

**EDUCATIONAL ACCREDITATION FOR KAREN DISPLACED
PERSONS/PEOPLES: A CASE STUDY IN A TEMPORARY SHELTER AREA
ALONG THE THAI-BURMESE BORDER ZONES**

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บทคัดย่อและแฟ้มข้อมูลฉบับเต็มของวิทยานิพนธ์ตั้งแต่ปีการศึกษา 2554 ที่ให้บริการในคลังปัญญาจุฬาฯ (CUIR)
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พิงชั่วคราวชายแดนไทยพม่า

นางสาวแอนนา ลีนา ทิล

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เกี่ยวกับการเติมเต็มสิทธิทางการศึกษาของผู้พลัดถิ่นจากพม่าในประเทศไทย โดยเน้นไปยังการเทียบวิทยฐานะอันเป็นสิ่งสำคัญของสิทธิทางการศึกษา (UNESCO/IIEP 2008) การเทียบวิทยฐานะไม่เพียงช่วยทำให้สิทธิทางการศึกษาสมบูรณ์ขึ้น แต่จะทำให้การศึกษาที่พวกเขาเรียนมานั้นนั้นได้รับการยอมรับจากทางรัฐ ซึ่งจะรองรับได้ว่าการศึกษานั้นสามารถเข้าถึงคุณภาพการศึกษาที่กำหนดขึ้นจากทางรัฐบาล

ความพยายามนี้ได้ส่งผลสู่การเทียบวิทยฐานะของโรงเรียนต่างๆ ในพื้นที่พักพิงชั่วคราวชายแดนไทย-พม่า ในกำกับของกระทรวงศึกษาธิการของไทย โรงเรียนเหล่านี้มีระบบจัดการและบริหารโดยชุมชนในพื้นที่พักพิงเอง ร่วมกับหน่วยงานพัฒนาเอกชน และองค์กรชุมชน โดยที่ทางรัฐบาลไทยยังไม่ได้มีความเกี่ยวข้องของเท่าไรนัก ดังนั้น หลักสูตรที่สอนในพื้นที่พักพิงไม่ได้ตั้งอยู่บนหลักสูตรจากทางพม่าหรือทางไทย ซึ่งหมายความว่า การศึกษาที่นักเรียนได้รับในพื้นที่พักพิงไม่ได้รับการยอมรับจากสังคมภายนอก

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งเน้นไปยังผู้มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องที่มีอยู่หลายฝ่าย รวมถึงบทบาทเฉพาะในกระบวนการเข้าสู่เทียบเคียงวิทยฐานะ ความคิดเห็นในด้านคุณภาพของหลักสูตรที่สอนในพื้นที่พักพิงปัจจุบัน และอุปสรรคที่เกี่ยวข้องกัยการเทียบวิทยฐานะ งานวิจัยนี้เสนอว่าสิทธิทางการศึกษานั้นจะประกอบไปด้วยกระบวนการทางการศึกษาที่รวมขั้นตอนการตัดสินใจ ความพึงพอใจ และผลลัพธ์ ซึ่งสิ่งเหล่านี้จะสมบูรณ์มิได้หากไม่มีการเทียบเคียงวิทยฐานะ

งานวิจัยนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า ผู้เกี่ยวข้องหลายฝ่ายได้เข้ามามีส่วนร่วมและมีจำเป็นอย่างยิ่งในการหาข้อกำหนดของการเทียบเคียงวิทยฐานะโดยกระทรวงศึกษาธิการของไทย อำนาจและการตัดสินใจให้การเทียบเคียงวิทยฐานะสุดท้ายแล้วนั้นขึ้นอยู่กับทางกระทรวงศึกษาธิการของไทยแต่เพียงผู้เดียว อุปสรรคในกระบวนการเทียบเคียงวิทยฐานะเกิดขึ้นจากข้อเท็จจริงที่ว่าผู้พลัดถิ่นในพื้นที่พักพิงไม่มีส่วนในการอธิบายเรื่องดังกล่าว อีกทั้งผู้พลัดถิ่นเชื้อสายกะเหรี่ยงเองก็มุ่งหวังจะสร้างอัตลักษณ์ของชาติให้ตนเองผ่านทางการศึกษา การยินยอมใช้หลักสูตรของรัฐไทยจึงไม่เป็นที่ยอมรับสำหรับพวกเขา ยิ่งไปกว่านั้น นโยบายที่ค่อนข้างขัดแย้งกันระหว่างกระทรวงมหาดไทยและกระทรวงศึกษาธิการของไทยก็ยิ่งทำให้เกิดความตึงเครียดมากกว่าจะสนับสนุนเรื่องของการเทียบเคียงวิทยฐานะ

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ANNA LENA TILL: EDUCATIONAL ACCREDITATION FOR KAREN
 DISPLACED PERSONS/PEOPLES: A CASE STUDY IN A TEMPORARY
 SHELTER AREA ALONG THE THAI-BURMESE BORDER ZONES.
 ADVISOR: NARUEMON THABCHUMPON, Ph.D., CO-ADVISOR:
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This thesis is concerned with the fulfillment of the right to education for displaced persons from Burma in Thailand, more specifically with accreditation as an essential part of the right to education (UNESCO/IIEP, 2008). For not only does accreditation work towards the fulfillment of the right to education but it also entails that the received education is recognized by a nation-state that guarantees that said education fulfills quality standards defined by the respective government.

One of the recent efforts towards this goal entails the accreditation of schools in temporary shelters along the Thai-Burmese border by the Thai Ministry of Education. These schools are managed and administered by the shelter community along with non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, without involvement by the Thai government so far. Consequently, the shelter curriculum is not based either on the Burmese or the Thai national curriculum which means that the education that students receive in the shelters is not recognized outside of their community.

The thesis investigates the different stakeholders involved and their respective roles in the accreditation process, their view on the quality of the curriculum currently used in the shelters and the correlating challenges posed to accreditation. The paper argues that the right to education comprises an educational process including decision-making, content and outcome which is incomplete unless education is officially accredited. The research methodology employed is qualitative, interviewees and key informants were selected through snowball sampling.

The research shows that while a host of different stakeholders are involved and needed to fulfill the requirements for accreditation by the Thai Ministry of Education, the power and authority to at last grant said accreditation lies solely with the Thai MoE. Challenges to the accreditation process are posed through the fact that the displaced persons in the shelter have not been included in the discussion. As the Karen displaced persons aim to create a national identity for themselves through their education system, alignment with the Thai national curriculum is rejected by many of them. Moreover, conflicting policies of the Thai Ministry of Interior and the MoE further constrain rather than support the accreditation process.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- CBO: Community-Based Organization
- CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child
- DP: Displaced Persons/Peoples
- ESA: Education Service Area
- ICESCR: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- INEE: Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
- KED: Karen Education Department
- KNU: Karen National Union
- KRC: Karen Refugee Committee
- KRCEE: Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity
- MoE: Ministry of Education
- MoI: Ministry of Interior
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
- NSC: National Security Council
- OBEC: Office of the Basic Education Commission
- OCEE: Office of Camp – Education Entity
- PAB: Provincial Admission Board
- RTG: Royal Thai Government
- RTT: Resident Teacher Trainer
- TSA: Temporary Shelter Areas

Chapter I

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the fulfillment of the right to education for “displaced persons” from Burma living in “temporary shelter areas” along the Thai-Burmese¹ border, more specifically with accreditation as an essential part of the right to education (UNESCO/IIEP, 2008). For not only does accreditation work towards the fulfillment of the right to education but also entails that the received education is recognized by a nation-state that guarantees it fulfills quality standards defined by the respective government.

Accreditation for displaced persons is especially important in the longer term perspective. Even the best education programs will lack in value for displaced students if they are not able to prove their learning attainments and competencies with valid certificates and documentation. As displacement will not last forever, if students cannot re-enter the formal education system, seek higher education or employment, either in their home country, the country of asylum or a third country, this will cause frustration and disappointment for students, parents and families (Kirk ed., 2009).

Since 1984 Thailand has seen an increased influx of displaced persons from Burma due to the military regime in Burma, continued fighting between the government’s and ethnic armed groups, and the human rights violations and abuses taking place. This resulted in around 140,000 displaced persons from Burma currently living in nine “temporary shelter areas” along the Thai-Burmese border. Around 70,000 or around half of them are children up to the age of 18 (ZOA Education Survey, 2010). Seven of these temporary shelter areas harbor populations which are predominantly of Karen ethnicity, while two of them are predominantly Karenni in terms of demographic make-up.

¹ The English name of the country was officially changed by the regime from Burma to Myanmar in 1989. Myanmar is a transliteration of the official name in the Burmese language (Taylor, 2001). However, the opposition objects to the change for political reasons and keeps using the name Burma to convey their belief that the current regime is illegitimate (Decha 2007, Taylor 2001).

As the displaced persons from Burma have been in Thailand for over 25 years, their situation is what UNHCR (2004) calls a “protracted refugee situation”, meaning that a population of over 25,000 people has been continuously living in the country of asylum for at least five years or longer.

1.1 Legal Framework

Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol. That means that there are no “refugees” in Thailand as this term is not accepted legally by the Royal Thai Government. Instead, the official term reads “displaced persons fleeing fighting” (Brees, 2008). Subsequently, the RTG also does not accept the term “camp” but calls the nine areas along the Thai-Burmese border where the displaced persons are currently staying “temporary shelter areas”, even though the first displaced persons arrived over 25 years ago. The reason to choose the temporary shelter areas for this case study on educational accreditation is that they are considered special security spaces by the RTG (Premjai et al. in press). This has ramifications for the resources available for education inside the TSA including, amongst others, qualifications of teachers inside and the ability to bring in teachers from outside. It also has implications for the curriculum and the ability of the displaced students to further their education outside of the TSA.

The “displaced person” status in Thailand depends on the policies of the Thai Ministry of Interior. For this purpose Provincial Admission Boards were set up in 1998 to determine displaced person status and to screen people for admittance to the temporary shelter areas (Premjai et al. in press). Conditions include firstly that displaced persons are only recognized as such and are eligible for humanitarian assistance if they stay inside the temporary shelter areas. Subsequently, every person who is found outside of the temporary shelter area is automatically considered to be an illegal migrant and can be deported. Secondly, permission to leave or enter the temporary shelter areas is granted or denied by discretion of the Thai MoI (Decha, 2007). In short, the displaced persons are not allowed to leave the temporary shelter

areas and it is by discretion of the MoI whether anybody can enter, including NGOs that provide humanitarian assistance (Premjai et al. in press).

1.2 Impact on education in the temporary shelter areas

This legal framework under which the displaced persons from Burma live in temporary shelter areas in Thailand has also had an impact on the education provided in the TMAs.

Through 1996, twelve years after the first displaced fled to Thailand, the RTG did not grant NGOs a mandate for education to be carried out in the temporary shelter areas. That means that the Karen displaced peoples², together with the then Karen Education Department, developed their own education system and respective curriculum. This curriculum was stitched together from the Burmese curriculum as a base, also containing parts of the American, Australian, British and Indian curricula. The goal of the education is “to build up a true and lasting peace and justice by producing graduates who are critical and creative thinkers, leaders, good citizens and proud of their ethnicity” (KED, 2007 as cited in Sawade, 2007 & 2009) as the KED is viewing itself as a Ministry of Education in “waiting”, even though it is viewed by most only as a local organization (Sawade, 2009).

Consequently, there is a great sense of ownership over the education system and curriculum among the temporary shelter area community. The management and administration of the schools is in the hands of a myriad of NGOs and CBOs together with the temporary shelter area community from which all educational staff, including principals, teachers, teacher trainers, etc. are recruited. However, the fact that the curriculum does not follow either the Burmese or the Thai curriculum means that the

² The term „displaced persons“ refers to one removed from his or her native country. The Royal Thai Government considers displaced persons from Burma to have ‘prima facie’ legal status, or in other words, not full refugee status but they are considered to be “displaced persons fleeing fighting”. In acknowledgement of the Karen as a diverse collective, keeping in mind the variety of dialects and religious beliefs inside the ethnic group, they will be referred to as “displaced peoples” in this thesis. This distinction in reference is also used to go beyond the confines of the legal term applied by the RTG in terms of the Karen’s role in the process towards accreditation.

certificates that the children receive upon completion of their schooling in the temporary shelter areas are not recognized outside of the temporary shelter area context (Oh 2010, Van der Stouwe & Oh 2008, Sawade 2007).

1.3 Why accreditation?

Not only are the certificates that the displaced students receive in the temporary shelter areas not recognized, but there are also concerns about the quality of the education they receive. Even though the range of available education is quite extensive, including nursery school, kindergarten, primary school, junior and senior high school, vocational training, junior college amongst others, conducted education surveys by ZOA Refugee Care Thailand, a NGO providing educational services in the temporary shelter areas, show that the education lacks in quality, especially in terms of curriculum (ZOA Education Survey, 2010).

In light of these concerns, accreditation by the Thai Ministry of Education could not only work towards the fulfillment of the right to education for the displaced persons from Burma living in the temporary shelter areas but also provide a chance for curriculum change.

Moreover, in light of the three durable solutions identified by UNHCR (2003), namely voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement, accreditation could be helpful for the DP as well. Should the displaced persons be able to return back to Burma one day, it is unlikely that the certificates given out now by the Karen representative body would be recognized in Burma for political reasons. Thus certificates given out or recognized by the Thai Ministry of Education, meaning by a government that Burma has diplomatic and economic relations with, would have a greater chance of allowing the displaced students to pursue higher education or employment should they be able to return (Lang, 2002).

Secondly, even though the Thai government is opposed to allowing the displaced persons to leave the temporary shelter areas to integrate into Thai society, there is the

possibility that the displaced students would have a chance to further their studies outside of the temporary shelter areas at Thai universities should their certificates be recognized by the Thai Ministry of Education. At least this was the precondition given by the Ministry of Education for the permission to leave the temporary shelter areas for education (ZOA External Relations Manager, interview, 08.07.2011, Mae Sot).

Thirdly, in the case of resettlement to a third country, the chance that the displaced persons' education is going to be recognized in their new home is much greater should their education be accredited by the Thai Ministry of Education. Sawade (2007: 25) emphasizes this when stating that "the realities of educational certification are that if you do not have the approval of a nation state, the certificate you receive is not recognized internationally". So, for the displaced persons living in the temporary shelter areas, Thai accreditation might not only be helpful for them in a local context between Thailand and Burma but in an international context as well should they resettle to a third country.

Consequently, not only would educational accreditation be positive in the way of heightening the quality of the taught curriculum but also be beneficial for the displaced persons in regard to the three durable solutions.

1.4 Research Objectives

- 1) To identify the stakeholders involved in the accreditation process.
- 2) To analyze how the various stakeholders' view quality of education in the temporary shelter areas in term of content.
- 3) To identify the challenges to accreditation of education in the temporary shelter areas.

1.5 Research Questions

- 1) Who are the stakeholders involved in the accreditation process?
- 2) How do the various stakeholders' view quality of education in the temporary shelter areas in terms of content?

- 3) What are the challenges to accreditation of education in the temporary shelter areas?

1.6 Research Methodology

Research done for this thesis included both documentary research and field research. Documentary research included the review of case studies and publications about educational accreditation in emergencies and refugee situations, reports from community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations providing education in the temporary shelter areas in Thailand, international human rights treaties pertaining to education and refugees as well as legal documents of the Royal Thai Government about the education system in Thailand. Furthermore, theoretical background on the right to education, quality education and accreditation was included in the documentary research.

The method of field research is qualitative. It was conducted by using semi-structured, in-depth and structured group interviews to access the view of different stakeholders on the quality of the curriculum in the temporary shelter area and the accreditation process. The study site for this thesis is Mae La temporary shelter area and the near town of Mae Sot, Tak Province, Thailand. Field research was conducted in the first two weeks of July 2011.

Mae La temporary shelter area was chosen as a case study because it is the biggest of the nine temporary shelter areas along the Thai-Burmese border with a population of approximately 48,000 people (TBBC, 2011). That makes it the center of education for displaced persons from Burma in Thailand with 32 schools and nearly 600 educational staff.

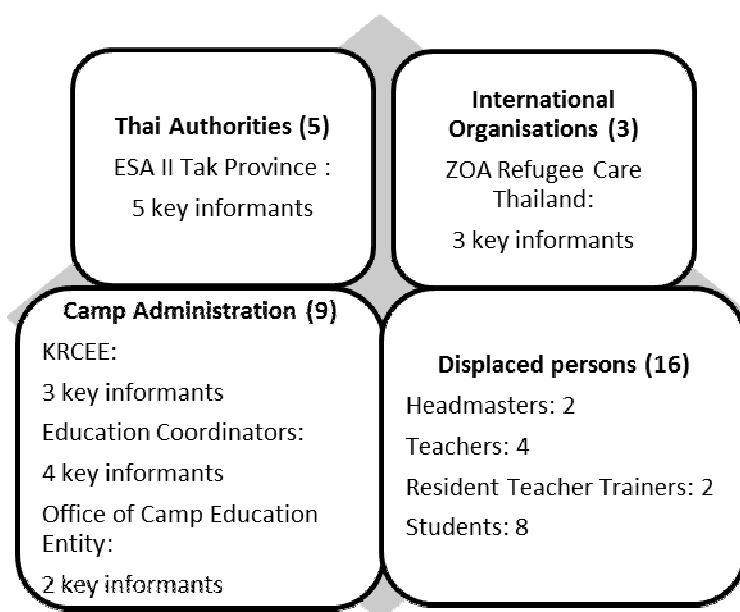
Mae La being the center of education has the advantage that all the relevant stakeholders to the involved in education and the accreditation process, such as ZOA Refugee Care Thailand, KRCEE et al., all have offices in the near town of Mae Sot which provides the additional advantage of little traveling involved to conduct interviews. Moreover, Mae La temporary shelter area is easily accessible via a paved

road while some other temporary shelter areas are located in mountainous, jungle-like areas.

Interviewees and key informants inside the temporary shelter area included the education coordinator from the camp committee, education coordinators from Zones A, B and C, resident teacher trainers, the Office of Camp Education Entity Secretary and In-Charge of Training, as well as headmasters, teachers and students from two schools in the temporary shelter area. In order to give interviewees a point of reference with which they could compare the curriculum in the temporary shelter area, they were asked to state the differences from the education system in Burma or another area outside of the temporary shelter area that they had experienced. Following the establishment of this point of reference, interviewees were asked to rate the curriculum in the temporary shelter area compared to the one in Burma or outside of the temporary shelter area in terms of quality. Interviewees were then confronted with the possibility of accreditation by the Thai Ministry of Education and the consequent change of the temporary shelter area curriculum on which they were asked to give their opinion.

Key informants that were interviewed outside of the temporary shelter area were the External Relations Manager, Program Manager and Program Advisor of ZOA Refugee Care Thailand, Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity General Secretary and two KRCEE staff as well as the Director of the Education Service Area II Tak Province and four ESA II staff. They were asked in detail how the idea to accredit the education in the temporary shelter areas came about, by whom, and when the discussion started. Furthermore, they were asked about their view on the quality of education and the curriculum inside of the temporary shelter area, why they support efforts to accredit said education, and their view on the accreditation process. A list of the topics covered in the interviews both inside and outside the temporary shelter area can be found in the appendix.

Figure 1: Stakeholders interviewed during field research



1.7 Research Scope

A total of 33 key informants and displaced persons were interviewed of which a complete list is included in the appendix.

In Mae La temporary shelter area, 32 schools offer education from elementary through high school using the KED/KRCEE curriculum. Nursery schools, religious learning, special education for disabled students, vocational training, adult learning and night school are also offered (Naruemon et al. in press, ZOA Education Survey 2010). However, this case study focuses on general education, meaning primary and secondary schools using the KED/KRCEE curriculum, because efforts for accreditation focus on them.

All interviews took place in Zone C in the Office of the Camp Education Entity, the Office of the Camp Committee as well as High School 1 and 7. As all members of the OCEE, the Camp Committee and the headmasters of all schools regularly come to the offices in Zone C, it was easiest, keeping in mind the restricted number of days that the researcher was allowed to enter the temporary shelter area, to concentrate the field work in Zone C. The two schools for this case study were

selected by the suggestion of the Education Coordinator of Mae La temporary shelter area. The researcher has no reason to believe that the results were biased by this selection, as the Education Coordinator explained and what turned out to be the case was, that save for himself none of the other educational staff were aware of the efforts made towards accreditation by KRCEE and ZOA Refugee Care Thailand.

The interviewees inside of Mae La temporary shelter were identified through selective sampling, focusing on educational staff and those who administer the education system as they are knowledgeable about the education and curriculum inside the temporary shelter. Consequently, they can assess what a change of the curriculum would entail and how that would affect the current education system. Most of them also went to school in Burma and thus have a base for comparison between the two education systems and their quality.

1.8 Constraints and Limitations

Access to the temporary shelter areas was limited by the strict policies of the Thai Ministry of Interior granting permission to enter, thus field research inside the temporary shelter area was limited to four days in total. Moreover, officials from the Thai MoI were not interviewed during field research. To overcome this constraint in gathering information, primary data from the recently completed but not yet published UNDP reports on social welfare and legal protection situation of the displaced persons (Naruemon et al. in press) and on the Royal Thai Government's policy towards displaced persons (Premjai et al. in press) were used to complete and corroborate parts of the research findings of this case study.

Also, results from the field research for this case study reflect the situation in July 2011. However, developments in Burma as well as corresponding changes in the perspective of the Thai government affect the circumstances in the temporary shelter areas and the proceeding of the accreditation process. Thus agendas of the various stakeholders, rules and regulations surrounding the temporary shelter areas and the

proceeding of the accreditation process might have changed since the research was undertaken.

Another limitation was the language barrier between interviewer and interviewees. Interviews inside of the temporary shelter area had to be conducted with a translator from Karen to English and the interview with the Director of ESA II Tak Province was conducted with a translator from Thai to English. Thus citations from interviews with displaced persons in the temporary shelter area and citations of the director are translations.

1.9 Significance of Research

Even though there are several publications saying that quality content is inherent to the right to education and that education in emergencies and other such situations, as the displaced persons from Burma living in Thailand are in, should be certified in order to heighten the value of education for the respective community, there is barely any literature on how to actually manage the process in reality. There were some case studies published on the subject (Kirk ed., 2009) but most of them do not match the situation in Thailand with a long-term protracted refugee situation in closed temporary shelter areas with no support from the home government and no obvious solution in sight that would allow the displaced population to return to their home country. This research will thus contribute filling a gap in the literature that exists concerning refugee education and more specifically how to certify refugee education so that it is of quality for the respective community. Additionally, this research strives to disentangle the host of stakeholders involved in the accreditation process in Thailand and what their different views mean for the education in the temporary shelter areas.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter is divided into six parts including migration flows from Burma to Thailand, Thai perspectives on displaced persons from Burma, education as a human right, quality education, educational accreditation and the conceptual framework.

2.1 Migration flows from Burma to Thailand

The migration flow from Burma to Thailand is one of the largest in Southeast Asia and can be described as a mixed migration flow. From the perspective of UNHCR -which because of its mandate needs to identify asylum seekers and refugees- and from the perspective of receiving countries, mixed migration is categorized by mixed groups of migrants. For instance one group can comprise asylum seekers, economic migrants and other categories. Secondly, both migrants and asylum seekers often employ the same routes of travel or mix up along the way or at the destination. Thirdly, mixed migration is characterized by an onward or secondary movement, such as resettlement or onward travel to a third country (UNHCR 2011, Cholewinski 2010, Van Hear, Brubaker & Bessa 2009, Crisp 2008). Thus the International Organization for Migration defines mixed migration flows as “complex population movements including refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants and other migrants” (Cholewinski, 2010: 6).

It is estimated that around two million people from Burma currently live in Thailand (Premjai et al. in press). In Thailand, both the Royal Thai Government as well as the international community classifies them into different categories. These categories determine people’s legal status within Thailand, the degree of protection under international mechanisms and the level of support and assistance that these people receive. However, people who migrate to Thailand often do not clearly fit into only one category thus making it harder to determine migration status and applicable legislation (Decha 2007, Caouette & Pack 2002).

The largest category of people from Burma migrating into Thailand is irregular migrants. There are a number of ways how migrants can turn out to be termed “irregular”:

- (a) they may enter the country clandestinely or without approval;
- (b) they may enter the country with a valid document, such as a visa or day-pass, but stay longer than permitted;
- (c) they may be in the country legally but working without permission;
- (d) they may have been working with permission but their status has changed, as when the work permit expires or the migrant changes employers.

(Huguet & Aphichat, 2011: 8)

The category of irregular migrants comprises a large majority of the migrants from Burma to Thailand. According to a study carried out by World Vision Foundation Thailand and the Asian Research Center for Migration in 2003, the five main reasons for labor migration into Thailand from Burma were a) low earnings in Burma, b) unemployment in Burma, c) family poverty, d) traumatic experiences, such as forced labor, and e) a lack of qualification for employment (World Vision Foundation Thailand & ARCM, no date). After efforts by the RTG to register irregular migrants in 2001, 2004 and 2009, there are around one million registered migrants and an estimated 1.4 million still unregistered by the end of 2010. The majority of both categories are from Burma (Huguet & Aphichat 2011). Once they are registered, they are in principle safe from arrest and deportation by Thai authorities. (Decha, 2007).

Conceptually, displaced persons can be considered a sub-category of irregular migrants because they have entered the country without authorization. The DP are permitted to stay under an exemption of the Immigration Act, article 17 by authorized Minister, with Cabinet approval (Premjai et al. in press: 33). People recognized as displaced persons were able to apply for resettlement in a third country in 2005 when the resettlement program started (ibid). However, to be admitted into this category by the Provincial Admission Boards a number of criteria have to be met. Firstly, access

to the shelters is only granted if the reason for coming to Thailand is “fleeing fighting”. UNHCR has tried to have this criteria broadened to include flight from the effects of fighting and civil war but the definition remains narrow. Secondly, only ethnic Karen and Karenni are eligible for asylum in the temporary shelter areas which excludes a number of other ethnic groups that flee into Thailand. For example, some 1,500 Shan that flew from fighting in Burma in 2002 (Caouette & Pack 2002). Thirdly, displaced persons are only recognized as such as long as they stay in the designated temporary shelter areas. As soon as they leave the confines of the shelter, often in search of employment, they automatically lose their exceptional migration status and thus face the threat of deportation by Thai authorities. These criteria attached to the term “displaced persons fleeing fighting” leaves a number of people who would otherwise be considered to be asylum seekers or refugees in an international context without protection and brands them as illegal migrants. Moreover, movement outside of a designated area will change the migration status from the exception of a displaced person to that of an illegal migrant (Premjai et al. in press, Decha 2007, Huguet & Sureporn 2005, Caouette & Pack 2002).

Consequently, both displaced persons and registered irregular migrants are, as an exception, safe from persecution and deportation for a time but whereas registered migrants have some freedom of movement the displaced persons in the temporary shelter areas can only keep their status by being confined in the shelters without access to outside resources.

2.2 Thai perspectives on displaced persons from Burma

Connected to enjoying a measure of protection by being confined by both a very narrow definition of their migration status and the connected confinement to the temporary shelter areas, the displaced persons from Burma are also confined in their chances for communication with the outside world and vice versa (Decha 2007). The Royal Thai Government has an interest in keeping public awareness of the conditions in the temporary shelter areas and the situation of the displaced persons as low as possible. Public opinion in Thai society is already negatively inclined towards the

issue, shown by nationwide surveys done by Assumption University in 2007 and 2009. Displaced persons are perceived as troublemakers, a burden to the country, disease carriers amongst others and it is not wished to allow them more freedom (Premjai et al. in press). Another important issue is the diplomatic and economic relations between Thailand and Burma. The fact that part of the displaced population in the temporary shelter areas was part of the armed resistance movements in Burma before fleeing to Thailand makes the fact that they enjoy a measure of protection in Thailand a sensitive issue between the two governments (Lang, 2002). The less attention is drawn to their presence in the country, the better, as they pose a threat to national security for the Thai government (Premjai et al. in press, Decha 2007). Additionally, the legal status of the displaced persons in Thailand -the fact that they would be considered illegal migrants if not for the exception of the migration status “displaced person”- renders them void of the possibility to have a say or “voice” in the decisions being made about their livelihoods, including the education available for their children (Decha, 2007). This situation is emphasized by the fact that whenever there is a meeting between representatives of the Thai authorities with UNHCR and NGOs that provide for the displaced persons in the temporary shelter areas, the displaced persons themselves cannot join as they are not allowed to leave the confines of the temporary shelter areas by the Ministry of Interior.

More practical matters also make it very difficult for the Karen DP to make themselves heard in matters that concern their situation and their livelihoods inside the temporary shelter areas. Many of the people staying in the temporary shelter areas are illiterate, so written testimonies or documentations are few (ZOA Education Survey 2010, Decha 2006). Moreover, documentation is often only available in Karen, thus only accessible to a small number of people inside the temporary shelter areas and in Burma. Writing in English, which would secure a much larger audience, is made difficult by the lack of proficiency in the language by most of the temporary shelter area population (Decha, 2006). The Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity (KRCEE), which has an office in town of Mae Sot near Mae La temporary shelter area, is the official representative of the Karen Refugee Committee in matters of education. The KRC publishes a monthly newsletter which is also available in

English and is the link of communication between the Karen displaced persons and the outside world. However, even KRCEE's access to the temporary shelter areas is limited; they have to rely on the help of NGO's such as ZOA Refugee Care Thailand to be able to travel in and out. Consequently, there is no qualified representation available for the Karen displaced persons to make themselves heard to the Thai public or government (Decha 2010 & 2006, Van der Stouwe & Oh 2009, Sawade 2007).

Thus while the displaced persons living in the temporary shelter areas should best not be seen nor heard from the point of view of the Royal Thai Government and oftentimes lack the resources to alert the outside world of their situation, the possibility of accreditation and the required involvement of the RTG has also the possibility of opening doors of communication. Broadening the opportunities of the displaced persons through accreditation needs their involvement in the process of accessing and evaluating the educational situation in the temporary shelter areas (Naruemon et al. in press) and would at the same time take care of some of the issues of representation for the Karen people as mentioned above. Moreover, the connection and implications of the right to education and accreditation for the displaced persons further the possibility of making their voices heard, at least in matters of education. The implications being that once the Thai Ministry of Education accredits their educational attainments they will be equal to those of Thai students, thus opening further possibilities for them. Thus their involvement in the accreditation process at all stages would ensure their becoming "visible" and could secure further rights that are connected to the right to education. This is underlined by Decha when he writes that

At first glance, by pushing the argument further, we seemingly appeal to the universality of being human, i.e., to interrogate the notion of equality under state sovereignty, and privileging the equality of all human beings as such. Nonetheless, [...], it is not the *humanness* and equality as such for which this appeal aims, but *what comes after* [...] (Decha, 2010: 130).

2.3 Education as a Human Right

Education as a human right has been recognized in international discourse since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 proclaimed that “everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental levels. Elementary education shall be compulsory.” (article 26) This was followed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which entered into force in 1976, of which article 13 identifies five indicators that determine the fulfillment of the right to education. With the ratification and entry into force of the ICESCR the right to education became part of international human rights law and further established indicators that should be progressively fulfilled. However, at this point there was no mentioning of the provision of education for non-citizens, stateless people or refugees. This changed with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which came into force in 1990, six years after the beginning of the flow of displaced persons into Thailand. Article 2 states that all state parties have to guarantee non-discrimination of all children, regardless of the “parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.” Furthermore, article 7 stipulates that all children have the right to a name and a nationality, especially if the child would remain stateless if nationality was not granted by the country that the child was born in. This is a very important right for the displaced persons from Burma in Thailand as most of them come here without any documents or proof of citizenship. That means when their children are born in Thailand, they will remain stateless too, if Burma does not recognize their parents as citizens and Thailand does not grant citizenship *jus soli*.

Another article of the CRC, which first explicitly states the rights of refugee children and those seeking refugee status, is article 22 which states that such children should enjoy all the rights laid down in human rights treaties that were signed by the state that hosts said children, which essentially means that the displaced children would enjoy the same human rights as Thai children. However, Thailand still maintains reservations against article 22 of the CRC since its ratification in 1992,

which means that the human rights treaties and other documents that Thailand has ratified might not be applied to children in the temporary shelter areas.

This is especially grave since Thailand has been actively working towards “Education for All” for its citizens since 1990 when the First World Conference on Education for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand. Thailand, together with 154 other nations, adopted the World Declaration on Education for All and agreed to the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs with the goal of making free and compulsory primary education available and accessible to all children by the year 2000.

This goal was reaffirmed during the World Education Forum in Dakar held in 2000. The forum adopted the Dakar Framework for Action which identified the next target as ensuring access to compulsory and completely free primary education of good quality for all children by the year 2015 (World Education Forum, 2000). Furthermore, as a precursor to the World Education Forum, the Asia-Pacific Conference on the EFA 2000 Assessment, held in Bangkok in January 2000, additionally adopted the “Asia and Pacific Framework for Action: Education for All” (World Education Forum, Regional Frameworks for Action, 2000).

Since those two conferences, Thailand has made major progress in realizing education for all its citizens. The net enrollment rate in primary school rose from 70% to 86% and the net enrollment rate for secondary school from 40% to 82% between 1990 and 2005. Moreover, free and compulsory education was expanded from six years of primary school to nine years (1997 Constitution) till the completion of junior high school and then to 12 years till the completion of high school (EFA 2000 Assessment, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005).

What is significant for this research are four important facts that stem from these developments in Thailand. Firstly, children of displaced persons in the temporary shelter areas in Thailand were excluded from these positive developments in availability and accessibility of education because of Thailand’s reservation to article 22 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its non-ratification of the

Convention on the Status of Refugees of 1951. Secondly, as a direct consequence, education in the temporary shelter areas had to be managed solely by the displaced persons for the first 12 years of their stay in Thailand because the Thai government did not allow NGOs a mandate for education before 1996. Since then, education in the seven predominantly Karen temporary shelter areas is funded and supported by ZOA Refugee Care Thailand, an international NGO which its headquarter in the Netherlands. Thirdly, as the Thai government had no hand whatsoever in the provision of education in the temporary shelter areas, the curriculum was designed by the KED in a vacuum, which means that education is suitable for the temporary shelter area context only but not recognized by any state (Sawade, 2007). Fourthly, the Dakar Framework for Action for the first time included quality of education in its goals to fulfill the right to education, instead of just provision and accessibility of education.

2.4 Quality Education

There has been an attempt to define quality in education since its introduction into human rights law with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and later the Dakar Framework for Action (UNICEF 2000).

At the International Working Group on Education in Italy in June 2000, UNICEF presented a paper, *Defining Quality in Education*. It sets forth conditions that must be fulfilled in the categories learners, environment, content, processes and outcomes and gives indicators for each category that should be fulfilled. It furthermore provides two case studies of quality education programs from Chile and Guatemala. According to Theis (2004: 28) quality education is child-centred and “prepares children for the challenges they face in life and helps every child reach his or her full potential.” At the same time it is concerned with the children’s environment outside of school, their health, nutrition, wellbeing, safety and protection from violence and abuse. In order to achieve this quality education, Theis sets forth that minimum standards for quality have to be agreed upon and be enforced by relevant state authorities. Sandkull (2005: 5) gives a very similar definition to Theis’ saying that “quality education is one that is

learner-centred, leads to the realisation of every learner's full potential and prepares the learners for the challenges faced in life." Furthermore, he states that quality education not only focuses on education in school but is also concerned with the students' wellbeing, the curricula and its outcomes, the quality of teaching and studying and lastly insists on a suitable learning environment. Now, UNICEF/UNESCO (2007: 4) defines quality education as enabling children to reach their full potential which will help them to realize employment opportunities and to develop life skills. In order to achieve these goals that make up quality education it needs to be "child-centered, relevant and embrace a broad curriculum, and be appropriately resourced and monitored." UNICEF/UNESCO (2007: 28) goes on to provide three elements that must be ensured for education to have quality, namely "a broad, relevant and inclusive curriculum, rights-based learning and assessment and child-friendly, safe and healthy environments". Lastly, Tomasevski (2001, 2004) identifies quality education as the acceptability of education as an intricate part of the right to education. Indicators include minimum standards in health and safety of the learning environment, the respect for diversity of learners, the language of instruction, orientation and contents of teaching, school discipline and the rights of learners. For example, the language of instruction should not pose an obstacle for children to attend school and understand lessons, so that in this respect the permission for minorities to establish their own schools and teach in their native language is a factor which also connects to the respect for diversity. Moreover, there should be professional requirements for teachers and a freedom from censorship included if education is to be of quality. Lastly, parents should be able to choose education for their children in conformity with their religious, moral or philosophical convictions, which also connect to the respect for diversity and the rights of learners.

Again these definitions of quality education, even though some overlap, differ in their emphasis and content. Adam (1993) stresses that different stakeholders have different definitions of quality, thus it is possible that one approach has "winners" and "losers". This is especially important for this research as nearly all of the above definitions include content or specifically curriculum in their definition of quality education. However, how this content or curriculum should look like to be of quality

is not universally defined as everyone will have a different outlook on the topic. In the case of the education system in the temporary shelter areas in Thailand, this “battle” between the different views on a quality curriculum is fought out at the moment over the process of accreditation of education in the temporary shelter areas by the Thai Ministry of Education. As mentioned before there are many different stakeholders involved in the education in the temporary shelter areas so that there are a lot of presumably different or conflicting views on the kind of content or curriculum that would be considered to be of quality for the displaced who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the process.

2.5 Educational Accreditation

What function does accreditation serve schools, colleges and universities? Miller and Boswell (1979: 219) write that the function of accreditation is the “validation of certificates, diplomas, degrees and credits awarded by an institution.” With this validation it proves to students, parents, potential employers and other parties the value of the education delivered by the accredited educational institution. Thrash (1979: 116) states that accreditation functions as the assurance of the educational quality of an institution “to the educational community, the general public, and other agencies and organizations”. Additionally, it encourages said educational institutions to continually re-evaluate and improve themselves. CRE (2001) distinguishes between two possible functions that accreditation serves, namely quality control and quality assurance, meaning that in the first place it makes sure that institutions adhere to quality requirements and in the second place to evaluate quality on an on-going basis. Accreditation in both cases is a public statement of educational quality. Vlasceanu, Grünberg and Parlea (2007: 26-27) state that accreditation serves as a recognition of an educational institution to having met predetermined minimal criteria or standards in regard to educational quality. In summary, accreditation provides proof of quality of education provided by an institution that assures third parties that educational quality is controlled and evaluated. Consequently, accreditation means an increase of the value of the received education as it is recognized by people and institutions

outside. The question which is important for this research is: What does that mean for education in a refugee context?

In a human rights and refugee context UNHCR (2003) identifies certification as a direct indicator for quality of education and states that without continued effort towards quality, accessibility of education could be lost along the way as it is a sign of the value of the received education for the community. Thus recognized value of the educational attainments will lead to fewer student drop-outs if students can trust that their achievements can lead them to higher education and employment. Consequently, “it is wasteful if education and training does not result in documented, officially recognised certificates.” (UNHCR, 2003: 11) Moreover, Katarina Tomasevski (2001), former Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, states within her 4-A-Framework (availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability) that without the assurance of quality and the adherence to minimal standards in education, it is not acceptable and consequently the right to education only partially fulfilled. Furthermore, the INEE *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction* (2006) stress the importance of education that is accredited and can be used beyond the camp context. They set forth that the main concern of communities is whether their children will have access to higher education and employment. Therefore the most important question is whether governments, institutions of higher learning and employers will recognize their children’s learning attainments. This is also a major factor in the motivation of students to go to school. Consequently, without accreditation, education in a refugee context is in danger of lacking in value for the respective community in the long run and might lead students to drop out of school if they have the feeling that the education they receive will not aid them in acquiring higher education or finding employment beyond their present situation which will not continue indefinitely into the future. Therefore, accreditation serves an important function for educational institutions and the communities that receive their education from them, not only in a stable environment but in emergencies and refugee situations as well. Concretely, it could mean for the displaced population from Burma living in temporary shelter areas in Thailand that they might be able to attend Thai universities if they remain in Thailand and prove

their educational attainments and quality of said attainments with certificates recognized by a nation-state to authorities, educational institutions and employers either in Burma, should they be able to go back home, or in any other country should they be resettled. In short, it would open up education and employment opportunities for them that their current education certificates cannot provide for.

Who has the authority to accredit educational institutions and determine those quality standards? Haakstad (2001) identifies four categories of possible authorities, namely 1) *national authorities of quality assurance*, 2) *professional associations or associations of institutions*, 3) *Individual institutions*, and 4) *Private organisations*. National authorities of quality assurance normally mean the Ministry of Education itself or an authority that was specifically set up by the state or ministry to carry out the recognition of educational programs or institutions. Professional associations may serve the function of national quality assurance and can even have the authority to accredit. However, the final responsibility for the national education system and the regulation and control over its quality lies with the government so that “such self-controlling powers must be regarded as delegated ‘in trust’ ” (Haakstad, 2001: 78). Individual institutions that are already accredited themselves have a right to recognize education from other institutions that are integrated into their own programs and offer new programs without a separate process of accreditation. Finally, private organizations that carry academic legitimacy can accredit institutions, faculties and programs by defining threshold standards and classifying institutions accordingly. However, such accreditation is both private and voluntary. Consequently it does only enhance an institution’s reputation but not its formal status inside of the national education system. These four categories of accreditation authorities refer to higher education primarily; however they also connect to this case study and the accreditation of secondary education. What was made clear is that primacy over accreditation and quality control and assurance lies with the government and state authorities. The government might lend accreditation power to other authorities and institutions but these were either instigated by the government itself or have already been accredited. For an emergency or in context of displacement, like in this case study, it means that even though children are possibly not educated under the

umbrella of the home or the host country at first or, in the case of the displaced population in Thailand, for a prolonged period of time, accreditation, if desired, will have to be sought by a national authority, possibly a foreign one, in this case the Thai Ministry of Education. The education of displaced population from Burma in Thailand is a special case in the respect that the education system was established by the KRCEE which acts as a Ministry of Education and has its responsibilities but is in reality a local organization.

According to the National Education Act of 1999, the Thai Ministry of Education has sole authority over all levels of education (National Education Commission, 2004). Part 3 of the National Education Act stipulates that if a school is provided by the private sector or an organization outside of state authority, the education provided will nonetheless have to adhere to the same quality standards. Furthermore, not only do the same standards apply but the respective school will have to go through the same quality assurance evaluation processes as a state school which will be pre-determined by the state. In the case of the schools in the temporary shelter areas which are run by ZOA Refugee Care Thailand, KRCEE and the displaced persons, it was made clear by the Thai MoE that accreditation would mean the alignment of the temporary shelter area curriculum with the Thai curriculum. It does not have to be copied one-on-one because there is room for “local content” in the Thai curriculum. However, the temporary shelter area schools will have to follow the curriculum and quality standards formulated by the Thai MoE (Van der Stouwe & Oh 2009, Thai Ministry of Education 2008).

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this thesis (see Figure 2) is based on the assumption that “accreditation is an essential part of the right to education” for various reasons. First of all, human rights documents, such as the World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), are instruments that are adopted by states, including Thailand. Therefore the education provided in the public education system of said states is automatically accredited.

Consequently, as soon as a higher level of education becomes available, in compliance with the progressive realisation of availability of secondary, vocational and tertiary education, students attending public education have automatic access to it if they pass the necessary requirements. Secondly, the very function of education is ensuring the access to the next higher level, secondary, tertiary education and employment. Human rights treaties establish equitable access to higher education and UNICEF/UNECOSO (2007: 30) state that a rights-based approach to education “requires a life-cycle approach, investing in learning and ensuring effective transitions at each stage of the child’s life.” Thus, accreditation is directly linked to the fulfillment of the rights to education in terms of availability of higher levels of education and the requirements that have to be met to have access to same. The displaced persons in the temporary shelter areas along the Thai-Burmese border are therefore in a unique position in the way that their special circumstances of a so far independent education system, outside of the Thai public education system, and their legal status, which restricts their movement, are not taken into account in most human rights instruments. However, Thailand has pledged itself legally to the fulfillment of the right to education for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in national legislation (Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011).

Moreover, accreditation of education not only ensures smooth transition between different levels of education in an education system but is also a way of ensuring adherence to quality standards in education. In a public education system set up by a state, quality standards are decided upon from the beginning, such as the qualifications of teachers, student-teacher ratio, teaching language, subjects to be taught and the content to be taught in said subjects, amongst others. The institution(s) responsible for the oversight of the education system are set up along-side in the form of Ministries of Education and affiliated institutions and departments that ensure adherence to stipulated quality standards. Thus educational accreditation in this respect means that education provided was set up and evaluated according to a set of quality standards and passed said evaluation successfully. As quality of education is just as much part of the right to education as the quantity of education provided, educational accreditation is an instrument to ensure that educational quality is an

essential part of the right to education. Hence this thesis presumes that quality education is not possible without accreditation, especially in the circumstances of the temporary shelter areas where institutions managing and administering education are considerably weaker in competency and capacity than state institutions responsible for education. Furthermore, effective implementation and evaluation of quality standards is inhibited by the legal standing of said institutions and restrictions of access to the temporary shelter areas. Consequently, education attainments become basically invalid with the lack of accreditation as education provided neither ensures access to higher levels of education once students venture outside the temporary shelter areas nor ensures quality of education because of the lack of functioning institutions and thus quality control measures. Hence it can be said that the right to education (the first block in the conceptual framework) is not fulfilled without accreditation.

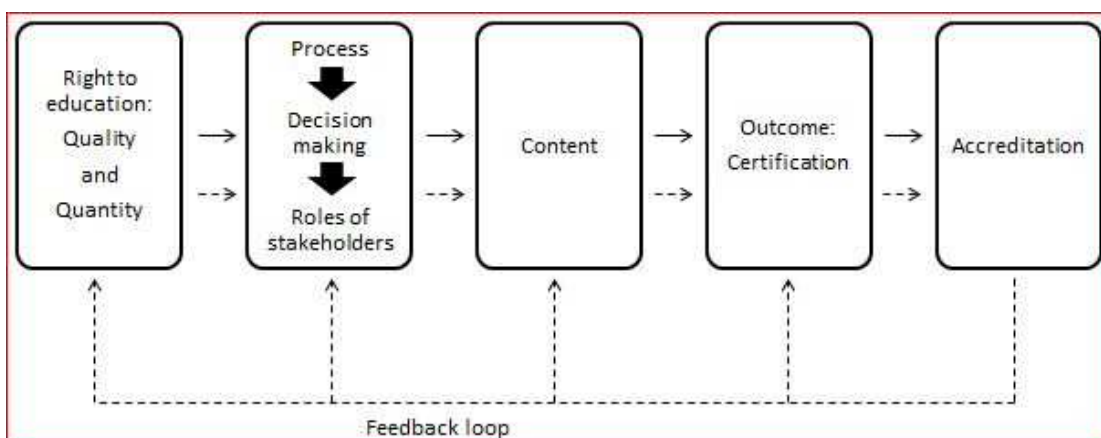
The displaced persons in the temporary shelter areas along the Thai-Burmese border are in a unique position. So far, their education system has been independent and not been part of the Thai public education system, except in the way that the level of education allowed to be provided was determined by the Thai government. In order for the education in the temporary shelter areas to be accredited it will have to go through an educational process (block 2 in the conceptual framework). Decisions have to be made about how to align the quality standards currently existing in the education system in the temporary shelter areas to the quality standards of the Thai public education system of which the Thai Ministry of Education holds sole responsibility. This process involves the various stakeholders now managing and administering the education system in the temporary shelter areas and centers on their different roles, thus connecting to the first research question.

The third block centers on the content or curriculum of the education in the temporary shelter areas as the Thai MoE made it clear that the focus of the alignment to the Thai public education system would lie on the subjects taught in the temporary shelter areas. Concessions will have to be made between the different views of the stakeholders on the quality of the content of education, including the view of the displaced persons, thus connecting this block to the second research question.

The outcome of the educational process, including a decision-making process by the various stakeholders involved in education in the temporary shelter areas, which focuses on the quality of the content of education in the temporary shelter areas, is the certification of educational attainments (block 4) by the schools, and, following, the accreditation of education in the temporary shelter areas by the Thai Ministry of Education. This last block connects to the third and last research question. All three elements of process, content and outcome were adopted from UNICEF (2000) “Defining Quality in Education” and UNICEF/UNESCO (2007) “A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education For All” and adjusted for the particular circumstances of the case study.

In the end, the very fact that accreditation of education received in the temporary shelter areas is the goal and part of the fulfillment of the right to education in terms of both quantity and quality affects the elements of the educational process. Therefore, a feedback loop is drawn to show that the end goal of accreditation has implications for the understanding of quality education (national quality standards versus Karen education system), the roles of stakeholders (NGOs, CBOs administer and manage it but Thai MoE has sole authority over it), the content of education (alignment prerequisite for accreditation) and the outcome in terms of certification of the educational attainments of the displaced students.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework



Chapter III

Research Findings

This chapter describes the findings collected during field research in Mae La temporary shelter area and Mae Sot and will answer the first and second research questions. The findings include an overview of the basic education now available in Mae La temporary shelter area, the proposition of the Thai Ministry of Education for curriculum change as well as the progress of the accreditation process so far. This is then followed by an introduction of the various stakeholders involved in the accreditation process and their role in this process. Subsequently, the view of the different stakeholders concerning the quality of the temporary shelter area curriculum as well as their view on the accreditation process will be outlined. Thus this chapter aims to answer research question number one and two.

3.1 Mae La temporary shelter area

3.1.1 Introduction to Mae La temporary shelter area

Mae La temporary shelter area is the setting for this case study. It is located 10km from the Thai-Burmese border in Tha Song Yang District, Tak province. Mae La was first established in 1984 with an initial population of 1,100. However, in 1995, several temporary shelter areas were attacked from across the border so several smaller temporary shelter areas were consolidated in the area that Mae La temporary shelter area is now located. Today, Mae La temporary shelter area is the biggest of all nine temporary shelter areas along the border with an approximate population of 48,000 (TBBC 2011, UNHCR Field Office Mae Sot 2007). The demographic makeup is predominantly Karen with 97% of the population being of Karen ethnicity, 2% being Burmese and 1% consisting of other ethnic groups (TBBC, 2008).

Figure 3: Map of Mae La temporary shelter area



Source: UNCHR Field Office Mae Sot

3.1.2 Education in Mae La temporary shelter area

In Mae La temporary shelter area, basic education, meaning primary and secondary education, is being provided in 32 schools across zones A, B and C. 25 of those schools offer primary and 16 offer secondary education, meaning that some schools combine primary and secondary school. Primary education includes grades 1 to 6, while secondary education includes grades 7 to 12. A total of 596 educational staff, comprised of principals, teachers, resident teacher trainers and teacher educators provide education for a total of 14,648 students in Mae La temporary shelter area (Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior 2011; ZOA Education Survey 2010). Additionally, as of May 2011, 1842 outside students from Karen territory in Burma are living in boarding houses and attending school in the temporary shelter area (KRC monthly report, May 2011). All educational staff is drawn from the temporary shelter area community and teachers are trained inside the temporary shelter area as well.

The curriculum in the seven predominantly Karen temporary shelter areas is comprised of the following subjects:

- Mathematics: Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry
- Social Studies: History (World & Karen History), Geography, Social Studies, Religion, Environment and Economics
- Health and Physical Education³
- Science: Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology
- Languages: Karen (teaching and native language), Burmese and English (foreign languages)

Moreover, Thai is also supposed to be taught from grade four onwards (Naruemon et al. in press, ZOA Education Survey 2010). Text books for Thai language study are available for the 1st and 2nd year of language study. However, according to the Secretary of OCEE in Mae La, Thai is only officially taught in three schools (interview, 04.07.2011). Many other schools teach it as an elective subject, according to the KRCEE General Secretary (interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). Students in high school seven furthermore stated that the teaching of Thai as a subject is inconsistent throughout grades, being taught to students in grade 10 last year but taught in grade seven to nine this year. This stems from the fact that there is not enough funding to hire an adequate number of teachers.

3.2 Proposal for curriculum change

The current Karen curriculum used in the temporary shelter areas will have to be aligned to the Thai curriculum in hope of it being accredited in the future. The current proposal of the Royal Thai Government allots a 70:30 percent split of the curriculum, with 70% representing Thai curriculum and 30% being reserved for local content (Purnell & Aranya, 2008). For this purpose, the subjects of Mathematics, Science and English of the Thai curriculum are currently being translated and adapted

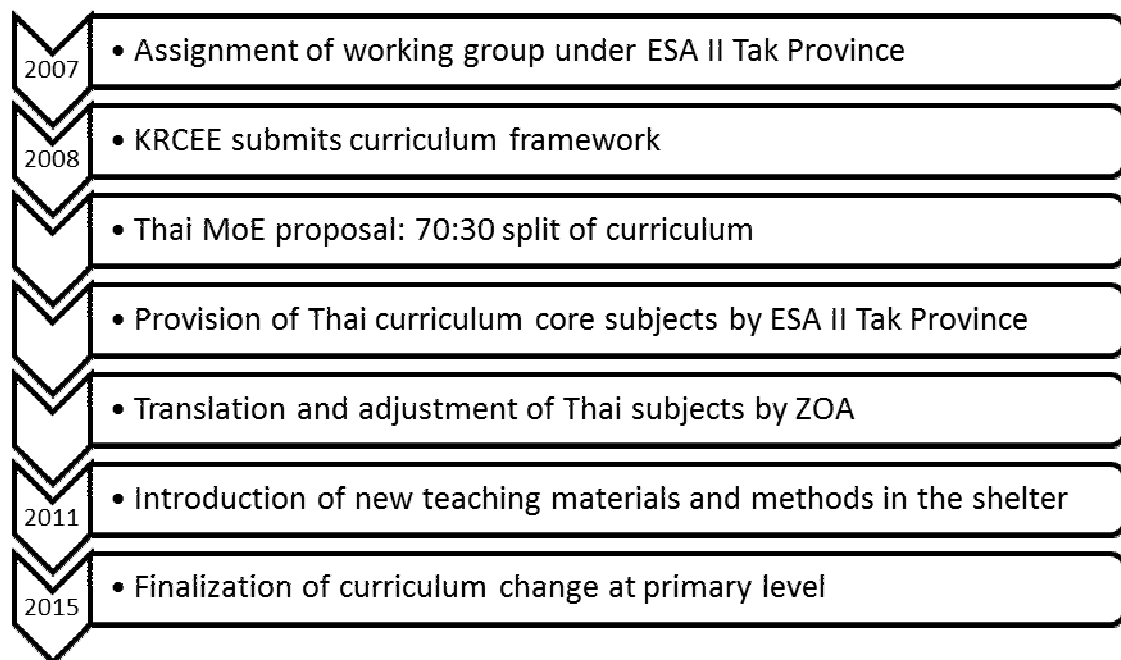
³ Is not taught in class but offered as an extra activity under Right to Play.

to the environment in the temporary shelter areas (ZOA Education Survey 2010, ZOA Program Advisor 12.07.2011, Director of ESA II Tak Province 11.07.2011). According to the Director of ESA II, the aim is also to have Thai language taught to at least the standard of six years of language study. At the same time, Thai language study should contribute to the students' understanding of the country and culture they live in, even if in isolation.

3.2.1 The accreditation process so far

In 2007 ESA II Tak Province assigned a group of staff to work with ZOA on accreditation. The first step was to request a curriculum framework from KRCEE to determine how much of the temporary shelter area curriculum did or did not overlap with the Thai curriculum (ZOA Manager External Relations, interview, 08.07.2011, Mae Sot). The curriculum framework was submitted in 2008 and the unofficial outcome -unofficial as it was only communicated by phone- was that about 70% of the temporary shelter area curriculum were already similar to the Thai one (General Secretary of KRCEE, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). This evaluation was followed by the stated proposal of the Thai MoE to change the curriculum to a 70:30 split, with the core subjects English, Mathematics and Science having to be aligned with the Thai curriculum and Thai language being taught more extensively than it is now. Since then, ZOA and KRCEE have worked together to develop the curriculum. However, human resources in the form of expertise to develop the learning materials as well as translate them into Karen and budget are main factors that pose challenges. At this stage, the curriculum and textbooks for English grade I have been finished and are now taught in Mae La temporary shelter area after an initial pilot phase. The curriculum change in the primary stages grade one to six is expected to be finalized by 2015 according to the current project proposal by ZOA (ZOA Manager External Relations and ZOA Program Advisor, interviews, 08.07. and 12.07.2011, Mae Sot).

Figure 4: Timeline of accreditation process



3.3 Stakeholders involved in the accreditation process

3.3.1 Displaced Peoples

When beginning my field work in Mae La temporary shelter area it became clear almost instantly that, even though the discussion around accreditation had been in progress since 2007 and subsequent curriculum change was already under way according to the proposal of the Thai MoE, the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area were oblivious. When explaining my research intent to the Education Coordinator of Mae La he told me that I could carry out my research and that he would organize contacts and interviews for me; however he explained that nobody knew anything about accreditation. He was the only one that I interviewed who had a vague idea that there was a discussion concerning accreditation and curriculum change going on between KRCEE, ZOA and the Thai MoE. Additionally, he stated that a curriculum change on the primary level was taking place but when asked about the connection to possible accreditation he declined that it had anything to do with it (Education Coordinator Mae La temporary shelter area, interview, 07.07.2011, Mae

La). When asking about this obvious lack in communication between the temporary shelter area and outside in subsequent interviews with ZOA, there were several explanations given. One was the legal status of KRCEE with the Thai MoI, resulting in limited access and the resultant difficulty in communicating with the temporary shelter area. In relation it was asked who really is in the position to disseminate information and access the displaced peoples' view on the process (ZOA Program Manager, interview, 08.07.2011, Mae Sot). Another explanation was that it was a conscious choice on the side of KRCEE, keeping up a monopoly of information. As long as information is only available to one source and everybody has to come ask for information, KRCEE will remain in a position of power as part of a quasi-government (ZOA Program Advisor, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). The impression is that KRCEE makes decisions on the displaced peoples' behalf regardless of their level of information and agreement or disagreement.

3.3.2 Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity

The Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity (KRCEE) came into existence on the 2nd of April 2009 (KRCEE Director, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). It took over the work of the Karen Education Department, which is a part of the Karen National Union and formerly assisted Karen people with educational policy in Karen State, in the temporary shelter areas in Thailand and in some migrant schools as well (Naruemon et al. in press, Sawade 2007). The KED designed the curriculum which is used in the Karen temporary shelter areas among the Thai-Burmese border (KRCEE interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot, Sawade, 2008).

Since 2009 the responsibilities of KED for the displaced Karen population in Thailand have been transferred to KRCEE, which is part of the Karen Refugee Committee, the representative body of Karen people living in temporary shelter areas in Thailand (TBBC, 2007). The KRCEE is responsible for inspecting schools in the seven predominantly Karen temporary shelter areas, ensuring the streamlining of curricula and distributing textbooks, administering board exams and giving certificates to students (Sawade, 2009). Its vision is “to build a true lasting peace and

justice by producing graduates who are critical and creative thinkers, competent leaders, and good citizens who are proud of their identity” (KRCEE poster, Naruemon et al. in press, Sawade, 2007&2009). KREE is the owner of the accreditation process with ZOA supporting them and facilitating coordination between KRCEE and the ESA II Tak Province (ZOA Manager External Relations, interview, 08.07.2011, Mae La).

3.3.3 ZOA Refugee Care Thailand

ZOA Refugee Care Thailand is an international relief and rehabilitation organization with its headquarters based in the Netherlands. It provides support to refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa and Asia. ZOA has been working in the temporary shelter areas in Thailand since 1997 and is the main provider of basic education. It provides funding for educational facilities and buildings, teacher training, the development of the curriculum, teaching and learning materials for the schools and education staff salaries (ZOA Education Survey, 2010).

The efforts to have accreditation for the temporary shelter area schools were started by ZOA and subsequently brought forward (ZOA Program Advisor and ZOA Program Manager, interviews, 12.07. and 08.07.2011, Mae Sot). This is in line with ZOA commitment to work towards quality education for all (ZOA Education Survey 2010, ZOA Program Advisor interview 12.07.2011 Mae Sot). The concrete role that ZOA took on in the accreditation and curriculum change process is the development and translation of the curriculum and textbooks. Moreover, they are facilitating the communication between ESA II Tak Province and other department of the Thai MoE and KRCEE.

3.3.4 Royal Thai Government

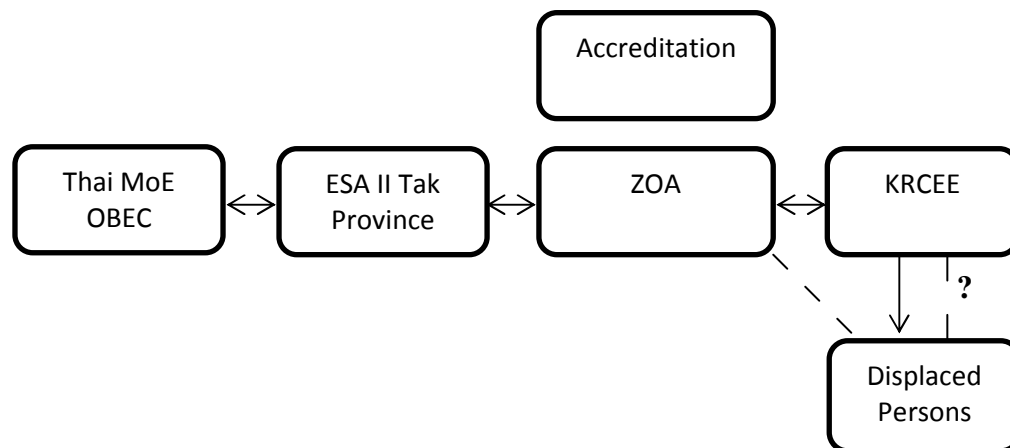
The Thai MoE began showing more interest in the education in the temporary shelter areas and migrant schools in 2005, when the Permanent Secretary of the MoE visited Mae La temporary shelter area and several Burmese migrant schools. It had

been ordered to become involved in the administration and curriculum of migrant and other non-state schools by the National Security Council after incidents in the South of Thailand between insurgencies and the RTG. When examining Muslim, Chinese and other migrant schools, the RTG realized that they did not know what was taught in those schools (Sawade, 2008). So, after the inspection of schools in Mae La temporary shelter area, OBEC was subsequently ordered to assign a team to monitor and take part in the temporary shelter area education (Director of ESA II Tak Province, interview, 11.07.2011, Mae Sot, Van der Stouwe & Oh, 2009).

After the proposal for curriculum change by the Thai MoE, the ESA II Tak Province, located in Mae Sot and working under OBEC, provided the Thai curricula for Mathematics, Science and English, which are at the moment translated and readjusted by ZOA and sent back to ESA for approval. The ESA II Tak Province and ESA I and II Mae Hong Son in cooperation developed a Thai language curriculum which was made available to schools in the temporary shelter area and migrant schools (Director of ESA II Tak Province, interview, 11.07.2011, Mae Sot).

However, the Thai MoE, including OBEC and ESA II Tak Province, face the same problem as KRCEE. As the temporary shelter areas are administered under the Thai MoI, all outsiders have to ask for permission and an entrance pass before being allowed inside the temporary shelter areas. This includes other ministries of the RTG, so the MoE is in a situation where it is supposed to evaluate quality standards in the temporary shelter area schools but faces trouble gaining access because the MoI denies them permission to enter (ZOA Program Advisor, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). Consequently, this poses a big problem to the accreditation and curriculum change process as the Thai MoE is the sole authority in Thailand who has the power to evaluate quality standards and grant accreditation to the schools in the temporary shelter area. So, even though there are a lot of stakeholders involved in the actual process of curriculum change, accreditation as the final goal can only be granted by the Thai MoE.

Figure 5: Communication channels among stakeholders throughout accreditation process



3.3.5 Conclusion

At this point the temporary shelter area community does not seem to be involved in the discussion about possible accreditation and the on-going curriculum change but as recipients of new directions and training that schools and teachers receive during the process of curriculum change.

According to ZOA, KRCEE is the owner of the accreditation process but the Thai MoE does not communicate with them directly, only through ZOA who facilitate information exchange. Moreover, KRCEE does not have the capacity to translate new learning materials or to train the teachers to use the new materials. All these functions are taken up by ZOA and implemented through their projects.

Finally, the process of curriculum change that is needed for possible accreditation of the temporary shelter area schools in the future involves a host of different stakeholders: ZOA, who produces the materials and organizes training, KRCEE, who communicate the decision on these changes to the temporary shelter area community and finally the temporary shelter area community themselves, who have to be trained and instructed on how to use the new materials and guidelines. However, in the end the power and authority to evaluate the curriculum and

eventually grant accreditation lies solely with the Thai Ministry of Education, which is supporting curriculum change by providing learning materials for Thai language and the curricula for the core subjects to ZOA

3.4 Views of stakeholders on quality of curriculum

3.4.1 Displaced Peoples

In order to access the view of the displaced peoples on the quality of the taught curriculum, the researcher asked interviewees about their experience with education and schooling in Burma or other areas outside of the temporary shelter area. This was done in order to give the interviewees a point of reference with which they could compare their own curriculum in Mae La temporary shelter area.

Out of the 22 interviewees in the temporary shelter area, only two of them rated the curriculum in Burma to be of higher quality than that in Mae La. Their arguments were that the curriculum in Burma is more comprehensive, more lessons were being taught in Burma when compared with Mae La partly because a lot of holidays are observed in the temporary shelter area. Also, the curriculum is too focused on Karen subjects, as a Burmese teacher from high school 1 put it: “Students need more knowledge about the outside world, not only about Karen” (interview, 05.07.2011, Mae La).

In contrast, a lot of interviewees that were of the opinion that the curriculum in Mae La temporary shelter area is of higher quality than in Burma, were especially proud of the many languages that students are learning in the temporary shelter area schools.

We learn a lot of languages in the camp, but in Burma, only one language and no chance to study Karen. (Education Coordinator Mae La, interview, 07.07.2011, Mae La)

Additionally, people thought that not only were they able to learn more languages in Mae La but that the ability of students who learned in Mae La was also of a higher standard than in Burma.

In Mae La, we teach a lot of languages, in Burma only Burmese. Subject quality is higher in Mae La than in Burma, because English ability is higher.

(Headmaster of high school 7, interview, 06.07.2011, Mae La)

Quality in Mae La is higher when comparing students from Burma and from Mae La from standard 10. Mae La students can speak English but Burmese students cannot. For example, my husband's nephew used to study standard five (grade five) in Burma, now he attends school here but he cannot even understand standard one (grade one) textbooks in English and Mathematics.

(Education Coordinator Zone B, interview, 07.07.2011, Mae La)

However, one important consideration for many interviewees, when stating that the curriculum in Mae La is of higher quality than in Burma, is their ability to study Karen language and history in school which in Burma is forbidden by the government and will result in punishment (Decha, 2007).

The curriculum (in Burma) is of lower quality, just for Burmese people. There is no class to study our history. (female student from high school 1, group interview, 05.07.2011, Mae La)

We learn a lot of languages and about history, in Burma, we only learn Burmese. Karen language is not allowed, we receive punishment if we teach Karen. (Headmaster of high school 1, interview, 05.07.2011, Mae La)

In contrast, students who had been born in the temporary shelter area or only experienced school in the temporary shelter area because they came to Thailand when they were very young had a more negative view on the education they were receiving.

We have no chance to go outside, that's why we cannot compare to other students. Our education level is very low, that's why we feel down. (female student 1 from high school 7, group interview, 06.07.2011, Mae La)

You know that our students cannot go to out to study more and more. If we compare with other countries, other students, our education level is low. (female student 2 from high school 7, group interview, 06.07.2011, Mae La)

In summary, even though the majority thought their curriculum was of higher quality than in Burma, especially concerning language study and the ability to study Karen language and history, one interviewee who had a higher education background from Burma and one interviewee with an NGO background in Burma disagreed. Moreover, students who had no experience with schooling outside of the temporary shelter area thought their education inferior to what is taught outside and in other countries, in contrast to interviewees who had experienced school in Burma.

3.4.1.1 Displaced peoples' view on accreditation

After being asked to assess the quality of their curriculum, the researcher then confronted interviewees with the possibility of changing to a Thai curriculum and the proposal of a 70:30 split in favor of the Thai curriculum in exchange for possible accreditation by the Thai Ministry of Education. Corresponding to the community's positive view of the quality of their curriculum and the importance allocated to being able to study their own language and history, the majority of respondents did not react favorably to the proposition.

50:50 is preferable. If children study Thai language our own language will disappear. We, our Karen, have no country; we live between Thai and Burma. If we study Burmese or Thai a lot our own language will disappear. That's why we have to study our Karen language more. (OCEE Secretary, interview, 04.07.2011, Mae La)

Not good for children to change the curriculum, it will become more Thai language and Karen language will disappear. We face the same problem in Burma, would like to study Karen language but cannot teach it.[...] I understand that they want to help people in camp by accreditation, but Karen language is disappearing because only learn Burmese. (History teacher from high school 7, interview, 06.07.2011, Mae La)

If they change most subjects will be Thai, not good for students. 50:50 would be better. If we get our nation and go back we need to use a lot of Karen, so not good if we change a lot of curriculum. Not good for students and people. (Education Coordinator Zone B, interview, 07.07.2011, Mae La)

If we change all (of the curriculum) it is not good for students. If we change a little it is a good opportunity for students to learn more about Thai history, etc. But if we change all (of the curriculum) Karen students will not know about Karen language or culture and our language will disappear. (Education Coordinator Zone C, interview, 07.07.2011, Mae La)

For the temporary shelter area community, which is predominantly Karen, this is the first time that they can freely teach their language and history to their children. Consequently, any change in the curriculum triggers anxiety over losing this freedom and with it their language and culture. A big concern is that they will end up with a similar situation as which prevails in Burma, with “another government” imposing restrictions on their education system. Furthermore, the Karen hope to have their own nation one day which also explains the fact that they would like to be treated equally (50:50) in any curriculum change and possible accreditation process.

3.4.2 Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity

KRCEE’s outlook on curriculum quality is also positive, on one hand in comparison with Burma and on the other hand because of a pilot project carried out some years ago. The General Secretary explained that when the curriculum was

designed they used the Burmese curriculum as a base, for example in math, but then upgraded it with content for example from the Australian curriculum. So in the end, grade 12 math that is taught in Mae La temporary shelter area would be equal to the level taught in Australia and consequently be of a higher standard and more diverse in content. In Burma the same subjects such as probability might be taught later at university (KRCEE interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). Furthermore, a bar exam is held in grade six and grade nine to determine student's learning outcome, with favorable results.

So for grade 9 subject English we include all the learning content that is learned in the school and the students can answer it, so it's ok, but grade 12 we only start to have it this year for three schools, like a pilot. (KRCEE General Secretary, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot)

The pilot project included ten students from the temporary shelter area to sit entrance exams to international programs at Thai universities. All ten students were able to pass the test and were accepted to these programs. In the eyes of KRCEE that validated the educational quality of their curriculum, as the universities were prepared to let the temporary shelter area students enter their programs and the students had shown that they have the ability to pass university entrance exams, just like Thai students. In the end, however, the students could not enter the universities as the Ministry of Interior failed to give permission for their travel documents (KRCEE interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot, Van der Stouwe & Oh, 2008).

It seems that the refugee education is accepted. You study 12 years, so you can come in our school and not make trouble in our school. So it is already accept in some way but the official announcement is not accept. (KRCEE General Secretary, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot)

Concerning accreditation KRCEE did not reveal its position towards accreditation clearly, even when asked directly. However, comments were made on

what the accreditation process so far has done for the temporary shelter area community.

We will restructure the learning area, before we call it science, etc. now we structure it in a different way, we call it mathematics, the MoE also does it this way. [...] We said ok, we only change the name and grouping them, so it's not hurt for us, just regroup it and we wrote it up to show it to them (Thai MoE) and they say good, 70-80% like Thai (curriculum). (KRCEE General Secretary, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot)

For us we are happy, we make the (curriculum) more comprehensive for other people. For example, the students who resettle, they take the transcript with the explanation and the U.S. school director can read it, one subject is taught 1000 hours annually and then show the strength. (KRCEE General Secretary, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot)

These comments made by KRCEE show that they are generally pleased with what the accreditation process has done for their education system so far, first and foremost the advantage being that the format or the grouping of the subjects is now similar to Thai and other countries' standards. Secondly, through these small changes of naming and grouping subjects, they have also achieved transcripts that are easily understandable outside of the temporary shelter area context, which helps students and families who resettle and have to fit into the new school of the third country (Naruemon et al. in press). However, as the General Secretary stated, changes so far have been small and easily adjustable. It is yet to be seen how KRCEE will view the accreditation process once serious changes to the curriculum have to be implemented.

3.4.3 ZOA Refugee Care Thailand

In contrast to the temporary shelter area community and KRCEE, ZOA has a very different view on the quality of the curriculum in the temporary shelter areas. ZOA criticizes exactly some parts of the curriculum that the displaced peoples

themselves and KRCEE put forward in favor of their curriculum. One main concern is that the curriculum was stitched together from various sources, British, Australian, and American, to name a few. These materials were not adapted but put right in the hand of students and teachers with the result that examples are used, for example for a science lesson, that do not relate at all to the students' environment and life experiences and thus are hardly helpful for the students' understanding of the lesson. One sample that I was shown of this concerned the explanation of a scientific phenomenon with the example of an iceberg in the ocean. There is no ocean anywhere near the temporary shelter area and if one speculates that some of the students might have seen the sea in Burma, the chance that anyone has yet to have seen an iceberg in fact or fiction is slim to none.

Moreover, the students and teachers might find themselves in a situation where a science lesson draws on concepts from mathematics that the students did not yet study and thus are not able to do yet. That is why ZOA favors the alignment with the Thai curriculum as it is coherent and also easily adaptable to the students' needs as it comes from a similar geographical and cultural background. Lastly, the current curriculum used in the temporary shelter areas relays messages of anti-government (anti-Burmese) sentiments and very strong nationalistic ideas, which are at times questionable in the eyes of ZOA (ZOA Program Advisor, interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). Thus accreditation and the subsequent curriculum change are seen as a good chance to improve the quality of education in the temporary shelter areas.

3.4.4 Royal Thai Government

The Thai MoE's view on the curriculum stem from the visit of the Deputy Provincial Governor of Tak Province and the visit of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education to Umphien and Mae La temporary shelter area in 2004 and 2005 respectively. Both officials concluded that the students in the temporary shelter areas were not able to understand or speak Thai and wanted to rectify this situation (Premjai et al. in press). The explanation given by the Director of ESA II Tak Province for this is that the MoE recognizes that the displaced peoples from Burma

have been in Thailand for a long time and that the MoE consequently wants them to learn about the country that they live in and be able to communicate in Thai because they should not just be here but understand the country that they live in. Through this, they hope to instill a positive image of Thailand in the displaced peoples, so that when they go back to Burma one day, it will have a positive effect on Thai-Burmese relations in turn (Premjai et al. in press). So, on the one hand, the MoE would like to see Thai language added to the curriculum to improve the quality from their point of view.

On the other hand and concerning the accreditation of the curriculum in the temporary shelter areas, the MoE had KRCEE send a curriculum framework to determine to what extent the temporary shelter area curriculum matches the quality standards set forth by the MoE for the Thai education system. They came to the conclusion that the current curriculum matches the Thai curriculum to about 70%. However, in order for the MoE to be able to certify it as having the same quality as the Thai curriculum, which is the prerequisite for accreditation, the main subjects Mathematics, Science and English will have to be aligned with the national curriculum (KRCEE interview 12.07.2011, Mae Sot; Director of ESA II Tak Province, interview, 11.07.2011, Mae Sot).

3.4.5 Conclusion

Having learned about each stakeholder's view on the quality of the curriculum used in the temporary shelter areas and their view on the on-going accreditation process, it becomes clear that all of them use different standards in their view on the quality of education in the temporary shelter areas.

For the displaced peoples, the most important aspect is the freedom to teach their children about their language, history and culture as they were not allowed to do that in Burma. Also, as they are striving to have their own nation one day they want to be treated as equals in the curriculum change process.

KRCEE's view, on the other hand, is more concerned with the outcome of the education that the children receive in the temporary shelter area. In their eyes the curriculum is of good quality because the students were able to pass the entrance exam of an outside university after having finished their education in the temporary shelter area.

Being an international relief organization, ZOA is committed to work for quality education for all, using the INEE minimum standards as a measure. Thus, they view the quality of the curriculum in terms of coherence, relevance, value outside of the temporary shelter areas for when a durable solution is found for the displaced peoples, etc. Consequently, they see flaws in the curriculum that the temporary shelter area community and KRCEE do not see, or not in the same way.

Lastly, the Thai MoE of course uses national quality standards of education to evaluate the quality of the curriculum in the temporary shelter areas. For them that means that the temporary shelter area curriculum has to follow the guidelines that exist for schools outside of the temporary shelter area, too. Consequently, they require the curriculum to be changed to be 70% Thai and 30% local content, independent of other measurements for quality that might apply outside of government regulations.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS: CHALLENGES TO ACCREDITATION

In this chapter, the challenges towards accreditation of the education system in the temporary shelter areas will be identified and analyzed on the basis of the different stakeholders' views on the quality of the curriculum and their view on accreditation. Hence this chapter aims to answer the third research question.

4.1 Education and Political Identity

The displaced peoples' community, which in the case of Mae La temporary shelter area means a predominantly Karen community, has struggled for the right to self-determination in Burma since 1947, when the Karen National Union was founded (Kapi, 2006). At first this struggle for self-determination was of a nationalist interpretation, the goal being an independent Karen state in Karen named *Kawthoolei*. However, since 1976 the Karen National Union calls for a federal union with a Karen state inside of Burma but independent from the central government (Na 2011, Decha 2010). This regional interpretation is a relatively new interpretation of self-determination according to Dahbour who states that it

can be applied to certain contemporary movements of indigenous peoples' rights or for the autonomy of substate regions from central authorities, when these are advocated as a means of remedying the marginalization or exploitation of groups leading ecologically or distinctive ways of life (Dahbour, 2001: 2).

To this end, the Karen have long since strived towards creating a national identity for themselves (Decha 2010, Kapi 2006). However, the Karen are not a homogenous group. First of all, they are quite diverse linguistically, with around twelve related but mutually non-intelligible spoken dialects. Moreover, even though the majority of Karen is Buddhist, around 20% are Christian and some small numbers are animists. The leadership role with the KNU has traditionally been played by a Christian elite. So, creating a common identity for such a diverse group of people

poses some challenges already, but with the suppression of cultural and political identities being enforced in Burma since 1962, it has become even more so. Minority languages are banned from the public schools system and, as has been reported by the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter areas, it results in punishment for the Karen to teach their language, history and culture in school (South, 2011). To this end the Burmese army frequently raids villages and schools so that pupils and students are forced to frequently flee and hide (interviews in Mae La temporary shelter area, 04.07.-07.07.2011).

Nonetheless, creating a common identity is a very important goal towards independence and the right to self-determination. As Baumann (2007: 19) puts it, creating a common identity is finding out “how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so both sides know how to go in each other’s presence”. These two sides in this case would first and foremost refer to the Burmese government on one side and the Karen on the other side. However, following Baumann’s logic, in order for the Burmese government to accept the right to self-determination of the Karen people, they have to create a common identity that is seen as coherent and valid to outsiders.

So, how does education come into play? Waters and LeBlanc (2005: 12) stress that “schools aim to create a common understanding of identity”. That is why every nation-state aims to establish a mass public education system. Following, for the Karen people, who do not yet have a state and neither the possibility to educate their children freely neither in their language nor history in Burma, the education system inside of the temporary shelter areas is a big chance. Green (1997 as cited in Sawade, 2007: 18) underlines this when he states that

practically all modern nations are now awake to the fact that education is the most potent means of development of the essentials of nationality. Education is the means by which people of retarded cultures may be brought rapidly to the common level.

As can be seen in the current curriculum in the temporary shelter areas, both Karen language, more specifically Sgaw dialect, and history are taught throughout the education system. Nearly all teachers are Karen and have also been educated in the temporary shelter area. That means that the current curriculum and teaching environment contributes to teach the students a common dialect, independent of which dialect they may speak at home, and gives them a common understanding of the origins and history of the Karen people. In short, they have, for the first time, the opportunity to consistently form a common identity with the help of an education system independent from Burma and any other system. Consequently, the main point that can be drawn from the research findings is that for the displaced peoples from Burma living in temporary shelter areas in Thailand, education is a crucial means to create, to pass on and to preserve a common identity that is crucial to their goal of self-determination and independence from Burma's central government.

These facts make it very understandable that any change to the current education system pose a threat in the eyes of the Karen community in the temporary shelter areas to their goals of self-determination and independence as they are trying to form a common identity through the education of their children. For as Robins (2007: 61) puts it:

Change implies the capacity to relinquish at least aspects of a given identity. This however, is likely to provoke feelings of anxiety and fear in the collectivity [...] This is basic fear about the mortality of the collective institution.

Consequently, it becomes also understandable that accreditation of their education system does not meet with much enthusiasm as it involves curriculum change and with it the adaptation to the national curriculum of Thailand. Even though Karen language would stay the teaching language and the curriculum would not change towards inhibiting the learning of Karen language, culture and history, accepting another nation-state's authority over the as of yet independent education system in the temporary shelter areas it not something that a lot of the displaced peoples are willing to do as can be concluded from the research findings. Moreover,

this situation is not likely to change throughout the curriculum change process if the temporary shelter area community is kept without information about the purpose for and requirements that come with these changes to their curriculum. Following the above discussion it might even be possible that the Karen community in the temporary shelter areas rejects the project as the standards that they put forward to measure and judge the quality of their education are connected to their aspirations for self-determination and independence.

4.2 Education and National Security in Thailand

Since the establishment of the temporary shelter area in Thailand in 1984, tensions have been apparent between the Burmese and Thai government. This stems from the fact that Karen displaced peoples were identified to have connections to the ethnic armed groups, specifically the Karen National Union and thus were viewed as insurgents (Premjai et al. in press, Lang 2002). Consequently, the Royal Thai Government has stressed the temporary and restricted nature of its humanitarian commitment towards the displaced peoples from Burma in light of the working relationship between the two governments and heightened economic connections. The opinion of the RTG is such that the displaced peoples from Burma living in temporary shelter areas in Thailand cannot be allowed to affect diplomatic relations between the two countries (Oh 2010, Lang 2002).

Consequently, while for the Karen community education is an issue of creating a common identity, the Royal Thai Government's involvement in the temporary shelter area education can be seen as a national security issue. After all, it was the National Security Council that ordered the Ministry of Education to make an effort to regulate schools outside of the public education system (Sawade, 2008). The fact that it was not known to the Thai government what was taught in those schools was found to be a security threat after conflicts with insurgencies in Thailand's south in 2005. Accordingly, this is also the time frame in which the Thai MoE officials started to visit the temporary shelter areas and inspect migrant schools near the Thai-Burmese border (Director of ESA II Tak province, interview, 11.07.2011, Mae Sot). Thus the

involvement of the Thai MoE in the education system and their willingness to discuss and assist in the accreditation process can partly be seen as “a broader initiative to enhance security along Thailand’s border areas” (Van der Stouwe & Oh, 2009: 155). As Simon Purnell, Program Advisor of ZOA put it:

There are a large number of security issues, not only with refugee and migrant schools and Chinese schools, the schools in the south. So, as you would expect they would like to make sure what it being taught, what is being said their country, in their schools that is teaching young people, is in line with the national vision (interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot).

However, the fact that education in the temporary shelter areas is considered to be an issue of national security, for the Thai government and especially the National Security Council, poses some real challenges to the accreditation process. First of all, there is a focus on Thai language learning. The students in the temporary shelter areas have to learn Thai in the primary level; so that at the end they have at least six years of Thai language instruction (Van der Stouwe & Oh 2009, Director of ESA II Tak Province, interview, 11.07.2011, Mae Sot). The purpose of the Thai language instruction is for communication. Furthermore, the students in the temporary shelter areas should know about Thai culture and customs, the country background of Thailand. This in turn is supposed to lead to a love for the Thai nation (Director of ESA II Tak Province, interview, 11.07.2011, Mae Sot). The hope is that a positive image of Thailand in the minds of the displaced students will be beneficial to Thai-Burmese relations once the displaced peoples go back to Burma. These thought processes of the Thai authorities are in direct opposite to what the displaced peoples are trying to achieve with their education system and curriculum.

Furthermore, a connecting challenge to the focus on Thai language study is posed by the issue of medium of instruction versus language of certification. Except for international schools in Thailand which are accredited by educational institutions outside of the country, all students in Thailand have to sit their exams in Thai (OPEC, 2003). It would be un-precedent that the Thai Ministry of Education would allow

exams to be held in another language than Thai, so it has to be assumed that the same requirements will apply to the schools in the temporary shelter areas as well. Even Muslim schools in the South of Thailand have to teach enough Thai language for their students to be able to pass exams held in Thai. Therefore the question arises whether the displaced students in the TSA would be able to sit exams administered in Thai language when supposedly only learning Thai as a foreign language.

Moreover, this focus on Thai language study poses serious logistic challenges to accreditation. As nearly none of the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter areas can speak Thai, of course they are not able to teach it either. As of now, all teachers and education personnel comes from the temporary shelter area community. For Thai language to be taught to the extent that the Thai Ministry of Education requires, it would be necessary for teachers from outside to enter the temporary shelter areas and teach Thai language there. However, this is very difficult to manage as it collides with the policies of the Thai MoI that greatly restrict access to the temporary shelter areas by outsiders. Simon Purnell, Program Advisor of ZOA, explains this when he states that

it also means that we are dealt a certain pack of cards rather than pure educational goals and that is also an additional challenge to making quality changes because policies that the Thai government signed up to and goals and agreements etc. under EFA (Education for All) at least are not supported by the National Security Council. There are gaps and contradictions in the Thai government policy framework (interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot).

These mentioned gaps between the policies of the National Security Council and the MoI on one side, and the ones of the Thai MoE on the other side become very clear during the drive towards accreditation. On the one hand, the NSC ordered the Thai MoE to become involved in the temporary shelter area education and accreditation as a way of regulating the curriculum for the purpose of knowing what is taught in the schools. On the other hand, the MoE faces various challenges towards that goal because the policies of the MoI do not correspond, meaning that in order for

the MoE to evaluate and accredit the education in the temporary shelter areas, it has to have access to them first. However, they, as everybody else, have to ask for a pass from the MoI to be allowed to enter the temporary shelter areas and this was denied. Thus the MoE feels blocked by the MoI as the temporary shelter area is under the MoI's administration. It came so far that ZOA had to ask permission for MoE officials in order for them to be able to enter the temporary shelter areas (ZOA Manager External Relations, interview, 08.07.2011, Mae Sot). So, here we find different ministries and institutions of the Thai government blocking each other because national security policies do not correspond with other policies or other policies are subordinated to national security concerns. As the MoE is the only institution in Thailand that has the authority to grant accreditation to the temporary shelter area schools, these are grave challenges to the accreditation process. Overall, it can be argued that such a national security framework, with contradictions in implementation by the Thai authorities, constrains rather than supports the accreditation process.

4.3 Education and Participation

A key indicator for the quality of an education program is that it is recognized by the education authorities of the host country and/or country of origin according to the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2006: 42). This indicator is tied to another important goal, namely that the affected students can enter or re-enter the formal education system after the emergency situation is over (ibid). Moreover, "the right to certification is an essential part of the right to education" (UNESCO/IIEP, 2008). Thus ZOA's efforts to gain accreditation for the education system in the temporary shelter areas in Thailand are in accordance with them using the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction as guidelines for their work and their commitment to the fulfillment of the right to education for the displaced students living in the temporary shelter areas.

In their regular education surveys, ZOA found that the curriculum is fragmented through the usage of a mixture of different borrowed curricula from

various countries. This is not ideal as the curriculum should “build on learners’ knowledge and experience and be relevant to the immediate environment” (INEE, 2006: 56). Naturally, that is not the case here with the curriculum containing parts of the British, American, Australian and Indian curriculum amongst others. Thus the decision of ZOA to seek accreditation from the Thai Ministry of Education, in light of their commitment to the right to education and accordingly “quality education for all”, works towards their aim of reforming the curriculum to be more coherent and relevant to the students’ experiences and environment as the Thai curriculum comes from a similar social and cultural background and is cohesive. At the same time the temporary shelter area schools can continue to teach in Karen language, as the Thai curriculum is translated by ZOA, and have classes teaching Karen history, etc. which guarantees another INEE key indicator for the quality of the curriculum is met namely that “learning content, materials and instruction are provided in the language(s) of the learners and the teachers” (2006: 56).

However, one important indicator is not met in the on-going accreditation process through the Thai MoE, namely that “where curriculum development or adaptation is required, it is conducted with the meaningful participation of stakeholders” (INEE, 2006: 56). Moreover

humanitarian actors have the responsibility to provide assistance in a manner that is consistent with human rights, including the right to participation, nondiscrimination and information, as reflected in the body of international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law (INEE, 2006: 11).

As can be deduced from the research findings, the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area, save the education coordinator, are not aware that under the umbrella of accreditation the curriculum is being changed and aligned with the Thai curriculum. Actually, even with the possibility of accreditation for their education system in the future, most interviewees were against the idea of aligning their curriculum with the Thai one. ZOA put this down mostly to a lack of communication with the displaced peoples’ community in the temporary shelter area (interviews,

08.07 and 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). However, the question remains how effective communication and information dissemination can be achieved, because without adequate information there is no way that the displaced peoples can ‘participate meaningfully’ in the discussion.

KRCEE is part of the Karen Refugee Committee, self-proclaimed representative body of the displaced peoples living in the temporary shelter areas in Thailand, and according to ZOA the owner of the accreditation process. Self-proclaimed because just as the formerly KED, which is affiliated with the KNU, KRCEE as part of KRC is only representative of a “Sgaw dialect-speaking, largely Christian (mostly Baptist) KNU elite, which the aid agencies accepted unquestioningly as representative of a linguistically and religiously diverse Karen community” (South, 2011: 35). In addition to being an elite representative, the KRC was never actually chosen or elected by the displaced community in the temporary shelter areas. Thus there is a problem of internal democracy between the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area and the Karen Refugee Committee, with KRCEE as part of it. Hence if the right to participation and information in the process of curriculum change and accreditation is to be guaranteed for the displaced community in the temporary shelter areas, working solely with KRCEE as part of the ‘representative’ body of the displaced community, also in light of the fact that not 100% of the displaced peoples are of Karen ethnicity, is not sufficient to ensure that the displaced peoples’ opinion in the matter will be heard.

Another factor that prevents effective communication and participation of the displaced peoples in the process is the fact that, even though KRC is recognized as the representative body of the displaced community living in temporary shelter areas in Thailand by international aid organizations and NGOs such as ZOA, it cannot communicate directly with Thai authorities. When asked about communication with OBEC and the Thai MoE, the General Secretary of KRCEE stated that “we do not get direct contact with them as KRCEE but through ZOA” (interview, 12.07.2011, Mae Sot). So, while aid agencies and NGOs might accept KRCEE as representative of the displaced peoples in Thailand, Thai authorities do not communicate directly with

them but only with ZOA, as one of the NGOs providing assistance in the temporary shelter areas. Thus the accreditation and subsequent curriculum change process here mirror the observations made by Waters and LeBlanc when they state that

in the international system of refugee relief, refugees are perceived as primarily being acute victims who have been denied access to physiological needs such as food, medical care, and potable water. [...] This structural limitation means that, irrespective of rhetoric to the contrary, planning for education is often done “for” refugees by external actors like the host country, United Nations relief agencies, and nongovernmental organizations, rather than “with” refugees (Waters and LeBlanc, 2005: 139)

Decha (2007: 246) underlines this when he writes that the international community and especially international relief organizations hold a view of the displaced peoples as “universal victims”. As such they are seen as unqualified to take part in decisions concerning their livelihoods.

The Thai MoE does not discuss the conditions and processes of the accreditation process with the known representative of the Karen displaced peoples’ community. Thus, information that is handed down to KRCEE has gone through various channels already and the information and say that the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter areas receive on the matter is even less. Hence it is not clear whether accreditation by the Thai Ministry of Education, should it be achieved, will really benefit the displaced peoples who are the rights holders of the right to quality education and for which sake the whole process was started by ZOA Refugee Care Thailand.

4.4 Conclusion

Through the analysis of the different views of the stakeholders towards the quality of the curriculum used in the temporary shelter areas and their roots, it became

clear that there are several challenges to the accreditation of the education system in the temporary shelter areas.

First of all, the majority of the displaced peoples will only see accreditation and curriculum change as heightening the quality of their education if they still can pursue their goal of creating a common Karen identity through it, meaning that they can still teach in Karen language and educate children in Karen history and cultural values. As these abilities will not be affected by the curriculum change, sufficient information dissemination and participation of the displaced peoples in the decision-making process should ameliorate most of these concerns. However, one has to note that the displaced peoples living in the temporary shelter areas are not 100% of Karen ethnicity, which poses the question if only the concerns of the Karen should be heeded.

Secondly, involving KRCEE as part of KRC in the accreditation process is not enough to guarantee the right to participation of the displaced peoples in the decision-making and accreditation process as KRC cannot simply be accepted as the legitimate representative body even of the Karen displaced peoples for reasons explained above. Moreover, there is not only a lack of communication between KRCEE and the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter areas but also between Thai authorities and the displaced peoples as all communication is facilitated through ZOA.

Thirdly, national security concerns associated with the displaced peoples from Burma living in temporary shelter areas along the Thai-Burmese border pose several logistic challenges to accreditation. On the side of the MoE, challenges are posed for accreditation through the requirements regarding Thai language study and the language of certification which will have to be complied with to achieve accreditation. Gaps and lack of coordination between the policies of Thai Ministry of Education, Thai Ministry of Interior and the National Security Council put further constraints on the accreditation process. Thai MoE officials, including staff from ESA II Tak Province are blocked in their attempt to assess and evaluate the education system in

the temporary shelter areas and could only access the temporary shelter area with help of ZOA Refugee Thailand.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This research was concerned with the problem of educational accreditation for displaced peoples from Burma living in temporary shelter areas along the Thai-Burmese border zones. It aimed to achieve three research objectives, namely the identifying of stakeholders involved in the process, the assessment of their view on the quality of the curriculum used in the temporary shelter areas and the challenges posed to the accreditation process through them.

First it was shown that the legal framework concerning displaced persons in Thailand directly impacts the education that they can receive. Furthermore, through the limitations arising out of this legal framework for the provision of education in the temporary shelter areas, displaced students are faced with problems of educational quality and lack of recognition of their educational attainments.

Through educational accreditation by the Thai Ministry of Education, not only is there a chance for heightening the quality of the curriculum used in the temporary shelter areas but it might be helpful to the displaced peoples in light of the three durable solutions that were identified by UNHCR for situations of displacement. However, as the education system in the temporary shelter areas is managed by a myriad of stakeholders including NGOs, CBOs and the displaced peoples themselves, views on the quality of the curriculum and the process of education differ greatly among them. Out of these different views on the curriculum and accreditation arise a multitude of challenges to the achievement of accreditation for the displaced peoples so that it improves the quality of their education.

The accreditation process did open up channels of communication through the necessity to assess and evaluate the education system in the temporary shelter areas by the Thai Ministry of Education. Thus KRCEE is one of the stakeholders in the accreditation process as recognized representative of the Karen Refugee Committee in educational matters. However, these new channels of communication between the

Thai MoE, KRCEE and the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area are neither direct nor complete. The Thai MoE, represented by ESA II Tak Province in Mae Sot, does not communicate directly with KRCEE nor the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area. Rather, communication between KRCEE and ESA II Tak Province is facilitated by ZOA Refugee Care Thailand, a Dutch relief organization that provides education in the temporary shelter areas. It can be concluded that this fact stems from two different reasons.

Firstly, even though the KRC and KRCEE as its arm is not officially affiliated with the KNU anymore, any branch of the RTG openly having contact or negotiating with a Karen representative body, with part of the Karen population being seen as insurgents by the Burmese government, could threaten diplomatic relations between Thailand and Burma. Thus facilitating communication through ZOA Refugee Care Thailand is a safe way, diplomatically, for Thai authorities to engage in talks on accreditation. Secondly, even though KRCEE is supposedly the owner of the accreditation process in ZOA's view, in reality it does not have the resources to handle the necessary curriculum changes and teacher training by itself. It is ZOA that receives the Thai curriculum from ESA II Tak Province and makes the necessary adjustments and translations so that it can be used for teaching in the temporary shelter areas and sends them back for approval. Moreover, ZOA facilitates the introduction of the new curriculum and accumulated additional resources to re-train the teachers in the temporary shelter areas according to the new methods. Lastly, not only is ZOA responsible for most of the logistics of the accreditation process but it has permission of the Ministry of Interior to go into the temporary shelter areas. Reportedly, officials from the MoE have been denied permission to enter the temporary shelter area by the MoI so that ZOA had to apply for permission for them. Hence in order for the Thai education authorities to gain access to the temporary shelter areas they need to approach ZOA.

As for communication between the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area and the stakeholders outside, it was found that except for the Education Coordinator as head of the Office of Camp – Education Entity, no one had any knowledge of the on-going accreditation process. The educational staff was informed of the on-going curriculum change by KRCEE, the new English curriculum for

primary school is being introduced right now, but there is no knowledge of this curriculum change being part of a greater project to gain accreditation. The accreditation process is supposed to broaden the educational opportunities of the displaced peoples and ensure the fulfillment of their right to education. However, the lack of information on the process, its goals and conditions (70:30 split etc.) leads to a fear of loss of identity for the Karen displaced peoples and an initial rejection of the proposal of the Thai MoE for curriculum change. This fact is also acknowledged by ZOA but nothing in the way of a solution is offered for this obvious challenge to the accreditation process.

The fact of the matter is that the Thai Ministry of Education is the sole authority in Thailand that could accredit the educational attainments of the displaced students in the temporary shelter areas. However, to be able to do so they require the curriculum in the temporary shelter areas to be aligned to the Thai national curriculum in a 70:30 split and the teaching of Thai language. It hopes to foster the understanding between Thailand and Burma through these efforts and make sure that national interests and visions are reflected in what is taught in schools throughout the country. At first glance, the goals in education of the Karen displaced peoples and the Thai MoE seem to stand in direct opposition, with the Karen aiming at creating a national identity for themselves and ultimately their own state as part of a federal union of Burma. At second glance though the requirements of the Thai MoE could be fulfilled without making the fears of the Karen displaced peoples come true.

The primary teaching language throughout the education system in the temporary shelter areas would still be Karen. The MoE merely requires Thai language to be taught as an additional foreign language so that communication with the temporary shelter area community becomes possible. Moreover, the subjects required to be aligned with the Thai curriculum, English, Mathematics and Science are rather neutral subjects. None of the Social Studies syllabus would be touched which is comprised of, amongst others, Karen history. Thus the fear of the temporary shelter area community not being to teach their language, history and culture anymore should the curriculum be aligned with the Thai curriculum are unfounded at this point. If these conditions could be thoroughly communicated to the Karen displaced peoples and the educational staff, it would go a long way of ameliorating the challenge,

connected to the different views on the quality of the education in the temporary shelter areas, to the accreditation of the education in the temporary shelter areas.

As the efforts towards accreditation are concentrated on general education in the temporary shelter areas, hence schools administered and managed by KRCEE and its arm OCEE which use its curriculum, KRCEE is recognized as the representative of the Karen displaced peoples in the temporary shelter areas by ZOA Refugee Care Thailand. However, neither can KRCEE claim that it is representative of all Karen displaced peoples, representing a Christian, Skaw-Karen speaking elite, nor does it seem to have the resources or the inclination to involve even its direct arm OCEE in the discussion. Moreover, not all of the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area are Karen. Conclusively, the lack of communication between the displaced peoples inside of the temporary shelter area and KRCEE as recognized representative body outside remains one of the main challenges to the accreditation process for reasons stated above.

The other big challenge remaining is the lack of coordination between policies of MoI and MoE, constraining the accreditation process. The problems these pose are mostly of a logistic nature, firstly because the MoE requires Thai language to be taught in the temporary shelter areas. As per regulation of the MoI, none of the teaching staff from the temporary shelter area can travel to Mae Sot to be trained by ESA II Tak Province without permission. On the other hand no Thai teachers from the outside can be sent into the temporary shelter area for the same reason without applying for entrance. Both possible solutions could only be achieved if it was possible, maybe through ZOA, to gain permission from the MoI for either scenario or the MoI would permanently grant permission to enter to MoE staff and officials. Otherwise, this requirement to accreditation will hardly be possible to fulfill. At the moment, the process for admission to the temporary shelter areas is quite time-consuming. Moreover, permission to enter is often granted only on very short notice and even if granted, it is not allowed to stay in the TSA overnight, so that a lot of traveling to and from the TSA is required (Decha, 2007).

Secondly, at one point MoE officials will have to enter the temporary shelter areas to finally evaluate the changes in the curriculum in order to be able to grant

accreditation to the education system in the temporary shelter areas. Even now ESA II Tak province staff would like to go and inspect the education system inside of the temporary shelter areas but fail to receive permission to do so.

Thirdly, these restrictions on entering the temporary shelter areas pose a side challenge to the problem of communication between the displaced peoples inside and KRCEE. Should KRCEE be willing to actively engage the displaced peoples in the temporary shelter area in the discussion about accreditation, they would also need to be able to easily travel to and from the temporary shelter area if they do not wish to solely send information to the temporary shelter area via the Education Coordinator, as seems to be happening now and who may or may not disseminate said information.

In conclusion, it can be said challenges to accreditation of the education system in the temporary shelter areas arise out of the stakeholders involved, their respective roles in the process and their different views on the quality of the curriculum taught in the temporary shelter areas. Some of them, like the apparent conflicting views on the quality of the curriculum between the Karen displaced peoples and the requirements of the Thai MoE for accreditation, seem to be solvable through better communication and involvement on all sides. Other challenges like policy conflicts inside the RTG, in this case between the MoE and MoI, and related logistic challenges cannot be presented with an obvious or easy solution at this time. However, solving them is equally important for the achievement of accreditation of the education system and hence for the fulfillment of the right to education for the displaced peoples and the connecting broadening of their educational opportunities in light of the three durable solutions. For with the fulfillment of their right to education, other rights can follow. Succeeding at accrediting education in the temporary shelter areas by the Thai Ministry of Education, students would be eligible for further study at tertiary or other educational institutions. Moreover, having the necessary qualifications, they could also claim their right to work outside of the temporary shelter areas in the future. Education is thus a pathway to the fulfillment of other rights and can serve as a bridge for the displaced peoples from Burma to exercise those rights in order to build a better life for themselves.

5.1 Possibility of accreditation

According to ZOA's project plan, alone the curriculum change in the primary schools in the temporary shelter areas will take till at least 2015. The question that comes to mind is whether the education system in the temporary shelter areas will then immediately be accredited by the Thai Ministry of Education. Apart from that, curriculum change of secondary education in the temporary shelter areas will take even longer if the duration of the curriculum change in the primary schools is anything to go by. Moreover, ZOA is currently in the process of phasing out its operation to a local NGO called "U-sa Khanae Development Foundation" (ZOA, 2012). ZOA will assist in the start-up and monitoring of the new foundation (ibid), but it will remain to be seen if the process of curriculum change and accreditation will continue without disruptions.

Furthermore, recent and future political developments in Burma raise the question whether the curriculum change in the temporary shelter areas can be completed much less accredited. Just before completion of this thesis, Thai newspapers reported that ceasefire talks have begun between the Burmese government and the Karen National Union (Bangkok Post, 12.01.2012). Moreover, Burma is to hold by-elections on April 1st 2012. 48 seats in parliament can be won and Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy registered to run in the election (Voices of America, 30.12.2011). Consequently, if the political climate inside Burma remains favourable it could be a sign that voluntary repatriation might become possible for the displaced peoples in Thailand. Thus the accreditation process could simply run out of time.

Connected to this issue will be the question how these developments influence the agenda of the Royal Thai Government, especially that of the National Security Council, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education. It might simply be decided that with repatriation becoming a possibility, accreditation of the education system in the temporary shelter areas will no longer be needed. This seems likely as voluntary repatriation was and is the most favourable of the three durable solutions in the eyes of the RTG (Premjai et al. in press). Additionally, one has to ask the question, in case that repatriation should become possible, whether the curriculum in the

temporary shelter areas should be more aligned with the Burmese curriculum instead of the Thai one.

These three factors, ZOA's phasing out its operation in Thailand, political developments in Burma and the connected change of agenda of the Royal Thai Government, which will influence the accreditation process in the future, could provide interesting angles for further study of the educational accreditation in the temporary shelter areas along the Thai-Burmese border zones.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

List of conducted interviews

Date	Location	Interviewee	Translator (Yes/No)	Research Method used
04.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Office of Camp Education Entity (OCEE) Secretary	Yes	Semi-structured interview
04.07.2011	Mae La shelter	OCEE in Charge of Training	Yes	Semi-structured interview
05.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Resident Teacher Trainer	Yes	Semi-structured interview
05.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Resident Teacher Trainer	Yes	Semi-structured interview
05.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Headmaster of High School 1	Yes	Semi-structured interview
05.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Four students from high school 1, two girls, two boys	Yes	Structured Group Interview
05.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Two teachers from high school 1, Burmese & Science	Yes	Semi-structured interview
06.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Headmaster of High School 7	Yes	Semi-structured interview
06.07.2011	Mae La shelter	English teacher from high school 7	Yes	Semi-structured interview
06.07.2011	Mae La shelter	History teacher from high school 7	Yes	Semi-structured interview
06.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Four students from high school 7, two girls, two boys	Yes	Structured Group Interview
07.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Education Coordinator Zone C	Yes	Semi-structured interview
07.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Education Coordinator Zone A	Yes	Semi-structured interview
07.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Education Coordinator Zone B	Yes	Semi-structured interview

07.07.2011	Mae La shelter	Education Coordinator Mae La shelter	Yes	Semi-structured interview
08.07.2011	Mae Sot	ZOA Manager External Relations	No	In-depth interview
08.07.2011	Mae Sot	ZOA Programme Manager	No	In-depth interview
11.07.2011	Mae Sot	Director of Education Service Area II Tak Province Also in attendance: Three coordinators and the Educational Supervisor of ESA II Tak Province	Yes	Semi-structured interview
12.07.2011	Mae Sot	KRCEE General Secretary Also in attendance: KRCEE Director KRCEE Secretary of Basic and Non-formal Education	No	Semi-structured interview
12.07.2011	Mae Sot	ZOA Programme Advisor	No	In-depth interview

APENDIX B

Semi-structured interviews: Topics covered inside Mae La temporary shelter

1. Duration of stay in Mae La temporary shelter
2. Occupation while in Burma
3. Occupation inside temporary shelter
4. Differences between school in Burma and inside the shelter
5. Quality of education in Burma and in the shelter
6. Importance of opportunity to study Karen language/history/culture
7. Opportunities for employment after graduation of school in the shelter
8. Opportunity for tertiary education inside the shelter
9. Possibility of accreditation by the Thai Ministry of Education
10. Willingness to change curriculum for accreditation

APENDIX C

Structured group interviews: Research questions covered with students inside Mae La temporary shelter

1. Duration of stay in Mae La temporary shelter
 - How long have you been in the shelter?
2. Experience of school outside of the shelter
 - Where did you go to school before coming to the shelter?
3. Differences between school outside and inside of the shelter
 - What are the differences between school in Burma/outside and in Mae La shelter?
4. Quality of education outside and inside the shelter
 - Which school do you think is better, the one in Burma/outside or in Mae La?
 - If necessary: Why do you say so?
 - How do you feel about not being able to go out to study or work?
5. Plans for after graduation
 - What do you want to do after graduation?
6. Subject they would want to study if it was possible to go to university
 - If you could go to university, what would you like to study?
7. Possibility of accreditation by Thai Ministry of Education/Opinion on curriculum change
 - What do you think about changing the curriculum and learning more Thai to receive official certificates?

APPENDIX D

In-depth interviews: Topics covered at ZOA Refugee Care Thailand

1. Start of the accreditation process
2. Stakeholders involved in accreditation process
3. Status of accreditation process at the moment
4. Involvement of KRCEE
5. Motivation for efforts towards accreditation of education in the temporary shelters
6. Reasons for agreement to alignment with Thai curriculum
7. Quality of education inside the temporary shelter
8. Changes in educational opportunities for displaced persons when accreditation is achieved
9. Reason(s) for lack of knowledge about accreditation process inside the temporary shelter
10. Plans for gaining support of displaced persons for the accreditation process/How to communicate effectively with displaced persons in shelters
11. Problems with teaching Thai inside the temporary shelters: Lack of teachers, language proficiency requirements
12. Conflicting MoE/MoI policies/Relationship between MoE/MoI in accreditation process
13. Difference between education for migrants and for displaced persons
14. OBEC support for accreditation process
15. Estimation how long accreditation process is going to take

16. Continuation of accreditation process after ZOA phases out operations in Thailand

APPENDIX E

Semi-structured interview: Topics covered at ESA II Tak Province

1. Cooperation between ESA II Tak Province and ZOA Refugee Care Thailand for accreditation
2. Accreditation process: who? what? when?
3. Support from ESA II towards Thai language study in the shelter
4. Support from ESA II towards alignment of Mathematics, Science and English with the Thai curriculum
5. Evaluation of quality of education in the temporary shelters
6. Project: Students from Mae La temporary shelter finishing high school in Mae Sot Town
7. Involvement of Thai MoE in education system of temporary shelters

APPENDIX F

Semi-structured interview: Topics covered at KRCEE

1. Start of KRCEE operating in Mae Sot
2. Start of Accreditation process: When? How? By whom?
3. Opportunities for students to study outside the shelters
4. Pilot Project: Gaining entrance to Thai universities
5. Involvement of KRCEE in accreditation process
6. Motivation of KRCEE for efforts towards accreditation
7. Differences between curriculum in Burma and inside temporary shelters
8. Quality of education in Burma and temporary shelters
9. Quality control of education in temporary shelters
10. Efforts to teach Thai language to displaced students in temporary shelters
11. Opinion on Thai language study for displaced students

BIOGRAPHY

Miss Anna Lena Till was born in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. From 2004-2005, she spent a year as a high school exchange student at the Seinan Jo Gakuin Koto Gakkou in Kitaykyushu, Japan. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Modern Japanese Studies from Heinrich-Heine-University, Düsseldorf. To do field research for her bachelor thesis, she spent a semester abroad as an international volunteer for a non-governmental organization in Hanoi, Vietnam. She finished her BA degree with a specialization in volunteer motivation and behavior, comparing Japan and Vietnam. After graduation, she moved to Thailand to study at the Intensive Thai Program of the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok for seven months. She will be graduating with a MA degree of Arts in International Development Studies at the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

