

1. Livelihood of Burmese migrants in Thailand, and the Role of Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs) – Áine Rickard, Graduate Student, Newman Research Centre, School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

Abstract: Livelihoods refer to the strategies that individuals and households strive to build in order to meet their daily needs within a context of poverty or vulnerability. As yet, the livelihoods created by some of the three million Burmese migrants living in Thailand remain under-researched, in particular away from the Burmese-Thai border region. In addition, there are a number of Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs) currently established in Thailand which aim to promote stronger livelihood opportunities for city-dwellers, including those of Burmese migrants. However, little academic research has documented how NGO programmes are influencing the livelihoods of these communities through interventions. At a time when NGOs have become increasingly important in the implementation of international development policy, it is important to understand the role that such NGO interventions play amongst vulnerable populations. As such, my doctoral project in human geography aims to examine how NGO interventions in Thailand are influencing the livelihood strategies of urban dwellers, including Burmese migrants. Specifically, what do these programmes consist of, what are the subjective experiences of these programmes by those involved, and how are such programmes mobilised in development discourse more broadly. In examining the interplay of such processes, this project hopes to provide a timely addition to the academic literature, of particular importance given the current economic and political transformations occurring in Myanmar and the reliance made of Burmese migrants within the Thai economy. In this paper, I provide an overview of my research which is currently in the pre-fieldwork stage. Commencing in early 2015, data-collection utilising an ethnographic approach of participant observation, focus groups, and individual interviews will be undertaken to explore the pertinent research themes outlined above.

2. Young Burmese migrants' perceptions of learning and livelihood in Myanmar and along the Thai-Myanmar border – Oh Su-Ann, Visiting Research Fellow, Myanmar Studies Programme, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

Abstract: Given the changes that are occurring in Myanmar, young Burmese migrants are now taking into account learning opportunities at home and in Thailand when weighing up their education choices. This has had at least two consequences on the learning landscape: schools catering to Burmese migrants and refugees on the Myawaddy-Maesot border are now considering adapting their curriculum to the one at home, and certain schools in Myanmar are making efforts to accept the learning acquired by students on the border. This paper examines the perceptions of young Burmese migrants on learning and livelihoods in Myanmar and Thailand given these changes. It considers the learning and employment choices that Burmese migrants make

in both Myanmar and Thailand, and how these are framed by the limited employment opportunities available, the types of learning provided and the learning institutions available in both countries. Research on education and employment along this border has tended to fall into two distinct camps: refugee schools or migrant education. In reality, education, learning and employment in this borderland are much more interconnected than is suggested by the literature. In addition, not all schools are created equal. Some are connected to large faith-based networks, some are training grounds for community leaders, some are connected to schools in Myanmar, while others form part of the process of social reproduction by which young Burmese nationals become integrated into the Thai economy, eventually replacing their parents in the factories, fisheries and farms of Thailand. Using in-depth interviews conducted with young migrants and refugees studying and working in and around Maesot, this paper explores the choices they make, the unconventional routes they have taken and how these are affected by political, economic and social changes taking place in Myanmar.

3. Education for Human Rights of Burmese Migrant Workers: A Case Study of DEAR Burma School – Pechet Men, Independent Researcher, Cambodia

Abstract: The case study is DEAR (Development of Education and Awareness of Refugees from Burma) Burma school, which is a project of Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB). DEAR Burma school provides non-formal education to migrant workers, particularly language training in English and Thai, and coursework on labor rights, migrant workers' rights, women's rights, human rights, and computer skills. DEAR Burma was established in 2003. There were 39 informants contacted for interviews and two sessions of Focus Group Discussion were conducted with 13 other students. Burmese migrant workers in Thailand speak Burmese and their ethnic languages. As Thai people generally do not understand these languages, there are problems and misunderstandings that can cause arguments or conflicts. Moreover, the migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. In particular, their rights as migrant workers are restricted. In order to deal with these situations, they go back to school to receive education to improve their knowledge and security. Participants come to DEAR Burma school so they can use their knowledge in their workplace, to communicate, to negotiate, to entertain, to access information, and to look for a better job. According to the findings, education has positive impacts in migrant workers' lives. With regard to the informants, though Thailand has not signed the convention on migrant workers, their rights as migrant workers have been improved. Their livelihood, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, self-esteem, and right to access information have been promoted. Additionally, troubles with Thai police and humiliation by other people, which was of concern to them, have been less frequent. Some participants use their knowledge of language to negotiate with their boss to obtain their own passports or to express their ideas, or to talk to police if they stop them. When migrant workers know more about their rights, they can start to negotiate and challenge unfairness and, most importantly, to stand up for themselves.

4. Myanmar Illegal Immigrants in Indonesia: the perceptions on their own country - Dedi Zuraidi, lecturer, School of Social and Political Science Raja Haji, Tanjungpinang, Riau Island Province, Indonesia

Abstract: Recent years have seen an increasing number of illegal migrants from Myanmar to neighbouring countries, including Indonesia, as asylum seekers and refugees. Indonesia has 13 immigration detention centres which are spread in different locations nation-wide, where thousands of illegal immigrants from various countries are being processed. In Indonesia, the number of Myanmar illegal immigrants is increasing, and their cases are being handled by the Indonesian Immigration authorities and the representatives of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and the IOM (International Organization for Migration) in Indonesia. This article focuses on the fundamental reasons why the Myanmar immigrants left their country illegally and how they perceive the current developments in Myanmar in the political, economic and socio-cultural sectors.
