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World Refugee Day 2014

The weather held up in Mae La camp while rain did not deter camp residents in Umpium and Nupo from coming out to mark World Refugee Day on Friday June 20th.

With this year's theme centered on "family", numerous activities for refugees of all ages were planned by Camp Committees, agencies and UNHCR. In Mae La, children queued patiently to get on a bouncing castle brought in especially for the day while camp residents were tested on their knowledge of the various agencies and their activities during a quiz. Japanese professional soccer player Shinnosuke Honda and Right To Play brought football and cheer to children in Umpium and in Nupo, a large audience gathered to watch "Nupo Has Talent". Traditional games were also played with enthusiastic participation by refugees and humanitarian staff.

In all three Tak camps, the day closed with the screening of an animated feature film Wall-E, organised by FilmAid. As a special treat for the younger audience, FilmAid took photos of children wearing masks of the film characters.



"My future dream relates to the world that we live in. If we do not preserve our environment and natural resources, we cannot deny that they will be gone."



Saw Hser Doh Muh is 23 years old and studies in Grade 12 in Mae Ra Ma Luang camp. Due to constant displacement during the conflict, he had no chance to start school until he arrived in Mae Ra Ma Luang camp in 2004 at the age of 10. He will finish Grade 12 soon and he is hoping to be able to study medicine and become a doctor.



"I want to see my people live in peace and unity."



Saw Ler K'Paw has lived in Mae La Oon camp for the past three years, studying and dreaming of a better future for himself and his people in Myanmar. He says the situation in his village is a little better now and he dreams of a permanent peace in his home village so he can return and serve others.





Addressing the needs of returnee communities in Mon State

In February earlier this year, UNHCR's partner the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) reported that it had met new refugees that had returned in one of the villages it visits in Mon state. Based on the information received from its partner, UNHCR's Mon Field Team conducted a return assessment in the village to verify the information and to learn more about the needs of the refugees that had returned and their host community.

The team interviewed the village elder and other members of the community and found out that some IDPs had also decided to return back to the village, including the village elder himself. According to the members of the community, the refugees and IDPs had decided to resettle permanently to their village of origin because the situation in the area has been calm for several years and they felt safe enough to come back.

The return had not been without its share of challenges, including a lack of safe drinking water. In fact, the community explained that they have been suffering from water shortage during the dry season for many years.

The community also added that people were in need of kitchen equipment, mosquito nets and warm blankets.

Since launching its return monitoring system throughout South-East Myanmar in mid-2103, UNHCR has visited 98 potential return villages in Mon State, 15 of which were verified as hosting IDPs and/or refugee returnees. In each case, UNHCR completes a community profile and needs assessment, not only to inform strategic planning and preparation for voluntary repatriation, but also to ascertain whether individual villages have critical needs that UNHCR can address in the short-term.

A week after this return assessment, UNHCR's field team distributed non-food items to the returnees and vulnerable members of the host community. The distribution of household items was successfully organized in coordination with the Karen National Union (KNU) and UNHCR's government counterpart, the Ministry for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development (Natala), benefitting 35 households, including 106 individual IDP returnees.

Because water was identified as one of the priority needs for the community, UNHCR also decided to implement a water project in the village. A coordination meeting with the KNU and Natala was held in the KNU Liaison Office to lay the groundwork for the project, which would benefit more than 300 members of the community.

KNU officials expressed their gratitude for the water point project and offered their full support to UNHCR and its partner Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ) in implementation of the project.

Thanks to the participation of the community, the hard work of BAJ and impressive coordination between the KNU and Natala, the project was fully completed in June 2014. In addition to being provided with reliable and safe drinking water, the community also received training on hygiene promotion, and maintenance and management of the water point.

MRCS, UNHCR's other partner in Mon state, also conducted a three-day Life Skills training for the returnees and the host community in May 2014. As per local custom, members of the community took part in an official handover ceremony in August 2014.

Our local center of knowledge and information



Story and photo by:

Shanti
Volunteer
Association

Whether you are looking for reference materials for your studies, wanting to access knowledge and information, or simply enjoy reading, visiting a community library is one of the best places to go.



local center of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users”; and one important function of the community library in the refugee camps is to share information with people using the library. Since the beginning of this year, SVA has been working to strengthen this information sharing function of the community libraries in the camps in cooperation with KRC, the Camp Committee, OCEE, the Library Committee and other stakeholders.

Up until now the main source of information at the libraries was available through books and other printed material. This included newspapers, magazines and general knowledge books which are distributed every month. However, with the support of UNHCR, SVA was able to set up computers in the libraries from the middle of 2014. The offline version of “Thailand-Myanmar Cross Border Portal” has been installed on the computers allowing people to access the information on this unique web portal in Karen, Burmese and English.

SVA received a lot of positive feedback from people using the library, most of who said they thought computers were very useful for accessing information. The OCEE also provides access to education e-data on these computers. Many library users, especially young people, often use these computers to find the latest information and educational materials.

At present, there are 21 community libraries in seven refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border. Libraries are open five days a week and each library has more than 7,000 books, including: picture story books, reference books, newspapers, magazines, general knowledge books, novels and comic books. All of which can be borrowed by anyone over the age of 12. There are also daily activities organized by librarians such as: story telling, games, songs and drawing for children. From children to the elderly, many users visit the library every day and spend time reading all sorts of books with friends and family. Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) has been supporting these community libraries since the year 2000.

In order to expand the range of library users, SVA conducted a workshop in August for information sharing at the library targeting OCEE, the Library Committee, teachers and camp based staff of NGOs and CBOs. During the workshop, participants shared ideas on how to improve the library’s function for information sharing through books, computers, information board and other tools. After the workshop, SVA staff members noted an increased sense of ownership on the part of the community towards the community libraries.

Ms. Ta Nye Paw (11), from Ban Don Yang camp often comes to the library. The library is one of her best friends. “I come to the library every day. I love story telling by the librarian. When I listen to stories, I feel very happy. My future dream in to be a librarian and I would like to tell stories for children!”

A community library is a local center of knowledge and information. SVA continues to work together with the community in order to further improve the libraries so that even more people will access this resource. If you have a chance, please come and visit your local community library!

Ms. Naw Bell Htee Loo (52), in Maela Oon camp likes the library and often volunteers to support the librarian’s work. “The library is useful for us because we can get more information though books. If I stay at my village in Myanmar, it would be difficult to access such a variety of books. Staying in the camp without the library would not be fun. The library gives us happiness and more knowledge”

“I come to the library every day. I love story telling by the librarian. When I listen to stories, I feel very happy. My future dream is to be a librarian and I would also like to tell stories for children!”

Mr. Saw Yo Tha (22), from Maela camp, works as a librarian in-charge of OCEE (Office of Camp Education Entity) and is proud of his work which supports people in the community. “The community library is like a doctor because it can heal people’s hearts.”

During discussions regarding durable solutions for refugees, various stakeholders have mentioned the importance of sharing information in the camps. As mentioned in the UNESCO Public Manifesto of 1994 “The Public Library is the



Interview with Lue Meh

We met Lue Meh for the first time during World Refugee Day which took place in Ban Mae Nai Soi on June 20th, 2014. On that day, more than a thousand people gathered to enjoy various cultural performances happening on stage. But at the end of day, the public was offered a surprise show by a wonderful lady who came forth to share her feelings with traditional songs about Kayah. We wanted to know more about her and she kindly accepted to answer some of our questions.

Hello Lue Meh, thank you for having us in your house. So could you tell us about the mysterious song you sang during World Refugee Day?

It was a song about exile. A song about what it is to be away from home, away from our homeland. It tells how we were pushed out of our villages and why we had to come all the way here. It is a poem that I composed in old Karenni.

It is also a poem about hope for our future.



What message were you trying to pass to the world?

People here are very sad. Especially elderly like me. A lot of them are very lonely. Some of them even commit suicide. My husband's brother actually did. He was very old, was living alone and he lost hope of ever going back to his old village.

We are also concerned about this. I am 70 years old. I am much younger than my husband. He does not know how old he is exactly but when he was already a teenager when the Japanese were in Kayah [she is referring the Japanese occupation of Myanmar during WWII between 1942 and 1945, therefore her husband should be between 80 and 90 years old ! After the war he had many problems with the Burmese government. One day they arrested him after he was not able to give them information he just did not have !

Can you tell us more about yourself? Where are you from? When did you arrive in Thailand?

I was born in Daw To Moh, in Shadaw township, east of the Salween river. I have three daughters. One lives here in Ban Mae Nai Soi, one has been resettled to the USA and the last one lives near Shadaw. I am not sure where she is. I think she lives in one of the relocation sites around Shadaw. It was set up for the people who had fled.

When the situation got bad in Kayah, she went there to see if it was safe and if there would be enough space for our family. But before she could come back our village was destroyed by the army and we had to leave with the rest of villagers to Thailand. It was 20 years ago I think. Last time I saw her was 10 years ago. She came to visit me for a short time to show me my grandson. He must be a man now. I heard he had a baby!

Would you like to go back to see them?

Of course! I wish I could go back. I wish I could leave the camp and see the outside. I wonder if they still have buffalos there. I have not seen a buffalo in so long! Some people have gone back to see if their villages are still there. I am not sure what is waiting for us in Kayah.

A lot of people are still scared. People here dare not go back yet. We hesitate; we wait for someone to tell us it is safe to go. We do not have anything and we do not know where to go.

What are your hopes for the future?

I want to die in my homeland. I do not know if my village is still there but at least I want to be among my people on my land to die. But now I feel it is still too dangerous to go.

I hope my daughter and grandson will be able to take care of me if I return to Kayah. I need to see how they live there. See if they have space for me in their house. Maybe I could go soon for a visit. Maybe when the rainy season ends.

Thank you, Lue Meh, for your warm welcome. We will see you soon!

Of course! I wish I could go back. I wish I could leave the camp and see the outside. I wonder if they still have buffalos there, I have not seen a buffalo in so long!

Livelihoods Support to Conflict-Affected Communities in Kayah

“I feel like a blind woman who can now see the light”

Daw Nyi Htoo is from Daw Ma Ta So village in Kayah's Demoso Township. She is the head of her family, making a living as a casual labourer on farms in neighbouring villages. With no tools of her own and very little money to buy seeds and other inputs; until very recently she relied entirely on the support of her fellow villagers. When no assistance was available, she was unable to work and provide food for her family. In mid-2014, Daw Nyi Htoo's vulnerability was such that her community identified her as a potential beneficiary for assistance through UNHCR Kayah's livelihoods support programme. Through our partner, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), she received funds to invest in tools, seeds and piglets in order to establish a sustainable livelihood for herself and her family. “I now own some pigs and my sesame plantation is doing very well. I feel like a blind woman who can now see the light”, she reports. “I hope I can do more sesame plantation next year.”

UNHCR Kayah began working with DRC in early 2014 in order to contribute to the achievement of durable solutions for the conflict-affected population in Kayah. Using an approach that involves the participation of all those involved and remaining sensitive to the issues at hand, UNHCR and DRC are providing support to both displaced and host community populations using a community-driven model of engagement. Demoso Township has seen a small number of refugees returning to re-establish their homes and livelihoods, and also has an internally displaced population within Kayah. It was seen as the best place to begin delivering livelihoods support, which UNHCR aims to expand further to other return areas in the near future.

In order to diversify people's livelihood options, the project goes beyond providing agricultural inputs and offers vocational support for those who wish to increase their self-reliance and ensure a sustainable livelihood is secured. U Tun Tun from Daw Ma Khtu village has benefited in such a way. With a family of six and a wife suffering from sickness, his life was devastated when his house was burned down in a fire that destroyed half his village in 2013. Re-establishing his and his family's life from scratch was no easy task. With the assistance of a grant for carpentry tools and a small generator from UNHCR/DRC, he has turned his once ailing carpentry business into a successful small enterprise. He hopes re-invest his profits into his children's education, and to build a more suitable house for his family.

UNHCR/DRC is further supporting the beneficiaries of this project by delivering training in areas such as cash management and updating technical skills, and monitoring progress at the household and community level in order to inform its future livelihoods work elsewhere in Kayah. Limited livelihood options in the past, due to problematic land access and dependence on rain-fed agriculture, has led to an over reliance on just one or two livelihood options, leaving communities particularly vulnerable. By minimizing this risk and widening livelihood options, people report feeling better equipped to deal with any shocks (such as flooding or drought) that may arise.

Working throughout Kayah to ensure host communities are ready to absorb and support returnees, should those living in the temporary shelters in Thailand or in relocation sites internally feel the conditions are right for their return; UNHCR is working across the Thai-Myanmar border with partner organisations on both sides, to create the right environment for a safe and dignified voluntary return in the future.



Paw Hser Soe Pree, from Nupo to America! An inspiring story from the Thai-Myanmar border



Paw Hser Soe, please tell us about yourself and what brings you to Mae Hong Son?

I am 24 years old and was born in the Karen State of Burma and I moved to a refugee camp in Thailand when I was seven years old. I moved to Utica, NY, USA in 2008 and it is the first time I am back in Thailand since I left. I am doing an internship with the Shanti Volunteer Association along the Thai-Myanmar Border. My mom and two of my siblings still live in Nu Po camp. I am so happy to see them! Unfortunately, my dad passed away in 2011 and I could not attend his funeral. He was a doctor and a community leader. He was reluctant to move to America because he wanted to continue his efforts to bring peace to the Karen community.

Do you have any memory of your life in your home country?

I was very young at the time. When we lived in Burma we had to move from place-to-place. Several times my family had to leave everything behind and run into the forest to hide from the soldiers. My father would build bamboo houses for us every place we landed, and then the soldiers would come again. For my whole childhood, we never stopped moving around. One day, though, it was different. I was six and a half years old. I was playing at my friend's home when suddenly I heard a big explosion. I knew, immediately, that the soldiers had attacked again. My dad was not home so my mom, my seven siblings and I ran for our lives. In the confusion, I got separated from my family. I didn't know what to do, so I just kept on running with other people lost like me. We ran until we reached the Thai border where some kind persons who knew my parents led me back to my mom. I never went back to Burma since then.

Can you tell us a bit more about your life in Thailand and your experiences before you arrived in the USA?

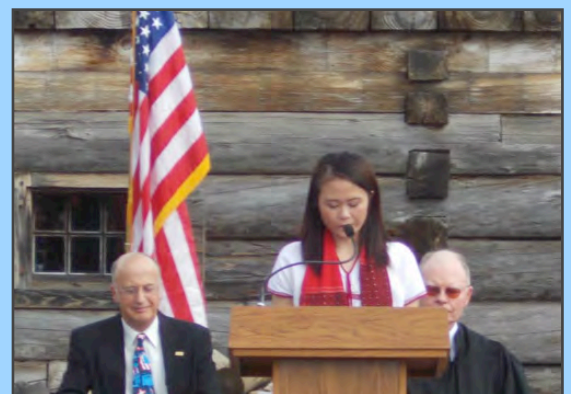
In Thailand, we were given a very small piece of land to live on. That place became our refugee camp. We were not planning to live there long, but a year passed, and then 3 more years passed. It seemed like there was no chance we could go back over the border to our home. Instead, more and more people kept moving to our refugee camp. Life in the refugee camp was not easy.

We were not allowed to leave the camp. So, we stayed there, living in small bamboo houses with no electricity or running water, no access to information such as television, newspapers or any other form of media. But most importantly, there was very limited access to education and no opportunity to learn beyond high school.

I also plan to continue my graduate studies and one day get a PhD in international human rights law with a focus on refugee issues.

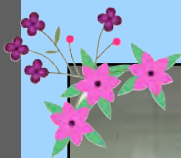


I do not forget where I came from or what I have been through to get here. Because of my experience, I want to spend my life helping other



Paw Hser Soe Pree, from Nupo to America! An inspiring story from the Thai-Myanmar border

I have a dream that, all the young refugees in the USA will be able to go to high school and college someday.



What was the hardest thing for you in the camp?

Soon after we arrived in Thailand a big misfortune hit my family when one of my older sisters fell ill. We had no idea what was wrong with her. My father was a traditional Karen doctor and he did manage to keep her alive but her strength continued to decline. To provide her with modern treatment was too expensive for us so we just decided to accept God's will and pray for help. Along with us, all the churches in the refugee camp prayed for her and one day, a friend who worked with the UNHCR heard of my sister's story and helped get her into a hospital in the USA! She became the first person in my family to resettle to the USA. My brother and another sister went with her to provide bone marrow for transplant. Soon after, I turned 18 and became old enough follow them to the USA.

What was your first impression on arrival to the USA? How did you adapt to such a different environment?

I arrived in Utica, NY on June 19, 2008. The happiest day of my life! For the first time in my life I saw cars, beautiful houses, trees, flowers, streets, and many different looking people with features that I had never seen in my life before. I was also quite scared. I didn't know much about the American culture. Fortunately, I quickly found a wonderful church, a great school, a nice wooden house and made many great friends. It took more than a year to understand the language, food, clothing styles, music, and many other things. Now, I really like my life here but it has been difficult at the beginning. I feel truly blessed!

I arrived in Utica, NY on June 19, 2008. The happiest day of my life! For the first time in my life I saw cars, beautiful houses, trees, flowers, streets, and many different looking people with features that I had never seen in my life before.

How did you adapt to the American school system?

The beginning was beyond difficult! But I worked hard, graduated from high school and in spring 2013, I finished among the top 5 percent of my class at Mohawk Valley Community College. I was awarded two scholarships to continue my studies at Hartwick College in International Studies. I graduated with my Bachelor Degree in spring 2014 and got awarded the Duffy Family Ambassador Scholarship to continue my research in the summer. I also got invited to speak about refugees issue on UN Youth Day at United Nation Headquarter in NYC.

And what are your plans for the future? Do you plan on working for the cause of the refugees?

Yes, definitely, I already started! In 2012, I created a group called, American and Refugee Students for Closer Connection (ARSCC) to bring better understanding between young refugees and Americans. Today, we have about 1,335 members across the country to join us on Facebook. I have a dream that all the young refugees in the USA will be able to go to high school and college someday.

I also plan to continue my graduate studies and one day get a PhD in international human rights law with a focus on refugee issues. I do not forget where I came from or what I have been through to get here and I really wish I could one day work for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to spend my life helping other refugee people around the world as I have been helped. I still have a long way to go but I will get there! I have been blessed and I want to give back at least a little bit of what God gave me!



During her graduation ceremony at Mohawk Valley Community College (Pawser was the first student in the college to win the Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship, the biggest private scholarship in the USA. She was also awarded the Chancellor's Award for Student Excellences, the highest award in SUNY (State University of New York) and Coca-Cola 2013 Community College Academic Team Gold Scholar award and was distinguished as part of the All-New York First Academic Team).

Naw Po, a 60-year-old Karen woman, has dedicated her life work to education since she was young. Her determination continues when she arrived in Nupo camp in 1997, where she was elected as the Assistant Camp Leader and the Camp Education Coordinator. Naw Po's dream is to see Karen people having good education and to have a better life either in the camp or back home. She prefers to stay behind to support the younger generations to grow and become successful.

Naw Po, could you briefly tell us about yourself?

My name is Naw Po. I was born on 20 July 1954 in a village called Paw Lu in Myawaddy, Kayin State. When I was young, I went to study in Nyi Nuang until Grade 8. I love teaching very much so I decided to return to my village where I started working as a teacher since 1971. I taught Karen and Math.

Later I married my husband, he is from another village, and we have 3 children. I also adopted 3 children.

In 1985 my family has to move to another village due to an armed conflict between KNU and the Myanmar soldiers. Later in 1997, there was another fighting in my village. I was so afraid and I wanted my children to be away from hostility so I decided to flee to Nupo camp in Thailand.

In Nupo, I worked as a school principal (and a teacher) between 1997 and 2008. Working as a teacher in the camp is tough as we are underpaid. As a headmaster, it is hard to help my teachers to sufficiently earn a living. People in the camp are poor. Some students are very poor and have nothing. We need to be united and help each other.

Why do you like being a teacher?

Being a teacher, I have a chance to help others for their better future. And teachers do not work only for money; we work to support other people. I feel so proud when I saw my students grow up and became doctors, medic staff or when seeing them successful in their careers.



Can you tell us more about your previous assignment?

I am a Camp Committee member since 2008 and I was appointed as a Camp Education Coordinator for KRCEE for 3 years. In the 2012 Camp Committee Election, I was elected with the second highest score among 40 nominees and I am one of the two female Camp Committee members. I am currently working as Assistant Camp Leader. I assist the Camp Leader in many issues, especially issues related to education and schools. I am also in charge when the Camp Leader is away.

Is there any difficulty working as a female Assistant Camp Leader?

No problem. They respect women during my work and there is no discrimination against women staff. I feel equal. In this camp all people are treated the same.

What is your view about education with regard to Karen people?

Karen people do not have a chance to study in higher education and a lot of them are not even educated. I myself only finished Grade 8. My wish is to see Karen people have good education. Life is not easy in Myanmar and I think that having good education will help us very much wherever our future is.

What do you think about the current situation in the camp?

Nupo camp residents do not seem to listen to the leaders, especially recently when the food ration is cut. The situation in the camp is getting tougher as they feel stressed out and depressed.

When asked whether she wants to join her children in the resettlement country, Ms. Naw Po said "I am too old to go. I will not have a job there and I prefer to stay here (in the camp) and help my people"

"I want to thank all organizations who support and encourage us in everything, be it health, education, food and shelter. Also to those organizations who helped with the resettlement of refugees, and I wish that the unregistered populations will be given that opportunity as well. Also, I want to thank this interview. It makes me proud of myself".

I feel so proud when I saw my students grew up and became doctors, medic staff or when seeing them successful in their careers.

My wish is to see Karen people to have good education. Life is not easy in Myanmar and I think that having good education will help us very much wherever our future is.

Interviewed by Praparatt,
UNHCR Field Office Mae Sot

Never Give Up to Be Number 1

Saw Joseph is a dynamic young man in his mid 20s. He would rather not have his photo taken but is happy to speak about his work, of which he feels passionately about. Since 2012, Saw Joseph has undertaken the challenging task of offering education to children in a remote location in Kayin State, South East of Myanmar.

His own story is of one where education changed his life. Saw Joseph is from Ayeyarwady Division, Patheingyi Township and comes from a struggling family of modest means.

"I was 19 years old and very sad to leave my parents. They too were sad I had to move far away from home. I have two older sisters and I am the youngest in the family."

Saw Joseph came to Mae La Camp in 2007 after completing Standard 10. He then enrolled in the Shalom Arts and Leadership College. After three years, he embarked on a teaching internship for a year at a remote village named Klaw Ker Der village, Hpapun Township. He soon fell in love with teaching and decided to build a school there. He eventually returned to Myanmar for good in the hope that he could help children who could not otherwise access education.

Still serving in the same village in Hpapun, Saw Joseph now oversees a school for 109 students coming from a



cluster of 10 surrounding villages. Seven teachers, some from Mae La and Mae La Oon camps, cater to the education of these children from Standards One through Eight, with boarding facilities for about 60 students.

"There are many difficulties", says Saw Joseph. "The journey is painstaking as there are landmines to avoid. We need financial support to pay our teachers and take care of the students. Our teachers earn a modest 5,000 Baht a year but we are still short of 20,000 Baht".

Nevertheless, Saw Joseph is determined to keep the school running as he wants to help the Karen people. He feels education is an important way forward to a better future, especially for children from these parts of Myanmar.



*"Never give up to be number 1!
That is my motto"*

UNHCR Myanmar meets refugee community in Tham Hin camp

Traveling two days over land from field offices in Myeik (Tanintharyi Region), Hpa-An (Kayin State) and Mawlamyine (Mon State), UNHCR's South-East Myanmar team arrived in Tham Hin camp on Wednesday, 7 May 2014 ready to learn first hand from the Myanmar refugees in Thailand about their life and future plans.

While UNHCR's offices in Thailand and Myanmar have worked closely together for the last few years, the trip to Tham Hin represented the first time UNHCR field staff based in Myanmar formally met with refugees in Thailand.

The day visit began with a good meeting with the camp committee. UNHCR used the occasion to brief the refugee representatives on the purpose of the visit and UNHCR's expanding operations in South-East Myanmar, with the Myeik field team emphasizing the agency's presence in Tanintharyi Region, the area of origin for the majority of those in the camp.

For their part, the camp committee offered UNHCR's field staff a fascinating and detailed overview of the camp's history, including an explanation of the original patterns of displacement and areas of origin for most of Tham Hin's residents. The camp committee also identified a few key issues related to return, most notably their concerns about access to education in Myanmar, particularly for those who have already begun or completed education while in Thailand.

Even more dynamic was the section meeting held the same afternoon at the Tham Hin Church. The meeting was joined by more than 300 individuals as word had spread that UNHCR staff from Myanmar would be there to answer questions from the participants.

Over the next four hours, staff from Myeik and Mawlamyine responded to a wave of inquiries from dozens of members of

the refugee community, on issues ranging from health and education to land and property. Some asked about their home villages, hoping UNHCR's field staff might have visited there, while others painfully recounted the experience that forced them to flee to Tham Hin in the first place.

What emerged quite clearly from the entire discussion was that amidst the anxiety about the possibility of return, there exists considerable interest about the situation back home. While not all appeared optimistic, some even expressing the fears they still have, many saw the meeting as an opportunity to bring into focus their vision for what home in Tanintharyi may look like tomorrow.

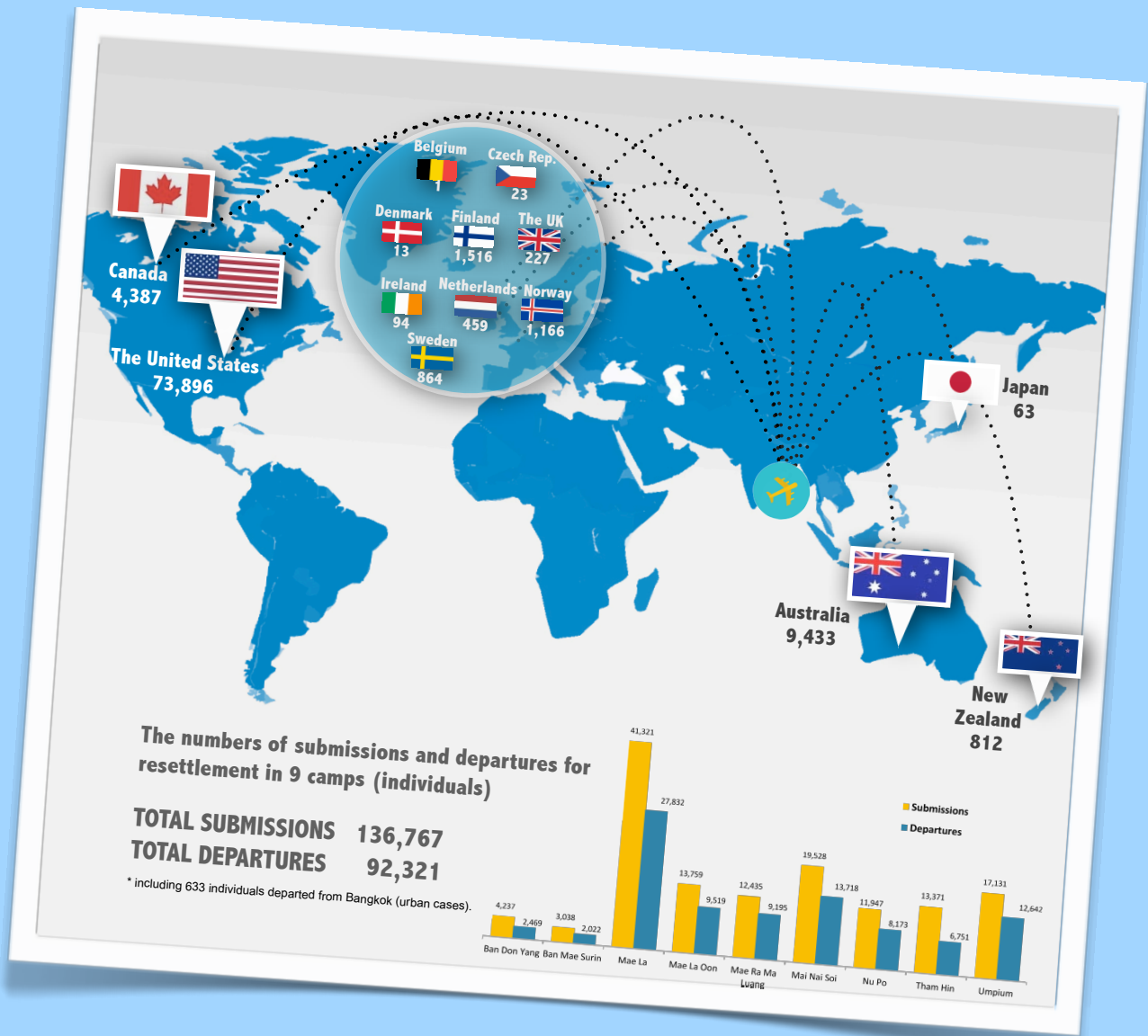
While UNHCR's field staff attempted to answer questions where possible – which is a challenge considering Tanintharyi spans more than 43,000 square kilometers – the team diligently listened and absorbed the feedback offered by the community.

The discussions also naturally revealed the next steps which should be taken, and the lessons to learn from the cross-border camp visit experience. For one, it was evident that one day was not enough for the Myanmar team to grasp the complete picture of life in Tham Hin. Focus group discussions with, for example, women and youth, would have certainly added further depth to the experience.

It was also evident in Tham Hin that there is a thirst for information about the situation in Tanintharyi, particularly when the refugee community began asking the field team from Myeik about individual villages of interest to them. Follow-ups are already underway to visit some of these villages of the Tham Hin community, and ensure the subsequent cross-border mission comes prepared with answer to these sincere queries.



Resettlement Statistics since 2005



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