

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This thesis portfolio is a culmination of two decades of work with migrant populations, current studies in public health and interest in reproductive health issues. My work with migrant populations has included new immigrants to USA, refugees and displaced persons in Asia and Africa and trafficked and undocumented migrant workers. During my studies at Chulalongkorn University's College of Public Health I pursued a Master's degree with a focus on reproductive health.

The aim of the thesis portfolio is to raise awareness of reproductive health issues among migrant populations in the broader context of their lives. In looking at the reproductive health literature I found very limited information on migrant populations. Likewise, migration literature has rarely addressed the reproductive health issues of migrants. I believe this gap must be addressed given the increasing migration occurring throughout Asia (and the world) and migrant's reproductive health vulnerabilities and needs.

It is hoped that the presentation of this portfolio will begin to highlight some of the realities faced by migrants, their perspectives and needs and how this impacts on their reproductive health. The information available from this thesis portfolio and the research findings will be shared with various government sectors, international and non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and others. It is hoped that this exchange of information will promote more discussion and action to include migrants in reproductive policies, programs, and research as well as reproductive health issues addressed in migrant focused initiatives.

The components of this portfolio acknowledge that reproductive health issues cannot be understood or addressed in isolation from the many other factors and conditions encountered by migrants. Throughout this portfolio the larger social, political and environmental factors which impact on migration, reproductive health and individual migrants perspectives, realities and needs will be explored.

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 Shan migrants on construction sites in Chiangmai as the data collection exercise. A summary of the thesis presentation given on the above three components

follows. Finally, an annotated bibliography of the materials most influential in preparing the various aspects of this thesis portfolio is provided.