

# SPCP - Thailand

## Executive summary

The SPCP was launched in Thailand in July 2006 with initial financial contributions from the Australian and US governments totalling **\$700,000**. Since that time the SPCP-Thailand has been working with NGO and international partners, the Royal Thai Government and refugees in the development of projects to address the many protection gaps as identified by refugees, governmental and non governmental partners, and highlighted in the SPCP gaps analysis report. **The projects developed address a wide range of issues** including those aimed at improving: physical security; health and education services; access to justice; documentation, and livelihoods. A contribution of over **\$690,000 from the High Commissioner's Special Projects in 2007** for Health, Nutrition and SGBV has been used to launch several SPCP projects in these sectors. SPCP project money has also been used to ensure all camp based refugees have ID cards as well as to fund the development of a comprehensive livelihoods strategy and to help engage Thai civil society in refugee protection. Most recently, **Austcare** have confirmed that they have obtained funding from the Australian government (**\$220,000**) for projects in sexual abuse and exploitation prevention and women's protection. **Favourable support from donors** following a recent donor mission and from the **Council of Business Leaders** is reinforcing SPCP-T and longstanding efforts by ROTH to enhance self-reliance opportunities. **Future funding** has been sought from the **EC (\$600,000)** and initial indications are favourable. Additional resource mobilisation work will continue throughout 2007 by ROTH in concert with the SPCP Geneva and the cooperation of the Private Sector Fundraising Unit.

## Objective

To remedy many of the persistent protection problems that characterise the lives of the thousands of camp and urban based refugees in Thailand by engaging NGOs, international agencies, donors and the Royal Thai Government in a collaborative effort.

## Sponsorship

The SPCP-T commenced in July 2006 with initial funding support provided by the Australian and the US governments, and a subsequent contribution of funds from the High Commissioner's Special Projects in 2007 for Health, Nutrition and SGBV. Most recently, further funding has been obtained from the Australian government through Austcare.

## NGO involvement

The SPCP-T was introduced at a time when a consortium of NGOs (the CCSDPT) and UNHCR had launched the 'CCSDPT/UNHCR Comprehensive Plan'. The SPCP has provided support to that initiative through the publication of a Gaps Analysis, the



provision of a comprehensive analytical framework and the development of projects necessary to remedy the gaps identified.

## Key gaps

Some of the major protection gaps identified by refugees in the course of participatory assessments and highlighted in the gaps report include:

- High levels of sexual and gender-based violence;
- Arrest and detention of refugees found outside the camps;
- Insufficient health services and absence of services to treat the mentally ill;
- Overcrowded and ill equipped schools and the lack of post-Grade 10 education opportunities;
- Under-representation of women and minority groups in camp administration;
- Absence of effective justice systems within the camps and;
- Lack of vocational training and a legal means to become self-reliant

## Project development

Over the past year, the SPCP-T has worked with government partners, refugee committees, community-based organisations, and NGOs, in camp and urban locations across Thailand to develop specific projects to remedy protection gaps. Many of these projects have now been incorporated in the CCSDPT/UNHCR Comprehensive Plan which was presented to donors at the end of May 2007.

The SPCP-T projects covers a range of sectors, including SGBV prevention and response, child protection, health and psychosocial services, education (from primary to post-Grade 10 levels), and the development of livelihoods initiatives.

## Project implementation

The following projects are being implemented as part of the initial funding received by the SPCP-T and funding subsequently provided through the High Commissioner's Special Projects in 2007 for Health, Nutrition and SGBV and the Australian government.

- Provision of ID cards for 80,000 camp-based refugees;
- Development of comprehensive livelihood strategy (with ILO);
- Expansion of drug addiction prevention and treatment programmes;
- Improved SGBV prevention and response mechanisms;
- Health education and access to reproductive health for refugee children and adolescents;
- Activities for refugee children living in boarding-houses;



- The empowerment of refugee women through agricultural activities;
- Strengthening the capacity of civil society to protect refugees (with US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants);
- Provision of training and awareness-raising on sexual abuse and exploitation prevention;
- A protection education program for women and girls.

### *Risks/constraints*

While the above projects will bring significant improvements, further strengthening of refugee protection in Thailand remains essential. At present over thirty SPCP projects that have been developed are awaiting funding, including all the projects that were developed for urban-based refugees.

In addition SPCP project proposals have not yet been developed for all identified gaps. Over the coming months ROTHa and NGO partners will need to concentrate their efforts on some specific gaps/issues in order to develop a truly comprehensive package of projects to strengthen refugee protection capacity in Thailand.

## Expanding self-reliance

### **UNHCR/ILO partnership**

In the first six months of 2007 the SPCP-T engaged the services of two ILO consultants to develop a comprehensive self-reliance strategy for refugees in two provinces along the Thai-Myanmar border. The ILO Bangkok has jointly managed this work with ROTHa and the results meet initial expectations. A comprehensive livelihoods program, consisting of eight livelihoods projects, has been designed in consultation with refugees, partners and the RTG.



This strategy was developed through a collaborative strategy involving NGO and governmental partners. If implemented, the projects will make a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of life of refugees, including the circumstances of women refugees, disabled refugees and hosting communities. UNHCR is currently partnering with ZOA Refugee Care to implement a pilot project which will engage refugees and local Thais in agricultural activities and expand existing vocational training programmes, in line with the consultants' recommendations.

### *Risks/constraints*

The challenge now is in securing the necessary NGO collaboration for their full implementation, and receiving the necessary final authorisation by the RTG. It is important that the momentum created by this initiative be maintained and that UNHCR and partners act to implement some livelihoods pilot projects as soon as possible.

A workshop is presently being organized, at which UNHCR and partners will identify priority areas for action, apportion responsibility, and explore the possibility of a more permanent co-ordinating mechanism for future projects in the field of livelihoods.

### **Donor Mission**

This year's annual donor COP mission took place in Thailand. It was an opportunity for the donors to view the circumstances of refugees; the operating environment (including political constraints); achievements to date; and the RBM planning software focus for future operations planning.

Among the positive outcomes of the mission was an Aide Memoire jointly signed by the donors urging the RTG to improve conditions in the camps and relax restrictions on income generation.

### **Council of Business Leaders**

This message was reinforced by the Council of Business Leaders who on a recent mission to Thailand welcomed the livelihoods work being undertaken and provided concrete ideas and means to further expand it using their resources. Specific suggestions include e-learning programmes to strengthen skills; the development of a livelihoods strategy in certain camp areas not covered by the initial ILO study; and skill matching exercises for refugees and local communities in Thailand and in resettlement countries.



### *Risks/constraints*

Again the challenge for UNHCR and partners is to maintain the momentum created by the COBL mission. Initial indications are favourable; Manpower, in particular, has been working to explore the possibilities of a pilot project to employ a small group of refugees in local industries.

## **Working alongside Thai civil society**

As part of the SPCP-T initiative, UNHCR is partnering with the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) on a project to engage Thai civil society organisations in refugee protection. The project seeks to identify and mobilize a core constituency of civil society actors drawn from the business, labour, faith, academic, and human rights/legal communities to raise awareness on the situation of refugees, to publicise their real and potential contributions to Thai society and to advocate for policies that will respect refugee rights and enhance their potential contributions. On World Refugee Day, USCRI, in collaboration with the Assumption University of Thailand and ROTHAI, organized a celebration aimed to raise awareness, create a better understanding of the lives of refugees, and strengthen support for refugees in Thailand.

### *Risks/constraints*

Unfortunately, progress with this project has been somewhat slow to date. This is in part due to the difficult political environment prevailing in Thailand since the coup in September 2006.



## Administration of Justice

To address the serious problems associated with the administration of justice in the camps, UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) are establishing the first Legal Aid Centres in two refugee camps in Thailand. The key aim is to strengthen the rule of law in the camps by providing greater access to the Thai justice system and through improving the refugee's own traditional justice mechanisms.

In parallel, ROTHHA commissioned a study on the administration of justice in the camps, which was presented at a workshop co-organised with the Thai Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice has since established an inter-ministerial working committee to develop a Memoranda of Understanding among governmental agencies, UNHCR and IRC, as well as manuals on the administration of justice for local authorities. Means to link these efforts with the work of the SPCP-T and perhaps with the engagement of bilateral support facilitated by Assistant High Commissioner-Protection are under discussion.

## Future Funding

A number of SPCP projected activities have been included in the 2008 COP for Thailand. However, a total of 31 remaining projects wait additional funding (totalling 6.87 million USD). Funding concept notes for projects amounting to \$600,000 have been submitted to the EC and preliminary indications from the EC are favourable. Additional resource mobilisation will continue throughout 2007 by ROTHHA in concert with the SPCP Geneva and the Private Sector Fundraising Unit.

