

# ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR DISPLACED MYANMAR NATIONALS IN THAI BORDER AREAS



The city of Mae Sot, Thailand, has long served as a refuge for Myanmar nationals fleeing conflict and a primary trade corridor between Myanmar and Thailand.

Its proximity to the city of Myawaddy, Myanmar, makes it a critical crossing point for displaced persons and labour migrants, many of whom arrive with limited resources and support networks.

Cities Alliance, in collaboration with BEAM Education Foundation and its partners, has launched the Supporting Community Efforts for Displaced Persons in Mae Sot City initiative to foster social and economic inclusion for displaced persons and marginalised host communities.

**THIS PILOT INITIATIVE EMPHASISES COLLABORATION BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO ADDRESS IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM CHALLENGES, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH, EDUCATION, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY.**

#### **Implementing Partners:**

BEAM Education Foundation, Thailand; Kings and Queens civil society organisation (CSO)

In Partnership with 25 CSOs and Foundations, Mae Sot General Hospital and Technical Vocational College, Thai Non-Formal Education/Department of Learning Encouragement/ DoLE, Burmese Migrants Teacher Association (BMTA),

Migrant Learning Centers (MLC), District City Administration, and Shwe Bangkok Rotary Club (Private Sector Network).

**Location:**  
Mae Sot city, Thailand

**Duration:**  
December 2024 – October 2026



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## RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

The urban environment in Mae Sot presents unique challenges for displaced persons: Limited access to basic services and social protection, combined with an informal employment market.

Women and youth face heightened risks of exploitation and trafficking, underscoring the need for a multifaceted approach prioritising social inclusion, economic empowerment, and resilience.

Collaboration between CSOs and local authorities plays a pivotal role in addressing these challenges. Community-driven solutions are essential for filling gaps in public services and integrating displaced populations into Mae Sot's social and economic fabric.

As of June 2024, over 347,000 Myanmar nationals are displaced along the Thailand-Myanmar border (IOM Mobility Tracking), with most residing in urban areas like Mae Sot. Only 82,400 live in nine official temporary displacement shelters (UNHCR, March 2024).

## Myanmar-Thailand City Corridors



Source: Google Maps



Thai language training. Photo: BEAM

## A SEQUENCED APPROACH



- 1. Reception and Protection:** Immediate needs such as mental health support, safe spaces, and access to social protection mechanisms for displaced persons.
- 2. Education and Skilling:** Building pathways to social and economic inclusion through Thai language and curricula training as well as vocational education.

- 3. Systems Strengthening:** Laying the groundwork for sustainable, scalable solutions through capacity building, collaboration, and leadership development.

## ANTICIPATED RESULTS



### Result 1: Reception and Protection of Vulnerable Populations

This result focuses on meeting the immediate needs of displaced persons and vulnerable migrants, emphasising mental health, social protection, and gender-responsive support. It includes:

#### Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):

Providing psychosocial support to 1,000 individuals through training programmes to enhance emotional well-being, build coping mechanisms, and address trauma. Safe spaces for women and girls will be created to reduce vulnerability and promote gender-responsive solutions.

#### Social Protection Awareness:

Reaching 7,630 beneficiaries with guidance on legal rights, health care, and education services, with a focus on women and youth.

#### Gender-Responsive Support:

Partnering with the Kings and Queens CSO to design and

implement five participatory projects to strengthen women's engagement in accessing public services and protection.



### Result 2: Education and Skills for Social and Economic

#### Inclusion

This result addresses barriers to education and employment for displaced persons and vulnerable migrants, equipping them with the skills and resources needed for integration. It includes:

#### Thai Language Training:

Providing language training to 1,520 individuals, enabling them to navigate daily life, improve employability, and build community connections.

#### Primary and Secondary Education:

Supporting Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs) to teach the Thai curriculum, enabling undocumented children to obtain a G-code for access to the Thai educational system.

#### Vocational Training and Skills Development:

Offering vocational training to 2,100 participants through a new MoU with Mae Sot Technical Vocational College, focusing on local job market demands such as construction, agriculture, and service industries.



### Result 3: Strengthened Systems for Long-Term Impact

#### Term Impact

This result focuses on building sustainable systems to ensure long-term solutions for public service delivery and social inclusion. It includes:

#### Capacity Building:

Strengthening local organisations to coordinate, share resources, and address service gaps, including healthcare, legal aid, and vocational training. For example, 25 local CSOs that have received Training of Trainers will scale the MHPSS training within their communities, ensuring broader impact and sustainability.

## Collaboration with Authorities:

Enhancing partnerships between civil society and government to improve service delivery, address gender disparities, and support vulnerable populations.

## Youth Empowerment:

Engaging 1,880 young people from migrant and host communities in skill-building initiatives, leadership programmes, and community-driven activities to foster social cohesion and prepare them as future leaders.

**The Mae Sot city pilot will serve as a model for urban displacement contexts, generating insights and recommendations for scaling in other Thailand-Myanmar border cities.**



## THE RESILIENT SYSTEMS OF SECONDARY CITIES AND MIGRATION DYNAMICS PROGRAMME

This project is part of the [Resilient Systems of Secondary Cities and Migration Dynamics Programme](#) supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The programme supports initiatives designed by secondary city stakeholders to provide migrants, forcibly displaced people, and host communities with equal access to quality public services, labour market integration, and economic opportunities.

It seeks to advance global thinking on how secondary cities in developing countries can manage and seize the opportunities arising from migration and displacement.

The programme operates in Asia, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, working with systems of secondary cities in Cambodia, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Tunisia, Somalia, Uganda, and Vietnam that are experiencing substantive migration and forced displacement.

It facilitates regional collaboration on urban planning and advocacy and fosters local partnerships among diverse city stakeholders and national and international actors to implement approaches that are locally relevant and work for all residents.