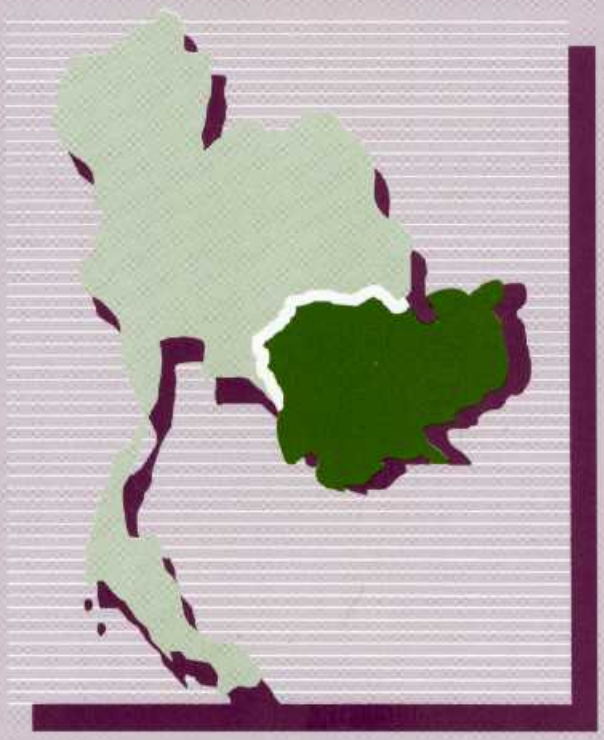
Management of Education Systems in Zones of Conflict-Relief Operations

A Case-Study in Thailand



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Management of Education Systems in Zones of Conflict-Relief Operations

A Case-Study in Thailand

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INTRODUCTION

"Education provides a signal of hope for the future. It can bridge unstable situations to revitalize cultural life. It is very important to provide education for refugees even in emergency situations. They are physically and psychologically vulnerable, especially children and women, and desperately need education to develop a more productive life-style."

Anne H. Dykstra,
former Head of Education,
United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO)

In the 18 years between 1975 and 1993, a huge number of Cambodian people were housed in the Thai-Cambodian border areas. Two considerable events brought about the large exodus of Cambodians: the Khmer Rouge's takeover and domination of the country between 1975 and 1978; and the Vietnamese invasion in 1979. By the end of 1979, about 110,000 people were housed in the holding centres inside Thailand (administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR). More than 300,000 Cambodians stayed in encampments built along the border, and later they were housed in the UNBRO-assisted border camps. The unstable situation in Cambodia throughout the 1980s, mainly caused by constant fighting between Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge, kept driving people towards the international frontier.

The numbers, locations and populations of encampments in the Thai-Cambodian border areas had been continuously changing in response to the unstable conditions within Cambodia. The peak number of encampments was 23 in 1982, which diminished finally to 8 in 1992. The camp population also fluctuated due to third country resettlement, new arrivals, and voluntary repatriation. Overall control of the camps was in the hands of the Thai Government: the Supreme Command, the Ministry of Defence. While the camps inside Thailand such as Khao I Dang were administered by the UNHCR since 1979, the camps on the Thai-Cambodian border were administered by

Government granted them temporary asylum in Thailand, and hoped that the Cambodians would have to repatriate to Cambodia at the earliest opportunity. After some 200,000 people were resettled in third countries such as the United States, France and Australia by the late 1980s, third countries were slow in resettling them unless they already had a family member residing abroad. The remaining Cambodian population at the border areas, some 360,000 people in the beginning of 1992, all joined the 1992-93 voluntary repatriation programme organized by UNHCR, and eventually returned to Cambodia by April, 1993.

Education in the camps was considered very important not only for providing psychological support but also building needed skills for Cambodian people in the camps. The UN agencies and NGOs endeavoured to support education for them. There were primary education, secondary education, adult literacy classes, vocational training schools, teacher training courses, and recreational activities. While these programmes achieved a great deal, they encountered serious constraints as well. Their management differed between two types of camps: the UNHCR camp (the Khao I Dang camp) and the UNBRO camp (the border camps), due mainly to the different types of administration and security environment, and the status and goals of the camp population.

The UNHCR-administered Khao I Dang camp, located 15 kilometers from the Thai-Cambodian border, was safer than the border camps, never suffering attacks by the Khmer Rouge or Vietnamese troops. The relatively stable environment and centrally organized structure of the camp contributed to developing the educational programmes since 1979. The camp population was not overtly affiliated with political factions. Most of them kept hoping for third country resettlement until the early 1990s. By the mid-1980s, a sizable number of the Khao I Dang population were given *prima facie* refugee status and resettled abroad.

On the other hand, the UNBRO-assisted border camps, spreading along the 400-mile border, suffered frequent shelling until the mid 1980s, and education then was stopped for a couple of months until normality was restored. In the late 1980s, as the camp situation became relatively stable, educational programmes saw improvement. The border camps were administered by Cambodian political factions that affected, to a large extent, educational management. The camp population understood that they would return to Cambodia. The geographical and political factors sometimes interfered with the process of educational development in the border camps.

Prior to the mid-1980s, the programmes in the Khao I Dang camp had already seen development in various fields. UNBRO was able to learn many things from the Khao I Dang programmes. In both camps, it was important to use the Cambodian refugees in all aspects of the development, implementation and staffing. While the majority of management positions were taken by non-refugee staff in Khao I Dang, UNBRO established the formal guidelines for Khmer self-management. This attempt turned out to be an effective strategy for building confidence and self-reliance among Cambodian people in the camps even as it met with constraints and difficulties.

This paper will focus on the management of education systems in the Thai-Cambodian border areas. For the purpose of this paper, it will be necessary to standardize the term referring to all Cambodians in the camps. Thus, the term "refugee" will be employed for the Cambodian camp population in the Thai-Cambodian border areas. First, the paper will examine the historical background of the camps including administrative and demographic characteristics, and analyze the Thai policies toward Cambodian refugees (Chapter 2). Second, the paper will examine education policy, and the stages of programme development provided to Cambodian refugees (Chapter 3). Third, the methods and outcomes of education programme management in the two types of camps (UNHCR-assisted and UNBRO-assisted) will be discussed covering contributing factors and problems encountered. The paper will also touch upon some important NGO programmes, strategies for easing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and the introduction of new subjects and technologies (Chapter 4). By discussing the development and implementation of educational management at the Thai-Cambodian border, it is hoped that some light will be shed on the nature and potential of emergency educational assistance.

Chapter Two

BACKGROUND OF THE CAMPS AT THE THAI-CAMBODIAN BORDER AREAS

2.1 Brief History of the Camps

Pre-Emergency Period (1975-1978)

The influx of Cambodian people started in the period from 1975 to 1978, when the Lon Nol government was toppled by the Khmer Rouge headed by Pol Pot. Pol Pot implemented an extreme kind of communism, resulting in at least one million deaths and wiping out most of the educated manpower. Several hundred thousand children of school age were massacred or died of starvation and disease. Schools, textbooks and all kinds of learning materials were destroyed. During this period, the Cambodian people escaped from the tyranny of the Khmer Rouge, due to fear of persecution, starvation, and dissatisfaction with Communism. Approximately 200,000 Cambodian civilians fled the country, including 34,000[1] to Thailand, 20,000 to Laos, and 150,000 to Vietnam.[2] The Cambodians admitted to the camps in Thailand were the fortunate ones, as the majority died before reaching the border. The three UNHCR-assisted camps (Aranyaprathet, Lumpuk and Kamput) hosted these Cambodians. Some 18,866 people resettled in third countries by the end of 1978.[3]

Emergency Period (1979-1981)

In January 1979, the Vietnamese ousted the Khmer Rouge and established the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) under the leadership of

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1. Table 1. Cambodian Refugee Arrival Figures

1975	1976	1977	1978 (75-78 total)	1979
17,038	6,428	7,045	3,528 (34,039)	137,894

(UNBRO. 1994. *Displacement and Survival*, p.13).

2. Robinson, 1994. *Something Like Home Again*, p. 3.

3. Fordham, 1991. *The Khmer Border "The Never Ending (??) Story"*, p. 2.

Heng Samrin, a former Khmer Rouge official who had defected to Vietnam. The Vietnamese invasion released people from the yoke of Pol Pot. A massive wave of Cambodians arrived at the border due to hatred of the Vietnamese-imposed government, involvement in the resistance movement and need for aid. By the end of 1979, approximately 138,000 Cambodians sought succour in Thailand. The Thai Government invited UNHCR, as a leading agency of emergency relief operations for the Cambodian refugees in Thailand, to establish "holding centres" for hosting them. The largest of these camps, Khao I Dang, was said to be the largest city of Cambodians in the world, with 140,000 inhabitants in 1980. UNHCR began activities of emergency assistance in close cooperation with agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Cambodians who remained along the Thai-Cambodian border, east of the UNHCR holding centres, also received assistance from international organizations and voluntary agencies (NGOs). In 1979, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began jointly leading the relief effort. They concentrated on providing basic assistance to ensure the survival of the Cambodian refugees on the border. UNICEF withdrew from the border operation at the end of 1981. Since the situation was no longer an emergency, further assistance was not covered by UNICEF's mandate.[4] The WFP was designated to take over as the lead agency and work closely with UNICEF, UNHCR and ICRC.

Between late 1970 and early 1980, there were nearly 100 agencies in the border areas. Scott Leiper, former Deputy Field Co-ordinator, recalls: "In 1980, too many NGOs came to help refugees on the border. The Thai Government allowed them to work in the border areas, but nobody was really responsible for co-ordination. Within a camp, there were sometimes two feeding programmes. Many duplications existed in the camps."

Post-Emergency Period (1982-1993)

In 1982, the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) was established to continue humanitarian assistance on the border which was formally served by UNICEF. UNBRO operated under the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN for Co-ordination of Cambodian Humanitarian Assistance Programmes (OSRSG). The regional representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) served

4. UNBRO, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

as the director of UNBRO, while the WFP provided staff and administrative support.[5]

In June 1982, the three resistance political factions finally agreed to the formation of an anti-Vietnamese coalition government, the "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea" (CGDK). The CGDK, as a "loose and uneasy alliance of convenience[6]" was recognized by the United Nations as the only legally constituted government of Cambodia. The three factions were: the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) headed by Son Sann, Prince Sihanouk's National United Front for an Independent, Neutral and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) and the Khmer Rouge headed by Khieu Samphan. In those days, there were three UNHCR-assisted camps inside Thailand, and 20 civilian and military encampments situated along the border.[7] The three political factions began administrating these border encampments.

Until 1984, the majority of Cambodian refugees, except those staying in UNHCR-assisted camps inside Thailand, lived in sites which straddled the border. They suffered periodic Vietnamese attacks. Dry season offensives against guerrilla bases by the Vietnamese forced border residents into temporary evacuation sites in Thailand. When the rainy season came, the Vietnamese troops gradually withdrew, allowing refugees to return to the border. The Thai Government insisted that the border sites should be entirely inside Cambodia.

During the period between late 1984 and early 1985, the Vietnamese launched the largest offensive on the CGDK bases. The entire border population of 200,000 was driven to seek refuge inside Thailand[8] The Thai Government permitted Cambodian refugees to remain in camps on Thai soil, legally and politically regarding them as illegal immigrants. They were allowed to stay there until such time as they could be repatriated. Since 1985, the Thai Government and UNBRO tried to separate civilian population from the military and consolidated 25 evacuation sites into 8 camps. All camps were administered by resistance factions: Site 2 and Sok Sann by KPNLF; Site B by FUNCINPEC; and Site 8, Borai, Ta Luan. Natao and Huay Chan by the Khmer Rouge.[9] The total camp population was about 300,000, after 200,000 were resettled in third countries through UNHCR assistance and 9,000 returned voluntarily to Cambodia.

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5. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p.7.
6. Gyallay-Pap, 1989. *Reclaiming a Shattered Past: Education for the Displaced Khmer in Thailand.* p. 262.
7. CCDSPT, 1982. *The CCDSPT Handbook: Refugee Services in Thailand,* p. 37.
8. New arrivals at the time were 4,346 in 1984 and 7,989 in 1985. Chantavanich and Reynolds, 1988. *Indochinese Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement.* p. 13.
9. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p.10.

By September 1989, all Vietnamese troops were ultimately withdrawn from Cambodia. And in October 1991, the Comprehensive Political Settlement on Cambodia was signed in Paris by all Cambodian parties and 18 governments. UNHCR replaced UNDP as the agency supervising the administration of UNBRO. This was the step linked to voluntary repatriation for which UNHCR was to be the lead agency. The repatriation of the Cambodian refugees was started on 30 March 1992 and completed on 30 March 1993, with the closure of Site 2 of about 200,000 people. A total of 362,209 people (82,316 families)[10] concluded their camp life and returned to Cambodia.

2.2 Cambodian Refugee Status and Thai Policy

The status of Cambodian people in the border areas and the nature of the camp in which they were placed depended on the Thai policies in force at the time they entered Thailand. The 1951 Geneva Convention of Refugees: Article 1A(2) defined the refugee as a person having left his country due to a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."[11] Clearly, Article 1A(2) was able to apply to the majority of Cambodians who fled to the border areas before 1979. If they returned to Cambodia, they would have been killed by the Khmer Rouge. However, refugee status is given by nations, not by UNHCR. In this case, Thailand is not a signatory to either the 1951 Geneva Convention of Refugees or the 1967 Protocol which extended the scope of the original agreement. Those two international instruments have no binding effect in Thailand. Anyone entering Thailand without a valid passport and visa is classified by law as an illegal immigrant. People seeking to become refugees in Thailand have been labelled in several ways such as "displaced persons", "illegal immigrants," "illegal entrants," and "evacuees." They have been housed in "holding centres" and "displaced persons camps."[12]

Thailand's refugee policy has been shaped by national economic, social and security concerns, as well as a desire to maintain favourable relations with its neighbours and international allies. Prior to 1975, Thailand had been hospitable to refugees from neighbouring countries. A number of early arrivals integrated into Thai society. However, this generous policy toward refugees changed after the Communist victories in Indochina in 1975. There were two contradictory concerns in Thai policy toward Cambodian refugees. On the one hand, due to regional security objectives, Thailand supported the Cambodian

10. UNHCR, 1993. *Status of Cambodia Repatriation Operation.*

11. UNHCR, 1988. *Collection of International Instruments Concerning Refugees.* p. 10.

12. CCSDPT, 1986. *The CCDSPT Handbook: Refugee Service in Thailand.* p. 17.

resistance factions opposing the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia. This Thai stance allowed refugees to be linked with these factions and to remain on Thai soil until they could return to Cambodia or resettle abroad. On the other hand, due to domestic policy objectives, Thailand wanted to ensure that it would not be permanently burdened with Cambodian refugees. Thus, Thai policy should not have been designed as a magnet for other Cambodians who had not yet fled Cambodia. These two concerns were counterbalancing each other between 1975 and 1993.

The evolution of Thai policy between 1975 and 1993 was divided into four phases by Dr. Muntarbhorn as follows:[13]

1. the preventive and retaliatory phase of 1975-1979;
2. the open door phase of late 1979 and early 1980;
3. the humane deterrence phase from 1980 to 1989; and 4) the swinging door phase of 1990-1993.

1. **The preventive and retaliatory phase of 1975-1979.** This initial phase saw a strong, restrictive policy from the Thai Government under a cabinet decision of 3 June 1975. If displaced persons attempted to enter the Kingdom, measures would be taken to send them out of the kingdom as quickly as possible. If this was not possible, they would be detained in camps as illegal immigrants. None of the Cambodians in the Thai-Cambodian border camps were given formal refugee status by Thailand. The Thai Government, however, recognized the Cambodians in the camps were in a "refugee-like situation and would be found to be refugees if an individual determination was made."[14] The Cambodians who fled to Thailand before 1979 and were housed in UNHCR holding centres were granted *de facto* refugee status, making them eligible for third country resettlement.[15] Although Thailand was reluctant to let Cambodians stay on its soil, they were given shelter in Thailand on the understanding that all would eventually be repatriated. The first false repatriation happened in June 1979. Thai soldiers took about 43,000 refugees to Preah Vihear and forced them to walk down the steep Dangrek mountains back to Cambodia, at a cost of several thousand lives. The incident created an international outcry.

2. **The open door phase of late 1979 to early 1980.** Because of pressure from the international community, Thailand liberalized its refugee

13. Rogge, 1990. *Return to Cambodia: the Significance and Implications of the Past, Present and Future Spontaneous Repatriations*. pp. 63-72.

14. Shawcross, 1984. *The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust and Modern Conscience*. p. 308.

15. Mysliwiec, 1988. *Punishing the Poor: the International Isolation of Kampuchea*. p. 96.

policy. Following a visit to the border by Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak, the Thai Government announced an "open door" policy: entry into Thailand for Khmer-distressed civilians would be unimpeded, and no one would be turned back.[16] Since Thailand wanted to avoid external criticism, it tried to show a measure of humanitarianism. However, the policy seemed to be the result of a political and military calculation. The open door policy did not last more than three months.

3. **The humane deterrence phase of 1980-1989.** The Thai authorities were afraid that the acceptance of refugees, together with the prospects for third country resettlement, would create a magnet effect, drawing more refugees into Thailand. The concept of humane deterrence was adopted, with the intention of sending negative signals to prospective refugees and discouraging them from choosing Thailand as a possible destination. "The objectives were to reduce the number of refugees inside Thailand, and to reduce the number of people trying to enter Thailand."[17]

Although the border had been officially closed since early 1980, the border camps were able to absorb all new arrivals. No third country resettlement was permitted. However, there were some exceptions, such as those being granted permission to emigrate under family reunion provisions. While there was modification of the policy of humane deterrence, the Thai government repeatedly emphasized that repatriation was the only acceptable solution.

4. **The swinging door policy since 1989**. The term "swinging door" refers to the oscillating nature of Thai policy. Sometimes there was a closed door policy. At other times there was an open door policy. The door was more open for some than for others. The fact that there was pronouncement of a closed door policy at the national level was not necessarily reflected in practice. The refugees arrived continuously and Khao I Dang as well as the border camps housed them. "Throughout the refugee history on the border," says Court Robinson, "Thai policy had a kind of swinging door aspect to it. whether they could get across the border safely depended on where they crossed, how they crossed, with whom they crossed. If they were lucky, if they had money, friends or family members already in the camps, they were likely able to enter the camps."

16. The Public Affairs Institute, 1989. *Indochinese Refugees in Thailand: Prospects for Long-stayers*. p. 27.

17. Thitapanich, 1986. *The Humane Deterrence Policy Toward Kampuchean Refugees in Thailand: A Policy Analysis*. p. 65.

2.3 Administrative Characteristics of the Camps - the UNHCR Camp and the UNBRO Camp

There were two types of camps for Cambodian refugees in terms of administration, operation, and inhabitants: the UNHCR camps and the UNBRO-assisted border camps. Basically, those who reached Thailand before the end of 1979 were housed in the UNHCR camps. Those seeking refuge after 1980 stayed in the border encampments, assisted by UNBRO since 1982.

The two types of camp "would often clash or converge, but neither would be able to break free from the other's orbit."[18] The Joint Operations Centre of the Supreme Command of the Royal Thai Armed Forces in Bangkok and various units of the Royal Thai Army and Marines in the field were responsible for refugees in both the UNHCR camps and the UNBRO-assisted border camps. In effect, Task Force 80 (1980-1987) and later the Displaced Persons' Protection Unit (DPPU) (1988-1993), both assigned by the Thai Government, had control over major issues of camp administration and security matters. Since the Supreme Command was directly responsible only for the security and the general administration of the camps, all the services needed were provided by international organizations and voluntary agencies.

UNHCR did not expand its mandate to assist Cambodian refugees on the border. There were three major reasons. First, because its mandate extends only to displaced persons who have gone outside the country of their nationality (paragraph 63 of the UNHCR statute),[19] this provision was applied, when UNHCR began operation in Thailand in 1979, to the Cambodian border population who lived on the Cambodian side of the border until 1985. Second, says Court Robinson, Visiting Scholar for the Asian Research Centre for Migration, Chulalongkorn University, "After 1979, the Khmer Rouge themselves fled the country. There were more soldiers in the refugee population. Thus, UNHCR and the Thai Government agreed that it was not appropriate for UNHCR to assist these refugees. UNHCR was given a mandate to assist only civilian refugees."[20] The third reason was a kind of apprehension on the part of the Thai Government. If it allowed the UNHCR to be involved in the border camp assistance, this action would protect refugees by recognizing refugee status for the border people. Then the free exercise of Thai policy

18. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
19. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1987. *Seeking Shelter: Cambodians in Thailand.* pp. 27-28.
20. "Both the statute of UNHCR and the 1951 Convention of Refugees ... insist that the refugee status cannot be given to anyone who is seriously suspected of having committed a crime against peace, a war crime, or a crime against humanity." A crime against humanity is defined that "murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war." Thus, UNHCR is given a mandate that such criminals should not be protected. Shawcross, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-307.

would be impeded. Moreover, the firm presence of the UNHCR would "encourage more refugees to cross the border seeking its protection and assistance. including resettlement in third countries.[21] Because of these reasons, UNHCR did not join the border operation although it had been on the Thai side of the border since 1985.

The UNHCR camps, also called holding centres, were clearly situated inside Thai territory. The major one was the Khao I Dang camp, established on a sloping hill about 12 kilometers from the border in November 1979. By mid-1980 the population reached its maximum of 15,000. Khao I Dang was a neutral camp and inhabitants were not allowed to affiliate with political factions. While under Thai military authority, UNHCR administered the holding centres in terms of budgetary and operational control, and provided services through implementing partners, such as government offices, international organizations and NGOs. For administrative purposes, the camp was divided into sections. The section leaders were appointed by UNHCR. The sections were further divided into smaller groups, which were themselves divided into rows. The group leaders were chosen by section leaders. Those leaders were responsible for overseeing the distribution of food, fuel and water, and ensuring that each family received its entitlement. The section leaders reported to UNHCR on a daily basis.[22] The majority of the Khao I Dang population hoped to be resettled in third countries. They were allowed to remain in the camp as long as they were not resettled abroad or they were not able to return to Cambodia (if some wished to return).

The border camps were strung along the no-man's land of the 700-kilometer Thai-Cambodian border. Like the UNHCR camps, the border camps were under Thai military supervision and UNBRO's budgetary and operational control. UNBRO was responsible for all relief services, many of which were actually provided by NGOs. The camps were also divided into sections, and subdivided into groups. There were appointed leaders in each section and group. However, unlike the UNHCR camps, the border camps themselves were administered by the CGDK factions such as FUNCINPEC, KPNLF and the Khmer Rouge. The daily administration of the camps was supervised by Cambodian civilian administrators. Since the separation of the civilian and military populations in 1985, the military commanders of each faction theoretically had no power within the UNBRO camps. However, the military authority, in fact, exercised its power on camp inhabitants. In every

21. OSRSG-United Nations, 1992. *Cambodian Humanitarian Assistance and the United Nations (1979-1991)*, p. 31.

22. Knight, 1993. *Closing Evaluation of the Education and Skills Training Programmes in Khao I Dang Refugee Camp.* p. 1.

camp, the civilian administrators were subject to military authority.[23] Almost all of these administrators answered directly to commanders and, via them, to the political leaders of each faction.[24]

The opportunities of third country resettlement for the border population were very limited. They were not allowed to begin the resettlement process until 1985, when the Thai Government permitted people in the border camps to resettle abroad if they had families or close relatives in third countries and those countries would accept them.[25] However, most of the border population wanted to return to Cambodia if the domestic situation became stable.

Among the border camps administered by the political factions, Site B, Site 2 and Site 8 represented the majority of the refugee population on the border. Site B was administered by Prince Sihanouk's son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh (FUNCINPEC), who also commanded the royalist resistance force. The population was 61,795 in 1991.[26] The camp was considered the safest and best administered among the border camps.[27] Site 2, consisting of five separate camps,[28] was administered by KPNLF. Its total population was 195,787 in 1991.[29] Site 2 was located in the central border zone and suffered periodic Vietnamese shelling. Moreover, domestic violence and black-market-related corruption were constant problems in Site 2. Site 8 was administered by the Khmer Rouge. Among five civilian camps administered by the Khmer Rouge, Site 8 was the only camp regularly open to the international relief community. The camp population was 43,847,[30] also constantly suffering from Vietnamese shelling.

2.4 Demographic Characteristics of the Refugees

It is crucial to analyze the demographic characteristics of refugees, such as male to female ratio, rural or urban origins, age group, educational level, and occupation. The data available on the refugees remaining in UNHCR camps in 1987[31] seem to adequately represent the demographic characteristics of the Cambodian refugees in the camps.

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23. Reynell, 1989. *Political Pawns: Refugees on the Thai-Cambodian Border.* pp. 65-71.
24. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights. *op. cit.*, p. 27.
25. Thitapanich, 1986. *op. cit.*, p. 67.
26. Fordham, *op. cit.*
27. Gyallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
28. The five camps were: Dong Rek, San Ro, Ban Sangae (Ampil), Nong Chan and Nong Samet. Lynch, 1989. *Border Khmer: A Demographic Study of the Residents of Site 2, Site B and Site 8.* pp. 7-11.
29. Fordham, *op. cit.*.
30. *Ibid*
31. Chantavanich and Reinolds, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-28.

As for the male to female ratio, males outnumbered females. The total number of refugees in the UNHCR camp was 19,599 in 1987. There were 10,267 males (52.39%) and 9,332 females (47.61%). The number of rural migrants was over five times as large as the number of urban migrants (16,093 : 2,985). As for the age distribution of the refugees, the largest group of refugees was in the age 1-12 category. About one half of the population was under the age of 19 (Table 2).

Table 3 indicates that a high percentage of the refugees had no education (45.87%) or only primary education (36.35%). During the period of the Khmer Rouge's control over the country between 1975 and 1987, the education system became a target for radical change. Educational institutions and trained personnel were regarded as key obstacles to the creation of a new society in Cambodia. Educational institutions, facilities and equipment were destroyed and teachers were killed. Consequently, this terrible domestic situation, lasting four years, resulted in a total lack of education.

Almost half of the population did not have any occupation. A serious dearth of professionals such as doctors, nurses and teachers, and those with commercial occupations (Table 4). "It is clear that if these people are not provided with education in the camps, they will not be able to lead an adjusted and meaningful life in the outside world."[32] In order to survive outside the camp, the refugees had to develop an adequate level of education, at least basic literacy, and other necessary skills.

Table 2. Refugees Left in the Camp, Classified by Age Group

1-12	13-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
7,390	2,462	4,456	3,046	1,229	660	540	19,783
(37.36)	(12.45)	(22.52)	(15.4)	(6.21)	(3.34)	(2.73)	(100)

32. *Ibid*, p. 24.

Table 3. Educational Attainment of Refugees

NA	No education	Primary	Secondary	Mid/ High	Vocational	College Graduate	Informal	Total
687	9,075	7,192	1,232	166	7	38	1,386	19,783
3.47	45.87	36.35	6.23	0.84	0.04	0.19	7.01	(100)

Table 4. Occupation of Refugees in Cambodia

No occupation	Professional (doctor, nurse, teacher, etc.)	Commercial clerk, sales	Unskilled	Farmers fisherman	Crafts	Students	Others	Total
11,529	73	375	1,302	8,901	54	1,708	306	24,248
47.55	0.30	1.55	5.37	36.71	0.22	7.04	1.26	(100)

Source for Tables 2,3,4: Chantavanich and Reynolds, 1988. *Indochinese Refugees: Asylum and Resettlement.* pp. 24-28.

Chapter Three

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

3.1 Education Policy Toward Cambodian Refugees

The Thai Government did not encourage the Cambodians to seek refuge in Thailand. It, in fact, tried to prevent the institutionalization and perpetuation of the camps. Thus, the Thai Government was opposed to the development of educational programmes that would make the camp so attractive as to draw more Cambodians into Thailand. However, Thailand gave its tacit approval for a limited education programme, and three levels of education were offered to Cambodian refugees at the pre-school, primary school and adult levels. In 1987, it approved a two-year enhanced primary education programme.[33] There was no policy to offer secondary or tertiary levels of education, although traits of secondary or tertiary education may be found in the adult education offered.

The Thai Ministry of Education had the following policy guidelines since 1977:

1. to enable displaced persons to return to their country of origin and to use their original language;
2. to enable displaced persons to receive vocational training for use in resettlement countries or on return to the country of origin;
3. to receive training for daily life;
4. to understand the Thai language and culture;
5. to enable displaced persons to study the language of the country to which they will travel.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) both thought that their main task was providing relief aid such as food, water, shelter, medical care, and so on. While they had no strong mandate for development assistance, they tried to emphasize the preservation of the Cambodian refugee's human dignity, pride, and spirit. This principle was incorporated into a policy, namely "Khmer Self-

33. Gyallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

Management." UNBRO emphasized Khmer-managed programmes, "to help the Khmer help themselves through exercise of responsibility and direct participation of the camp population in the programmes affecting them.[34]

In the camps, in practice, education policy was a collaborative one between the UN organization and the camp administrations. UNHCR and UNBRO provided technical support for policies determined by Khmer administrators. In the UNHCR-assisted Khao I Dang camp, NGOs had authoritarian control over programmes because the high rate of turnover in refugee staffing caused unstable demographic conditions in the camp. In UNBRO camps, "the balance has tipped in favour of an international community equipped with both funds and expertise as against a divided and dependent camp leadership that has placed political, military and other pressing demands above education.[35]"

3.2 Pre-Emergency Period (1975-1978)

During the early period, no organized education classes were held in the border areas. The focus of the assisting agencies was on the rapid delivery of essential assistance to meet the displaced people's basic needs. Providing food, water, medicines, clothes and shelter was the main task. Only after the basic physical needs were met was the need for education addressed. However, initially, basic education was not a primary concern since most of the first displaced Cambodians were well-educated and were not expected to stay long in the camps. The main goal of education at that stage was to prepare Cambodians for third country resettlement or local integration. Supote Prasertsri, a former education officer of UNHCR says: "Because, during the period between 1975 and 1978, nobody thought that they could return to Cambodia where the Khmer Rouge had strong control over the country, the focus of education was thus on third country resettlement. There were many private classes teaching English as well as French."

However, the Thai Government was aware of the fact that opportunities of third country resettlement for the refugees were limited. Thus, the Thai Ministries of Education and Interior were responsible for implementing educational programmes according to the Thai educational system. Refugee children were enrolled in the primary school system and taught according to the

34. OSRSG-UN, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

35. *ibid.* p. 269.

Thai curriculum by Thai teachers. The UNHCR provided financial support to Thai programmes and voluntary agencies.[36]

3.3 Emergency Period (1979-1981)

Because of the fall of the Khmer Rouge, repatriation was regarded as the major goal for the Cambodian refugees. They received basic education in their native language to encourage voluntary repatriation. The problem of creating better educational programmes became more challenging and more urgent by the fact that no one had any schooling during the four years of Khmer Rouge rule.[37]

The Joint Operation Centre (JOC) under the Supreme Command of the Ministry of Defence was assigned by the Thai Government to oversee displaced people. Since this agency was not in charge of education but in charge of protecting displaced people, education and other social programmes were left in the hands of displaced Cambodians and supporting voluntary agencies (NGOs). This educational independence contributed to revitalizing Khmer education and cultural programmes.

Right after the establishment of the Khao I Dang camp, in early 1980, one highly motivated group of teachers who had survived the Pol Pot regime set up the Khmer Education Development Centre (KEDC). The KEDC tried to upgrade primary education, pre-schools, curriculum development, and teacher training. Moreover, it endeavoured to implement an entire education system including early childhood education, vocational education, work-oriented literacy, and special education.

UNHCR was in charge of financial support and co-ordination assistance. A high level of NGO assistance was given to the educational programme in terms of day-to-day logistics and technical support. For example, primary education was run by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), secondary education was organized by the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), and the printing house was established by the Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee (JSRC).[38]

On the border areas, UNICEF provided emergency educational assistance from the beginning of the relief operation. However, its educational

36. Prasertsri. *Kampuchean Refugees Achieve Universal Education Despite Difficulties.* 1989. pp. 168-169.

37. Prasertsri, *op. cit.* p. 169.

38. Brief explanations about these agencies were made in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1, pp. 48-50.

assistance was on a small scale and development was seen some years later. In 1981, UNICEF provided $200,000 which was 6% of its $3.2 million budget for border education on behalf of the ICRC/UNICEF joint mission. This was contrary to the period between 1979 and 1980, when the joint mission provided no education funds in their border aid budget.[39]

3.4 Post-Emergency Period (1982-1993)

In 1982, the three resistance factions (Sihanouk's FUNCINPEC, KPNLF, and the Khmer Rouge) formed the Coalition Government of Democratic Cambodia (CGDK). A11 border camps were administered by these political factions: Site B with a population of 63,747, under FUNCINPEC, Site 2 with a population of 143,956, under KPNLF, and Site 8 with a population of 41,384, under the Khmer Rouge.[40] The education programmes could not help becoming somewhat politically oriented. However, because the aid staff usually succeeded in keeping Cambodian civilians and military separated and the fact that textbooks developed prior to the formation of CGDK were used, a certain level of subject content neutrality was assured.

The educational assistance provided by UNICEF between 1979 and 1981 was continued by a new ad hoc operation, the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) since 1982. UNBRO began operation as a unit of the WFP. It relied on NGOs providing programmes and services. Continuing agreements with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC), UNBRO provided educational materials to seven camps. The first Khmer-run primary school was opened in Sok San in 15 December 1982.[41] However, during the period between 1982 and 1985, there were frequent Vietnamese attacks that forced the Cambodians to evacuate many times. Educational programmes at the border then came to a standstill.[42] The Vietnamese military offensive during the 1984-85 dry season drove Cambodian refugees across the border to stay inside Thailand. From mid-1985 to 1986, there was some stability in the camp and educational programmes gradually resumed. UNBRO acquired a border mandate to co-ordinate a primary education programme.

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39. Gyallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

40. Prasertsri, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

41. UNBRO, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

42. "The years 1980-85 at the border area were very unstable and schools operated on an average of 4-6 months per year only." *Education Workshop Report*, 1988. p. 4.

The Thai Government was initially reluctant to develop educational programmes at the border camps since they would make the camps so attractive that more Cambodians would be drawn into Thailand. However, formal education was finally permitted after 1985. Qualified educators were recruited and a search for expatriate Khmers was launched. Between 1987 and 1988, UNBRO held some workshops for Cambodian education representatives. With the agreement of the Thai Government in 1987, UNBRO undertook a two-year (1988-89) programme of general education at the primary level (grades 1 to 5) in the border camps.

UNBRO started "the Two-Year Enhanced Primary Education Programme" in 1988, preparing 100 teacher trainers and 1,500 teachers for some 65,000 students. The prime objective of the programme was to set standards for the Khmer-managed primary education programmes along the border on the basis of internationally accepted contents endorsed by UNESCO. The programme comprised six specific areas: (1) curriculum and materials development; (2) printing of educational materials; (3) provision of school supplies; (4) construction of classrooms; (5) teacher trainer training; and (6) teacher training. As for the budget, the United States offered $1.5 million to support this programme.

In January 1989, approximately 70,000 students enrolled in grades 1-5, together with about 2,500 Khmer teachers and support staff. Many of the new arrivals had received little or no education prior to arriving in camps. Those people were required to join small classes. Students received basic school supplies and textbooks according to a strict formula[43] established by UNBRO. UNBRO's education effort, which had been divided into two sections, education and community service, was integrated into one programme, namely the Human Development Programme, in 1989.

Since 1992, starting with the UNHCR-run repatriation programme, camp schools and skill training facilities were gradually closed, and all of the education programmes were concluded with the closure of Site 2 on 30 March 1993.

43. The formula is based on the number of children multiplied by the number of materials. (Kurt Bredenberg, a former UNBRO education co-ordinator).

Chapter Four

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

4.1 Educational Management in the UNHCR camp - the Khao I Dang Case

4.1.1 Khmer Education Development Centre (KEDC)

Established in early 1980, the Khmer Education Development Centre (KEDC) was in charge of the whole educational management of the Khao I Dang camp. Unlike other relief assistance provided by international agencies, educational services in Khao I Dang were initiated by a group of refugees who were former educators in Cambodia. Under the leadership of a former senior official from the Ministry of Education in Phnom Penh, the KEDC placed its foremost emphasis on the establishment and management of primary schools and preschools targeting children ages 3 to 15. It was also responsible for curriculum development and teacher training. In succeeding years, the KEDC implemented a whole new educational system, and expanded with a wide range of other programmes including secondary education, special education for disabled persons, adult literacy, recreation, libraries, women's rehabilitation, printing and newsletters.[44]

While UNBRO stressed the importance of Khmer self-management in the border camps (which will be explained in section 4.2.1), this principle was not stated clearly in Khao I Dang. However, initial efforts to establish an educational programme for Cambodian refugees in Khao I Dang followed "a community-based model in which the planning, implementation, and administration of the programme were all undertaken by the Khmers themselves."[45] The Central Committee of the KEDC consisted of a chairman, two vice-chairmen, a headmaster co-ordinator, and the chairman of the hiring and firing committee. These positions were taken by refugees who used to be educators and had survived the years of turmoil in Cambodia. A non-refugee education co-ordinator assisted the refugee administration by overseeing the implementation of UNHCR funding, providing technical and managerial guidance, and supervising other non-refugee consultants in the programme.

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44. Bredenberg. 1988. *Lessons Learned in a Community-Based Refugees Education Programme.* p. 2.
45. *ibid.* p. 3.

Although the non-refugee staff were initially intended to play only a supportive advisory role to the refugees, they came to wield greater authority in administration. One reason was that the original catalysts of the programme, who were educated and experienced Cambodian educators, were soon accepted for resettlement abroad. Then a whole new team of Cambodian administrators took their place. However, these people were also resettled and again replaced. Because the ongoing brain drain caused a shortage of competent administrators and then a decline in the quality of the programme, non-refugee staff could justifiably take over important administrative positions.[46]

Another reason the non-refugee staff held too much authority was that refugees tended to subordinate themselves to non-refugee staff who were mostly Americans and Europeans. Since Cambodian refugees had experienced a long colonial history, they tended to inappropriately defer to decision-making by non-Khmer staff.[47]

"UNHCR and NGOs were the only institutions for any kind of stability and continuity in the camp" says Kurt Bredenberg, a former education co-ordinator in the Khao I Dang camp and Site 2. "The refugees were not able to have institutions or a community which would be stable because people were always leaving. People may come in for 6 months to a year and then leave for resettlement. In the administrative positions, there was no one left any more." The deterioration of the self-management principle was inevitable in the demographically unstable context of Khao I Dang.

4.1.2 Education System and Finance

In 1980, the KEDC established the first primary school in Khao I Dang. In 1984, after one school was closed because resettlement had caused a lack of students, there were nine primary schools with 6,000 - 7,000 students in grades 1 - 5. The student population was 20 per cent of the total of 30,500. There were 276 teachers who taught 4-hour sessions each in the morning and afternoon, five days a week. The class size was small with 20 - 30 students. By 1990, the number of primary schools had been reduced to 5 with 3,514 students which was about 23 per cent of the total population of nearly 15,000. The student to teacher ratio was 26:1. Primary students received 21 hours of instruction per week in grades 1 and 2, and 24 hours of instruction per week in grades 3, 4, and 5.[48]

46. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

47. Bredenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

48. UNHCR, 1990. *Self-Evaluation Report.* p. 1.

A secondary school was established in 1982. Like the primary school, the secondary school operated in two four-hour shifts to accommodate the greatest possible number of students. In 1984, there was one secondary school with 1,200 students which were reduced to 452. At this time, the student to teacher ratio was 15:1. Secondary students received 24 hours of instruction per week.

Additional programmes and activities developed under the KEDC such as adult literacy, special education, recreation, libraries, Women's Rehabilitation and Development Centre, Language and Literacy Centre, printing, and newsletters.

ADULT LITERACY: The adult literacy programme provided classes in basic reading, writing and numeric skills in Khmer. In 1984, 1,800 students were enrolled in the programme taught by 49 teachers. Almost half the student body comprised young adults (16-25 years old) and two-thirds of the students were women.[49] By 1990, the number of students was reduced to about 650. They received 8 hours of instruction per week. The student to teacher ratio was 23:1.[50]

SPECIAL EDUCATION: This programme provided special instruction to blind, deaf, speech impaired, mentally retarded or physically handicapped children and adults. The student enrollment in January, 1984 was 70, including 29 deaf, 9 blind, 14 mentally handicapped, 4 physically handicapped and 14 learning disabled students. The total number of students was reduced to 24 after June due to third country resettlement.[51] In 1991, the enrollment was 80. The student to teacher ratio was 4:1. However, in serious cases, children could receive specific therapy with the ratio of 1:1. Students in special education received at least 18 hours of instruction per week. They were also provided with one hour per week of cultural training.[52] Development of a Khmer braille system as well as efforts to teach sign language to the deaf children, especially, gained strong support from handicapped children and adults. However, in the case of the former, instruction was sometimes impeded by a total lack of books in Khmer braille.

49. Heywood-Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

50. UNHCR. *Self-Evaluation Report*. p. 4.

51. Heywood-Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

52. UNHCR. *Self-Evaluation Report*. pp. 6-7.

RECREATION: This programme was relatively self-sufficient. It provided for three public playgrounds, sports instruction in the schools and to the public, and co-ordination of sports competitions held in the camp.

LIBRARY PROGRAMME: The library system was organized into a large central library with branches located in outlying schools. However, libraries were not well-attended because: (1) most of the refugees were unfamiliar with a library system; (2) there was a dearth of Khmer-language books; (3) available English books were at too high level for many refugees to read; and (4) management was inadequate.[53]

WOMEN'S REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (WRDC): This programme was initially designed to help women increase their ability to cope with the camp situation and raise their self-esteem. In later years, it emphasized women's contributions to the family and community. The programme provided skills training (machine sewing, knitting, and weaving), home economics, numeracy and literacy classes, and pre-school day care centre for children of women in the programmes. The programme employed 90 refugee staff. Each year's enrolment was about 1,000 (1,200 in 1984). In 1990, 524 women graduated from various courses of the programme.[54]

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CENTRE: This centre was the only programme authorized to teach foreign language to refugees. Its initial objective, which was to enhance the resettlement opportunities of refugees during embassy interviews, shifted to increase English proficiency among refugee staff for better communication with non-refugee staff.[55]

PRINTING: This project was an on-site facility which printed all texts developed by the curriculum development office for dissemination to the schools and libraries. It also operated with the newsletter project which provided newsletters promoting the continuing development of Cambodian culture.

One piece of available data on finance is the education budget allotted to IRC in 1990, and the education expenditure in 1991 and 1992. The IRC was the major agency in-charge of both primary and secondary education, and most of the other educational programmes in Khao I Dang. The project funding which IRC received from UNHCR in 1990 was $152,762. This was broken into such items as primary school, secondary school, literacy training,

53. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

54. IRC Report, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

55. IRC Annual Report, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

vocational training, pre-school, teacher training and other education activities.[56] The education expenditure in 1991 was $299,843 which was 10 per cent of the total expenditure of $3,013,494. In 1992, the education expenditure was reduced to $189,747 which was 7.2 per cent of the total of $2,619,715. (Source: UNHCR regional office in Bangkok).

4.1.3 Personnel Management

Under UNHCR's budgetary support and supervision, refugee staff and non-refugee staff (mainly NGO personnel such as IRC) ran educational programmes. The programme offices and schools in Khao I Dang hired a wide variety of refugee staff ranging from book collators, machine operators, teachers, teacher trainers, and curriculum writers. There was also a sizable number of non-refugee staff who were engaged with NGOs. There were problems with regard both to refugee staff and non-refugee staff in maintaining proper levels of staff motivation and ensuring integrated staff co-ordination.

The biggest impediment to effective personnel management was the policy of third country resettlement which caused an on-going brain drain on refugee staff. It is necessary to explain, before proceeding to state the problem, that there were four types of refugees in Khao I Dang in terms of status. The refugees who entered Khao I Dang before 1982 (the majority of them arriving between 1979 and 1980) were called "Khao I Dang card holders" (KDs). Most of the people in this group came from rural areas, but it included a small, educated and experienced work force such as doctors and teachers, namely the "cream of Khao I Dang."[57] Initially, this "cream of Khao I Dang" occupied important positions as programme administrators and trainers. Since KDs were considered to be in a refugee-like situation, the opportunities of third country resettlement were open to them. The "cream of Khao I Dang" were quickly accepted by third countries; then a whole new team of administrators took their place and they too soon left for resettlement. Since each time saw less qualified staff taking over positions, there was a shortage of competent refugee administrators and so programme quality deteriorated. After some repetition of this kind of staff replacement, KDs remaining in the camps were "long-stayers" who had never been accepted by any country even after several embassy screenings.

The next group arrived in Khao I Dang illegally between February 1983 and August 1984. The Thai Government regularized their status in August 1984

56. UNHCR *Financial Report* 2. 1990.

57. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

and called them "family ration card holders" (FCs). Another group who arrived after August 1984 had their registration authorized in September 1985, and were called "ration card holders" (RCs).[58] FCs and RCs were not eligible for resettlement; however, the Thai Government eventually granted third countries permission to begin considering their resettlement. Most of the RCs were from the urban middle class and included teachers, students and government officials. Between 1985 and 1989, refugees who were from the same background as RCs illegally entered Khao I Dang. These persons, called "Khmer transfers" (KTs), were transferred in 1989 to a nearby camp for a year and sent back to Khao I Dang again. No opportunity for third country resettlement was given to KTs.

RCs became an effective work force and began occupying positions which KDs previously had taken. Knight recalls, "there were a lot of conflicts between KDs and RCs. While KDs were mostly rice farmers, RCs were educated urban people. Until 1985, KDs were in authority. But, as soon as RCs became registered, they took over KDs positions because NGOs preferred to hire RCs." At the end of 1987, however, when the Thai Government allowed RCs to be resettled, educated RCs began leaving, which resulted in a poorer quality of programme.

Not only did the resettlement result in a shortage of quality programme personnel, but it also caused many refugees to lose interest in working for the programmes. The majority of the Khao I Dang population held onto their desire for resettlement abroad until the last minute, when the camp finally closed in 1993. Although they could not pass the embassy screening processes, they never gave up their hopes of reaching third countries. Many of them were not interested in being involved in educational programmes as staff, because that would never help enhance their resettlement prospects. Instead, they wanted to learn foreign languages. "The most popular programme in the camp was always English," says Knight. "The refugees wanted to learn English for the embassy interviews. And they thought if they were to be resettled, they would need English. They were completely opposed to return to Cambodia."

Another impediment to personnel management was the "paternalistic nature" of the system. "The highly transitory nature of the refugee population and the resulting high turnover in Khmer administrative staff has led over the years to a disproportionate shift of programme authority to non-refugee staff."[59] A decline in the quality of programmes and an increase in the

58. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

59. Bredenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

incompetency of refugee staff in management[60] contributed to this phenomenon. Although non-refugee staff understood that they had to be willing to accept "varying degrees of administrative chaos as the price of fostering greater autonomy, self-management, and ultimately higher level of (staff) motivation,"[61] the programmes were, in practice, "run by foreigners." Knight recalls, "In general, programmes were overseen by non-refugee staff who controlled the budget. Even if most programmes had a non-refugee manager and a refugee supervisor, Khmer self-management was not really emphasized. The NGO was pretty much in control."

The high turnover of non-refugee staff was also seen as a problem. "Western staff often came to the camp as volunteers, having made a one-year, or in many cases, six-month commitment to the programme...with little or no understanding of the history of the programme or the people with whom they were dealing,"[62] Because of their short time commitment, many hurried to introduce improvement. When their efforts were about to reach fruition, their contracts expired and they had to leave. The handover of jobs between predecessors and successors was often ill-implemented without clear programme documentation. Thus, their roles were not smoothly integrated. "Many volunteers were university students, and stayed in the camp a short time. Some were not familiar with refugee issues but there were very motivated and responsible people," recalls Sophin Moantong, a former education co-ordinator in IRC, then in UNBRO.

4.1.4 Curriculum Development and Textbooks

Although the peculiarity of the Khmer language and the destruction of the education system by the Khmer Rouge made it difficult to develop a standardized curriculum for refugee children, the KEDC's effort to develop such a curriculum was well-organized. Its primary emphasis was on the primary school curriculum. Based upon a few remaining Khmer textbooks, a curriculum for the subjects of language, mathematics, and science for grades 1-5 was produced between 1980 and 1983. After the UNESCO-assisted book committee checked a revision of the curriculum, textbooks were printed - according to the revised curriculum - under the IRC printing project.

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60. In the later years of the camp, young translators who were also refugees sometimes took high managerial positions. The fact that very few non-refugee staff spoke Khmer gave the translators opportunities to wield power. However, there were conflicts between young translators and senior people. (Knight)

61. Bredenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

62. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

The additional effort of standardizing a curriculum was made when the secondary education programme was established in 1982. However, the secondary curriculum was poorly planned and lacked co-ordination with the primary school curriculum. There was no model curriculum to develop secondary textbooks. Moreover, since new advisory staff replaced some primary textbooks which were previously developed with new books translated from Philippine models, there was a serious lack of continuity between primary and secondary curricula. Neither systematic assessment of student needs nor an effort toward continuity of content from one grade to the next was made in later years.[63]

In order to better standardize a curriculum for all schools in the camp, the KEDC used the Singapore model as a base and adapted it to meet Cambodian cultural and educational needs. The Committee of Writers (a team of nine refugee writers)[64] translated it into Khmer according to UNESCO's advice. A high level of continuity was guaranteed by purchasing an entire set of books for grades 1 through 10. This effort was believed to be "both practical and time-saving"[65] although it was characterized by 'revision' rather than 'development'. The Singapore curriculum was chosen because: (1) its content was compatible with the experience of Cambodian people; (2) textbooks written in English were easier to translate for Cambodian refugees than Thai books (few refugees could read Thai); and (3) the Singapore curriculum was characterized by a balanced combination of innovative teaching methodologies with an element of traditional Asian instruction. However, it was not easy for refugee translators who were not professionals to translate the entire set of Singapore textbooks into Khmer within a limited time. A deterioration of quality was inevitable.

The difficulty in establishing better co-ordination and continuity in the curriculum development was mainly due to the lack of integration of advisory jobs between predecessors and successors, such as "the unwillingness of those directing curriculum efforts to build on what had come before." Various outside advisors came to work in the programme for a short time period and then left.[66]

4.1.5 Teaching and Teacher Training

The teacher training component of the KEDC had a vital and challenging role due to the fact that (1) less than 10 per cent of the total population had

63. *ibid.* p. 12.

64. Heywood-Yates, 1984. *Education for Kampucheans: Semi-Annual Report.* p. 3.

65. Heywood-Yates, 1985. *IRC Annual Report: Education Program, Khao I Dang.* p. 2.

66. *ibid.* p. 14.

post-secondary school certification: (2) many of the educated refugees had no interest in investing their time in a teacher training programme which would not contribute to fostering their resettlement goals; and (3) recruited refugee teachers were very young and had experienced the most educational deprivation during the Khmer Rouge period. The KEDC made efforts to recruit refugees with some pedagogical training in Cambodia or with post-secondary training. This core group of refugees was trained to be trainers, and they trained teachers in the schools and various other programmes.[67]

In the beginning of the teacher training programme, teacher trainers were assigned by school and responsible for the training needs of every subject in every grade. This approach proved to be impractical and inefficient. Thus, the programme was reformed so that trainers were assigned on the basis of grade in the primary schools and on the basis of subject matter in the secondary school. "All trainers responsible for a given grade or subject met together during the week to plan training and then assemble all the teachers together in a given central location for the execution of the training."[68] This arrangement improved the effectiveness and integration of training. However, the lack of qualified training personnel was still a serious problem.

In 1990, there were 31 pre-service teacher trainees for primary schools. The objectives of this course were: to solve the problem of the shortage of primary school teachers in Khao I Dang; to promote effective teaching in primary schools; and to introduce modern technology to primary schools.[69] The training was conducted six days a week from Monday to Saturday, between 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. They finished their 300 hours of theory including child development, techniques for teaching Khmer and arithmetic, lesson planning, and games and songs. Then teacher trainees prepared teaching aids (color coded letters, etc.), and began their 60-hour teaching practice, monitored by teacher trainers.[70] The graduation ceremony was held for these 31 trainees in October 1990. Eight of these were hired to teach in primary schools.[71]

Besides teacher training, there was a also a management training course (1989-90). This was an introductory course of management, including leadership training, problem solving, negotiation, and time management. The programme was, in fact, very successful. "This course gave refugees confidence to manage the programme," says Knight. "It was taught in English with

67. Bredenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

68. *ibid.*, p. 10.

69. IRC Quarterly Report (April-June) 1990. *Education Programme: Khao I Dang.* p. 2.

70. IRC Quarterly Report (July-September) 1990. *Education Programme: Khao I Dang.* p. 2.

71. IRC Quarterly Report (October- December) 1990. *Khao I Dang.* p. 2

translators. The translators in turn taught the course then with support of IRC staff. All the education supervisors attended this management training course. We found that young supervisors were very open to new ideas. On the other hand, older people were very closed and not receptive."

4.2 Educational Management in the UNBRO Camps – the Border Camp Case

4.2.1 Khmer Self-Management

UNBRO formally stated its "firm intention to retain border education activities under Khmer self-management and to limit UNBRO's input to resources and technical support."[72] UNBRO considered that, "in view of the necessarily dependent nature of the displaced Khmer living in the border camps, the term 'self-management' was more appropriate." It was acknowledged that, "as long as the Khmer remained in the camps, they would remain dependent upon outside assistance and that what actually should be sought is greater Khmer management of this assistance."[73] Khmer self-management meant "a process or direction with the goal of Khmer people running programmes as much as possible in all areas, including assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. Any job that can be done by a Khmer should be, with voluntary agency staff serving more as advisors, monitors and trainers, rather than direct service providers or managers."[74]

"The idea of Khmer self-management was developed in 1987" says Van de Velde. "Before 1986, the camps' situation was militarily and politically unstable. At that time, it was not appropriate to provide more flexibility to the management. But, when some sort of stability developed in the camps after 1986, we started thinking that sooner or later people would have to go back to Cambodia. There they would have to be responsible for making every single decision themselves in order to be integrated into local society. We decided to relax certain controls which we had over the refugees and tried to transfer our management responsibilities to the refugees as much as possible to make them aware of how to function in a normal society."

UNBRO endeavoured to work in this spirit with the Khmer education committee representing the politically divergent camps. A divided and dependent camp leadership placed political, military and other pressing demands on education. In practice, UNBRO had to deal with the influence of factional

72. Gyallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

73. Mastro, 1988. *Khmer Self-Management of Health Care in Thai-Kampuchean Border Encampments.* p. 3.

74. Summary of Major Points Raised at Khmer Self-Management Meeting, 18 October 1988.

politics and a lack of refugee staff with sufficient managerial skills. Bredenberg recalls "The history of camp education can be said to be the history of factions. Each camp had its own educational administration and own educational structure. Neither one of these reflected a democratic system. There was no accountability. There was incredible corruption. It was very, very difficult to hand funds and authority over to unaccountable administrators to foster Khmer self-management. We were always handicapped by these problems." Van de Velde says, "when Khmer self-management was less successful, it was mainly because of the pressure put on refugees by the political factions which mainly wanted to take advantage of UNBRO's assistance." In addition, there was a sheer lack of qualified Khmer with education management skills,[75] so that non-refugee staff were unwilling to support a management transfer of unqualified refugee personnel.

However, in later years, Khmer self-management became better implemented in the Human Development Programme. There were 20 education and skill training programmes including an early childhood programme, adult literacy, library, news bulletin, typing, and so on. Approximately 8,000 refugees were involved in these activities as president, supervisor, teachers, editors, guards, etc. "Many people came with different kinds of skills. They worked hard." said Dykstra. "Because Cambodian factional governments were active, they wanted to run programmes by themselves. Khmer self-management was implemented to a certain degree. Thus we did not regard ourselves as managers but as their counterparts," says Moantong.

4.2.2 Education System and Finance

The school system in the border camps had developed since 1981 and made rapid progress after 1986 when the camp situation became relatively stable. In 1989, there were 50 primary schools with 70,000 students in grades 1-5, and 6 secondary schools including 3 middle schools (colleges) and 3 combined middle/high schools (lycees) with 7,000 students. About 10,000 adults were involved in literacy and vocational skills programmes run by the Khmer Women's Association (KWA) as a social welfare service. Instruction was provided in the Khmer language by 1,300 primary and 300 secondary school teachers, except for some secondary subjects conducted in English. In addition, there were 100 part-time secondary teachers.

75. *ibid.*

In Site 2, there were 27 primary schools with 40,000 students, and 4 secondary schools with 6,000 students. In Site B, there were 11 primary schools with 10,890 students, and 1 secondary school with 1,010 students. In Site 8, there were six primary schools with 6,000 students and no secondary schools. The school buildings in these three major camps were ground-level huts made of bamboo and thatch, and located in the centre of each camp. Each classroom was equipped with a blackboard and rows of wooden benches and desks which were closely spaced.

As for primary education, UNBRO was given an important mandate to co-ordinate primary education in all of the border camps in the mid-1980s. UNBRO decided in 1987 not to rely on any other agency or organization but internally hire education officers and co-ordinators with assistance from the UNESCO regional advisor. "That (primary education) was where we needed one single homogeneous education system. We did not want to see the situation that several different NGOs run different primary education programmes in applying different standards with different systems and methodologies. It was very difficult to find one single agency, in our view, which was able to provide a consolidated education programme all along the border," says Van de Velde. "Although the Thai Government considered that since the refugees were accepted on a temporary basis, there was no need to develop programmes with long-term roles such as education. However, when it came to primary education, they understood the needs. They relaxed their policy and let UNBRO do primary education."

Primary schools functioned on a four-hour shift system in the morning and afternoon in order to accommodate more children in limited school space. The students received 20 hours of primary instruction per week.[76] A nine-month school term began in January and ended in October. Enrollment of students between 1987 and 1988 was 52,444 which was approximately 80% of the eligible primary school age population. Ages of students, in fact, were between 7 and 18 years old.[77] Many of them had missed primary education in the Pol Pot years. In some classes, there were 60 to 70 students. Grade 1 classes, especially, had large numbers of students. The teacher-student ratio was very high, 1:49 (UNBRO's desired ratio was 1:30).

As for secondary education, although the Thai Government did not allow UNBRO to introduce secondary education into the camps, secondary education had developed since 1982 directly by refugees themselves with assistance from

76. Thirty hours is accepted as an international minimum requirement. Gallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

77. Reynell, *op. cit.*, p. 167:

the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR), which recruited Cambodian teachers, trained them to be secondary school teachers, and supplied textbooks, reading materials and teaching kits. In 1989, the Thai Government, satisfied that the repatriation programme was within view, recognized the need for secondary education and COERR's role. Ban Sangae (Ampil) camp, the first camp to initiate secondary education, produced the first graduates - 43 students from secondary education - in 1988.[78]

In addition to school programmes, UNBRO assisted adult literacy education, early childhood education and special education run by the Khmer Women's Association (KWA). It should be noted that the illiteracy rate estimated by UNBRO was between 65 and 80 per cent. The rate of women was 30 per cent higher than that of men. Thus, adult literacy education was organized mainly for women. In 1986, there were 4,339 students enrolled in level 1 and 3,532 in level 2 throughout the camps.

The KWA, formed in each camp by female refugees in 1982, worked closely with the camp administration. "The administrator selected women to be in charge of programmes as members of the KWA. They worked as 'housewives' to take care of domestic problems relating to children, women, and the elderly," says Moantong.

As for the education budget and expenditure, in 1982 $140,000 out of $1.39 million for "Miscellaneous and Social Welfare" was allotted to the women's programme.[79] Since 1985 "a small but growing fraction of UNBRO's budget"[80] was devoted to education programmes. In 1987, $403,000, a little over 10 per cent of the total budget and an increase over the 1986 budget, was appropriated for the education programme.[81] In 1991, education expenditure was $973,082 which was 3.6% of the $26,716,166 total expenditure excluding food.[82] "In terms of money," says Leiper, "UNBRO did not have any problem or conflict. There was always very strong support from the international community such as the United States, Japan, France, the United Kingdom and Australia." Van de Velde recalls, "We never really had any problem in terms of budget. When we had budget crises, we appealed to donors, then money came quite quickly due to their genuine humanitarian concern. Most of the donors believed UNBR0 to be a cost-effective operation."

78. Gyallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 267-268.

79. UNBRO, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

80. Gyallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

81. *ibid*

82. UNHCR/UNBRO Statement, Cumulative Summary of Monthly Expenditures for the Month Ended December 1991.

4.2.3 Personnel Management

The Bangkok office of UNBRO recruited staff who not only had good curriculum vitae but were also quite personable. Since UNBRO was a large operation with 200 staff, it had many personal contacts in the field of relief assistance. The recommendation from the internal staff was also highly valued. "Team spirit was so important in UNBRO that we did not want to run a risk by recruiting people whom we did not know at all," states Van de Velde. "People from NGOs had advantages because they knew the border camps and Khmer problems. So they could start working quickly without any training. There was not a frequent staff turnover. Turnover was much less than in other UN organizations or operations."

As for the education programmes, unlike UNHCR which assumed responsibility only for budgetary control and camp supervision, UNBRO was directly involved in running primary education programmes in the border camps. UNBRO's education committee was formed in 1986. Its central office was located in the centre of Site 2. The 24 members were selected by the camp administrations and they, in turn, elected their chairman. UNBRO staff served the committee in technical support; however, they often affected the committee's decisions.

A regular meeting was held once a month with 30 to 40 people including both refugee members and non-refugee staff. Non-refugee staff were recruited through recommendation of current UNBRO staff or interviews from such NGOs as IRC, Redd Barna, COERR and CYR. They were required to have sufficient working experience in the field of education. Despite relatively low salaries, most of the staff were highly motivated and hard-working. Many of them spoke Khmer.

4.2.4 Curriculum Development and Textbooks

In primary education in the early 1980s, IRC assisted in curriculum development and introduced new teaching methodologies for a curriculum which was similar to the pre-1970s primary curriculum in Cambodia. The curriculum developed in the Khao I Dang camp became a model curriculum for border camp education. Subjects included Khmer, arithmetic, history, geography, hygiene and science. Secondary education was not officially sanctioned by the Thai Government, but had begun since 1982 in the Ban Sangae camp with COERR's informal assistance. Subjects included

mathematics, English, Khmer, natural and physical science, history, geography, civics, and ethics.[83]

A considerable shortage of educational materials was a problem in the camps. Since the Khmer Rouge destroyed the entire educational system, there were virtually no textbooks left in Cambodia. Primary education textbooks used in the camps were printed in the early 1980s on Roneo machines at the printing house in the Khao I Dang camp. In 1987, there were no history or science books for grades 2, 5 and 6, and no mathematics textbooks for grades 5 and 7. None of the existing materials included student workbooks.

Further development of the curriculum occurred in 1987 after UNBRO was given a mandate to organize primary education in all of the camps. It was believed that "UNBR0 was in a better position than the unco-ordinated voluntary agencies to promote a standardized curriculum for all the camps and foster greater Khmer self-management."[84] Eighty-two Cambodian education representatives from three camps (Site 2, Site 8 and Site B) gathered for a five-day UNBRO workshop for establishing an action plan for the two-year primary education programme in 1987. In the secondary curriculum at the schools in Ampil camp (Site 2 North, formerly Ban Sangae), 40 per cent of the 24 hours of teaching per week devoted to mathematics including algebra, plane and non-Euclidean geometry, and trigonometry, and also the sciences including chemistry and physics. Khmer and English languages were emphasized as well in the secondary curriculum.

Under the two-year enhanced primary education programme of UNBRO (1988-89), UNBRO's curriculum office began searching for new educational materials and hired a corps of Cambodian researchers, editors, calligraphers and artists to assist in text preparation. UNBRO also contracted with IRC to install printing facilities in Site 2 and Site B for printing textbooks, which began in February 1989.

The secondary schools relied partly on surviving Khmer texts but also on new materials for mathematics and science provided by Site 2 education headquarters. Many books were from Singapore, and some from France and Thailand.

There was a problem with regard to political affiliation of the border camps. Since the camps were administered by the aforementioned three political factions, the vocabularies of textbooks and history information which the faction administration wanted to include in the textbooks sometimes differed with each

83. Gyallay-Pap. *op. cit.*, pp. 264-265.

84. *ibid.*, p. 266.

faction. Bredenberg says: "The education administrators in Site B were all appointed by FUNCINPEC, and were Sihanoukist. They were not at all democratic. Textbooks developed by UNBRO were supposed to be used in all camps. When the books were presented to Site D, they refused to use them. They thought that some of the terminologies were not deferential enough to the king."

4.2.5 Teaching and Teacher Training

From the beginning of education in the border camps, there was the serious problem of a dearth of qualified teachers in all levels of education. Cambodian teachers perished or fled to the West after the 1970s. In 1987, there were 1,300 primary school teachers, most of whom lacked formal education above the primary school level. In the UNBRO administered examinations on subjects including mathematics, Khmer, history and geography, 30 per cent passed the primary level, 60 per cent passed the grade 3 level, and 10 per cent were below grade 3 level.[85] Teachers themselves wanted to acquire teaching skills and receive methodological training. They experienced difficulty in teaching subjects such as science and geography above the grade 3 level. However, prior to 1988, primary school teacher training was infrequent and irregular.

In April and May of 1987, a pilot project for teacher training was carried out in Site B. Since Site B was near Buriram, a Thai province, five Khmer-speaking Thai teachers at Buriram Teacher's College led this project. Five teachers taught project management, Khmer, economics, education and science respectively, and provided further instruction on leadership education. The course was held 6 hours a day from Monday to Friday for 2 months. About 150 teachers took this course in Site B. Poomjit Ruangdej, a teacher training specialist at Buriram Teacher's College, notes that "Cambodian teachers were very enthusiastic about learning teaching methodologies. They understood the importance of what they were doing from a long-term perspective regarding Cambodia's education."

Under the new primary school programme between 1988 and 1989, teachers received training twice a week in "subject-oriented teaching methodologies that include: discovery, competition (games), demonstration, imitation, outdoor survey, question-answer, sensory coding, scientific method, discussion, and interviewing."[86] However, another problem occurred. As soon as trained teachers were produced, they became targets for recruitment by

85. Education Workshop Report. *op. cit.*, p. 7.

86. Education Workshop Report, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-17.

voluntary agencies which were able to provide them with "fringe benefits" such as "extra supplies, donations, skills training and foreign language studies".[87] These benefits were often more attractive than a teacher's weekly salary of 7 kilos of rice and 10 tins of canned fish provided by UNBRO. Thus, attendance at the teacher's training sessions gradually declined.

In 1987, the number of Cambodian teacher-trainers in training for the two-year UNBRO programme increased to 60 from 12, working under 18 UNBRO education staff (up from 2 at the beginning of the year) including 15 Khmer speaking educational trainers and a UNESCO advisor. The teacher-trainers received instruction in content, child development, and general pedagogy. The workshops were held for the purpose of improving the training, curriculum, and materials.

As stated earlier, the Thai Government was not in favour of the development of secondary education. Thus, secondary education in the camps was carried out on a limited scale. Since the presence of adequate and qualified teachers was so limited, any secondary education weakened the quality of primary school education, because the few good teachers would move up to that level. However, secondary teacher-training classes were initiated at Ban Sangae camp in 1982. In the late 1980s, a teacher-training programme was begun under COERR's auspices in Site 2, and Site B started its own pedagogical centre. In 1989, there were about 300 secondary teachers in the camps, who were recruited from leadership positions in hospitals, administration, and other programmes. Most of them were unskilled in secondary school teaching.

4.3 Other Programmes

4.3.1 Activities of Voluntary Agencies

There were a number of voluntary agencies working at the Khao I Dang camp as well as the border camps. They included: the American Refugee Committee (ARC); Cama Service, Inc. (CAMA); Care International in Thailand (CARE); Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR); Christian Outreach (COR); Caring for Young Refugees (CYR); Handicap International (HI); International Rescue Committee (IRC); Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee (JSRC); Japan International Volunteer Centre of Thailand (JVC); Malteser-Hilfsdienst Auslandsdienst E.V. (MHD); Médecins-sans-Frontières-France (MSF-F); Médecins-sans-Frontières-Holland (MSF-H); Oeuvres Hospitalières Françaises de l'Ordre de Malte (OHFOM); Redd Barna Thailand (RBT); Soutien à l'Initiative Privée pour l'Aide à la Reconstruction des 3 Pays

87. *ibid*, p. 8

Du Sud-Est (SIPAR); Thai-Chinese Refugee Service (TCRS); and Youth with a Mission (YWAM) (Table 5).

Those agencies provided regular services in the fields of health, nutrition, education, vocational training, and distribution of food, household supplies and clothing. They have received "high marks for their level of technical expertise and efficiency in providing services."[88] In 1991, there were 14 agencies working in Khao I Dang (Table 6). "There was a high level of NGO assistance in Khao I Dang. The camp could be considered the best served refugee camp in history," says Robinson. To give an example of NGO activities in the border camps, nine agencies worked to provide services at the Site 2 South (Table 7).

The following three agencies were regarded as the most effective NGOs that organized educational programmes in the camps. The Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR) was established by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand in 1978, to give requisite relief assistance to victims of natural disasters and refugees who seek asylum in Thailand. COERR organized diverse programmes including education, vocational training, language courses, and social services both in Khao I Dang and in the border camps. As for secondary education, in particular, COERR was the only agency in the border camps starting secondary education in Ban Sangae camp (Ampil, later included in Site 2) in 1982, and expanding it to other camps in 1987. Not only UNBRO supplied funds for COERR's programmes, but also COERR's own funding sources, such as Catholic and non-Catholic organizations in Thailand and abroad.[89] "Once we get permission from the government and enough money, we can be very flexible in providing refugees with various assistance. We have recruited many foreign professionals such as doctors and teachers for our programmes. When they return to their countries, they will talk about our programmes. Next time, their friends and colleagues may want to join us" says Yontarakit Chanprasit, Deputy Executive Director of COERR.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) was founded in 1933 at the request of Albert Einstein to assist anti-Nazis fleeing from Hitler's Germany. Today, IRC operates in five continents and covers two basic areas of activity: (1) emergency relief, including medical, educational and child care assistance, to refugees in crisis areas of Africa, Asia and Central America; (2) permanent resettlement of refugees on a world-wide scale. In Thailand, IRC began working for Indochinese refugees in 1976 including the provision of a range of

88. Gyallay-Pap, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

89. *COERR Annual Report, No. 17.* Bangkok, 1992.

educational, health care and sanitation services to both Khao I Dang and the border camps.[90] In Khao I Dang, IRC was in charge of most of the educational programmes such as primary and secondary schools, adult literacy, Language and Literacy Centre (LLC), Women's Rehabilitation and Development Programme (WRDP), visual arts programme, library programme, and a special school and infant stimulation programme. IRC also started a printing project in Khao I Dang in 1982, and at Site 2 as well as Site B in 1989.

The Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee (JSRC) was established in 1979 by Soto Zen Buddhists to help refugees in Southeast Asia. In view of the limited formal assistance, JSRC created its own strategy to help refugees effectively work for their future. Considering each human being's self-perception based on culture, language, and philosophy, JSRC co-ordinates various projects such as the establishment of community centres, enlarged printing facilities, library operations, and skills training programmes, for educational development and cultural preservation. In particular, JSRC's printing project won a good reputation. Formerly established in Sa Kaeo camp in 1980, the printing facilities (Roneo machine, etc.) were moved to Khao I Dang when Sa Kaeo was closed. In 1989, 49 refugee staff produced 62,500 books and reports.[91] Tatsuya Hata, Director of JSRC, observed that "we have been working for a long time to help beneficiaries become self-sufficient. In recent years, Japanese people have come to better understand refugee problems. Many young people, mostly university students, are interested in our activities. Moreover, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have started offering subsidies to us, so that we can renovate our facilities and increase our programmes."

The Committee for Co-ordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPT), formed in 1975 with 15 voluntary agencies, co-ordinated NGOs' aid efforts and activities for displaced persons from Cambodia, Burma, and Laos.[92] The membership reached a high mark of 52 agencies in mid-1981 and fell to 33 in 1992. The CCSDPT held regular meetings to exchange information and discuss activities and problems. It was funded mainly by contributions from member agencies and partly by a grant from the United Nations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In 1980, since a great number of NGOs came to work at the Thai-Cambodian border from all over the world (mainly from the United States

90. IRC Annual Report, *op. cit.*

91. *Bankaeng Post, No. 76,* JSRC-SVA. 1990.

92. CCSDPT, 1986. *The CCSDPT Handbook Refugee Service in Thailand.*

and Europe) offering help to Cambodian displaced persons, coordination of such a number of agencies was then beyond the capacity of CCSDPT. No one was able to effectively co-ordinate so many agencies. Thus, there was considerable duplication of programmes within a camp. In 1982, however, when UNBRO started, the Thai Government requested that UNBRO become the sole co-ordinating agency on the Thai-Cambodian border. UNBRO received funds from donor communities, then assigned programmes to agencies according to its policy, "one programme by one agency at one camp."[93] In the beginning, some NGOs were reluctant to agree with the way UNBRO coordinated because they wanted to provide services with their own technical expertise wherever they wanted to run their programmes. But, those NGOs, realizing that they were funded almost entirely by UNBRO, had to co-operate. NGOs sometimes needed to compete with one another for funds to implement programmes.

93. Scott Leiper, former Deputy Field Co-ordinator.

Table 5. Voluntary Agencies (NGOs) at the Border Camps

	Site 2 South	Site 2 North	Site B	Site 8	K I D
ARC	*	*			
CAMA				*	
CARE					*
COERR	*	*	*	*	
COR	*				*
CYR					*
HI	*	*	*	*	*
IRC	*	*			*
JSRC	*	*			*
JVC					*
MHD	*	*		*	*
MSF-F					*
MSF-H			*		
RBT					*
OXFAM			*	*	*
SIPAR-OM		*	*	*	*
TORS	*				*
YWAM		*			*

Source: CCSDP Directory, July 1992.

Table 6. NGO's Activities at the Khao I Dang Camp

CARE	- Distribution of basic rations, household supplies, cooking fuel - Nutrition education - Supplementary feeding
COR	- Construction & maintenance - Mother & child health care - Skills training
CYR	- Pre-school education, teachers' training - Mothers' training - Skills training (weaving, sewing, etc.)
HI	- Prosthetic/orthopaedic devices workshop - Physical rehabilitation - Technical training centre
IRC	- Social infrastructure (sanitation, fire prevention, road & drainage maintenance, toilet construction & maintenance) Health education - Physical rehabilitation & infant stimulation - Education/schooling (primary, secondary, teachers' training, curriculum development, adult literacy, special education, pre-school library, printing) - Recreation
JSRC	- Printing - Pottery and ceramics making - Library services - Cultural programmes (drama, dance, music, stone carving) - Sports programmes
JVC	- Vocational training school (auto mechanics)
MHD	- Medical care Physical rehabilitation
MSF	- Medical care
OXFAM	- Traditional medicine - Psychiatric care - Training programme for mental health workers

RBT	- Social welfare & counselling - Recreation - Self-dependent training (camp life orientation) - Marriage registration service - Employment opportunity service
SIPAR	- French language teaching
TORS	- Chinese primary/pre-school - Cultural activities - Social service/counselling - Small business management
YWAM	- Skills training (sewing agriculture) - Education/schooling (2 pre-schools) - Banking and mailing - Agricultural assistance

Source: CCSDP Directory, July 1992

Table 7. NGOs' Activities at the Site 2 South

ARC	- Medical care - Medical training - Distribution (food, household supply, cloth) - Social welfare & counselling
COERR	- Education/schooling - Skills training - Mailing - Care of unaccompanied minors - Aid to elderly - Health education
COR	- Mother and child health care - Child-spacing activities - Prosthetic/orthopaedic devices workshop
HI	- Physical rehabilitation - Special education for handicapped
IRC	- Khmer border printing project - Landmine awareness programme - Distribution (clothing, books)
JSRC	- Medical care (Leprosy)
MHD	- Physical rehabilitation for Leprosy patients
SIPAR-OM	- French language teaching - School of Management - Children's library
TORS	- Skill training (sewing, hairdressing, baking) - Social service/counselling - Cultural activities - Small business management

Source: CCSDP Directory, July 1992

4.3.2 Strategy for PTSD Reduction

Psychiatric problems in the camp populations - created by the trauma of the Khmer Rouge period (1975-1979), by more than ten years of confinement in the refugee camps, and by almost total dependency upon relief agencies - were frequently observed.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a Western category of psychiatric disease considered to be caused by traumatic experiences of life-threatening, violent, hurtful and terrifying situations. "The major symptoms of PTSD fall into four categories:

1. Recurrent memory phenomena related to the traumatic event.

   This might include nightmares, daytime memories and flashbacks (i.e. reliving the trauma as if it is actually happening again).

2. Persistent avoidance of anything associated with the trauma.

3. Diminished emotional responsiveness to the external world.

4. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal that were not present before the trauma (such as sleep disturbances, being on guard, and an exaggerated startle response)."[94]

PTSD is believed to be "a grief reaction related to the death of a loved one" or, in some cases, "a form of cultural bereavement related to the loss of homeland, culture, tradition, and national identity."[95]

A remarkable study was made by the Harvard Programme in Refugee Trauma of the Harvard School of Public Health with the co-sponsorship of the World Federation for Mental Health.[96] The study indicated that nearly all respondents[97] were exposed to massive trauma between 1975 and 1979. Almost all experienced lack of food, water, shelter, and medical care. Many suffered brainwashing, beatings and other forms of head injury, torture, and sexual violence. Although major violence and traumatic events markedly declined in the 1980s, many people were still traumatized due to deteriorated camp conditions with ongoing violence and overcrowding. Human rights' abuses were frequently observed related to the increasing power of the Cambodian factions. The camp population continued to suffer lack of food and water, serious injury caused by shelling, grenade attacks, armed robbery by bandits, and knifing.[98]

Most of the adult population had some form of PTSD symptoms or depression. A majority of the survey respondents showed avoidance of thoughts, feelings and activities in order to cope with their trauma. Frequent

94. Mollica. et.al., 1990, *Repatriation and Disability: A Community Study of Health, Mental Health and Social Functioning of the Khmer Residents of Site 2. Volume I Khmer Adults*. p. 56

95. *ibid*

96. The study is aimed at providing information on mental health conditions of the Site 2 population for developing an effective repatriation programme.

97. Respondents were 1,000 randomly selected households including adults between 18-35 years of age and children between 12-13 years of age.

98. Mollica, et. al., *op. cit.*, pp. 62-64.

recurrent memory phenomena such as thoughts or memories of the painful and terrifying events (feeling that the event is happening again) were also reported. Depressive symptoms such as a feeling of having no future, hopelessness, and hyperarousal reactions were prominent as well. PTSD was more common in males, widows and highly educated persons who survived the Khmer Rouge era.

Approximately 25 per cent of the adult respondents attended school or some other training programme with the average attending five days a week. Men were more likely than women (31% : 22%), and single persons were more likely than married ones or widows (61% : 24%, and 20%). Literate persons or those who spoke some other language than Khmer were more likely to attend school. The most common subjects studies were Khmer language, English language, Khmer history, and health and nutrition. Those who did not attend school said they could not because of domestic responsibilities[99] or the need to earn a living.

As for children, when asked what they felt were the most hurtful and terrifying experiences of their lives (the respondents could indicate more then one event), 56 per cent reported shelling and bombing and 52 per cent indicated having had to go without food, water and shelter. Twenty-nine per cent reported separation from family members. Most of the children showed somatic symptoms of emotional distress (ED) which was often associated with poor health status. As behavioural symptoms, more than 70 per cent of respondents reported having frequent headaches, more than 60 per cent indicated dizziness, trouble sitting still, demands for attention, and rapid mood changes. They also showed compulsive behaviour (58%), dependency (57%) or poor concentration (49%).[100]

Almost 100 per cent of the children attended school. The majority attended school 5 days a week (79%); 20 per cent attended 6 days a week and 1 per cent attended 7 days a week. Seventy per cent of both boys and girls had between 3-5 years of education. More boys than girls had over 6 years of education (16% : 11%).

While they had good school attendance, sometimes they did not learn well due to the above-mentioned conditions. Teachers in the camp's school frequently reported their students' inability to concentrate and learn.

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99. They had any of the following household responsibilities: cooking, cleaning house, taking care of children, washing clothes, collecting rations, carrying water, gardening, collecting firewood, finding extra food, making thatch, and milling rice.

100. Mollica. et. al., 1990. *Repatriation and Disability: A Community Study of Health, Mental Health and Social Functioning of the Khmer Residents of Site 2, Volume 2 Khmer Children (12-13 years of age).* pp. 16-19.

For the people in the camp who were more or less at high risk for psychological disability, how did education or any form of vocational training work as an effective means to successfully overcome their long years of ongoing trauma? While the study proved that the presence of Western scaled symptoms of PTSD and emotional distress were high in Site 2, the real meaning of these symptoms was unknown. Moreover, this study did not investigate to what extent education was effective in regard to alleviating the distress caused by traumatic experiences and to helping people cope with the complexities of living in the camp. However, the study concluded that in spite of the high prevalence of PTSD and depression, these conditions did not significantly impair the social functioning of adults in the camp, except for non-working women who were more depressed, illiterate and uneducated. Moreover, in spite of a high prevalence of physical and emotional symptoms, the children were highly motivated to learn and attend school and had the drive and optimistic desire of most normal young people to make something out of themselves. Thus, education could be effective for those who were relatively vulnerable but who wanted to be educated, such as children and illiterate women.

Although military confinement and humanitarian assistance generated pathological dependency, low self-esteem and lack of initiative, the strategy of "Khmer self-management" adopted in both types of camp was effective to a certain extent in replacing refugee passivity and dependency with self-reliance and initiative. Although it could not be fully operational, the effort was made to foster Khmer grass-roots initiative. Among activities fostering Khmer self-management, the Khmer Women's Association (KWA) became the main body for helping vulnerable women and children rehabilitate their lives, offering mental health training and providing opportunities for professional social work. Some Khmer expatriates from abroad were recruited for leadership or teaching positions in order to serve as a bridge between the refugees and the outside world. The study suggested that a clearer camp-wide policy of Khmer self-management should have been enforced with the consensus of all agencies involved. In addition, the study revealed the importance of families in supporting disabled and dependent adults and children, promoting school attendance and transmitting cultural knowledge and values. Stable homes were especially necessary for educating refugee children.

4.3.3 Introduction of New Subjects and Technologies

In 1992, UNBRO offered two new programmes in the border camps. One was the Landmine Awareness Programme (LMAP), which IRC had previously carried out in 1990 with funding from the Office of the Secretary General's Special Representative (OSRSG). The programme was created in

response to the high number of casualties and injuries from land mines and unexploded ordinance. In 1990, there were some 5,000 amputees in the border camps resulting from land mines. In order to minimize the number of casualties, the programme focused on providing the refugees with a sense of awareness, knowledge and skills to recognize and avoid the land mines. Under the new arrangement, UNBRO (hiring most of the formerly involved IRC staff) initiated a massive information and education campaign through posters, videos and other forms of public media as well as a three-hour training course. LMAP activities occurred in the seven border camps and over 300 camp-based refugee teachers were trained. The programme was vital in preventing further injuries after the refugees returned to Cambodia.

Another programme was the Human Rights Information Project, which had also been initiated by OSRSG in 1991. The activities under this project included the instruction of refugee trainers for human rights education. The project also focused on dissemination of human rights information, in which videos using Cambodian actors proved to be very popular in the camps. The human rights workers undertook outreach activities to disseminate information on repatriation. These two programmes were phased out by the end of June 1992. Dykstra points out, "It was difficult to teach in the school because the regular classes were taught only 3 hours either in the morning or in the afternoon. However, for the dissemination of human rights, there were many programmes. Camp newspapers carried articles regarding human rights; handouts and posters were provided in the camps. And there was a Human Rights Day."

New technologies such as computers were difficult to use in the camps in the Thai-Cambodian border areas.[101] Dykstra recalled that "electricity was limited in the camps. Moreover, a large percentage of illiterate people in the camp population had never seen computers. It would have been difficult to have computers commonly used in the camps. Furthermore, it is difficult to implement the Educational Management Information System (EMIS) in this kind of situation." Van de Velde noted that "Because of limited electricity as well as limits from a financial and security perspective, it would be difficult to introduce EMIS."

101. COERR for the first time started a computer course in a camp inside Thailand in 1993. The Ministry of Interior of the Thai Government registered 516 Burmese displaced persons in December 1992 and housed them in the camp called "Safe Area", located in Ratchaburi province. COERR organized the computer course teaching DOS, Wordstar, Lotus 23, and Windows. Students learned wordprocessing using five computers in either morning or afternoon classes.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

The Cambodian refugees spent years of life confined as displaced persons in the camps in the Thai-Cambodian border area. There was a large percentage of illiterate refugees due to the war-devastated education history of Cambodia in the decade of the 1970s. Moreover, the refugees were more or less psychologically or physically damaged by their past political situations in Cambodia and recent traumas in the camps (lack of physical safety, ongoing violence, and overcrowding). In spite of such conditions, or because of them, there was a huge demand for education in the camps. Some remarkable educational developments occurred both in the UNHCR camp (Khao I Dang) and the UNBRO border camps. There were high-level achievements among primary and secondary school students, an increased level of literacy among adults, and the development of special education facilities for the handicapped. The standardized curriculum was used in all of the camps and well co-ordinated teacher training produced a number of teachers who were to be responsible for the children's future.

However, one of the remaining questions concerns the type of education offered in the camps. The educational system in the camps was based on the Western system emphasizing productivity and efficiency. Was it appropriate for Cambodian people who were mainly agriculturalists attached to their land and their traditional beliefs and culture? It has been pointed out that the disparity between the modern Western school system and the reality of Cambodian culture and society was apparent in the absence of artistic, religious, and other traditional cultural subjects through which the Cambodians have traditionally understood themselves (Gyallay-Pap, 1989). The Western industrial development norms should have been re-examined and redefined in light of old and new Cambodian realities and needs.

Another question concerns the interpretation of the principle of Khmer self-management. Was the desire of the refugees to take charge of their own lives compatible with the purpose of the non-refugee advisory staff to transfer a certain degree of their authority to the refugees? A sizable number of the

refugees themselves worked for programmes as staff according to the Khmer self-management guidelines. And many non-refugee staff strived to bring more refugees into the management arena. However, resettlement (Khao I Dang), internal conflict (mainly caused by the Cambodian resistance factions), a shortage of qualified refugees and their constant reliance on non-refugee staff served to impede the realization of complete self-sufficiency. Non-refugee staff were somewhat reluctant to relax their control over the programmes due to their fears of chaos caused by refugee management. A clear camp-wide policy on the desirability of Khmer self-management needed to be made. However, since refugee staff were capable of learning from their errors, allowing them to make mistakes contributed to improving both self-management and internal administration in the long run.

Educating people in the camps by schooling and training means empowering them in all their activities, from controlling their own lives to participating on a more equal basis in society, and eventually freeing themselves from diverse forms of exploitation. Basic literacy gained through education is fundamental for people's self-esteem and also for the preservation of their language and culture. Stable family environments, providing the refugees with psychological support and encouragement, are undoubtedly necessary so that camp residents can be properly educated. Then they would be prepared for economic self-sufficiency, with knowledge as their weapon for productive life in Cambodia or in their new homes.

The completion of the repatriation of some 360,000 Cambodian refugees in 1993 meant the conclusion of the history of Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand. Back in their native places where material resources are extremely limited and infrastructure is inadequate, they have started making their living from scratch. They are no longer provided with food and the necessities of life which they had received when they were in the refugee camps. They are not taken care of any more. They have to rely on themselves, standing on their own two feet and managing many complicated issues by themselves with their newly acquired weapons, namely literacy and skills.

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