



MIGRATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL



MISSION IN THAILAND

AUSCO

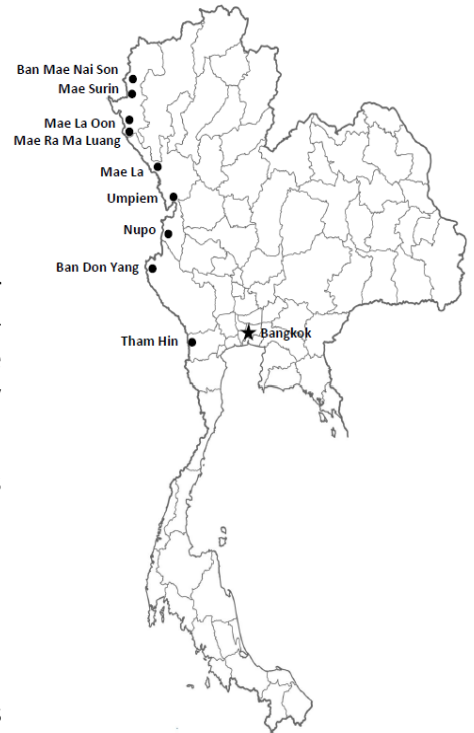
Australian Cultural Orientation Program

For over 10 years, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Government of Australia have worked in partnership in order to deliver pre-departure Australian Cultural Orientation (AUSCO) training for Australia-bound refugees and humanitarian entrants. The program is funded by the Australian Department of Social Services (DSS) and has been delivered by IOM since 2003.

IOM Thailand is host to the AUSCO Global Office which oversees permanent AUSCO implementing and coordinating missions in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Kenya. AUSCO is further delivered in Sudan and Uganda, and through mobile locations in Ghana, Guinea, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Costa Rica.

The program's objectives are several-fold and include empowering refugees and humanitarian entrants with information on life in Australia, whilst also encouraging language training on arrival and equipping participants with the basic skills and necessary tools needed to deal with initial settlement concerns and to achieve self-sufficiency.

Through a 5-day course, AUSCO provides the chance for participants to be provided with practical advice and accurate information on the departure and settlement processes, and an opportunity to ask questions about travel to Australia and life in their new home country — including pathways and access to further education and employment. As of December 2017, the program had assisted 87,426 participants globally.



Locations of AUSCO's Activities in Thailand

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A child is presented with a certificate of completion by IOM Thailand's Chief of Mission.
Photo: IOM

Key Facts

8,531

Total number of persons trained globally through AUSCO prior to resettlement in Australia in 2017

769

Number of participants in Thailand that benefitted from AUSCO in 2017

5 Days

Duration of the pre-departure AUSCO cultural orientation program



A group of children discussing and determining legal activities in Australia.
Photo: IOM

Stakeholders in Thailand

The local stakeholders to the AUSCO Program in Thailand are the Australian Embassy in Bangkok and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR).

The majority of AUSCO sessions in Thailand are held in nine temporary shelter areas along the Thai-Myanmar border and IOM sub-office in Mae Sot where the AUSCO trainer team is based.

AUSCO sessions are also occasionally held in Bangkok for urban caseloads. A total of 769 refugees and humanitarian entrants in Thailand benefitted from the AUSCO program in 2017.

Link to Onshore Settlement Services

AUSCO links closely with the orientation element of the onshore settlement program, together providing a continuum for humanitarian entrants to facilitate their settlement journey.

To ensure best practices, AUSCO and the onshore settlement program hold joint workshops — bringing together offshore and onshore trainers to exchange ideas in an effort to make the transition from offshore to onshore orientation as seamless as possible.

These workshops are supplemented by an exchange program between trainers from AUSCO, and the onshore program lasting approximately two weeks. This is in addition to Train-the-Trainer workshops that are held regularly in various locations.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

The AUSCO Curriculum

The AUSCO Program is provided to refugee and humanitarian visa holders over the age of five who are preparing to settle in Australia. The program provides practical orientation to Australian lifestyle and culture as well as managing client expectations. Each AUSCO course is tailored to meet the needs of a diverse range of participants and is designed to achieve four primary objectives:

- Prepare visa holders for travel;
- Enhance settlement prospects;
- Create realistic expectations about life in Australia;
- Provide information about Australian laws, values and lifestyle.



Trainers involve participants in interactive activities. Photo: IOM

This is achieved over the course of five days with 15-25 contact hours. AUSCO trainers use a variety of teaching methods throughout the course including brainstorming, simulations, case studies, discussions, problem solving and role plays. Course content is supplemented by AUSCO Student Folders available in a number of languages, and an 'Activity Book' to reflect upon and record the participants settlement journey.

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