

# Promoting Stability, Well-being and Harmony for Myanmar Muslim and Host Communities in Thailand



**“This project is like a tree. IOM provided our community with the seeds/saplings, and we have to water and nurture it, so it can grow to become a big tree,”**

*Community Volunteer, Kok Pae community, Mae Sot, 18 May 2020*



## OVERVIEW

Thailand has been a destination and transit country for marginalized Myanmar Muslims for decades, particularly after violence erupted in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2012. IOM estimates that up to 21,000 Myanmar Muslims (including Rohingyas) are believed to be residing in 21 host communities spread across Tak, Ranong and Phang Nga provinces.

Myanmar Muslims residing in such communities face highly insecure situations due to their irregular status and varying degrees of documentation. In addition to the constant threat of arbitrary deportation, their vulnerabilities are exacerbated by high levels of poverty, an overall lack of access to public services such as healthcare and education and a lack of livelihood opportunities. Myanmar Muslims in Thailand also face difficulties to get a Certificate of Identity due to their religion.

In order to address these gaps and provide support to this group, IOM has developed a number of interventions relating to five key sectors, namely, **education, protection, healthcare, livelihoods, as well as environmental health, water and sanitation.**

## OBJECTIVES

- To improve the stability and empowerment of marginalized Myanmar Muslims as well as disadvantaged Thais in host communities through interventions to improve the living working and access conditions pertaining to health education, legal aid protection and livelihoods.
- To increase the awareness of interventions and strengthen the standardization of approaches by international and local humanitarian community and local and religious leaders, in their effort to assist the communities and the wellbeing of its members.
- To decrease the vulnerability of marginalized Myanmar Muslims and disadvantaged Thais in host communities through relationship building, and advocacy/ awareness-raising with all relevant stakeholders (international humanitarian community, local and religious leaders, neighboring Thai communities, NGOs, CBOs and the Royal Thai Government).

## KEY FACTS

<b>Donor:</b>	EU Delegation to Thailand, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM)
<b>Project duration:</b>	February 2016- July 2020
<b>Areas covered:</b>	Mae Sot (Tak), Ranong and Phang Nga
<b>Management site:</b>	Bangkok, Thailand
<b>Project partners:</b>	Provincial and municipal level government administrations; community health centres, community leaders, religious leaders, NGOs and CBOs
<b>Target beneficiaries:</b>	Myanmar Muslims (including Rohingyas), other migrants in vulnerable situations and disadvantaged Thais

## SDGs

This project works towards reaching the following Sustainable Development Goals.



# COMMUNITY CASE REFERRAL MECHANISM



## PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Better link Myanmar Muslim migrants in vulnerable communities to public services through the assistance of Myanmar Muslim community leaders and volunteers.

## AREAS COVERED

10 communities in Mae Sot and Phop Pra districts (Tak province)

## ACTIVITY DURATION

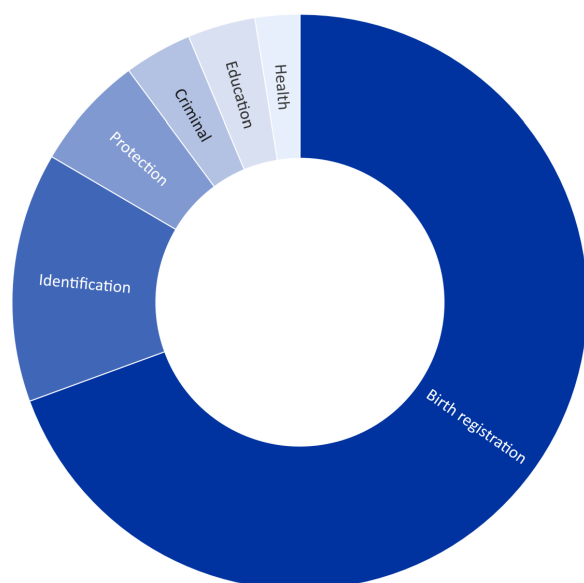
September 2018 to February 2019

## PROCESS

- 1 Mapping available public services provided by government and NGOs.
- 2 Creation of standard operation procedure flowcharts to inform target beneficiaries of the available services.
- 3 Distribution of the flowcharts and training provision to one Myanmar Muslim community leader per community.
- 4 Establishment of the case referral mechanism through existing local networks, supported by Myanmar Muslim community leaders.

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## INDIVIDUAL CASES REFERRED



- |                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2 Health insurance cases | 5 Protection cases                |
| 3 Education cases        | 11 Non-Thai ID Registration cases |
| 3 Criminal cases         | 54 Birth registration cases       |

## ACHIEVEMENTS



Closer collaboration between Myanmar and Thai Muslim leaders



Better connection between Myanmar Communities and service providers



Preparedness to respond to identified gaps in the provision of services



Empowerment of Myanmar Muslim Women in community activities and their access to the established networks



Reduction of the knowledge gap in the community



# COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGNS

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Reduce the amount of waste created by the increased use of tote bags for grocery shopping, fanny packs for children and stainless-steel lunch boxes.

### AREAS COVERED

13 communities (7 in Ranong and 6 in Phang Nga)



60%

shift towards conscious practices

35%

increase of knowledge levels

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Prevent domestic violence cases and educate Myanmar Muslim men about Islam's teachings on domestic violence.

### AREAS COVERED

2 communities (Mae Sot District, Tak Province)

### Bangladesh Community

86%

increase in equality knowledge levels

24%

overall increase of knowledge levels

### Madina Community

60%

increase in victim treatment knowledge levels

6%

overall decrease of knowledge levels\*



\*The divergence of results in both communities is due to the difference in both communities' socio-demographic profiles. In the Bangladesh community, the respondents come from developing areas of Myanmar, they have higher levels of education, have more MLCs in the area and the average age was around 40 years old. However, in the Madina community, the respondents come from remote areas in Myanmar, have lower levels of education and the respondent average age were older. This divergence should be considered for further interventions.

# HUMAN INTEREST STORIES AND GOOD PRACTICES

## HEALTH



*“After getting health insurance, we bring our children to the hospitals every time they get sick and only pay 30 baht. Not only do they recover faster due to better services, but they can also return to school more promptly.”*

*We wish other undocumented migrants could also access migrant health insurance just like us. It has provided better healthcare for my family members, supported my family’s financial status and facilitated my children’s education.” Says Armen*

After migrating from Mawlamyine, Myanmar, Armen and his wife Kha De Ja, a Muslim couple (34-year-old husband and 39-year-old wife) lived and worked in Mae Sot district for 12 years. Their three children, all under the age of six, often catch seasonal and communicable diseases such as the flu, dengue and diarrhea, but they could not afford to go to the hospital. Three IOM volunteers visited the family and reviewed their request for support. Within a week, the family were told they had been selected to receive health insurance.

## EDUCATION

*“With hard work and effort by the parents, our school has been able to provide the right environment for the children. As a result, there has been an increase in the annual number of children’s learning outcomes in the Muditar Migrant Learning Center,” says San Win, Head Teacher.*



IOM provided the Burmese Migrant Workers Education Centre (BMWEC) with a grant to implement the project “Promoting Migrant Children’s Access to Equality Education” in Mae Sot, Thailand. As a part of this project, they partnered with Muditar Migrant Learning Center (MLC) through the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to share information of the school’s activities with the parents and seek cooperation and support. BMWEC had provided trainings funded by IOM for PTA members on “The Value of Education” for parents to understand the importance of education and encourage them to send their children to school and support the MLC.

As the school was struggling to find funding for running costs and teachers’ salaries, Mr. San Win, the head teacher, encouraged the PTA to collect donations from parents to be able to generate partial income for the school. However, the parents decided to start an income-generation project by growing mushrooms in the school and selling them at the market and to local communities since the school needed more funds. This initiative stems from IOM funded trainings and has been sustained over time, providing the necessary financial support to manage the migrant learning centre.



## PROTECTION

*“If only I had this knowledge and understanding before, I could have helped my mother and my siblings. Now I am convinced that I need to take better care of myself and my brothers and sisters in order to stay away from violence. I want to spread the awareness on the severity of domestic violence with my friends at school so they know that these situations can occur.” says Chong Ngye*



Chong Ngye, an 18-years old student living in Mae Sot had experienced domestic violence throughout her entire life. Her mother was beaten up recurrently by her father, thus her siblings and her lived with her grandparents to avoid being beaten themselves. Chong Ngye did not know how to help her mother, who suffered from domestic violence for a decade until she ran away. She came to realize what domestic and gender-based violence were when she participated in the youth workshops on addressing happy family and preventing violence against women and children, as well as personal counselling sessions on future goals achievement organized by the Suwannimit Foundation (Third party partner). This also increased her understanding of Thai laws, human rights protection, as well as women and children's rights.

## LEGAL AID



*“I would have not obtained the retroactive birth registration on my own. IOM's assistance to prepare antenatal care record, child vaccination book; to coordinate with the Thai houseowner and to provide interpretation at multiple occasions allowed my son to finally receive it. My son has now the birth certificate and ID card, which makes him feel safer and more comfortable to access the public services,” says Gay Thew*

A married couple of Myanmar Muslim migrants who entered Thailand 27 years ago seeking better job opportunities, settled in Mae Sot and had a son in 2004. The boy was born at home since Ms. Gay Thew and Mr. Kyaw Min Sein did not have the financial resources to go neither to the public hospital, nor the private clinic. Hence, the child was deprived from obtaining a birth certificate, and therefore an education. In 2019, through the community case referral mechanism, Mrs. San San Win, shared the information about the necessary process to obtain retroactive birth registration. IOM's Case Referral Support Officer took up the case to local government authorities to advocate for the boy to receive a birth certificate.



*“Our Bang Kluay Nok Savings Group creates a collaborative learning process, promotes saving habits, builds team capacity through the participation of the group and community members, sharing, understanding, and unity, with the goal of sustainable quality of life improvement in the community,” says Somsri Kingkaew, Chairperson, Bang Kluay Nok Savings Group.*

In collaboration with the Japan International Labor Foundation (JILAF), IOM supported the Bang Kluay Nok community with the establishment of livelihood projects. This involved trainings and orientation sessions for community members, organized by JILAF and the Ranong Community Development Department (CDD) on household economics, organizational management, household bookkeeping and the procedures to establish a savings group and mutual aid system. JILAF also arranged a study tour to two savings groups in Ranong for them to learn from their best practices and build connections. This resulted in the establishment of the Bang Kluay Nok Savings Group in Ranong, in August 2019. The group was initially founded by 38 women and had 47 members in May 2020. They are preparing plans to establish a community welfare fund from these savings to provide emergency financial support to members in need, and their families.

Additionally, JILAF supported the group by establishing free basic medicines sponsored by the State Enterprise Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC), hand toolkits for boat engine repair, two pooled funds for the emergency response to COVID-19 from which members can borrow money free of interest, and a Crab Net Vocational Program Pooled Fund to provide crab net raw materials and equipment for members to produce crab nets which are sold to contribute to the pooled fund.

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With funding support  
from the European Union