

Fact Sheet: United States Resettlement Admissions Program (USRAP)

The United States welcomed 60,192 refugees from all over the world during Fiscal Year 2008 (October 2007 – September 2008). A total of 18,511 refugees resettled in the U.S. from the East Asia region (excluding Vietnam), constituting one-third of all refugees resettled in the U.S. The majority of the refugees (18,139) were Burmese who had sought temporary refuge in Thailand and Malaysia. As of now, third country resettlement is the only durable solution available to Burmese refugees, and more than 50% of eligible refugees living in Thailand camps are interested in U.S. resettlement. Along with the U.S., several other countries offer resettlement opportunities to Burmese refugees.



Photos: Karenni Refugees plays a theater performance about U.S. resettlement in Ban Mai Nai Soi camp in Mae Hong Son, Thailand.

On one hand, resettlement has brought positive change among refugees as a durable solution is presented. On the other hand, skilled workers in health and education sectors are particularly sought after by some resettlement countries¹, and recruitment and trainings of new staff are becoming a routine for some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who provide assistance to refugees along the border. Maintaining the same level of services is also getting difficult due to the loss of experienced and skilled refugee staff. RMA, along with UNHCR and NGO partners, are working closely to find how to mitigate the negative impact of resettlement on the quality of life of refugees in the camps.

For more information on USRAP, click [here](#).

Assistance Program

Monitoring the assistance programs that are funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), Department of State, is also an important part of RMA's work. PRM provides annual contributions to UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross to support their activities in the East Asia and Southeast Asia regions. PRM also funds NGOs and international organizations to assist their projects for refugees, internally

displaced persons (IDPs) and trafficking victims. Below are some of the activities that PRM supports and RMA monitors.

Thailand

PRM supports the International Rescue Committee (IRC)'s assistance project in Mae Hong Son Province. IRC runs two clinics in Mae Hong Son camps and provides general health



services as well as reproductive and childcare services to refugees. Medics, pharmacists and lab technicians are recruited from the refugee communities. Community health workers also educate refugees to adopt basic hygiene practices and to implement preventative measures against communicable diseases such as malaria and cholera. IRC also runs a safe house for victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and provides counseling and legal services to resolve the issues. The GBV team also raises awareness on GBV in refugee communities through workshops and advertising campaign.

Photo: Karenni refugees participates in Peaceful Family Initiatives, a part of GBV project in Ban Mai Nai Soi camp in Mae Hong Son, Thailand

The American Refugee Committee (ARC) is another partner that RMA works with in three camps in Tak Province and Ratchaburi Province. Its activities range from Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) services to Microeconomic Enterprise activities. Through ARC's provision of yarn, female refugees are involved in cloth making, with their products sold to ARC and provided to expectant mothers and babies born with the help of midwives at the ARC-operated RCH ward. This is one example of refugee self-sufficiency activities.

These activities boost their self confidence and allow them more dignified lives in the closed camps. PRM also funds the Thai-Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), which provides food and non-food items such as cooking fuels, bedding mats and clothes to refugees. The distribution of such items is managed by refugees themselves with overall supervision by TBBC.

Ensuring access for persons with disabilities (PWDs) to all the facilities and services provided by the international communities is also a priority for PRM. This year, PRM funds Handicap International to support its activities for PWDs in the camps.

Bangladesh

PRM funds the NGO Austcare for multisectoral projects (including vocational training, education, nutrition, water and sanitation, civic education) and Handicap International for its activities on the improvement of access for PWDs in two camps in Cox's Bazar. The

UNHCR-run official camps are occupied by 28,000 Rohingya refugees who fled from Northern Rakhine State in Burma.

Malaysia

Through UNHCR Kuala Lumpur, PRM funds health projects by A Call To Serve and education projects by the Tzu Chi Foundation Malaysia. PRM also funds the GBV project of International Catholic Migration Commission with a local implementing partner, Tenaganita.

ⁱ Any refugees who are interested and are eligible can apply to the US Resettlement Program regardless of age, education, physical illness or language skills. Other resettlement countries apply various criteria in selecting refugees, however.