

Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) works in nine refugee camps along the Thailand-Burma/Myanmar border. TBBC pursues change leading to durable solutions while ensuring a protective environment for displaced people of Burma/Myanmar. Our work is centred on the provision of food, shelter, and capacity-building support for the camp residents. TBBC also endeavours to increase self-reliance and reduce aid dependency by promoting and supporting livelihood opportunities.



TBBC's presence has been exclusively in Thailand throughout the 28 years that the organisation has been supporting displaced people along the Thailand-Burma/Myanmar border. As TBBC refocuses its programme on preparing refugees for a possible return, the potential benefits of TBBC opening an office in Burma/Myanmar are being considered. At the invitation of Minister U Aung Min from the President's Office, TBBC visited Rangoon/Yangon in early September to explore the possibility of establishing an official presence in Burma/Myanmar. This would enable TBBC to work from both sides of the border in advance of any eventual refugee return and better enable TBBC to support reintegration of refugees and internally displaced people into conflict-affected communities. During the four day visit TBBC met with a range of government advisors, civil society and international community representatives.

The visit confirmed the need for improved coordination between humanitarian agencies on both sides of the border. TBBC's 28 years of relationships and trust will be extremely useful in creating and supporting linkages between



TBBC Senior Management meets with U Tin Oo, deputy leader of the NLD

civil society organisations, which is key to ensuring community participation in the planning and management of return and reintegration processes. Whilst the possibility of establishing an official presence inside is yet to be confirmed, the opportunity to visit Rangoon/Yangon and the encouragement received from all stakeholders reaffirms TBBC's hopes that negotiating a sustainable solution to conflict and displacement is a realistic objective. Until such time TBBC remains committed to promoting the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons to assistance and protection and, in particular, to ensuring that basic services to 140,000 refugees in camps are maintained .

LIVELIHOODS

When refugees eventually return to Burma/Myanmar, they will need to have a means to become independent. Setting up economic activities to ensure adequate food and livelihood security will be crucial for refugees' successful reintegration. In addition, with the decrease in rations, more refugees are currently seeking work outside of camp, which is a grave risk for the refugees as they are often arrested and sometimes even deported. Now, more than ever, refugees require support to upgrade their skills and know-how to engage in meaningful livelihood activities. Here is an update on some of TBBC's efforts to build people's knowledge and skills within the camps.

COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION (CAN) PROJECT

The CAN project's goal is to build community self-reliance in agriculture and nutrition, and to improve overall availability and access to nutritious food in order to enhance refugee household nutrition and income. A recent review of the TBBC CAN project, undertaken by Dr Julian Gonsalves, concluded that: "Community household garden allotments are probably the single

best way to prepare refugees for repatriation... This is also a good return on donor's investment, and is a clear indication that community gardens are increasing self-reliance."

Daw Ma Tha and Daw Mangi, both widowed, say that their garden allotments allow them to safely earn 50 to 200 baht per day without having to leave camp and provide enough vegetables for their families. The women believe that the gardens contribute to both their psychological and physical well-being, adding that they have less time to think about their problems. The gardens provide the women with a means to buy food, such as fish and spices, and other basic needs.

Although uncertain of what their future will hold, both women confidently say that when the time comes to repatriate to Myanmar, if they have access to land, they will utilise their skills and grow vegetables.



ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT AND GRANTS

TBBC's Entrepreneurial Development and Grants Programme enables refugees to become actively engaged in the camp economy, develop their entrepreneurial skills, expand their livelihood options and increase their income. This is achieved through developing entrepreneurial skills via training, grants and mentoring support .

Daw Hehlet and U Teelay, residents of Tham Hin camp, fled from the military in Burma/Myanmar in 1997. Six months ago they attended TBBC's entrepreneurial development training and received a small grant to start a duck raising business. They now have thirty-six ducks and have been able to expand their business to include chickens, and share their learning and experiences with other duck raisers in the camp. With the support of this initiative, the couple are able to sell their ducks and chickens to camp residents and make a small profit. Daw Hehlet commented that *'our life in the camp has improved significantly as we no longer have to go outside to earn money. I hope to soon receive a second grant and begin pig raising.'*



TBBC PROGRAMME REPORT

TBBC's latest programme report for the period from January-June 2012 is now available! The report provides extensive information on TBBC's activities during the first half of 2012, as well as the context on the border and inside Burma. You can download this [here](#) on the TBBC website.

Please make a donation today by visiting the TBBC website [here](#). Thank you for your generosity and commitment to refugees and displaced people from Burma.

