9.4%), labour shortages (6.5%) and cheap labour (2.5%).

Table 4.21: \*Reasons for sending refugees back to their origin or allowing them to live and work permanently by position and location

Reasons for sending refugees back to their origins or allowing them to live	Position		Location		Total
	Leader	Villager	Camp	City	
Reason for sending refugees back to their origins					
- Job competition	12.8%	19.3%	12.5%	23.4%	18.0%
- Personal safety concerns	14.3%	18.1%	16.3%	18.3%	17.3%
- Competition for land and water resources	12.8%	15.6%	20.2%	9.9%	15.1%
- Burden on public finance	13.5%	14.6%	11.8%	16.9%	14.4%
- Non-Thai and with illegal entrants	6.0%	8.8%	6.2%	10.3%	8.3%
- Fear of growing number of MDPs	7.5%	5.4%	4.4%	7.3%	5.9%
- National security concerns	8.8%	3.8%	3.5%	6.1%	4.8%
- Deforestation	8.3%	1.4%	4.0%	1.6%	2.8%
- Disease carriers	3.3%	2.4%	3.3%	1.9%	2.6%
- Involved in drug trafficking	2.0%	1.2%	1.0%	1.7%	1.4%
Reason for allowing refugee to live and work permanently					
- Humanitarian	5.3%	10.4%	13.5%	5.3%	9.4%
- Labour shortage in Thailand	12.5%	5.0%	7.8%	5.2%	6.5%
- Lower wages than Thai workers	1.5%	2.8%	3.1%	1.9%	2.5%

\* can answer more than one reasons

## PART V

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. Summary of Key Findings in Relation to Hypotheses

As there are four hypotheses in this study, the results from the analyses confirm the hypotheses to some extent. The first hypothesis on close contact with MDPs is related to more positive opinions toward MDPs is supported by the evidence that community leaders and rural residents who are more familiar with refugees and migrants tended to have a better understanding of refugees and migrants and also have a more positive view on migrants than villagers and city residents.

Findings from the analysis also support the second hypothesis: a competition for resources between local residents and MDPs is associated with in negative opinions toward MDPs. The result of analysis shows that job competition and competition for land and natural resources were a major concern to Thai people. Regarding job competition, over 60 percent of respondents considered that non-registered migrant workers competed with Thais for jobs. Almost half of the respondents also considered registered migrants competed with Thais for jobs. On the issue of competition for land and natural resources, over half of respondents thought that refugees and non-registered migrant workers competed with them for land and natural resources use.

The third hypothesis: a feeling of otherness is related with negative opinions toward MDPs, is also supported by evidence that people displayed prejudice against irregular migrant workers. All residents had a more positive view of registered migrant workers and refugees than non-registered migrant workers. This was also observed that perception of non-registered migrant workers was heavily influenced by ‘the fear of the unknown’ and ‘the fear of numbers’. In addition the feeling of otherness also raised personal safety issues which were a major concern for all respondents. Over half of all respondents in all provinces perceived that migrants and refugees were a threat to their lives and property. A higher percentage of respondents viewed non-registered migrant workers as the greatest threat. This negative view had been heavily influenced by negative media reports regarding refugees and immigrants in Thailand

The results also support the last hypothesis which indicates that the positive opinions toward MDPs are associated with the human rights principle. It reveals that the majority of respondents in all provinces supported humanitarian assistance given to refugees in camps. Respondents agreed that refugees and migrants should be entitled to the basic necessities of life. In addition the majority of respondents supported the same standard of healthcare services provided to Thais, refugees and registered migrant workers.

## 5.2 Conclusions

The study reveals both positive and negative views held by the Thai public in the four border provinces of Mae Hong Son, Tak, Kanchanaburi and Ratchaburi toward refugees and migrant workers from Myanmar. Since this study covers various dimensions including personal safety, human rights, labour protection, economics, socio-cultural issues, education, health and human settlement issues, it is hard to make a general statement regarding Thai public perceptions toward refugees and migrant workers. However, some observations can be made from this study as follows:

1. People who are community leaders and those who live close to refugee camps are more familiar with refugees and migrants than people who live in city areas. Also, a sizable percentage of community leaders and people living close to the camp areas have visited camps such that they tend to have a better understanding of refugees and migrants that can lead to a more positive view toward them than city respondents. In addition community leaders are more likely to get more information on refugees and migrants through several channels than their villagers.
2. In general, respondents have a more positive view of registered migrant workers and refugees than non-registered migrant workers. Most refugees in the camps are seen as living in designated areas under supervision of Thai agencies and the UN. Registered migrant workers are seen as conforming to the law and have been registered by the Thai authorities. On the other hand, non-registered migrant workers are mysterious to Thais despite the fact that some of them are also de facto refugees.
3. Personal safety issues are a major concern for all respondents in all provinces. With a few exceptions, over half of all respondents in all provinces in this survey perceived that migrants and refugees were a threat to their lives and properties. A much higher percentage of respondents viewed non-registered migrant workers as a threat. This perception has no basis in empirical evidence. 'The fear of the unknown' is a major cause of negative attitudes toward non-registered migrant workers. Such misperception has been partly influenced by negative media reporting on refugees and migrants in Thailand.

4. Regarding human rights issues, the majority of respondents in all provinces are quite positive in support of humanitarian assistance given to refugees in camps and are also of the view that refugees and migrants should be entitled to the basic necessities of life. However, regarding government protection of personal safety and property, Thai respondents seem to have a different standard among the three groups of migrants. The majority consider that registered migrant workers should be well protected similar to Thais but this is not so often the opinion regarding refugees and non-registered migrant workers.
5. With respect to labour protection, around half of respondents considered that registered migrant workers should have the same labour protection as Thais. However, a majority did not consider giving such protection to non-registered migrant workers. Despite their stance on labour protection for registered migrant workers, the majority of respondents did not think that these workers should have the same minimum wages as Thais.
6. In relation to economic aspects, job competition and competition for land and natural resources are a major concern for many Thai respondents. Over 60 percent of respondents considered that non-registered migrant workers competed with them for jobs. Close to half of the respondents also perceived job competition with registered migrants. Over one-half of the respondents considered that refugees and non-registered migrant workers competed with them for land and natural resources also. It is noted that the villagers are more concerned about this aspect than that of their community leaders. This perception may have some empirical basis as many Thai farmers, refugees and some migrants outside the camps collect wood, food such as bamboo shoots and mushrooms and other natural resources in their neighbourhood. There are also reports of excess garbage waste generated from the refugee camps.
7. On social and cultural issues, the majority of respondents prefer the use of Thai language for refugees and migrants in their communication with Thai authorities and people. Most respondents consider that refugees and migrants should learn Thai together with their own ethnic language. Thai respondents also considered that Thais living in border areas should learn ethnic language of refugees and migrants. Many respondents also thought that cultural exchanges with refugees and migrants are a good thing.
8. On education, the majority of respondents thought that Thai language should be taught in schools attended by refugees and migrants. The majority of people also supported the accreditation of education provided to children of refugees and registered migrant migrants. Over half of all respondents also agreed on school attendance in Thailand for children of refugees and registered migrant migrants.



9. Regarding health issues, the majority of respondents supported the same standard of healthcare services for Thais, refugees and registered migrants. However, most would prefer separate healthcare facilities to be set up for refugees and all migrants. The majority of respondents considered that registered migrant workers and refugees should be entitled to the same of standard healthcare service provided to Thais, including health promotion, health prevention, disease diagnosis, treatment services and rehabilitation services. The majority did not however consider that non-registered migrant workers should enjoy the same privileges. However, the majority of respondents considered that refugees and all migrants should self-finance their healthcare services. Most did not think that the Thai government should finance healthcare services provided to refugees and migrants. However, most respondents think that non-government organisations and United Nations agencies should take care of healthcare costs for refugees.
10. On the issue of human settlement, the majority of respondents did not support granting of permanent residence to refugees regardless of their length of stay in Thailand. The majority also did not support the granting of permanent residence to refugees and migrants marrying Thais. Even children of refugees and migrants born in Thailand were not supported by the majority of respondents in this regard. However, the majority would support the granting of Thai citizenship to stateless ethnic minorities born in Thailand.
11. In general, community leaders have more positive opinions on refugees and registered migrants but less to non-registered migrants when compared to their villagers.

## 5.3 Policy Recommendations

### 1. *Human Rights Policy and Protection of Refugees*

The new political regime in Myanmar has been more flexible in seeking political settlement with ethnic groups. Ceasefire agreements have also been signed with many rebel groups along the Thai-Myanmar border such as with the Mon and Karen. It is quite likely that political persecution in Myanmar will reduce and the influx of refugees into Thailand will decline. It is also possible that some refugees could return to Myanmar in the near future. As the majority of Thais have endorsed the human rights principle of providing assistance to refugees in this study, now it may be an opportune time for Thailand to consider ratification of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Alternatively, Thailand may introduce a refugee and immigration policy which respects the principle of “non-refoulement”. The Thai government should once again allow the UNHCR to register refugees and provide protection and humanitarian assistance to those facing political persecution and human rights abuse in their homelands. Importantly, policy coordination among policy makers and stakeholders is necessary to ensure consistent policy practice and continuity. The Thai government and its bureaucracies should be flexible and more adaptable to local circumstances.

## *2. Protection of Life and Property*

On the one hand, refugees and migrants need justice and the rights of protection while in Thailand. There are reports and evidence of their abuse and harassment by officials and employers. On the other hand, the majority of Thais are concerned about the threat on their lives and properties as a result of an influx of refugees and migrants. It is quite worrisome that the majority of Thais perceive that the inflow of refugees and migrants is a threat to their personal safety. It is quite clear that both migrants and Thais need better protection of their lives and properties. The justice system should be improved and law enforcement enhanced in border provinces. The more secure environment and improved community safety could ensure social cohesion in areas where mixed ethnic groups live.

## *3. Economic Opportunities*

According to this survey, most Thais underestimate the economic contribution of migrants in their communities. Worse still, they perceive that intense job competition and competition for land and natural resources exists between Thais and migrants. Urban people have a more negative view on migrants and refugees than their peers in border areas. This perception runs against the fact that migrants are usually employed in the 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and difficult) ignored by most Thais. In addition, the fact that Thailand has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world (less than 1 in recent years) contrasts with the prevailing attitude of job competition between Thais and migrants. The Thai authorities, media and scholars should therefore produce more positive information on the economic contribution of migrants. Thailand should also come up with an immigration policy aiming to import labour with skills needed in Thailand. A thorough study of labour demand and supply in Thailand should also be undertaken.

## *4. Education Policy*

At present, most refugees and migrants are not educated in schools accredited by the Ministry of Education of Thailand. Many children of migrants also have not enrolled in Thai schools as bilingual education is not well promoted. This research found that Thai people strongly support refugees' and migrants' enrolment in schools accredited by Thai authorities. Moreover, they also support the attendance of migrant children in Thai schools. Thai respondents also agree with bilingual education of migrants. Thai education policy should therefore aim to promote access of migrants and their children to schools accredited by Thai authorities. Teachers who speak ethnic languages of migrants should also be recruited to motivate enrolment of migrants' children in Thai schools. Proper education could pave the way for further education and career advancement.

## **5. Health Policy**

On a positive note, Thai people in border provinces support universal healthcare for refugees and registered migrants although they do not want the Thai government to fund these health care schemes and they are concerned with overcrowded facilities at hospitals and health centers. It is important that the Thai authorities attempt to register all migrant workers in Thailand in order to have them covered under standard healthcare services. As demand for healthcare increases, the Thai authorities should also work with local governments and health experts to provide healthcare services in a more flexible manner to meet local demand. Mobile health care units, health promotion and health prevention programmes should be promoted in order to reduce overcrowded facilities at hospitals. Foreign health volunteers and Thai health volunteers will be instrumental in Thailand's healthcare policy to improve the health of migrants. Other stakeholders such as employers and local community leaders can also play an important role in improving the health of migrants and Thai citizens in border areas. Health financing is also a major issue which should be further explored to ensure necessary healthcare services for non-registered migrants.

## **6. Media and Communication**

Many negative views and perceptions of refugees and migrants in Thailand are influenced by negative reporting from the Thai media. According to this survey of Thai respondents, the main sources of information received on refugees and migrants were mostly from television and conversations with other people. Each of the two sources of information accounts for almost one-third of all sources reported. But there are just a small number of Thai journalists who are familiar with issues relating to refugees and migrants. The majority of these people tend to work for English language media and newspapers. Thai audiences often view sensational news such as fighting between the Myanmar army and resistant ethnic groups or the arrest of non-registered migrant migrants. With millions of migrants living in Thailand, social cohesion should be on the agenda of the Thai authorities and Thai media in expressing their views on migrants. Training programmes for media, NGOs personnel and community leaders should be introduced to equip these individuals with a more balanced view on refugees and migrants.

## **7. Social Cohesion and Community's Involvement**

As the majority of Thais have negative views on refugees and migrants concerning competition for land and other resources in local communities, attempts should be made to alleviate these concerns and to promote social cohesion amongst Thais and migrants. Collective management of local resources such as forest and water resources involving refugee camp committees and local community leaders should be promoted to avoid misunderstandings and conflict. More interactions and exchanges

between refugees, NGO personnel and local community members should also be promoted to ensure social cohesion. Many NGOs already provide a Thai community support component in their programmes which allocates resources to Thai people living close to refugee camps. NGOs also provide jobs for local staff and the local economy benefits from the expenditure on office supplies, transport and property rentals. Moreover, TBBC also donates supplies such as mosquito nets, blankets and rice to local communities. Such information should be made public and local community leaders should be informed of NGOs' direct and indirect contribution to their local communities.

#### ***8. Human Settlement and Local Integration***

Local integration is a very sensitive issue in Thailand. The majority of Thais do not support the granting of permanent residence status to refugees and migrants who have had long-term residence in Thailand. Nor would they support the granting of permanent residence to stateless children whose parents are refugees or migrant workers. However, Thailand is facing human rights challenges from stateless children and refugees living outside the refugee camps. Stakeholders should be involved in public debates aimed at finding flexible solutions to local integration issues involving stateless children and migrants. Thailand should also make an effort to prevent a xenophobic environment in the country. A multiculturalism policy should be promoted by the Thai government aimed at creating a more inclusive society where people of different ethnic origins can live and work together.

Table 5.1 Action Programmes to Correct Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice

Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice	Recommended Actions
More threat from refugees and migrants than other strangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media training on issues related to refugees and migrants</li> <li>- Research on economic contribution of migrants</li> </ul>
Irregular migrant workers deserve less protection than other workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universal protection policy promoted</li> <li>- Campaign against discrimination</li> <li>- Registered migrant support for migrants</li> </ul>
Different labour standards should be applied to irregular migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campaign against discrimination</li> <li>- Coordination with employers' associations and Thai officials to ensure universal labour protection</li> </ul>
Migrant workers should have lower wages than Thais	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campaign against discrimination</li> <li>- Coordination with employers' associations and Thai officials to ensure universal labour protection</li> </ul>
City people are more concerned on job competition from migrants than those in camp areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More balanced information on refugees in the press</li> <li>- Research on economic contribution of migrants to provide empirical evidence</li> </ul>
Concern on competition for land and resources from irregular migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better management of collective resources in border areas</li> <li>- Community involvement in migration policy</li> </ul>
Refugees and migrants are a burden on Thai public finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Correcting misinformation and informing the public that most financing comes from international organisations and aid agencies</li> </ul>
Little support for the preservation of migrants' culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of multiculturalism and sensitivity to minorities' cultural practices</li> </ul>
Children of non-registered migrant migrants should be excluded from universal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Universal education policy should be seriously implemented and promoted</li> </ul>
Separate healthcare facilities should be set up for refugees and migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better management of healthcare services to reduce congestion such as setting up mobile health units to visit migrants</li> </ul>
Refugees and migrants should self-finance healthcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Study of health financing programmes to cover different groups of migrants</li> <li>- More contribution from employers, migrants and aid agencies</li> </ul>

Table 5.1 Action Programmes to Correct Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice (Cont'd)

Misinformation/Misperception/Prejudice	Recommended Actions
Little support for RTG's health financing for refugees and migrants	- Providing information of direct and indirect tax contribution from migrants (VAT, registration fees)
Children of refugees and migrants should not be given Thai permanent residence	- Exploring the possibility of local integration measures for stateless children

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The presence of millions of refugees and migrant workers in Thailand raises concerns about their protection and welfare. The surge in the number of migrants and their demand for social services also affect the quality of lives of Thai people living in border provinces. These phenomena could influence the views and attitudes of the Thai people and have major repercussions on Thailand's immigration policy and the country's policy on the provision of social services to refugees and migrants. This study aims to find out current attitudes of the Thai people toward refugees and both registered and non-registered migrant workers from Myanmar. The attitudes surveyed cover eight major dimensions, namely, Personal Security Issues, Human Rights Concern; Labour Protection; Economic Views; Socio-cultural Views; Human Settlement and Naturalisation; Future of Myanmar Displaced Persons in Thailand; and Policy Views on Social Services including education and healthcare. It is anticipated that the information and findings of this study are useful for policy makers to understand drivers and mechanisms that shape public opinions on the subject matter, and help to reduce local prejudice and hostile attitudes toward refugees and migrants.



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Organization**



European Union

## MAE HONG SON

## TAK

## KANCHANABURI

## RATCHABURI