

**RECOGNIZING THE IMPACT  
OF MIGRATION ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH  
IN MYANMAR**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Public Health  
Health Systems Development Programme  
College of Public Health  
Chulalongkorn University  
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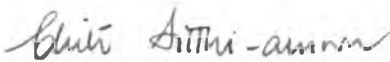
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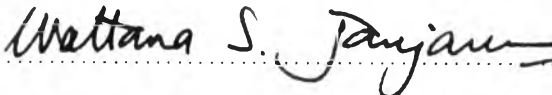
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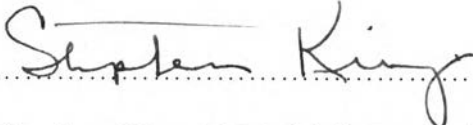
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## ABSTRACT

This is a thesis portfolio submitted for a Master's Degree in Public Health from Chulalongkorn University. The aim of the thesis is to raise awareness of the reproductive health issues among migrant populations and the importance of understanding them in the broader context of their lives and surrounding environments. There is limited information available on the reproductive health realities and needs of migrant populations. This is a growing concern given the increasing migration occurring throughout Asia (and the world) and migrant's reproductive health vulnerabilities and needs.

The components of this thesis explore reproductive health issues among migration populations within and from Myanmar in neighboring countries. A comprehensive definition of migrants is used in this thesis to include all people who have moved from their homes for any reason either internally or across borders. This thesis portfolio contains an essay, research proposal, data collection exercise, presentation summary and annotated bibliography. The essay presents the need for recognizing the impact of migration on reproductive health and focuses on migrants from and within Myanmar as a case example. The research proposal aims to assess the reproductive health perspectives, concerns and realities among female migrants from Myanmar in Thailand. Phase one of the research proposal was carried out among migrants from Shan State in Myanmar working on construction sites in Chiangmai, Thailand as the data collection exercise. A summary of the thesis presentation given on the above three components will follow next. Finally, an annotated bibliography of

the materials most influential in preparing the various aspects of this thesis portfolio is provided.

The thesis highlights how migration impacts women's reproductive health and the need to consider this population and their particular vulnerabilities and needs in research and policies. The research findings explain how migrants are unable or limited in their ability to access health services due to their isolation, illegal status and/or the high levels of violence in their lives. A strategy for addressing key reproductive health issues in the broader context of the lives of migrants within and from Myanmar is provided as a case example. This strategy emphasizes the critical role international and non-governmental organizations have in raising the issues surrounding migration and reproductive health and bringing them to the attention of governments.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is the Shan migrant community in Thailand that I have first and foremost to thank for working together and sharing their experiences that often required great trust and openness. Many members of this community were directly involved in conceptualizing the issues, providing background information, introductions, collecting data, transcribing and translating and discussing the results. It is only with their collaboration that this project was possible. In particular I would like to thank Hseng Noun Lintner, Mo Ngun Hom Kampang, Hseng Oo Longhtun, Yawong Khampang and Kham Han Fa.

There were many other key informants and service providers who also were critical in developing, training and providing on-going input to the research. Many individuals took time out not only to participate in the in-depth interviews, but throughout the study to support the research and offer information and assistance to the participants and those in their communities.

A special thanks to my advisor, Dr. Stephen King who was not only willing to support my interests, but encouraging, even though it often entailed a great deal of his time, energy and patience. The direction of Dr. Kritaya Archanavitkul was essential as both my external advisor and the research project coordinator. Dr. Kritaya, from the Institute of Population and Social Research at Mahidol University, directed the research and provided training and input throughout the entire research process. Many other professors at the Chulalongkorn's College of Public Health provided input to

various aspects of the research that contributed a great deal to my learning and the quality of this portfolio.

Finally, thanks to the Ford Foundation and World Bank for funding the research project. As explained in the thesis, the proposal these institutions funded was developed by a team and evolved a great deal from my contribution that is presented in this portfolio. However, it was the funding of these institutions that allowed the larger research study to take place of which the data collection presented here was one small component.

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