ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF URBAN REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS IN BANGKOK

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จำนวนผู้ลี้ภัยในเมืองขณะนี้มีอยู่เกือบครึ่งหนึ่งของประชากรผู้ลี้ภัยของโลกโดยรวม การศึกษาอย่างเป็นทางการสำหรับเด็กของครอบครัวผู้ลี้ภัยมักจะล่าช้าเนื่องจากสถานการณ์ ปัญหาและอุปสรรคของพวกเขาสามารถเกิดขึ้นในทุกประเทศ แต่ในปัญหาและอุปสรรคที่เกิดขึ้นประเทศไทยคือการเข้าถึงการศึกษา รวมถึงการคุกคามของการจับกุมและคุมขัง วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาครั้งนี้คือ การกำหนดปัจจัยสำคัญที่จำกัดการเข้าถึงการศึกษาสำหรับเด็กลี้ภัยจากเมืองและผู้ลี้ภัยในกรุงเทพฯ

ผลการวิจัยหลักของการศึกษานี้คือ (i) ส่วนใหญ่ของผู้ลี้ภัยวัยเรียนและผู้ขอลี้ภัยจะมีการเข้าถึงการศึกษา; แต่มากกว่าครึ่งหนึ่งได้รับการศึกษาต่ำกว่ามาตรฐานระดับชาติ สิ่งนี้สามารถได้พิจารณาได้ว่าเป็นการศึกษาที่ไม่เป็นทางการซึ่งไม่สามารถตอบสนองความต้องการของศึกษาขั้นพื้นฐานได้ (ii) การคุกคามของการจับกุมและคุมขังที่เกิดจากสถานะที่ผิดกฎหมายไม่รบกวนการเข้าถึงการศึกษาในเรื่องของความสม่ำเสมอแต่จำกัดการเข้าถึงการศึกษาในระยะยาว (iii) กลยุทธ์ปัจจุบันที่ให้ลงทะเบียนผู้ลี้ภัยในเมืองและเด็กลี้ภัยในโรงเรียนของรัฐ ดูเหมือนจะเป็นตัวเลือกที่ดีที่สุดสำหรับปัญหาของสถานการณ์ปัจจุบัน ถึงแม้จะมีอุปสรรคทางภาษาซึ่งทำให้เกิดช่องว่างในการศึกษา และผลของช่องว่างนี้จะรบกวนการศึกษาของเด็กเหล่านี้

สาขา : การศึกษาการพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ ลายมือชื่อนิสิต.....

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Urban refugees now make up almost half of the world's total refugee population. Formal education for the children of refugee and asylum-seeker families might often be delayed due to their situation. Barriers can arise in any country but in Thailand barriers to accessing education also include the threat of arrest and detention. The purpose of this study is to determine the key factors that limit access to education for the children of urban asylum-seekers and refugees in Bangkok.

The primary findings of the study are: (i) The majority of the school aged refugees and asylum-seekers studied do have access to education; but more than half receive education far below national standards. This can only be considered informal rather than formal schooling that would be recognized as fulfilling basic education requirements. (ii) The threat of arrest and detention resulting from illegal status does disrupt access to education creating a gap in consistency, but does not completely restrict access in the long term. (iii) The current strategy to enroll urban refugee and asylum-seeker children in Thai public schools appears to be the best option given the challenges of the situation, although language barriers are encountered which causes a further gap in education. The resulting gaps combined cause substantial disruption in the education of these children.

Field of Study : International Development Studies Student's Signature .....

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRC	Bangkok Refugee Center
BRLC	Bangkok Refugee Learning Center
COERR	Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA	Education For All
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDC	Immigration Detention Center
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NEDPlan	National Education Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPEC	National Primary Education Commission
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
TCR	Thai Committee for Refugees Foundation
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Thailand is a prosperous newly industrialized country prized for its diversity and easygoing friendly population. The capital city of Bangkok is extremely diverse, generally safe and relatively inexpensive. With approximately nine million people, the city is a good place to remain anonymous and find informal work opportunities. These are all good reason to come to Thailand, but there are other reasons why asylum-seekers from non-neighboring countries come to Thailand. A significant attraction is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which has the regional office situated in the heart of Bangkok where asylum-seekers may apply for refugee status. A second reason is the ease of attaining initial entry to the country with a tourist visa. Unfortunately this is where the ease ends; Thailand has not signed the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and there are no national policies for the protection of refugees or asylum-seekers. This becomes of utmost importance when the asylum-seeker or refugee overstays their tourist visa during the process of attaining refugee status and waiting for resettlement, and slips into the category of 'illegal immigrant'. Those who are in the country illegally are subject to arrest, detention and pressure to repatriate (Den Otter, 2007). In this atmosphere, refugees and asylum-seekers try to live their day to day lives and exercise their human rights when possible. One of these human rights is the right to free education for children. Thai policies state that all children, including the children of asylum-seekers and refugees, should be offered basic primary education (Thailand, 2008). In reality there are multiple barriers restricting access to primary education for this vulnerable population. This thesis explores the various barriers that urban refugee and asylum-seeker children face in attempting to access primary education.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The right to primary education for children is essentially uncontested in every corner of the globe. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states in Article 26 that "Everyone has the right to education". There are multiple international conventions and treaties as well as national policies that support this fundamental right. Yet in Southeast Asia over 18 million primary school aged children do not attend school (UNDPI, 2010). Some families cannot afford school related expenses, the transportation costs or constant relocation in search of livelihood makes it too difficult to stay enrolled. Some may not have the correct documentation needed to enter school or social issues may prove too difficult to overcome. In some cases customary norms hinder the child's formal education, (such as cultural with gender discrimination towards girls). Many other occurrences can interrupt schooling; manmade, such as war, or environmental, such as natural disasters. Another interruption that can last months or years is the process of seeking asylum as a refugee.

For asylum-seekers, survival is the first priority and gaining refugee status is a close second. Primary education for the children in refugee and asylum-seekers families might often be delayed for various reasons such as education programs not being readily available, language barriers, persistent relocation, or more personal reasons such as stress. These barriers can arise in any country that an asylum-seeker family flees to, but one barrier only exists in certain countries, the threat of arrest and detention.

One hundred and forty-seven countries in the world have ratified the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the subsequent 1967 protocol (Goodwin-Gill, 2012). Article 22 on the convention requires that refugees are provided with a primary education. Under these guidelines, asylum-seekers are offered temporary schooling either in refugee camps or through integration into established schools in the host country. Despite these provisions, there are still children who do not receive schooling for extended periods of time. These commonly include the children of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in countries that are not party to, or do not uphold the guidelines listed in the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. More than half of the countries in Asia have not signed the

convention and additionally a few countries that have signed it but do not enforce its guidelines (Davies, 2008).

Urban refugees and asylum-seekers - often thought of as invisible in a city - are growing in number and now make up more than half of all refugees and asylum-seekers worldwide. (UNHCR, 2010b) These swelling numbers also reflect the rising number of children who are at risk of not receiving adequate education. In 2008 a UNHCR study found that only 29 of 87 urban areas met standard enrollment at primary schools for refugee children. (UNHCR, 2009) Although urban environments offer a better chance of employment and income, often lack basic services that would be provided in refugee camps, such as food, shelter, healthcare and access to basic education. To compound this situation, asylum-seekers and refugees face vulnerabilities; discrimination, poverty and language barriers on top of trauma and sometimes abuse and discrimination.

The challenges associated with being an asylum-seeker or a refugee, combined with those related to an urban environment are significantly exacerbated if the primary protection mechanism, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, is not recognized by host country. Under such circumstances asylum-seekers and refugees are considered ‘illegal migrants’ with no protection, as is the case in India, Thailand, Malaysia and a handful of other countries, most of which are in South and South East Asia (UNHCR, 2010b).

Although Thailand has not signed the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, they have a long history of permitting refugees from Viet Nam and bordering countries such as Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, to seek temporary refuge within their borders. Some temporary refugee camps have been operating for a long time. The camps along the border with Myanmar have housed over 130,000 people for the past 20 years ((TBBC) 2012). Thailand has ratified other international conventions and treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). These are positive signs that refugees, asylum-seekers and other people of concern, do benefit from some protection in Thailand.

In relation to education in particular, Thailand abides by the Education For All (EFA) framework and is actively working towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that target universal education as the second most important goal after poverty alleviation. Thailand's constitution (2007) also includes specific reference in Chapter 3 - Part 8, Rights and Liberties in Education, and Chapter 5 - Part 4, Foreign Policy, to education for all. Three primary ministries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education, all support primary education for all children including marginalized groups with no legal status, and illegal migrants.

Despite Thailand's commitment to primary education for all children, there are significant barriers for urban refugees and asylum-seeker children trying to access an education. According to the Thai immigration policy, those who have over stayed their visa are illegal and are routinely arrested and put in detention with the potential of being repatriated (Thai Immigration Policy, 2004). This threat is constant so these families keep a low profile to avoid detection while they await their refugee status determination and are able to resettle in a third country or voluntarily repatriate.

The contradiction between the framework to provide primary education for all and the need to enforce immigration policies that result in restriction on movement, is one of the barriers to accessing education for asylum-seeker children. The problem lays not in the educational policies but in the implementation of the immigration policies. Thailand has the human rights framework permitting these children the right to primary education, but lacks recognition of refugee rights in national immigration policies which may result in a barrier to access.

This thesis will focus on the conflict between the implementation of educational and immigration policies and other barriers that exist hindering the access to schooling for the children of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok.

1.3 Thesis Structure - Conceptual Framework

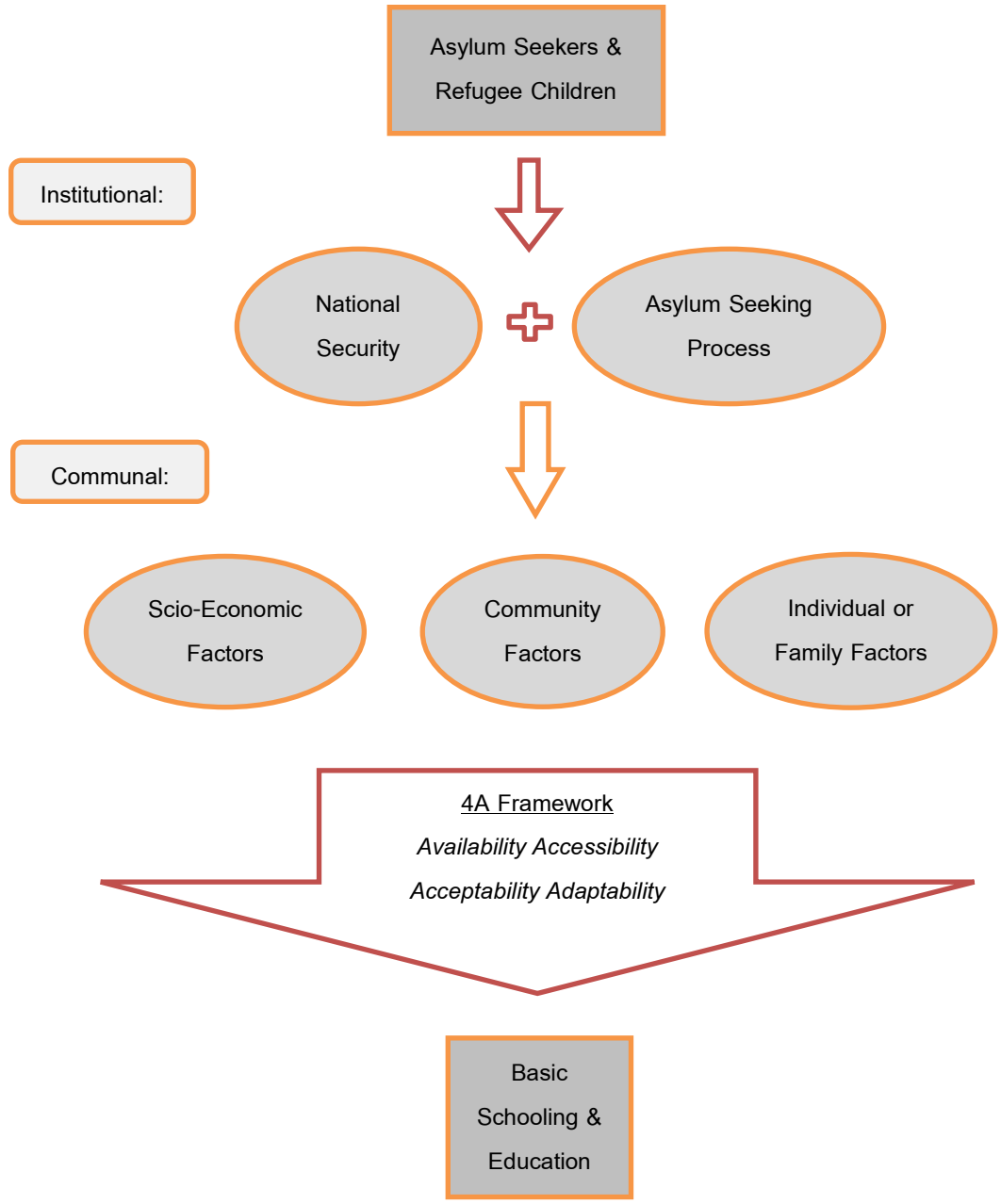
The key variables that will be addressed in this thesis are; the access to primary education, the unique vulnerabilities that an urban asylum-seeker faces in a transit country and the implementation of national legislation and policies that affect this population.

There are five main elements to be considered; national security, the asylum seeking process, socio-economic factors, community factors and individual or family factors. The first two concern the legality of an urban refugee or asylum-seeker with regards to their status in the host or transit country. In the case of Thailand, the emphasis on national security that leads to the creation and enforcement of certain immigration laws, is in conflict with the length of the asylum seeking process, that is dependent on the refugee status determination procedure conducted by the UNHCR regional office in Bangkok (Alexander, 1999). The last three elements address the specific condition of this population while seeking asylum. This includes socio-economic factors - the means to afford protections such as visa renewals and the means to send children to school. Secondly, community factors are important as networks can provide support for the duration of the asylum seeking process and make access to education more attainable by knowledge sharing. Lastly individual or family factors that define additional reasons, other than legal, socio-economic and community, that a child might have or not have access to primary education.

Considering these five main elements, two institutional and three communal, the right to receive an education will be measured using the 4A's framework; Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability (Tomasevski, 2001). Research from the literature suggests that Thailand's Ministry of Education does ensure Available and Acceptable schools for all (EFA). Research conducted as part of this study test whether this is the case.

Accessibility and Adaptability are of great importance to this study. Accessibility, ensures that all learning environments must be both physically and economically accessible for every child, including the most marginalized. Schools must be within safe physical reach and must also be affordable to all. Although the meaning of "within safe physical reach" usually applies to areas of conflict, the researcher proposes to extend this statement to include physical access to school without the persistent threat of arrest and detention. 'Adaptability' stresses education adapted to the best interests of each child, especially those from disadvantaged groups. This might include assistance with language or other challenges specific to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Figure 1.0: Conceptual Framework



1.4 Research Questions

What are the key barriers that urban refugee and asylum-seeker children face in attempting to access basic schooling and education in Bangkok?

- What legislation and institutional factors affect access to primary education for urban refugee and asylum-seeker children and to what extent are these factors implemented.
- Which socio-economic factors influence these families and their children?
- What community and individual factors affect these families and their children?
- How acceptable is the quality of education that is available to these children?

1.5 Research Objectives

- To identify the legislation and institutional factors that affect access to primary education for the children of refugees and asylum-seekers and to determine to what extent these factors are being implemented.
- To assess the individual socio-economic factors that influence these families and their children.
- To examine the community and personal factors that affect these families and their children.
- To evaluate the acceptability of the current educational options.

1.6 Hypothesis

The main barrier to access of primary education for the children of asylum-seekers and refugees in Bangkok is that their presence in the country is viewed by Thai authorities in a national security, rather than a human rights framework.

1.7 Significance of the Research

According to the documentary data collected and to the best of the researchers knowledge, a study investigating the key factors and barriers that urban refugee and asylum-seeker children face when attempting to access basic education in Bangkok, does not exist. This research fills a gap in knowledge in this aspect. It is important as it reveals the situation of this particular population in Bangkok using the indicator of primary education. Thailand has recently made substantial movements towards

providing primary education to all, as is displayed in efforts towards migrant children living in Thailand. This has been successful so far, and reflects the over-all direction of policy change towards migrants as a whole in the last few years. The same has not been addressed for urban refugees and asylum-seekers. Although Thailand has not signed the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, they have signed other international agreements, such as the ICCPR and the ICESCR, that offer the protections needed towards this vulnerable population to enable them to retain their basic human rights while staying temporarily in Thailand. Thailand is one of 49 countries in the world that are not party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Goodwin-Gill, 2012). The majority of countries that have not signed this convention are in South and South East Asia. Which effects the 80% of the world's refugees that reside in Asia and Africa (UNHCR, 2010a) . With almost two-thirds of the world's refugees in urban areas, this study assessing access to primary education in Bangkok, could act to highlight the need for further research that would lead to legislative reform to benefit urban refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2010b).

CHAPTER II
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method is utilized for this study in order to answer the research questions and test the hypothesis of this thesis. This was entailed in a cross-sectional study utilizing various methods including: documentary research, semi-structured, in-depth and expert interviews, exploratory research and non-participant observation.

2.1 Documentary Research

Documentary research was used to assess available information relevant to the research question; in particular, information about the current legislation and policies in Thailand regarding immigration and education. Documented information relevant to urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok was also gathered from key-informants and relevant organizations.

Secondary data was collected from books, reports, journals, news articles, NGO's websites and other credible internet sources. All information reviewed related to the refugee and asylum-seeker condition, immigration law, educational policy, human rights for refugees and asylum-seekers and the four nationalities studied. Primary data was collected from a number of agencies such as the UNHCR, Bangkok Refugee Center (BRC), and the International Schools association Cognita. Additional information was gathered during the following conference:

"*World Refugee Day 2012: Thai Voice for Refugees."* The Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand, 20 June 2012.

2.2 Field Study Research – Data Collection and Methods

The following section will discuss the specifics about the data collected in the field.

In-depth expert interviews and non-participant observation were conducted with international and local aid organizations, acting school administration and teachers and Thai immigration authorities.

Respondents were divided into two groups; 1) expert and key informant: in-depth interviews and 2) sample population: semi-structural interviews. Informal interview and observation were also conducted to collect other relevant information.

2.2.1 Expert and Key Informant Interviews

The in-depth interviews with expert and key informants consisted of questions tailored to the expertise of the individual. The interviews at the schools consisted of questions concerning the admission of refugee and asylum-seeker children, discrimination issues, concerns with immigration authorities, curriculum offered and accreditation. The interviews with JRS, Calvary Baptist Church and in Search of Sanuk, explored the schooling that these organizations offered this particular population, any issues they had with immigration authorities and general information about urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok. The interview with the UNHCR covered protection issues and services offered to this population, general information and details about the Bangkok Refugee Learning Center program. At the BRC the interviewer gathered information about the past and present education programs offered, general information on the population and issues with Thai immigration. The information gathered during the interview with the Thai Committee for Refugees Foundation (TCR) and the ex-immigration officer concerned the legal aspects of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok. The interview with IOM representatives covered information about the Immigration Detention Center (IDC) daycare and issues particular to this population. The Australian Government Volunteer provided information about both BRC and IDC and the urban refugee and asylum-seeker condition in Bangkok. The interview with the out-reach advocate provided information about the Vietnamese-Hmong community in Bangkok.

The following key informants and experts were interviewed: (see Appendix B for more details)

- Teacher – International School 1
- Head master – International School 2
- Board member – International School 3
- Ex-immigration officer - IDC
- Associate Protection Officer – UNHCR

- Founder and Executive Director – TCR
- Program Manager of the Urban Refugee Program (URP) - JRS
- Psycho-social Case Worker (URP) Team - JRS
- Project Officer, Counter Traffic Unit – IOM
- Project Assistant – IDC/IOM Daycare
- Program Manager – BRC
- Australian Government Volunteer – BRC and IDC
- Founder and Executive Director – In Search of Sanuk
- Project Director - Lumpini School, Calvary Baptist Church
- Outreach Advocate – Vietnamese Hmong Community

2.2.2 Sample Population Interviews

The semi-structural interviews conducted with the study population discussed general factual data about their family and living situation, past education and employment, questions about their refugee status, information about the educational opportunities they have taken part in, their connections with a community or organizations that offer assistance and questions about experiences with Thai immigration authorities. These interviews were held with the following groups: (See Appendix A for more details)[1]

- 19 Sri Lankan - Tamil families
- 8 Pakistani – Ahmadiyya families
- 2 Somali Families
- 2 Vietnamese - Hmong Families

These families were selected using the snow-ball sampling model utilizing the initial contacts of the translators used.

2.2.2.1 Pakistani – Ahmadiyya

The Pakistani translator, previously known to the researcher, helped to coordinate and conduct all eight interviews in the Ahmadi community. The researcher was notified by TCR that the organizations consent was needed before continuing

[1] A background and overview pertaining to these four nationalities will be discussed further in section 4.2.

with the interviews in this community. The researcher sent interview questions to TCR for approval and was then able to conduct the interviews without a TCR representative. As will be explained in detail in section 2.7.3, data saturation was attained after eight interviews, so no further interviews were conducted with this community.

2.2.2.2 Sri Lankan

The point of entry to the Sri Lankan urban refugee and asylum-seeker community was obtained through an international school teacher with close ties to one of the Sri Lankan families. The family helped the researcher to link to five additional families and a translator. The translator then helped the researcher to connect to six more families in the Sri Lankan community. A JRS staff member connected the researcher with a second Sri Lankan translator who arranged for seven more interviews in the community. A total of 19 Sri Lankan families with a total of 42 children, in three different areas of Bangkok were interviewed.

2.2.2.3 Somali

The researcher located a Somali community with the help of Jesuit Refugee Services and interviewed two families from this community. The young brother in one of the families spoke good English and translated for both families.

2.2.2.4 Vietnamese - Hmong

As the researcher was not permitted to meet with the majority of the Vietnamese - Hmong community for security reasons (explained in detail in section 2.7.4). The researcher instead interviewed a family contacted personally through the IOM/IDC Daycare. The second Hmong family was contacted for the interviewer through the Vietnamese – Hmong advocate personally. Both families were less at-risk than the majority of the Hmong community, so meeting with them was less likely to put them at risk.

2.2.3 Interview Questions and Modifications

The interview questions used were the same for every family interviewed with many questions open ended to encourage the interviewee to expand on the topic if they wished. The interview questions started with factual data, such as nationality, number of children, and moved to socio-economic factors such as past schooling and profession of the parents. The researcher then asked details about the refugee status of the families and information about the children's schooling experiences in Bangkok. Questions are asked about transportation and travel to and from school and how safe this process feels to the family. Next the families were asked about how important providing their children with education is to them. The following questions pertain to social capital concerning if the family is part of a community that assists them or if organizations have provided them with assistance. The last questions measure how threatened the families feel by immigration authorities, if this affects their behaviors and if it has an effect on the child's access to education. The interview ends with a question asking if the parent feels that the stay in Bangkok has or will affect their children's education in the future. (See Appendix C for actual interview questions)

Some modifications to the interview questions were necessary to facilitate the flow of the interview, for clearer understanding of what was being asked and to acquire more information that would further enhance the study.

Modifications to the initial interview questions were made during and after the first interview. It was found that some of the wording was better understood using different more common terms and phrases. It was apparent that a new section was needed to record the variety of schools that the child had attended during their stay in Bangkok, not just their current school. As many families move locations, their legal-status changes or are arrested during their stay in Bangkok; this has direct effects on access to child's schooling.

To better assess the perception of the parent towards education and to better understand the gravity of the situation, a new question was created for the end of the interview. The parent was asked their thoughts and feelings in regard to the future of their child's education, considering the schooling that they experienced in Bangkok. This gauged the perception of the impact that this time spent will have on the future. This is important if there is limited access to schooling, or if the schooling available is

so substandard as to have a major negative effect of the child's schooling in the long term.

Two of the questions were deleted; one asking why a child would not or did not attend school for a temporary amount of time, such as a day or a few days. This was confusing and better stated as "Has your child ever not attended school due to the threat of Immigration police?". The second question deleted asked when the family would resettle if they were currently in the resettlement process. The researcher learned that a refugee will only be notified a few weeks before resettlement, so no one knows the date beforehand, it can take months or years.

2.2.3.1 School Age Range

The researcher had intended on using the age range from 5 to 18 years old as "school age" but changed this to fit the situation. Although the national policy states that free-education starts at five years old, the UNHCR/BRLC officially provide education from 6 to 17 years of age, so this is the age range that the researcher used (Thailand, 2008).

2.3 Research Scope

Due to the focus on urban refugees and asylum-seekers, the field study was limited to the Bangkok metropolitan area and due to the restricted amount of time available, the field study was conducted in approximately six weeks. The researcher anticipated difficulties trying to locate families as urban refugees and asylum-seekers attempt to remain anonymous to avoid detection from immigration police. To access the communities the researcher found that using the snow-ball sampling method, utilizing the connections of the translators, was successful in locating a sufficient number of families to interview. The population studied was comprised of samples from the four largest populations of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok; Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Vietnamese-Hmong and Somali. The researcher intended on focusing her study on the Sri Lankan and Pakistani populations, but once in the field expanded the scope to include the Hmong and Somali's to complete the study with more diversified data. The researcher interviewed families with all three possible refugee statuses; recognized refugees, asylum-seeker and families who had their cases

rejected and files with the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) closed.

2.4 Language Used and the Use of a Translator

All of the key informant interviews were conducted in English with the exception of one interview that was Thai and English and a translator was used to assist. A translator was necessary for seven of the Pakistani-Ahmadi interviews, 16 of the Sri Lankans interviews, two of the Somali interviews and one of the Vietnamese-Hmong interviews. A total of six translators were used; two Sri Lankan, one Ahmadi, one Somali, one Hmong and one Thai. The purpose of the study was explained to the translators for better understanding and it was further explained that all the information was important and not to paraphrase or summarize in relaying the information.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

The security of the urban refugee and asylum-seeker families is a primary concern to the researcher as their legal status in Thailand puts them at risk of arrested and indefinite detention under Thai law. Recognizing this, the researcher took every measure to reduce visibility when visiting with the urban refugees and asylum-seekers in this study. Confidentiality was strictly maintained to ensure the safety and anonymity of the informants. Names were not taken but rather the families were recorded as “Family 1, 2, 3…etc.”. Any names used in the write up for the thesis, such as in case studies, are fictitious. Photos were not taken and voices not recorded, all responses to interview questions were handwritten by the interviewer. The location of the urban refugees and asylum-seekers homes remains confidential.

All families were given information about the study and asked by the translators if they were interested in taking part prior to the interviews. At the time of the interviews the researcher gained consent again, before each interview, and the interviewees were advised that they were free to only answer the questions that they felt comfortable answering. Two respondents chose not answer about the source of their income and another respondent chose not to disclose information about the church charity school that their children were attending.

2.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The data from the interviews was hand-recorded and then cumulated into tables for analysis. The interview questions covered a wide range of topics to get an ample picture of the urban refugee and asylum-seeker condition in Bangkok. The questions were fully comprehensive to answer the studies research objectives. The five key fields; legislative and institutional factors, socioeconomic, community and individual factors incited supplementary information that helped the researcher arrive at the conclusions that will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The data for assessing the quality of education was collated from the family interviews and the information from the key-informants in the education field.

2.7 Limitation of the Study

The following sections discuss limitations to the study that the researcher encountered during the field work.

2.7.1 Resettlement and pre-resettlement

An unavoidable limitation to the study was all participants interviewed were in awaiting resettlement rather than a broader study that could including those who had resettled recently as well. This skews the research results for average amount of time it takes urban refugees and asylum-seekers to resettle. Only one family had a date in which they would resettle to another country, every other family was waiting for an undesignated amount of time. This may make the data reflect that the wait for resettlement is longer than if the study was expanded to collecting data from families who had already resettled, as well as the families awaiting resettlement.

2.7.2 Snow-ball method

Another limitation was that due to using the snow-ball method for selecting families to interview. All these families were by default, part of a community to have been recognized and contacted for the study. A less biased selection might have been conducted by contacting urban refugees and asylum-seekers solely through an NGO, such as through the researchers connections at Jesuit Refugee Services, but the staff member contacted at JRS felt that as an independent study, not related to JRS, this

would be inappropriate. The respondents might feel obliged to take part in the study believing that it would be linked to their connection with JRS[2].

2.7.3 Data Saturation

As was mentioned in section 2.2.2.1, data-saturation was quickly reached within the Ahmadi community due to their very unique set of circumstances that pertain to not a few families, but the entire community.

The whole community of 96 individuals was arrested and sent to detention on the same date. They all were released from detention on the same date, and all the children were then provided schooling unique to them, unlike any other urban refugee community in Bangkok. All families were granted refugee status and 50% have already resettled in third countries. Due to the similarity of the experiences the researcher felt after interviewing eight families, with a total of 17 children, data saturation had been reached.

2.7.4 Too vulnerable

The last limitation concerns the Vietnamese-Hmong population. The researcher was not allowed to contact this population for security reasons. The Hmong are extremely vulnerable and lack protections, so any action that might increase detection is discouraged. The two families that were interviewed are less at risk , due to the first family currently being in the IDC, and the second family having received bail from IDC via TCR, permitting legal stay in the country for a finite amount of time.

2.8 Terminology Used

The following are terms used throughout the thesis clarify the intent of the researcher.

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[2] Never the less, the researcher was introduced to the Somali population (as noted in 2.2.2.3) through the assistance of JRS. A number of families were made aware of the study by the JRS caseworker and free to contact the researcher on their own if interested. The individual who contacted the researcher, and became the translator for the interviews, benefited by taking the opportunity to practicing his English.

Asylum-seeker:

An asylum-seeker is a refugee who does not have the official status of Refugee. They may not have applied for refugee status, or are in the process of refugee status determination by the state or the UNHCR. If one is denied refugee status, it does not mean that they are not a refugee, it just means that they do not have the title and the protections given to those with official refugee status.

Education:

Education can be both: "The delivery of knowledge, skills and information from teacher to student" and also "The act of imparting general knowledge, developing powers of reasoning, and judgment" and generally expanding one's self intellectually (Collins, 1980).

Formal Education:

"Formal education corresponds to a systematic, organized education model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms, presenting a rather rigid curriculum as regards objectives, content and methodology." (Dib, 1988).

Informal Education:

"Informal education does not correspond to an organized and systematic view of education; informal education does not necessarily include the objectives and subjects usually encompassed by the traditional curricula. … Informal education does not of necessity regard the providing of degrees or diplomas; it merely supplements both formal and non-formal education." (Dib, 1988).

Migrants:

People residing in a country other than the one in which they are nationals[3].

[3] Often the terms Refugee and Migrant are used interchangeably and in the Southeast Asia region the terms 'illegal migrant' and 'irregular migrant' are used to define migrants and refugees, asylum-seekers. This reflects the idea that all unofficially titled non-citizens are Migrants. It does not separate the people who chose to leave their homes for better economic opportunities and those that were forced to leave due to violence and persecution.

People of Concern:

'People of Concern' is a term used by the UNHCR that includes: refugees, asylum-seekers, repatriated refugees, internally displaced persons and those who are stateless. The author will use this definition when using this term.

Refugee:

The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines refugees as:

"A refugee is someone who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." (UNHCR text of the General Assembly resolution, 1950)

This is the definition that the UNHCR universally uses but this is not the only definition used around the world. Different regions have their own definitions of 'refugee' such as the Cartagena Declaration in Latin America the Africa's Organization of African Unity definition which all use the same premise of people fleeing from persecution and danger.

Refugee is a legal term, a legal status that a host country, or the UNHCR, grants a person seeking asylum if the person is acknowledged as fitting the criteria of the definition of Refugee. A person does not *become* a refugee by virtue of this recognition, but rather the recognition is declaratory and formally confirms the status allowing the individual to obtain protection and provisions from the host country, transit country and/or resettlement country.

Schooling:

Schooling is the process of being taught, learning or receiving an education in a school.

Urban Asylum-seeker:

Urban Asylum-seeker is a person seeking the official status of Refugee, while living in an urban area. These people are extremely vulnerable, they depend entirely on

social networks that they may have and charity organizations, to survive. They have no official protections, like a refugee would have, or access to services, like an asylum-seeker in a camp may have.

Urban Refugee:

An urban refugee is a person officially granted Refugee Status living in an urban area.

CHAPTER III
LITERATURE REVIEW

3. 1 Refugees & Asylum-Seekers

3.1.1 Refugee Protections in Asia and SE Asia

Sara Davies discusses the lack of protections in Asia in terms of International Refugee Law (Davies, 2008). She points out that out of twenty-nine countries in Asia, only ten have signed both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its addendum, the 1967 Protocol. Out of these ten countries only five have made it domestic law. Three of these countries are post-Soviet countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan that signed the convention when the United Nations were helping them to create their own governments. Japan signed the Convention in 1981 as one of the only fully industrialized countries in the region, until recently did not accept many refugees, but they are one of nations that supplies the most funding to the UNHCR. South Korea, one of the four Asian Tigers, is also considered a developed nation, signed the convention and put it into law, accepting thousands of North Korean refugees every year. Cambodia and the Philippines have 'acceded' to the Convention, but have variable implementation.

There are no regional instruments particularly for refugee rights in South East Asia, such as Africa's has with the 'Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa' created by the Organization of African Unity or the Organization of American States 'Cartagena Declaration on Refugees' from 1984. Although many Asian countries are part of the Asia-Africa Legal Consultative Committee that instituted the Bangkok Principles on the Status and Treatment of Refugees in 1966 and reaffirmed again in 1988 and 2001. The Bangkok Principles recognize refugees and appeal to countries to provide asylum and uphold the principle of non-refoulement. It declares that these rights can only be exercised when the security of the State is not threatened and it is up to each state to make that judgment. There is no monitoring system and these guidelines are non-binding, rather used as

inspiration for states to enact their own national legislation for the status and treatment of refugees.

Sara Davies points out that Southeast Asia has the highest number of refugees seeking asylum from a single UNHCR branch (Malaysia) and the second highest number of submitting claims from one country (Burma). Despite these high numbers, there seems to be no collective interest from ASEAN to create a regional policy to address this problem. Without international, regional or national protections in place, many would-be refugees do not apply to the UNHCR in fear of having their case rejected and drawing attention to their presence in a country where they are considered illegal migrants. Because there is no national help, there is an enormous pressure on the UNHCR in these countries to conduct the refugee status determination (RSD) process on their own and to support people and communities that have attained their Refugee Status while awaiting resettlement to a third country. Due to these issues many asylum-seekers chose to seek Refugee Status in countries that have more established programs, such as Australia, the US, and the UK, putting greater strain on these countries.

Davies outlines four main reasons for the failure of Southeast Asian countries to adopt the international principles concerning refugees, or to show any interest in creating their own. Firstly, the ‘ASEAN-way’, which refers to the custom of non-interference with neighboring countries over sensitive issues. This region is accustomed to arriving at political solutions through bilateral negotiation, emphasizing on sovereign jurisdiction rather than universal human rights. Secondly, countries in this region state that they cannot bear the economic cost of refugee recognition, although equally poor and developing countries in other parts of the world, are a party to the Convention and Protocol relating to the status or refugees and do not seem to suffer economically from the refugees due to the large amount of foreign aid money that is provided to states that receive large numbers of refugees. Thirdly, the belief that admitting refugees would pose a threat to social cohesion. This viewpoint comes from many states history of differing ethnic groups causing friction when brought together. But just the opposite is true; communities that are not integrated into the society, but rather kept outside of society often pose more of a threat. Refugee camps can be a breeding ground for crime, rebel group infiltration, the

spread of disease and heightened insecurity. Integration into the norms of society is far more fruitful. Lastly, ‘Asian’ values; international refugee laws are based on Western value systems, not Asian. But the concept of human rights is universal and could be adapted to fit well within Asian values and still benefit these vulnerable groups. Another point that Davies makes is that it is beneficial for a state to allow this population into the country, and then to label them as illegal migrants. With no protections and a lack of official status they are more likely to accept the dirty, dangerous and difficult (3D) jobs that nationals don’t want to do.

This data points out many interesting points concerning the lack of protections for refugees in Southeast Asian countries. It relates directly to the topic of this thesis and helps to define the situation that urban refugees and asylum-seekers face in seeking protections and services in Southeast Asia.

3.1.2. Refugees in Other Non-Signatory Countries

Malaysia and Thailand have a very similar refugee and asylum-seeker situation. Neither are party to the 1951 Convention Relating to Refugees and both have large number of refugees and asylum-seekers entering into their country, with Malaysia being one of the largest recipients in the world of refugees. In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia there are 67000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers with an estimated additional 30,000 that are unregistered (Kaur, 2007). Kuala Lumpur is a massive city of approximately seven million people. In this population refugees and asylum-seekers are dispersed and frequently mobile. This makes it difficult for aid organizations to reach out to them and meet their needs. Similar to Thailand, refugees and asylum-seekers are considered illegal migrants and at risk of arrest and detention. Frequent police raids for undocumented migrants capture refugees and their UNHCR documentation do little to protect them from detention. Alongside constant fear, many in this vulnerable population suffer depressing financial situations. Often they owe money to a smuggler who arranged their travel to Malaysia, but without the opportunity to work they take loans to live and pay their debt. (Kaur 2007) Many of the urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok suffer much the same conditions and are equally ’invisible’ so they struggle to survive. One of the challenges that the UNHCR faces in large urban areas such as Bangkok, is trying to locate and keep tract

of the people of concern that they are trying to assist. Many chose to stay hidden due to fear arrest and deportation (UNHCR, 2010a).

3.2 Education

3.2.1 International Frameworks

3.2.1.1 The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 (2) that states that the condition of childhood is "entitled to special care and assistance" (Rehman, 2003). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the primary international guideline and agreement between nations, that defines goals for countries to achieve, on behalf of children. Thailand ratified this convention September 5th, 1992. It expresses the right to survival, full development, protection from harm, the opportunity to participate in family, culture and social life. The main principles are non-discrimination, best interest of the child, right to life and development, and participation of the child in decisions that affect them. Human dignity and harmonious development is key (UNESCO, 2012). Article 28 and 29 are specific to education. Article 28 calls for states to make primary education compulsory and free for all. Quality and relevance of education is stated in Article 29, which necessitates that education builds on a child's potential and supports his or her cultural identity. Psychosocial support and elements covering human rights and equality fall under Article 29 as well. The protection of a child's right to culture and recreation are outlined in Article 31. The CRC also discusses the issue of non-discrimination in Article 2, ensuring access for all children regardless of physical disabilities, gender, and the protection of linguistic and cultural rights of ethnic minority communities. Article 22 mandates that States Parties shall take "all appropriate measures to ensure that all children who is seeking refugee status… whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights" (Assembly, 1990). The CRC's General Comment no. 6 (1990) discusses unaccompanied children outside of their country of origin bringing attention to the special vulnerabilities that these children face recognizing the "multifaceted challenges faced by States and other actors in ensuring that such children are able to

access and enjoy their rights, irrespective of their nationality, immigration status or statelessness" (Bhabha, 2008).

3.2.1.2 The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

This UN treaty contains some of the most important international legal provisions establishing economic, social and cultural rights. The right to free and compulsory education at the primary level and accessible secondary-level education is articulated in Article 13 of the Covenant. Extra emphasis is put on improving conditions and teaching standards. Thailand ratified the ICESCR convention in 1992.

3.2.1.3 The International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

Thailand Ratified this convention on January 28th, 2003. This UN convention obliges countries to condemn every form of racial discrimination as well as to pursue policies to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms. In Article 5 it states that state parties take every measure to eliminate racial discrimination and to guarantee rights to everyone without distinction as to race, color, national or ethnic origin or equality before the law. It also lists basic rights that should be for the enjoyment of everyone including the right to education and training. *(*United Nations Treaties Collection, 2012*)* Thailand added an interpretative declaration to ensure that national sovereignty and that the international treaties do not conflict or override national priorities.

3.2.2 Education for Non-Nationals

3.2.2.1 Education for Refugees - Global Review

A report studying and critiquing education for refugees worldwide revealed the biggest issues facing refugees and the organizations and states that assist them. The provision of educational opportunities is one of the highest priorities of refugee communities. Access to education is a basic human right and is linked to poverty reduction, economic growth, stability and better lives for children, families, and whole communities. Most refugees, especially parents, feel passionate that education

is “the key to the future,” that it will help bring peace to their countries and that despite not knowing “what will happen tomorrow,” education brings stability and hope (Dryden-Peterson, 2011).

Despite the obvious benefits of providing education, this sector only receives 2% of humanitarian aid, the lowest of all sectors. Only thirty-eight percent 38% of requests for education funding are met, which is about half the average for all sectors (UNESCO, 2011). Support for high quality education based on the human rights and the developmental approach to education is especially critical due to several new realities in refugee work; the increase of urban refugees and policies that address this reality mean a transformation of the way that assistance is delivered. For the best access to education, high-level advocacy to facilitate integration of refugee children into national schools and on-going support to the building of national education systems is needed. Roughly a decade ago the refugee education situation was deemed as “plagued by inconsistencies,” having been “seriously affected by the financial constraints” by the UNHCR Inspection and Evaluation Service. The author discusses the situation since then in comparison to now.

The factors related to school access play out differently in different contexts, for instance, the global averages for refugee school participation mask the large differences between camp and urban settings. It is clear that access to education is generally more difficult in urban areas.

The number one challenge listed in this report is that “Urban refugee education requires an approach different from strategies used in camp settings” (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). That almost half of refugees live and seek to access education in urban areas is not a new phenomenon. This is being increasingly recognized, as an example the UNHCR’s 2007-2009 Education Strategy report contained the word ‘urban’ only twice, whereas in the 2010-2012 edition, it appears 51 times. Addressing educational access, quality, and protection are particularly challenging for refugees in urban areas.

The new urban policy states that UNHCR will priorities “ensuring that children receive primary school education” in urban areas. This policy outlines several reasons why the right to education is difficult to accomplish in urban settings including the cost of schools and an already over-stretched education system trying to

serve local populations (UNHCR, 2010c). Often there are legal and policy barriers for refugees in urban areas, which make access to education more difficult. In some cases, refugees cannot legally leave the refugee camps that they are in. In other cases, refugees are living in countries that have not signed the 1951 Convention and without protections face daily threats of arrest or detention. Many barriers to accessing education are exacerbated in urban areas verses the camps. The direct and indirect costs of schools are more of a financial burden on refugee families in urban areas due to legal and policy restrictions combined with high costs of living in cities. Urban refugee children entering into a national system have less support than in a camp-based school in adjusting to a new curriculum, new language, accessing psychosocial support, addressing discrimination, harassment from teachers and peers. It also might be difficult in terms of recognizing the child's prior education or administrators might not understand the basic process of admitting refugee children to a local school (Crisp, 2001).

This thorough report covers all issues related to refugee education such as; quality of teachers, overcrowding, the role of various NGO's and the UNHCR, conflict and emergency situations all over the world. The author mostly uses the word 'refugee' but includes asylum-seekers in the discussion and most likely uses one word for simplicity. The parts that pertain most to this thesis concern the comparisons between urban and camp refugees and the barriers to access that urban refugees face. The author includes many case studies, particularly in Africa and gives detailed recommendations towards the future.

3.2.2.2 Education for Refugees - Developed Countries

There is an important paper written about the access, and right to education for refugee and asylum seeking children in OECD countries, case study: Australia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. This study focuses on education provided in the resettlement country rather than in a transit country, but many of the issues are the same. All the resettlement countries are signatories of Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, so there is no issue with the National law being different from the International law. The author rather focuses on the many obstacles in the individual social and community realm that are likely universal in all situations that refugees and

asylum-seekers encounter. These obstacles include prejudice and xenophobia, the language barrier and limited access to the child's previous schooling information. There is also a psychological component mentioned that some children may need special help in school due to the trauma that they have experienced. Some children may not be accustomed to groups settings or have a very different style of education that they are familiar with. Teachers sometimes lack the resources needed to address these multiple issues. Multiculturalism and culturally sensitive practices in a school are also important for a child to be able to succeed.

Bourgonje discusses education in detention centers as children are often held in immigration detention centers while their cases are being processed in the UK and Australia. Every year about 2000 children are held in detention in the UK. The problems facing the teachers include little knowledge of the children's learning needs or abilities upon arrival and many children of different ages and skill levels, so the children do more creative play then following a school based curriculum. Education in the Australian immigration detention centers is the same, with issues of under-staffing, high turn-over of staff and children who arrive with little or no educational background. In Sweden the children's biggest obstacle is the language barrier (Bourgonje, 2010). Although this study is about children resettled in OECD countries, some of the barriers to education may be common to children of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok such as: discrimination, the need for specialized psychological assistance and difficulty due to the foreign language.

3.2.2.3 Education for Migrants - Thailand

Somporn Sanee (2010) researches the right to education for migrant children in the Tak province of Thailand. There are legal and implemented structures for registered migrant children and they are encouraged to attend school. Even unregistered migrant children are in theory able to attend local Thai schools. The barriers faced have more to do with the lack of understanding of the policies on the side of the local schools and the migrant parents. If they are aware of the right to attend school, issues such as the expense of attending school, transportation, books, uniform, might stand in the way. Migrants are discriminated against and migrant parents might not feel able to assert their children's right to attend school.

Discrimination in the school towards the children and the language barrier might also discourage attendance. Unregistered migrant children are in a similar position as refugees and asylum-seekers, as illegal migrants they face a threat of detention or deportation if detected, encouraging a low profile. Zeya Thu (2006) researches migrant children's access to education as well, but in a different location, Samut Sakhon and focusing on Myanmar children. He found as well that although the legislation is in place to provide education to non-Thai children, the implementation is not carried out effectively. A number of barriers are faced from the household/community-level, the school-level and the policy-system-level. Thu points out migrant children face many human rights violations from exploitation and violence to general health risks. This is similar to the human rights violations that refugee and asylum-seeker children face; the information pertaining to migrant children can be seen as applicable to the situation of urban refugee and asylum-seeker children as well. Although recently the Thai government has been allowing and encouraging the children of migrant workers to attend local schools, progress is still in the initial phases.

3.2.2.4 Education for Refugees along the border - Thailand

In a 2011 study conducted by Anna Lena Till, the situation of accreditation in the temporary shelters along the border of Thailand and Myanmar was assessed. Using the premise that 'the right to certification is an essential part of the right to education" the education system in the camp was explored (UNESCO, 2008). The author found that although the accreditation is possible, the stake holders had concerns about the changes needed to acquire accreditation, such as following the Thai national curriculum, focusing on Thai language and Thai history (Till, 2011). ZOA is the primary organization in the camps providing education. In the Annual report the Core Organizational Strategies for 2010-2012, ZOA states that a quality improvement process is needed to "ensure that management and delivery of education and training remains relevant but has strong links to sustainable options such as recognition or accreditation" (ZOA, 2009). The Ministry of Education is doing what it can to assist in the accreditation of the camp schools, but the Ministry of the Interior has not changed its stance on national security and so although these students may

have the education to continue on to university or transfer to other schools, they are not allowed to leave the camps so currently even with accreditation the only students who could benefit from this are the ones that resettle in a third country. Despite this barrier to practical implementation, schools that are accredited have lower drop-out rates and other immediate benefits that make striving for accreditation important.

3.2.3 Frameworks and Guidelines for Education in Thailand

The three Ministries in Thailand that are included in study are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education. Each has their own statement on the right of education for all:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: ***"The Cabinet Resolution on Education for Unregistered Persons (2005)*** *provides the right to education at all levels for all children in Thailand that have no legal status. Accordingly, such children can enroll at public schools certified by the Ministry of Education."(Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012)*

Ministry of the Interior: *"The Thai Government recognizes the right to education for all children of migrant workers, displaced persons and other illegal migrants. As such, the presence of those people has propelled the Government to establish the legal and policy frameworks … so as to integrate them into the national education system. The Government has also allocated additional national budget to support schools providing education to those migrants." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012)*

Ministry of Education: *The Regulation on Proof of Admission of Students into Educational Institutes (2004) states that: 'All education institutions are duty bound to admit children of school age to study in their institutes, with or without evidence of civil registration, by using birth certificates or letters of certification of birth, or other proof issued by government authorities, or documents which are accepted by the Ministry of Education.' (Ministry of Education 2008)*

These statements show Thailand's strong commitment to making education accessible to all, formally at the policy level, agreed upon by multiple ministry's.

3.2.3.1 Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goal 2 is aimed at achieving universal primary education, to "Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling." (NESDB, 2004) The MDG

global indicators focus on the net enrolment ration, the retention ratio of children from 1st through 6th grade, and the literacy rate of 15 to 24 year olds. Thailand has adopted these indicators directly and added the MDG+ that includes upper secondary schools, test scores in both primary and secondary school and Information Technology literacy rates amongst the 15 to 24 year olds. Thailand is likely to reach these goals as they have recently put a great deal of effort into their national education system.

They have three main national targets that address primary education that reinforce the MDG goals. In Chapter III, Part 8 the 2007 Constitution states that "A person shall enjoy an equal right to receive the fundamental education for the duration of not less than 12 years which shall be provided by the State thoroughly…" (Foreign Law Bureau Office of the Counsel of State, 2007). Although they state "a person" this is in the Constitution so it is meant to apply to Thai Nationals. The two other targets that clarify that this is education intended strictly for Nationals are the National Education Act of 1999 and the National Education Development Plan (NEDPlan) Tenth Plan from 2007 to 2011. These discuss primary education for Thai citizens, the Thai labor force, raising the quality of education, encouraging schooling in information technology, raising test scores and increasing the number of 'researchers' in the population.

In 2001 the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) collected data on school aged children and identified disadvantaged groups who had difficulty enrolling or staying in school. In this group 'foreign children' and 'stateless' children are included. But the study states that there are no broad-based systematic databases or monitoring systems to tract these children, only occasional studies. This is where there is a disconnect between the stated MDG II of ensuring that "children everywhere… will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" (MDG) and Thailand's goals that focus on Thai nationals coming short of the universal goal of education for all. The measuring instruments to determine whether the MDG indicators have been met, leave out non-nationals in Thailand. The numbers that the Thai education agencies gather utilize population data from the Ministry of Interiors registration statistics that would likely not include non-Thai's. The indicators are

measured using the gross and net enrolment ratios, the primary retention ratio, and the literacy rate for 15 to 24 year olds. All of these three measurements could easily overlook non-Thai's, such as substantial refugee and asylum-seeker populations who are not counted in the overall Thai population statistics. The development and evaluation division of the NESDB report net and gross enrolment ratios, but the data does not include Bangkok, where there are a growing number of non-Thai school aged children.

In 2012 Thailand has already reached the MDG 2 of 2015. Their national programs to improve schooling are well structured and well supported (Bruns, 2003). Unfortunately some of the minority populations will be overlooked despite the language of the target that seeks "universal" primary education for "children everywhere". The disadvantaged groups including foreign and stateless children are not including in the poling so Thailand has reached its goal, without including these groups.

3.2.3.2 Education For All

UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) action plan was created and presented at a World Conference in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The need for universal education is emphasized in the foreword the Secretary-General of the National Education Commission, he states:

"We hope that developing countries will together with Thailand, continue to move forward to provide basic education to all … for the benefit of all children and adults of the world." (Sujaatanond, 1990)

The intent is to provide basic education to everyone, but point number 21, reveals that there are still disadvantaged and underprivileged groups that need attention. The terms "boat people" and "wanderers" are used to describe refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people respectively. These groups are considered 'unreached'. So regardless of the overall objectives to provide education to all and to benefit all the children and adults of the world, there is a pocket population that falls though the gap. Education For All is a strong national plan that covers many factors such as non-formal schooling, the roll of NGO's and the departments of

Community Development and Public Welfare's involvement in providing education. Access is addressed, but only in the context of education reaching remote rural communities (Sujaatanond, 1990).

3.2.3.3 National Education Reform

The most important policy reform is the 2005 Cabinet Resolution on Education for Unregistered Persons that stipulates the right to education at all levels, for children in Thailand regardless of their legal status. Accordingly such children can enroll at public schools certified by the Ministry of Education. They do not need documentation to enroll in school, they are registered by the Ministry of Education and thus recorded with the Ministry of Interior (Affairs, 2011).

The Ministry of Education Regulation on Proof of Admission of Students into Education Institutes (2004) and the Cabinet Resolution of July 5th 2005, stipulated that:

"All education institutions are duty bound to admit children of school age to study in the institutes, with or without evidence of civil registration, by using birth certificates or letters of certification of birth, or other proof issued by government authorities, or documents which are accepted by the Ministry of Education."(Affairs, 2011)

This means that all children in Thailand, regardless of their legal status, have the right to obtain education informally or at schools accredited by the Ministry of Education.

Another recent policy reform on education in Thailand is further opening education. The Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers of Thailand made by Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva on the 30th December 2008. It states that every child is to be "provided with access to 15 years" cost-free education, starting from the kindergarten level through the secondary education level" (Abhisit Vejjajiva 2008). It also mandates creating "equal and fair education opportunities for the disadvantaged, including… persons in distress … and those of different cultural backgrounds." This key determining policy has made a huge impact opening up educational opportunities to migrant, stateless and displaced children in Thailand and the population of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok have benefited from it as well.

The original National Education Act was written in 1999, with amendments in 2002 and most recently 2010. Created by the office of the National Education Commission and the Prime Minister; the major changes increased the number of years that children could attend school for free and the aim of teaching (Commission, 1999, 2002). Chapter 2, section 10 states that all children are offered free schooling for twelve years with nine years compulsory. Teaching is to be student-centered with a strong focus on quality as monitored by the Office for Educational Standards Assessment and Quality. Thailand has country wide guidelines and indicators for determining quality assessment of formal, in-formal and non-formal education. The guidelines are based on the National Education Acts, B.E. 2542, B.E. 2545 and B. E. 2545. Non-formal education should be flexible and respond to the requirement needs of an individual group of learners. In-formal education should "enable learners to learn by themselves" (Commission, 1999, 2002). These two legitimate forms of education are valuable to the refugee community that may not be able to access formal forms of education.

3.3 National Security & Immigration Law

3.3.1 Legal Framework: Thai Immigration Act

Thai law distinguishes between two main categories of migrants, documented or 'legal' migrants and undocumented or 'illegal' migrants. The first category includes people who enter and are allowed to stay in Thailand, who hold passports, visas, work permits and other valid documents, as required by the immigration legislation. The second category includes all people who enter Thailand without documents or who subsequently become undocumented after arrival. There are estimated to be over three million migrant workers in Thailand, 1.4 million of these migrants are undocumented. In addition, there are 140,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok who are not permitted to work (Huguet and Aphichat, 2011).

In the enforcement of the Immigration Act, the two articles, Section 54, 62 and Section 81, are used to detain, charge and deport those who have no passport or legal documentation, or permissions to stay in the Kingdom have expired. Upon entry into Thailand, the most common visa issued is a Non-Immigrant visa in which a maximum of 90 days is allowed as is stated in the Government Gazette penned by the Thai

Immigration Commission. The highest ranking powers in this commission, in order are: the Under Secretary of the Minister of Interior, Under Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Director General of the Police Department and the Director General of the Labor Department (Thai Immigration Act, 2004).

There is a provision in Section 15 (8) that discusses "…agreements made between concerned countries and with mutual reciprocation" (Thai Immigration Act, 2004) which explains the allowance for the displaced people in the camps on the border with Myanmar. Being recognized by the UNHCR as a refugee or an asylum-seeker in the process of RSD alone, is not a justifiable reason to extend your visa or to stay in the country after your visa has expired. The absence of guidelines on refugees means that refugees who are apprehended are criminalized. Therefore, any person who enters the country illegally or stays in the country once their visa has expired, is considered an Illegal Immigration and will be punished with fines, detention time, or both (Thai Immigration Act, 2004).

3.3.2 Refugees from an Immigration standpoint in Bangkok

A small article in the Bangkok Post in June of 2011 discussed immigration law and in-transit asylum-seekers in Bangkok. (Bangkok Post, 2011) It focuses on North Korean and Pakistani asylum-seekers touching on how they enter the country, and how human rights activists and sometimes foreign diplomats help these groups of people. The deputy chief of investigation at the Immigration Bureau states that:

"If we don't arrest them, more illegal migrants will come to Thailand. This will lead to more crimes and human trafficking," (Bangkok Post, 2011)

This illustrates Thailand's priorities between humanitarian ideals and national security concerns. The Immigration Bureau is aware of the situation that refugees are fleeing from however, because their entry and stay in Thailand is illegal, they must be prosecuted in court. According to an investigation a large group of Ahmadiyya Pakistanis entered Thailand legally but were categorized as illegal migrants because they overstayed their visas while waiting to receive refugee status to be resettled in a third country. Apparently their arrival in large numbers to a Bangkok housing estate

worried some residents in the area. The Immigration Bureau has urged members of the public to call the police department if they have information about illegal immigrants in their neighborhoods. Landlords and car rental services are also warned against helping these immigrants. Providing accommodation for illegal immigrants will result in a fine of 100,000 baht or up to 10 years in jail. Providing them with transport can result in a fine of 50,000 baht or up to five years in prison. This article has some large generalizations about refugees, but provides some interesting and useful quotes from the Immigration Bureau regarding the status of refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok.

3.4 Human Rights

3.4.1 Human Rights and National Interests

Andreas Follesdal (2007) studies the elements that influence States in ratifying human rights conventions (Follesdal, 2010). This includes political effects on states' policies, perceived interests and ideas held of sovereign statehood. Follesdal discusses how accepting certain obligations are often contingent on what other key stakeholders do, for instance national polices can be influenced by multilateral treaty negotiations with neighboring countries. Although human rights issues have traditionally been regarded as domestic affairs there are a growing body of human rights conventions, doctrines and treaties at the international level, indicating that human rights issues are of global interest and supersede national interests. Follesdal's paper is important to this study to broaden the understanding between universal human rights and the role that nation states have when implementing their national laws.

Christina Boswell discusses the crisis of conflict between refugee rights and national interests (Boswell, 2007). She argues that it is a fundamental issue of liberal theories of justice verses national interests. Large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers are considered a financial, social and political burden for receiving states, which goes against national interests. The social costs are perceived to be an over burdening of accommodation and services such as schooling and health facilities. There is also the impression that the arrival of refugees can generate tension in the resident host population. These problems are exacerbated by a state's inability to control unwanted flows of irregular migration. A small percentage of non-genuine asylum-seekers have

abused refugee welfare systems and eroded public sympathy for the refugees. This paper discusses the current debates surrounding refugee rights and implementation. Exploration of how nations value their economic, strategic and social goals over that of duty to refugees. This paper is important for understanding how states view refugees and asylum-seekers in the context of national interest over international human rights concerns. It sheds light on why nations would choose not to ratify the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, or to make other provisions that would support refugees and asylum-seekers within their territory. It provides a balanced and thorough examination of the issues that come into play when considering national policies that conflict with international guidelines.

3.4.2 The 4A Framework

In the ICESCR General Comment number 13 concerning the right to education, the 4A's are first defined (CESCR 1999). It is stated that education in all forms and at all levels should exhibit the following qualities: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Katarina Tomasevski, a former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, summarizes these qualities below (Tomasevski, 2001):

1) Availability means that education is free and government-funded and that there is adequate infrastructure and trained teachers able to support education delivery.
2) Accessibility means that the system is non-discriminatory and accessible to all, and that positive steps are taken to include the most marginalised.
3) Acceptability means that the content of education is relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, and of quality; that the school itself is safe and teachers are professional.
4) Adaptability means that education can evolve with the changing needs of society and contribute to challenging inequalities, such as gender discrimination, and that it can be adapted locally to suit specific contexts.

The general comment of the ICESCR further defines Accessibility by stating that educational institutions and programs must be “within safe physical reach” for all and economically accessible for all.

UNESCO’s Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education presented information pertaining to the right to education. Sheldon Shaffer Director of Asia Pacific regional bureau of education for UNESCO, discussed the situation in the region concerning education for children including the gap between the legal obligations of the countries and the reality. As of 2002 there were 15 million primary school aged children not attending school. Using the 4A framework Shaffer outlines the duties of the countries in a rights-based context, also adding ‘quality’ as the fifth criteria essential to ensuring the right to education. UNESCO defines ‘Acceptability’ as the “creation of minimum standards for learning materials, methods of instruction and school discipline using human rights standards” (Shaeffer, 2003). Shaffer goes on to say that acceptability also means “respect for diversity by ensuring inclusion and equal opportunities for all”. Adaptability is defined by the UNESCO as “the design and implementation of education for children excluded from formal schooling” as well as “the adaptation of education to the best interests of each child, especially for those from disadvantaged groups”. Quality education is also a criteria, encompassing: “good teaching, well-equipped schools and learning centers, safe schools, enough instruction in the right languages, a relevant and useful curriculum and well managed schools”.

The 4A framework is a lens in which to view the rights based approach to the assessment of education. This view allows for thorough critiquing of the multiple facets that come together to create the experience of education and schooling.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS: URBAN REFUGEES AND AYSLUM-SEEKERS IN BANGKOK

This chapter first discusses the research sites in which the study took place and gives an overview of the situation for urban refugees and asylum-seekers at this time. The researcher then discusses the research design of the study and the changes that were made during the course of the field work. Finally, based on the research questions posed, the legislative, institutional and communal situation for these communities in Bangkok are addressed.

Figure 4.0: **Thailand in Southeast Asia**

(Source, Asia Web Direct, 2012)

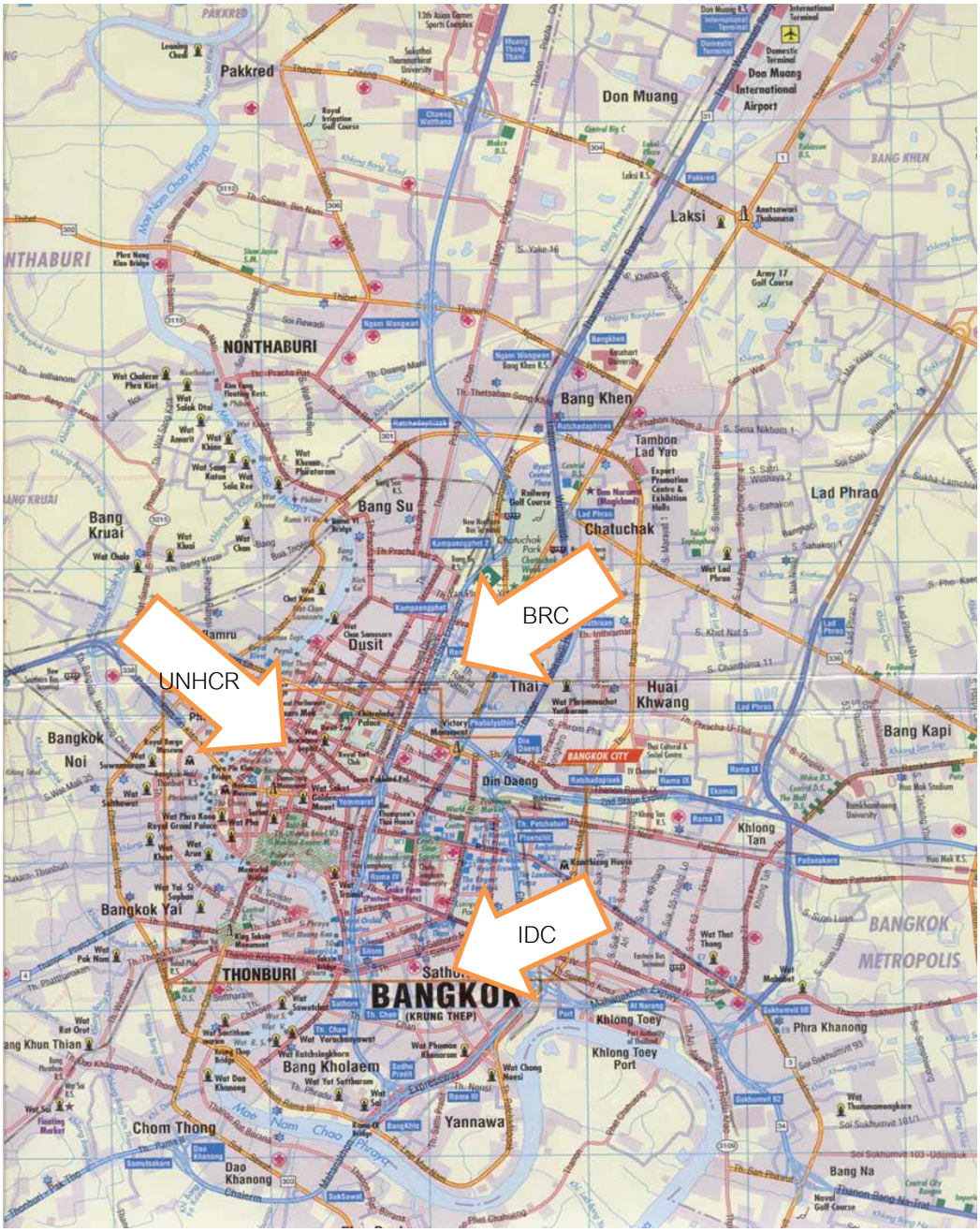
4. 1 Profile of the Research Site and Population

Bangkok is the capital and also the largest city in Thailand, with over nine million living in the city and the surrounding metropolitan area. Bangkok is a densely populated city comprising of 1,568 square kilometers. It is the major economic and financial heart of Thailand and also a leading economic and financial hub in Southeast Asia. Bangkok is a popular tourist destination and also jumping off point for tourism throughout Thailand. Tourism is a very important sector for Thailand accounting for almost 7% of the Kingdom's entire GDP (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

The same national policies created to encourage this booming sector, such as the ease for foreigners to obtain tourist visas, also creates a pull-factor for urban asylum-seekers from other parts of the region and world. The positioning of the UNHCR regional offices in Bangkok also draw refugees to this area. As the most stable country in the region, Thailand has hosted almost 3 million refugees from neighboring countries, over the last three decades, despite the lack of specific and formal legislation governing asylum and refugee affairs. The Kingdom is party to many important international guidelines but is not signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Although there are special concessions for the refugees from Myanmar staying in temporary shelters on the border of Thailand, refugees that come to Bangkok are considered “illegal immigrants” if they come without proper documents or overstay their initial entrance visas. Local integration is not an option for urban refugees and asylum-seekers. The gravity of these circumstances will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

There are more than 2000 urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok (UNHCR 2012). This is seemingly insignificant compared to the 130, 000 refugees currently residing in camps on the border of Thailand and Myanmar (TBBC, 2012). But it is this populations’ size, along with the “illegal” status that causes these people to disperse throughout the city undetected and perpetuates the lack of information about this population.

Figure 4.1: Bangkok City Map with UNHCR, BRC and IDC marked



(Source, JustMaps, 2012)

Information about this urban refugees is important as the trend of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing to urban areas is ever increasing. Almost half of all the worlds refugees are now living in cities and 30% of the globes total refugees are in Asia (Deutsche Welle, 2012; UNHCR, 2012). Yet little research has been done exploring the specific challenges that urban refugees in Asia face, especially in countries where

there is no specific legislation protecting their rights as refugees. In comparison to the refugees living in the camps - urban refugees have fewer services available to them. Many services provided in camps by aid organizations are not readily available in a city setting. Urban refugees and asylum seekers have to fend for themselves finding food, shelter and basic services, such as healthcare and education.

In Bangkok the UNHCR office provides asylum seekers with some basic information primarily alerting them to the services provided by their implementing arm COERR/BRC that offers medical and other services. There are in fact multiple options available to urban refugees and asylum seekers in the form of rental and food assistance, schooling opportunities legal assistance, but there is a lack of coordination of information about these services so it takes asylum-seekers sometimes months to discover the options available.

4.2 Background of Four Nationalities

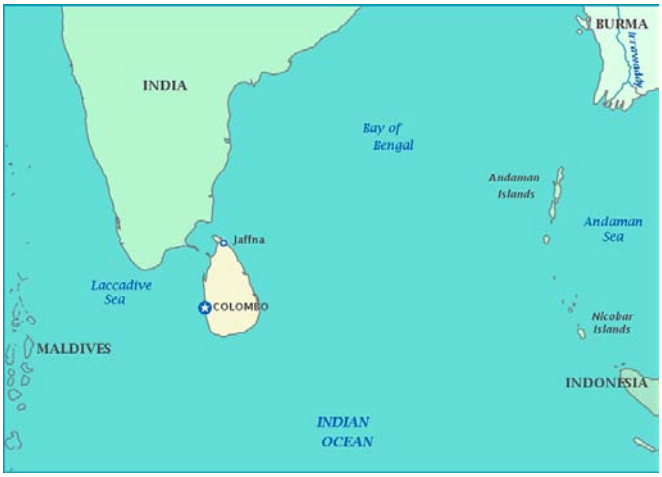
Figure 4.2: Pakistan

(source, BJDesign, 2009)

4.2.1 Pakistani Ahmadiyya

The Pakistani Ahmadiyya flee from religious persecution in their home country. Their belief in Muhammad and prophets varies from other Pakistani Muslims and therefore they are persecuted; unable to call themselves Muslim or practice their form of the religion in Pakistan. Interestingly, Pakistan is a sending and receiving country for refugees. Pakistan supports the highest number of refugees in the world. These refugees come from the bordering countries of Afghanistan and Iran. Under such conditions these Afghanistan and Iran are obviously not able to receive the refugees coming from Pakistan. The other bordering country, India is not an option either as relations between India and Pakistan are not always favorable, so refugees from Pakistan do not feel safe there. Those who can, fly to other countries and many fly to Bangkok as it is in the region, there is access the UNHCR regional offices, and there is easy entry into Thailand via a tourist visa. Most of the families that come are middle-class holding professions such as business owners and professionals. In the population studied many of the mothers were university educated. Most of the asylum-seekers arrived to Bangkok with savings, but depleted all their funds during their extended stay.

Figure 4.3: Sri Lanka



(Source, Owl & Mouse, 2009)

4.2.2 Sri Lankan Tamil

Sri Lankans have been the largest population of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok for years. In 2009 the numbers increased with the end of the 26 year civil war between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers. Those who had any affiliation with the defeated LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) group fled the country. As the Tamil Tigers employed forced military recruitment of men and women, some Tamils fled from the threat of the Sri Lankan government and some fled from the LTTE. In October 2011, 292 Sri Lankans were registered as refugees and 196 classified as asylum-seekers.

Figure 4.4: Vietnam

(Source, Owl & Mouse, 2009)

5.2.3 Vietnamese Hmong

The largest population of urban asylum-seekers in Bangkok are the Viet-Hmong . Due to the representation of the population, the researcher sought to add this community to the study.

The Vietnamese-Hmong in Bangkok, are quite different from the Lao-Hmong, that Thailand is used to receiving. One of the most noticeable differences is that the

Lao-Hmong can often understand or speak Thai as it is similar to the Lao language. Vietnamese-Hmong on the other hand only speak Hmong or Vietnamese. This difference makes their existence as urban asylum-seekers in Bangkok more of a challenge. According to NGO Boat People SOS (BPSOS), there are at least 300 hundred of Vietnamese Hmong in Bangkok as of January 2012.

Figure 4.5: Somalia

(Source, Daily Kos, 2011)

4.2.4 Somali

The researcher chose the Somali's as the fourth largest community of urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok, to complete the study.

Southern Somalia has been without a government and in the ravages of war for over 20 years. The refugee camps available in Kenya are over loaded with a population of almost 300,000 (UNHCR, 2012). Crime and lack of food are common problems in the camps so those who are about to gather enough money, usually remittances from relatives overseas, are able to leave the area and seek asylum elsewhere. There is a Somali community of refugees in Bangkok, so some come here.

4.3 Institutional Barriers: Refugee Status Determination, Immigration Status and Legislation on Education

The conceptual framework for this thesis started at an institutional level addressing national security and the asylum seeking process. A key issue specific to this population concerns their legal status in Thailand. This will be explored by examining the time that it takes to undergo the RSD and resettlement process currently and the present immigration law that Thailand follows concerning those who have overstayed their visas. It is the discrepancy that leads to the restriction of movement that hinders this population. Also at the Institutional level, the current legislation on education is reviewed to assess if there are any policy barriers restricting access to education for this population. This section answers the sub-research question "What legislation and institutional factors affect access to primary education for urban refugee and asylum-seeker children and to what extent are these factors implemented."

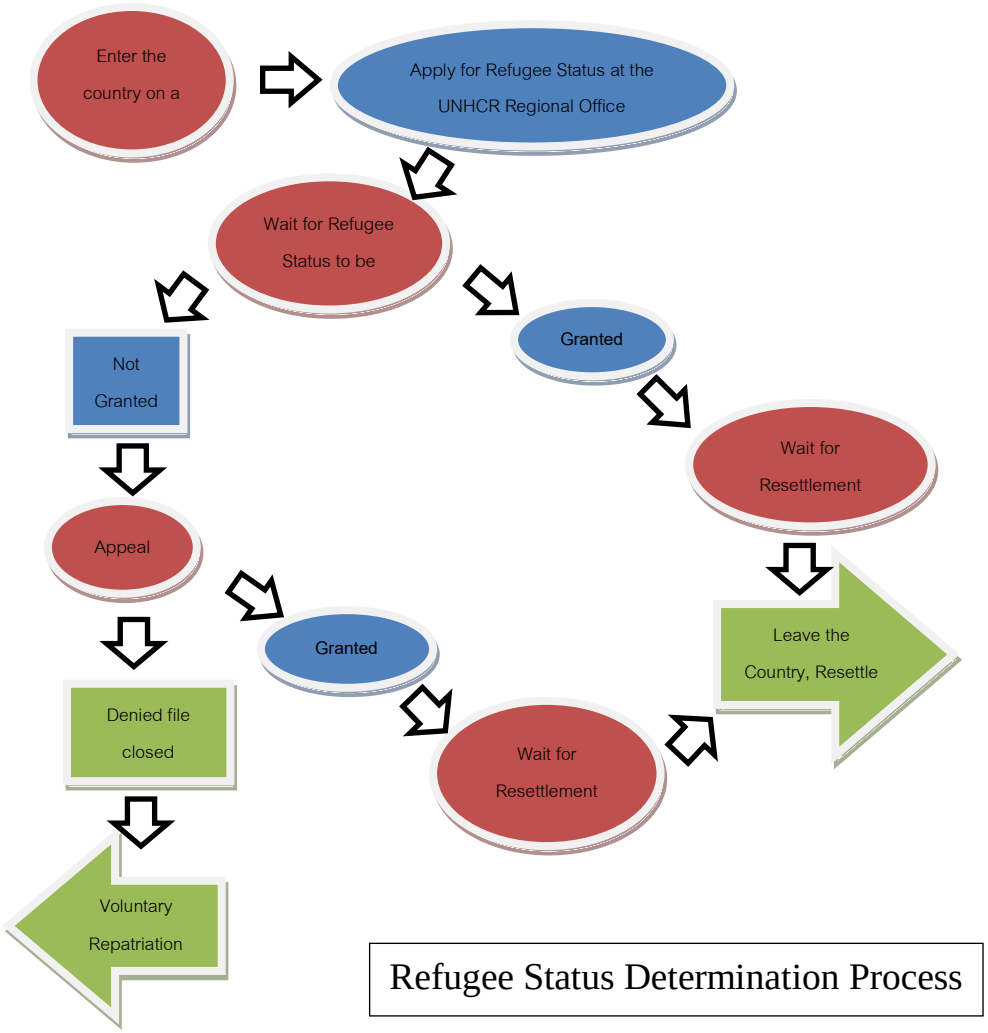
4.3.1 Refugee Status Determination

As Thailand is not a signatory to the Convention relating to the Rights of Refugees, the UNHCR office in Bangkok handles all of the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) processes for the asylum-seekers who come to this country. Some cases can be expedited in extreme circumstances but normally the RSD process generally takes 6 to 8 months in order for an officer to fact-check all the data and gain a full understanding of each particular case. Due to a high volume of cases and limited funding, the RSD can take much longer than that. Seventy-three percent of the participants interviewed were recognized refugees, and twenty-six percent were asylum-seekers. Of the refugees interviewed the researcher found that that RSD period took on the average two years and five months, with the shortest time period being one month and the longest time period being three years. Although this is the calculated average, eighty-two percent of the recognized refugees received their formal refugee status in less than two years.

Table 4.1: Refugee Status Determination

Number of Families	Under a year	One year plus	Two years plus	Three years plus	Four years plus	Five years plus	Shortest time waiting	Longest time waiting	Average time waiting
Total time waiting for RSD:	11	7	3	1	0	0	1 month	3 years	2 years and 5 months
Total time in Bangkok:	2	8	12	6	1	1	11 months	5 years and 1 month	-[4]

Figure 4.6: The Refugee Status Determination Process



[4] Because the eventual leaving date cannot be predicted, we cannot accurately assess the average wait time.

This figure illustrates the RSD process from entrance to the country, often on a tourist visa, through the process to either resettlement or voluntary repatriation.

Refugee Status Determination is a case by case situation with each family being interviewed one or more times by a RSD officer to collect data concerning the particular circumstance that they experienced. Eleven families requested appeals when their cases were initially rejected. One case was granted after the first appeal, three cases were granted after the second appeal and seven families were still refused after the appeals process.

According to this study the total amount of time spent in Bangkok does not differ significantly between refugees and asylum-seekers. The family that has been here the longest, five years and one month, are recognized as refugees. Many of the asylum-seekers with their RSD refused, have been here two and a half to three years, which is similar to the amount of total time that recognized refugees have spent in Bangkok as well.

After refugee status has been determined, a refugee can enjoy certain assistance such as a monthly stipend and more educational opportunities for their children. But they are not offered any further protection as a result of their refugee status and are still subject to arrest and indefinite detention.

After refugee status has been determined the individual or family must be accepted by a third country for resettlement, another process that can take an extended amount of time. As the researcher only interviewed the urban refugee and asylum-seeker population in Bangkok currently, this study does not include refugees already relocated so statistics cannot be reported on this, although data was collected to the duration of the stay in Bangkok so far, of which the majority of those studied have been waiting in excess of two years to be resettled. The majority, sixty-seven percent, have been waiting over two years for resettlement. Although some have been waiting only for months, others have been waiting years and remain waiting. It is impossible to know when resettlement will happen for these families.

During this time while families wait for the Refugee Status Determination process and the resettlement process to be completed, they stay in Bangkok where they are deemed illegal if they do not have a valid visa. As mentioned before, most urban refugees come to Bangkok on tourist visa that last only a few months,

depending on the country of origin. After this time they can renew their tourist visa only for the total of 90 days. Longer visas are available to those who apply for them in their home country, which is often not a possibility for refugees fleeing their country. Refugees are not allowed to work while awaiting refugee status and resettlement, so these families cannot attain work visas to extend their stay. The cost of extending a visa is also expensive for refugees who have often exhausted any savings they might have had coming to Thailand.

In conclusion due to the required time that it takes to fulfill the process of RSD and the additional time waiting for resettlement in the third country, the tourist visa does not afford enough time for these processes to be completed and so urban refugees and asylum-seekers will almost always overstay their visa and be at risk to arrest and detention.

4.3.2 Immigration Status

Immigration law is part of the national security of every country. In the enforcement of the Immigration Act in Thailand, three articles, Section 54, 62 and Section 81, are used to enforce the immigration laws. Those who have no passport or legal documentation upon arrival, or whose permissions to stay in the Kingdom have expired, are subject to arrest, detention and possibly deportation. Upon entry into Thailand, the most common visa issued is a Non-Immigrant visa in which a maximum of 90 days is allowed as is stated by the Thai Immigration Commission. The initial length of stay permitted varies by country. For some countries it is required that the individual applies for the visa at the Thai embassy or consulate in their home country, such is the case for India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Sudan, Algeria, Libya, Yemen, Egypt and Palestinian States which are all countries that many refugees originate from.

If a person does over-stay the allotted time stipulated by the visa, there is a fine of 500 baht a day when they leave the country, not to exceed 20,000 baht. If a person overstays their visa and is caught by the police, they will go to court and either negotiate a monetary fine, go to immigration detention, or both. These laws of the utmost importance to urban refugees and asylum-seekers as they are forced to overstay limited travel visas while they undertake two consecutive processes that both

can take months to years to complete, as is explained in detail in the Refugee Status Determination section.

With regards to the long term stay of refugees and asylum-seekers, there are "no special visas for People of Concern to the UNHCR" (Interview with Executive Director TCR) and local integration is not an option:

> "*The Thai government has imposed upon UNHCR its desire that asylum be granted on a temporary basis, on the condition that all refugees will eventually depart Thailand, either through resettlement or voluntary repatriation."* (U. f. UNHCR, 2005)

The laws are generally intended to control foreigners and not specific to refugees. Even if a police or immigration officer knows about the refugee situation, they are still required to follow the law that states that all those without a valid visa, are subject to arrest.

> *"Refugees are not targeted; immigration officers are just doing their job." - ex-immigration officer*

The situation in the refugee camps on the border of Myanmar is a special situation where the camp organizers have permission from the government to monitor this population.

> *"The NGO's must screen the refugees and justify their being there. The people cannot leave the camp or they are subject to the law" – Executive Director TCR interview*.

One flexibility in the immigration law is "lawful bail" Article 54, Immigration Act B.E. 2522[5] (Immigration Act, 2004). That allows certain cases to stay in the Kingdom for a finite amount of time, pending their "deportation" or their confirmed departure proposal. This is useful for refugees awaiting resettlement. The notice for bail has rules including that the person must report to an immigration official once a month and the bail money (50,000 baht) is kept as security against the person fleeing the country. If the person does not report to immigration once a month, the 50,000

[5] Section 54 : Any alien who enters or come to stay in the Kingdom without permission or when such permission expires or is revoked , the competent official will deport such alien out of the Kingdom.…In case there is an order of deportation for the alien; while waiting for the alien to be deported the competent official may order the alien to stay at any prescribed place or he may order the alien to report to him (competent official) according to a prescribed date, time ,and place with Security or with Security and Bond. The competent official may also detain the alien at any given place as maybe necessary. The expense of detention shall be charged to the alien's account.

baht is not returned to the payee, there is a warrant put out for the persons arrest, and the local police and the border police are notified. The money is a guarantee that the foreigner will follow the proper procedures as long as they are in Thailand. When a foreigner registers monthly with the IDC Official, that official will then report to a Commissioner of the Immigration Bureau. The Commissioner has the right to decide whether the foreigner can continue their stay in Thailand or if the terms of their bail will be canceled. The condition of intent is important; the foreigner must be credibly in the process of leaving.

> *"One year is ok, but more than two years [the Commissioner] can cancel [the bail agreement] – Ex-immigration officer*

According to the interview with the past immigration officer, it is not likely that the Immigration Law will change. The driving forces behind these laws are universally consistent with standard immigration mission statements of most countries:

> *"National Security, control of foreigners, protection of victims and control of crime"– Ex-immigration officer*

The ex-immigration officer mentioned that sometimes the UNHCR applies pressure on the Thai government, but this isn't enough to change the law. The immigration law will change only if:

> *"…it is important or assists the immigration officer, reduces procedures and/or budget but still controls the foreign population. If it is good for everyone, then it will change." – Ex- immigration officer*

In conclusion, although the Thai immigration law is very stable and does not have the flexibility to permit special allowances for urban refugees and asylum-seekers, there is a clause that allows those who received bail from IDC to remain in the country legally until their pending departure date. This loop-hole has been exercised recently with TCR's historic action of posting bail of all 94 Pakistani-Ahmadi's from the Immigration Detention Center on June 6, 2011. Previous to this few individual's received bail, and never a large group together.

4.3.2.1 Restriction on freedom of movement

This unavoidable situation obviously limits movement for this population. Out of fear of detection from the immigration authorities most urban asylum seekers restrict their movement to only the most important tasks to reduce their visibility.

When the populations were asked to rank how threatened they feel by Thai immigration police right now, it became clear that those who had been in IDC and were bailed out, were safe from being re-detained and could live free of threat. Whereas those who hadn't had this experience suffer a sever restriction on their freedom of movement.

Table 4.2: Feelings of Threat - Thai Immigration Police

	Number of families	Feel extremely threatened (**10**)	**9**	**8**	**7**	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	Don't feel threatened or concerned at all (**1**)
Pakistani	8										8 families= 100%
Sri Lankan	19	15 families = 79%					1 family = 5%				3 families= 16%
Somali	2	2 families= 100%									
Hmong	2						1 family = 50%				1 family= 50%
Total:	**31**	**17 families = 55%**					**2 families = 6%**				**12 families = 39%**

The data from this table would suggest that 61% of the total families feel extremely threatened by the immigration authorities, 32% do not feel threatened or concerned at all, and 7% don't feel too threatened or too safe, either way. From the interviews the researcher found that this feeling of fear was directly connected to whether the families had been bailed out of the IDC or not. The bail papers affording a certain amount of security from re-arrest. When the researcher adjusted the data for the feelings of threat connected to having bail papers, the results were quite different, as shown below.

Table 4.3: Feelings of Threat - Thai Immigration Police; Adjusted for Refugee and Asylum-Seekers With or Without Bail Certificate

	Total Number of families	Feel extremely threatened (**10**)	**9**	**8**	**7**	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	Don't feel threatened or concerned at all (**1**)
Refugees bailed out of IDC	11										11
Refugees never placed in detention	11	10					1[6]				
Asylum seekers bailed out of IDC	2										2
Asylum seekers never placed in detention	6	6									
Total:	**30**[7]	**17**					1				**13**

The table above shows that 100% of the families that feel no threat have received bail. Except for one case where the father of the family has received bail, but the rest of the family hasn't, all the families never arrested report that they feel extremely threatened. The bail documents appear to legitimize the urban refugee or asylum-seekers presence in the country without a visa, for a limited amount of time. But this is not a guarantee, the Immigration Bureau Commissioner has the right to cancel this bail as they see fit (interview ex-immigration officer IDC).

In conclusion the fear of arrest and detention has a huge impact of the freedom of movement for these communities. The only way to negate this is to receive bail from the IDC allowing a temporary stay contingent on meeting the specified criteria.

4.3.3 Educational Policies

There are no specific policies for urban refugee or asylum-seeker children, but as discussed in Section 3.2 of the Literature Review, this population does benefit from the recent education reform that has promoted education for all children in Thailand including migrant, stateless and displaced children. The researcher found that even though these changes occurred as long ago as four to seven years ago, the actual

[6] The father in one family was in IDC then bailed out, the rest of the family has not been arrested so the father feels safe and his family does not.
[7] 1 family currently in IDC

implementation seems to be picking up only as recently as 10 months ago. Interviews with key-informant who volunteered with the BRLC in 2009, and the current General Manager of BRC, make it clear that the switch to offering urban refugee and asylum-seeker children the opportunity to be integrated into Thai schools, started as recently as 2010. As soon as the Thai government announced free education for all, BRLC changed its programming from all English courses with the option to taking Thai courses, to the emphasis being on learning Thai language and the BRLC acting as a "preparatory learning center" for children entering the Thai school system. (Interview with the General Manager of BRC)

> *"…the UNHCR didn't want to be providing a parallel service unnecessarily, so they said, so there was an attempt to get lots of the kids into Thai schools." (Interview Australian Government Volunteer at BRC)*

Prior to this time the BRLC offered schooling in English that was more catered towards the refugees situation of anticipated resettlement in a third country. Although the BRLC is not accredited so schooling provided there cannot be officially transferred to a school in the third country. Thai schools are accredited, but a major barrier that will be discussed in Chapter 5, is the language barrier that causes a substantial gap in education for the urban refugee and asylum-seeker children.

When discussing if barriers to education exist at the institutional level the executive director for Thai Committee for Refugees stated that:

> *"Access is not denied under any Thai law … even formal education is free and subsidized by the State. No policy or law would deny access to education. Towards realizing access, there are other parameters. Status by the immigration act [stimulates] fear that limits movement outside of their residence." – Executive Director TCR*

This points towards a barrier that will be discussed earlier in the chapter concerning refugee status, immigration law and the restriction on freedom of movement.

In conclusion Thailand has recently created robust policies to support education for all children. There are no specific laws towards urban refugee or asylum-seeker children, but according to legislation they can benefit from the free and compulsory schooling that is provided to all children in Thailand. Barriers to actual access will be discussed further, but at the policy level, access is granted even if its conflict with immigration law creates a situation of limited actual access.

4.4 Communal Barriers: Socio-Economic Factors, Community and Individual Factors

The next level of this thesis's conceptual framework addresses the communal factors such a socio-economic, community and individual or family factors. These are important factors a level down from the institutional factors, that can determine the outcome of if a child is able to access education or not.

4.4.1 Socio-Economic Factors

The researcher investigated; current income, parents last occupation and parents educational history to assess and compare the varying socioeconomic factors amongst urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok to assess if these factors could contribute to a barrier to access to education.

4.4.1.1 Current Income

Assessing the current income of this population is important to determine if the lack finances act as a barrier to education. These people do not come to Thailand as migrants so they are not allowed to work. This puts an enormous strain on any savings that they may have brought with them from their home country. Even for families that report that they did come with a substantial amount of money, over the years this money has dwindled to nothing.

"…after three years here, all our savings is gone." (family of five) – Refugee Family 4

The refugee family that has been in Bangkok the longest, five years, is the only family to report that they have informal work that earns them additional income.

The father in this family of six sells rice flour and chili powder and the mother cooks and sells the food that she makes (Refugee Family 14).

Table 4.4: Primary source of Current Income

Primary Source of Current Income:	Percentage of families:[8]
UNHCR stipend	56%
Money from family	13%
Money from charity	6.5%
Money from selling possessions	6.5%
No income at all	10%
Money from working	3%
Money from an NGO	0%
Money from savings	0%

The researcher found that the majority, 56% of those interviewed, received a stipend from the UNHCR as they are recognized refugees. Thirteen percent received some money from family members and ten percent report no income at all. A small percentage of families sell their possessions, get money from charities or work illegally to earn money. It should be noted here that the UNHCR stipend is fairly stable and money that the family can count on every month, the other sources of income are more unstable. Money from NGO's and charities varies often based on the donors and funding that the NGO is receiving. For instance JRS used to provide food subsidies prior to the Fall of 2010, but when the funding was cut, the service was discontinued. Some families receive rent allowances for the first three months that they are in Bangkok, or food one month (Refugee Family Interviews).

4.4.1.2 Previous Career

It's not surprising that the majority, 70% of the female respondents in families with children, stated that their previous job was housewife or mother. Thirty-seven

[8] Two families chose not to respond

percent of the total parents interviewed are single mothers and so the last job of the father was not investigated. Although the researcher did not ask a specific question pertaining to the whereabouts of the missing fathers, it was clear from the information gathered during the interview that most if not all the fathers that were not with their family, were permanently missing[9] or had died due to the conflict in the country of origin. For mothers that worked, the jobs included: teacher, med student, maid, secretary, journalist and soldier. For the families living in Bangkok where the mother and father lived together, the top two professions that the fathers report having are business owner at 32% and farmer at 26%. Other jobs include Driver, 16%, and clerk or administrator.

4.4.1.3 Past Schooling

Past schooling is an important factor to measure as it can determine socio-economic status of a family. The level of schooling relates to the level of job that the individual can acquire, this then is directly related to the amount of income that they can expect to make. This is not true is every situation, but generally those who have not finished secondary school are not expected to make the similar wage to those who have graduated from university.

Twenty percent of the mothers interviewed had graduated from university and one mother was still attending university when the family fled from their home. Thirty-two percent finished advanced secondary schooling, six point five percent finished ordinary secondary schooling, and twenty-three percent finished some schooling, but no higher than tenth grade. Only thirteen percent had no schooling at all.

The study collected data from only 63% of the fathers as 37% of the parents interviewed were single mothers as mentioned previously. Out of this number 11% of the fathers graduated from university, 47% finished advanced secondary schooling, 16% finished ordinary secondary schooling and 32% percent had some schooling, but not completed higher than tenth grade.

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[9] These woman are considered “half-widowed” as their husbands have disappeared and are assumed dead. (Olarte, 2011)

Table 4.5: Parents Schooling History

	University Graduate	Finished 12th grade	Finished 11th grade	Finished 10th grade or less	No schooling
Mothers Schooling	23%[10]	32%	6.5%	23%	13%
Fathers schooling[11]	11%	47%	16%	32%	--

By percentage, the Pakistani community had higher education statistics with five parents out of eight families had attended university. In the Sri Lankan community only four out of nineteen parents in the families reported being college graduates. These results are not fully representational considering that more than half, fifty-six percent, of the Sri Lankan families are single-mother families, so the data for the fathers of those families was not included.

In conclusion, more than half of the mothers and fathers of the refugees and asylum-seeker children interviewed have at least a 12th grade education, some, especially the mothers, with higher education levels.

4.4.2 Community & Individual Factors

Community and individual factors are very important to answer this thesis question, as follows.

4.4.2.1 Community Factors

"[We] met different people and nationalities at BRC, met other Ahmadi, and we are a strong community, we help each other… we are very communal, we share food, clothes, shoe polish, everything." - Refugee Family 3 interview

The researcher investigated community factors to answer the question of if being in a community increases the proportion of children going to school. Conversely does *not* being part of a community lower the instance of children attending school?

Three different translators organized a large number of the interviews that the researcher conducted. It is clear that in order for families to be contacted in the first place, they must all be in some sort of community and known by others. Due to this

[10] One mother included, half way through university courses
[11] 37% of the statistics for the fathers are unknown due to single parent families

inability to conduct a truly random sampling of the urban refugee and asylum-seeker population in Bangkok, the results of this study show that all families studied are part of a community.

Table 4.6: Time Taken to Meet Others

Urban Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Families	1 month or less	2 months or less	3 months or less	4 months or less
Time it took to meet people	36%	21%	25%	18%

Ninety percent of the families reported that they did not know anyone before they came to Thailand. It took families anywhere from one month to four months, to meet the people that are now part of their community. These social connections assist with day-to-day living in the city, and provide important information and resource sharing, but due to the nature of urban refugee and asylum-seeking families needed to avoid recognition, it often takes extended amounts of time for families to connect to each other.

Figure 4.7: Refugee & Asylum-seeker Quotes: Help from the community

"Local Thai's helped us figure out how to get food at the market"	*"Our new friends tell us how to get things, give us some dishes and basic things."*
- Refugee family 2	*- Refugee family 17*
"My sister helped me with everything because I am taking care of our mother and father"	*"I have one friend, a Sri Lankan who has stayed here a long time [who] helped us, other than that, we were on our own."*
- Asylum-seeker family 21	*- Refugee family 13*

Interestingly enough seventy percent of the respondents claim to have found information about the schooling options in Bangkok through official channels, such as the UNHCR telling them directly that they could access schooling at the BRLC, or when visiting the BRC for a purpose other than schooling - such as for medical assistance or receiving the UNHCR refugee stipend – they were alerted to the

educational program offered. This is likely due to initial contact with the UNHCR when the family arrives, rather than the long time it takes to meet other families. The remaining thirty percent did discover schooling options through their friends and in their community. Below are direct quotes from various refugee and asylum-seekers about how they found out about the schooling options available to their children in Bangkok.

Figure 4.8 : Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Quotes: Finding Out About Schools

"I went to BRC for medical and saw students, that is how I found out [about the school]"	*"Some students were in the same building [where we live] and so that is how I found out about the school."*	*"Some people said that the BRC had medical and education, but we were arrested so quickly we didn't use it."*
– Refugee family 16	*– Refugee family 11*	*- Refugee family 3*
"My Sri Lankan friends told me about the International school."	*"The UN told us about BRC, and BRC sent her to a Thai school."*	*"A foreigner friend told me about the international school."*
– Refugee family 1	*- Asylum Seeker family 20*	*- Refugee family 8*

In conclusion, these social connections serve as a substantial support in day to day survival in the city, such as locating food and getting information about locating housing, but most respondents claim to have discovered educational options for their children through formal channels such as the UNHCR and the BRC.

4.4.3.2.Individual factors

Although the formal channels for accessing education are the same for all urban refugees and asylum-seekers, namely BRLC, some families have created other alternatives by individually seeking out other opportunities.

> *"My father tried for two years to get us scholarships to go to international schools here. He went around to each school and asked them for help. Finally one of the schools accepted two of us." –Refugee Family 4 interview*

An urban asylum-seeking family conducts additional schooling at home to fill the gap. The young single mother was a teacher in her home country, she can only send her son to the BRLC once a week and so she borrows books from the BRLC library and schools him at home on the other four days of the week.

One of the families reported that they "kept up the religious schooling" throughout their stay in Bangkok, so they feel that their child has not fallen too far behind in schooling despite their current situation lacking formal schooling.

These are all examples of actions that the individual families take to create educational opportunities for their children that makes their experience with education in Bangkok, different from other families in the same situation.

The researcher expected to encounter some individual factors that would be related to the psychosocial condition of being a refugee. The researcher speculated that families traumatized by the events surrounding the flight from their home, might display tendencies to not want to separate from their children and therefore might not send them to school. But the research found that education was paramount for every family and so every family did what they could to send their child to school. In only two situations there were children who didn't go to school because they wanted to stay with their mothers. In both situations the children were young and unaccustomed to being away from the mother.

> *Refugee Family 2 speaking about why their 5 year old doesn't go to school: "[He] is too young and loves his mamma too much."*
>
> *Asylum Seeker Family 29, older boy speaking about why his younger sister stopped going to school after 2 months: "When the floods came and she had*

to stay the night at the school, she cried all night missing our mother and went home after that."

Every family in the study made a concerted effort to send their children to school. Even a disabled mother, missing a leg from the war in her home country, walks her child to school every day. She stated that the most dangerous part of taking her child to school was simply crossing the very busy road that was between their home and the school because she is afraid that she walks too slow due to her disability. One of the interviewees stated that concerning the asylum-seeker children who only attend the BRLC school once a week, that "if the school is too far away and it takes too long to get there, some parents are lazy and don't want to take their children". But the researcher did not find this in any direct interviews. All the parents interviewed made every effort, even though dangerous and taxing, to take their children to school.

4.5 Summary

In conclusion, urban refugees and asylum-seekers are an important population to study in today's world. Urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok face particular challenges as the Thai government has no legal provisions constructed specifically for the protection of this population. This is exacerbated by the lengthy RSD process and resettlement process that force this population into over staying their initial visas. They are unable to work and often only have enough money to survive, so the expenditure of visas is not possible.

The findings surrounding the institutional factors show that the RSD and resettlement processes are extremely long. Most urban refugees and asylum-seekers surveyed attained full refugee status in approximately a year, but with the majority still in Bangkok after two years. There is also a percentage of those who are asylum-seekers and still remain in Bangkok for upwards of three years. This delayed process leads to the over-staying of permits to stay in the country and by immigration law, pushes these people into the vulnerable situation of being considered "illegal immigrants". The constant threat of arrest and indefinite detention creates a serious restriction to the freedom of movement for this population. This lack of freedom of movement directly effects access to education, not by restricting it all together, but by

producing gaps in education due to missing days at school, moving to new locations to stay undetected, and creating and atmosphere non-conducive to studying and getting an education. This leads to the education policies in Thailand that make every effort to make school accessible for all children, but are in conflict with immigration policies that cause the restriction movement.

The communal factors discussed include socioeconomic, community and individual factors of the studied population. The findings show that socioeconomic factors do present a barrier as this population is not allowed to work while in Thailand. This will become more relevant when Chapter 4 discusses the educational options available to this population, with one of the options being to pay for school. The families are trying to survive with concerns about affording rent and food, yet still, education is a major priority for almost every family interviewed. Almost all of the families were part of a community of some sort. The community factor proved important for families that learned of schooling options through their community but the majority of families found out about school through the UNHCR. The individual factors proved important for families that sought out schooling options on their own, but the researcher didn't find any individual factors that served as a barrier to the access to education.

CHAPTER V
FINDINGS: ACCESS TO EDUCATION

This section discusses the schooling option available to urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok. The researcher assesses the access to education to this population and compares the education experiences of the four different nationalities studied. Finally, this chapter presents the information collected from the interviews and field observation through the lens of the 4A's framework: Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability.

5.1 Schooling options in Bangkok for Urban Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

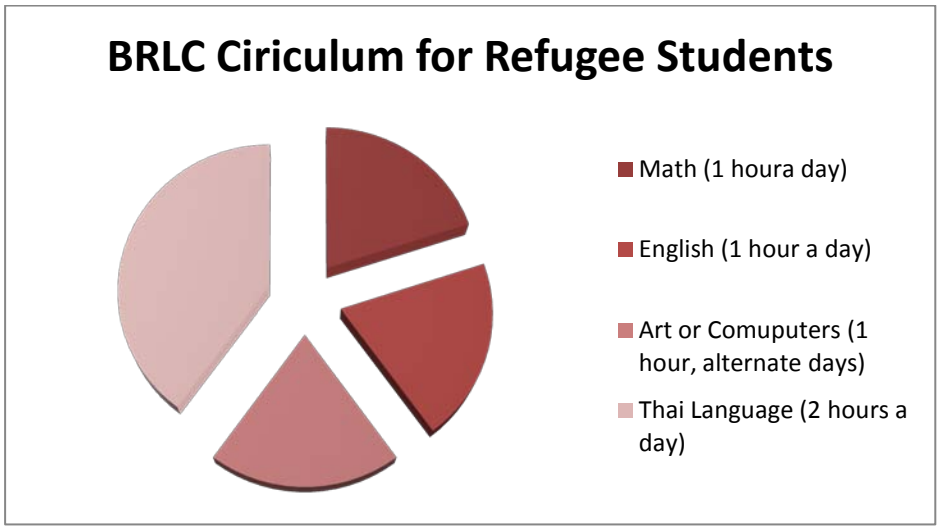
There is one primary source of schooling for urban refugees and asylum-seeker children in Bangkok and that is the Bangkok Refugee Learning Center (BRLC). The UNHCR directs families with children to the BRC and it is usually their first point of contact with the schooling options available to them. For children who can speak Thai, public Thai schools are an option. Some urban refugees and asylum-seekers seek out alternatives including international schools, of which a few offer scholarships. Other sources of education are irregular and can be considered supplemental or informal learning rather than an official source of schooling.

5.1.1 UNHCR's Bangkok Refugee Learning Center

The Bangkok Refugee Center (BRC) is the primary source of schooling for urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok. The BRC is run by the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR) as the implementing partner of the UNHCR regional office in Thailand. The UNHCR funds the BRC through COERR and COERR runs and manages the BRC with the BRC operating under the guidelines of the UNHCR. All decisions about programming are made together between the three identities the BRC, COERR and the UNHCR.

The BRC offers four main services to refugees and asylum-seekers: financial, medical, social service and education. The Bangkok Refugee Learning Center (BRLC) provides the non-formal education to children and adults of this population.

Figure 5.1: BRLC Curriculum for Refugee Students



(Source, interview with General Manager of BRC)

This chart shows the four classes taught in a five hour school day. Currently the curriculum consists of English, Mathematics, and alternate Art and Computer classes taught in English for one hour each. There are three staff members who teach two hours of Thai class each day. The classes are divided into levels one through five. These levels are assigned first by age and secondly by skill. The fifth level is for young-adults, 18 to 25 years old. In 2009 the classes were taught by ex-pat volunteers but now, except for the Thai classes, Math, English and Computers are taught by volunteer refugee and asylum seeker teachers, currently there are eight volunteer teachers. Besides the core classes, children are also taught "how to be a good citizen, how to be clean" and how to prepare for discrimination that they might encounter in the Thai public schools, "especially the darker children". The general manager of BRC has been complimented from the Thai schools on the "good behavior" of the refugee and asylum-seeker children who attend their schools (General Manager, BRC Interview).

The new program of "preparatory training courses" (General Manager, BRC interview) assists children into local Thai schools and has been very successful thus far. Last year 44 children were placed in Thai public schools and as of June 2012,

COERR/BRC has been able to place a total of 108 refugee and asylum seeker children into 28 different Thai Public schools in various provinces in Thailand.

In 2006 there were 130 refugee and asylum-seeker children attending classes at the BRLC. In 2009 there were 100 – 150 refugee children attending Monday through Thursdays. Due to limited capacity, there were an additional 150 children on the waiting-list. No asylum-seeker children were able to attend at that time.

> *"I found a clause in UNHCR document saying that refugees and asylum-seeker kids all had right to education and would be treated equally and so I pressured the management until they allowed some asylum-seeker children to attend and then the floodgates opened and the teachers agreed to teach the asylum-seeker children on Fridays. After all, some of the volunteer teachers, who were asylum-seekers themselves, were not allowed to bring their kids to school! About 100 asylum-seeker children came on Fridays." (Dot Laughton interview)*

As of January to June 2012, there were 96 refugee and 138 asylum seeker children between the ages of 6 and 17 years old, attending the BRC. The refugee students study four days a week and the asylum-seeker children, one day a week. There continues to be a very high percentage of asylum-seeker children attending the BRLC, but at just five hours a week they receive an extremely limited education. Previously the schooling for the asylum-seeker children was funded by donations of a local international school, as of 2012, the UNHCR started funding the program.

The BRC assists all refugees and asylum-seekers who have passed through the UNHCR process. Burmese refugees and asylum-seekers are not accepted as there are specific programs created for them on the border of Thailand and Myanmar. Currently Sri Lankans represent the largest group of urban refugees in Bangkok and the Vietnamese Hmong represent the largest number of asylum seekers. Many Lao-Hmong are in Bangkok as well, but they are handled differently due to Memorandums of Understanding that Thailand has with Lao PDR.

Table 5.1: The Six Largest Populations of Refugees and Asylum-seekers in Bangkok by Country of Origin

	Refugees	**Asylum-seekers**
1st	Sri Lanka	Vietnam (Hmong)
2nd	Pakistan	Pakistan
3rd	Somali	China
4th	China	Congo
5th	Iraq	Iran
6th	Cambodia	Cambodia

(source interview with General Manager BRC)

In conclusion, the BRC handles over 230 urban refugee and asylum-seeker children in Bangkok, either in providing schooling through the BRLC or assisting these children into local Thai Public Schools.

5.1.2 Thai Schools

Since the beginning of this year the BRC has connected with ten new primary schools and placed 30 new BRLC students into Thai public schools in Bangkok. The following Thai public schools in Bangkok are: Vichakorn, Prachapiban, Klongmakhamtes, Wat Nuanchan, Thainiyomsongkroh, Wat Ratniyomtham and Wat Ratbuakao. At the start of the program in 2011 a total of 44 students were placed into Thai schools.

The Thai curriculum consists of five basic areas shown in the following table.

Table 5.2: Thai Public School Focus for Curriculum

Basic Skills:	Thai Language and Mathematics
Life Experience:	Social studies, natural science, health education, citizenship and conservation
Character Development:	Moral education, physical education, music, performing arts and art education
Special Experience: (grades 5 and 6)	English language or special vocational skills relevant to the needs of the community
Thai Studies:	Thai history and culture

Thailand's public schools are under the authority of the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE). The Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC) in collaboration with the MOE created the most recent educational reform: the National Education Plan of 2002 – 2016 (ONEC 2002). These schools are standardized and officially accredited so any child attending can attain transcripts and records towards future schooling. This is particularly important for urban refugee and asylum-seeker children who would benefit by having records of their education thus far in order to continue their studies after resettlement or repatriation.

Although there are common criticisms of the Thai public school system, such as over-crowded classrooms, teachers continuing to teach rote-style learning and a limited ability for handling students who should be moved ahead or held back the class, the urban refugees interviewed did not have any complaints.

> *"We are happy he is in the [Thai public] school, it is better than BRC, it's a proper school." – Refugee family 24, interview*

In conclusion, Thai public schools are now becoming an acceptable method for urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok to attain formal and accredited schooling. Getting into the system takes an extended amount of time due to the language barrier and this will be discussed further in section 5.7.4 on 'Adaptability'.

5.1.3 International Schools

International schools are another option for refugees and asylum-seekers either by scholarship or if the family is able to afford it. There are several International schools in Bangkok that accept and support refugee and asylum-seeker children. A couple of the schools work with BRC to place children such as one international school that offers two scholarship slots for refugee or asylum-seeker children who are the top performers at BRLC. These slots only open when the previous student graduates or is resettled in a third country or voluntarily repatriated to their home country. Cognita, an international group comprised of independent international schools throughout Europe, the UK and Asia supported an International School[12] in Bangkok in providing scholarships to two asylum-seeker children, who were bailed

[12] International School 3

out of Immigration Detention Center in 2011, another International school[13] also provides scholarships to a few students of refugee and asylum-seeker status.

International Schools in Bangkok cost anywhere from 25,000 baht to over 300,000 baht a year. Anyone who can afford international school is permitted to go. The International schools in Bangkok all have slightly different curricula some are based on the British, American, French or other systems, but they all offer a wide range of courses that include classes such as: Maths, English, Science, History, Social and Health Education, Geography, Information and Communication Technology, Physical Education and Languages.

The high quality of the schooling is certainly a draw for refugees and asylum-seekers as it is for anyone, but more importantly the schooling is taught in English which is thought by refugees to be the most useful language for their future resettlement in a third country. Most refugees are resettled in English speaking countries such as the US, Australia and Canada, so this is a valid assumption (UNHCR, 2012a).

Although those who are able to, are free to attend International schools, the UNHCR and the BRC do not push for this option over Thai public schools for two reasons; the cost and the chance of imbalance to the locals. Thai public schools are free and subsidized by the Thai government, International schools are very expensive and the UNHCR could not afford to take on these fees. The second part is that providing better schooling to a foreign population than the local population could cause resentment. As the UNHCR is considered a guest in Thailand they are careful not to make any decisions that could cause disruption.

In conclusion, International schools are a very good option for urban refugees and asylum seekers if they can afford them or are able to secure a scholarship. Refugee children can more easily assimilate into their country of resettlement and if they already speak English when they come to Thailand, there is no delay in their studies.

[13] International School 1

5.1.4 Special Refugee Group Schooling - Ahmadiyya

The Pakistani-Ahmadi have a very different situation to other urban refugee and asylum seeker populations. Their entire community was bailed out of the IDC at the same time by the Thai Committee for Refugees - Freedom Fund, and in addition to this TCR set up provisions for their stay after bail. This included organizing a space for temporary schooling for the children of the community. The head of TCR negotiated with the BRC to fund room rental in a Thai public school near the housing that TCR had arranged for the community. The BRC agreed as it was unfeasible for all the children to travel approximately two hours to and from their homes to the BRLC every day to access schooling. The Ahmadi provided two volunteer teachers from the community to teach the class in Urdu. The subjects covered include English, Math, General Studies and Religious studies. Children from six to ten years old all attend one class together. The class is held four days a week for three hours a day. Although the classroom is situated in a Thai public school, the children have little interaction with the Thai kids.

> *"There are cultural barriers, our kids cannot mix with Thai kids, secondly, there is a problem with communication, speaking and understanding, [but] there is no threat." – Refugee family 3*

> *"On the playground the kids play together, but the Thai kids fight with our children." – Refugee family 1*

In summation, the community school arranged for this group of Pakistani-Ahmadi's is particular to just this group, but it indicates what options can be made possible if the right actors come together to advocate for it. This 'school' will be finished when this particular community has been resettled which will probably be within the next year as over 50 % of the families have already left.

5.1.5. Immigration Detention Center Daycare

There is one schooling option specific to the children who are in the Immigration Detention Center (IDC) located in the Yannawa district of Bangkok. In 2002 the International Organization on Migration (IOM) funded a small learning

center in one of the cells at the detention center that could accommodate 10 to 15 children a day.

> *"The purpose was not just education but for psychosocial reasons too, such as general wellbeing. There were no toilet facilities and the cell was directly opposite a men's detention cell which made the teachers and children slightly uncomfortable." (Interview with Australian Government Volunteer)*

In 2009 several Immigration offices were moved to another location, Chang Wattana, and the Immigration authorities approved the vacant offices to be converted into a larger and private space for the school. The Swiss Embassy, US Government and the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and UNICEF funded the creation of this school and IOM continued to administer and provide teachers and social workers. This 'daycare' officially opened in December 2010. The daycare can only accommodate about 25 students comfortably so when there are more children in the IDC, the children cannot attend every day. In 2011, there was a spike in immigration arrests with all the detention cells significantly over capacity, at this time the children could only go to the daycare once or twice a week due to the high number of children detained.

> *"When both the Sri Lankan and the Pakistani's were in IDC, there were about 120 kids." – Project Officer Counter-Trafficking Unit, IOM/IDC Daycare*

At present there are few enough families detained that all 23 urban asylum-seeker and refugee children can attend the daycare Monday through Thursday. There are two or three IOM staff members working at the daycare daily and two or three volunteers. The volunteers are often interns studying the population from a child-psychology or humanitarian point of view or sometimes teachers from abroad. The focus of the daycare is enhanced overall well-being for these children so studying is not always a priority, although there is a loose curriculum that is followed and educational material is always encouraged. The ages range from 2 to 18 years old, some of the children with a strong background in education and others with no schooling at all. Some kids are detained and attend this school for weeks or months, before their families voluntarily repatriate, are resettled in a third country, or are

bailed out of detention. Some children currently have been in detention and attending the daycare for almost two years. Thai immigration is allowing the IOM to run this school on their premises for these children, but otherwise they have no involvement in the program.

In conclusion this is not strictly speaking a 'schooling option' for anyone but the population that are in immigration detention, but it is attended by the urban refugee and asylum-seeker's child population in Bangkok, so it is included in this study. Many students now utilizing other schooling options once spent time in detention attending the IOM/IDC daycare, so it is a relevant part of the whole educational experience in Bangkok for this population.

5.1.6 NGO Supported Informal Schooling

Jesuit Refugee Services – Urban Refugee Program (JRS – URP) is a NGO that assists urban refugees and asylum-seekers. They have a history of assisting communities in setting up their own schooling, facilitating the process with volunteer teachers, and providing funding for supplies and room rental.

> *"Providing schooling is not a major role [of ours], it's supposed to be handled by BRC, but as a partner, we can help." -Program Director JRS-URP*

In 2010 JRS-URP assisted the Ahmadi Pakistani population in running their own school in their communities, providing the rent for the rooms, and donating school and office supplies. A few volunteer teachers taught English and art classes, but the classes were primarily taught by the communities own teachers who taught basic studies and religious studies in Urdu, the language of the Ahmadi-Pakistanis. It was successful with over 20 children from the community regularly attending classes. On November 2011 the majority of the Ahmadi families were arrested and sent to the IDC and the classes ended. Following this event JRS provided open English classes at a church hall near their main office, two days a week, three hours a day, taught by volunteer teachers. There were between ten and fifteen students on a regular basis, studying English language. These classes continued for approximately three months but the transportation became too expensive and dangerous for many of the families

and so the classes were canceled for safety reasons. Currently JRS is facilitating English classes for a Somali population of refugees living too far from the BRC to access the schooling opportunities provided. These classes are held twice a week for three hours a day. They are taught by volunteer teachers focusing on the English language. JRS pays for a room in the building in which the refugees live, giving them easy and safe access to the classes. The program has been running for over four months. The program director the JRS – Urban Refugee Program states that the Somali Community Center is not a school.

> *"We offer informal learning activities to help, [but] it's not a school." (Program Director JRS-URP, interview)*

In conclusion, the JRS-URP assists in providing supplemental informal education options for this population in Bangkok. Currently they are providing the Somali urban refugee and asylum-seeker population with English classes located in their community.

5.1.7 Charity Organization Informal Schooling

Dwight Turner the creator of 'In Search of Sanuk' coordinates informal classes on weekends for disadvantaged urban Thai, refugee and asylum seeker children. The classes are taught by two to four adult volunteer teachers and three to five volunteer teenagers from international schools in Bangkok. The classes run most Saturdays that international schools are in session. The subjects covered are English language and another special type of skill, such as computers, art or dance. The classes are roughly three hours long and have a regular attendance of around twenty children aged three to fifteen. The kids come from a few designated poor communities in Bangkok comprising about half Thai children and half refugee and asylum-seeker children. The urban refugee and asylum-seekers are primarily Vietnamese-Hmong and Sri Lankan. Dwight states that he has never had an issue with immigration police.

In conclusion, charitable informal schooling options are available to urban refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok, but they are too limited to be considered an adequate source of schooling.

5.1.8 Church Based Informal Schooling

Some informal schooling options are offered by NGO's and churches in Bangkok. One such church ran an informal "outreach" school in Lumpini Park in the center of Bangkok. The classes were held three times a week for six hours a day, for children from 6 to 14 years old. There were four regular teachers with a number of visitor volunteer teachers helping to teach the 30 plus children. The subjects taught were basics such as English, Science, Mathematics, Art and Bible stories. The church supplied the teaching materials, school supplies and transportation fees and the teachers were all Christian volunteers. The interviewee left the country while the program was still running so she does not know why the program ended, but she knows that it was ended in October 2011. (Sister Grace – volunteer at the Calvary Baptist Church Bangkok, interview) Asylum Seeker Family #27 said that their children attended a church run school five days a week, but declined to disclose the name of the school or any information about it.

In conclusion, informal schooling organized by churches is an option for temporary or supplementary education for this population but they are not a replacement for formal schooling.

5.2 Analysis of schooling options

In Bangkok currently there are eight schooling options that the researcher found available to urban refugees and asylum-seekers: International Schools, Thai Public Schools, the Bangkok Refugee Learning Center, the Ahmadi School, the IDC/IOM Daycare, JRS's informal English classes, and the weekend classes provided by the charity 'In Search of Sanuk' and church based schooling. The last option of church based schooling will not be included in this study due to one school having ceased operation recently (the Calvary Baptist Church schooling program in Lumpini Park) and the lack of information on the churched based schooling option that one refugee family is utilizing.

5.2.1 Analysis Compared to National Standards

Of these eight options, there is a clear distinction between what can be considered conventional formal schooling and what cannot. One way of illustrating

this is by grouping the schools into tiers according to whether they match national standards of schooling, or not. National standards at the bare minimum include accredited school systems and licensed professional teachers (Methi Pilanthananond, 2007).

Two of the educational options that fulfill these criteria are the International schools and the Thai public schools. The BRLC, as a “preparatory school”, falls short of national standards due to the lack of licensed teachers, lack of accreditation. The BRLC also has a very limited number of core classes compared to an accredited school. Furthermore, the BRLC falls into two categories due to the segregation of schooling between the refugee students the asylum-seeking students. The education offered to the urban refugee students is closer to official schooling as it is structured with classes four days a week, five hours a day, primary topics are taught and there is a graduated system where children move from one level to the next as they learn. The program that BRLC runs for the children of urban asylum-seekers is offered only one day a week; this cannot be considered more than supplementary education. Similarly, ‘In Search of Sanuks’ weekend class is valuable in its own right, but cannot be considered schooling. Jesuit Refugee Services offers English classes twice a week, and although this provides important education to a population who otherwise would not access any education, it cannot be considered complete schooling either. The classes that the Pakistani-Ahmadi children attend are definitely a source of schooling with regular four day a week attendance and a range of topics taught and but this also falls short of actual schooling, due to the lack of division of ages and skill levels, the lack of educational resources and lack of curriculum. The researcher also finds the limited age range accepted (6 to 10 years old) problematic in terms of access to education for all the children in the community. The last educational option is quite different from all the rest as it is the daycare for the children that are detained in the IDC. IOM and IDC both call this a “daycare” clearly stating that it is not a school, but the teachers and social-workers employed do provide education, especially for the long term children, where Math, English and Thai are being taught regularly, four days a week. Still, this cannot be considered complete schooling.

Table 5.3: Whether Education Currently Available to Urban Refugees and Asylum-Seeker Children Meets National Standards for Education

Education Currently Available to Urban Refugee and Asylum Seeker Children in Bangkok:[14]	Schooling - meets national standards for education	Schooling - does not meet national standards for education	Informal classes - cannot be considered schooling	Percentage of children from study utilizing these options[15]
International Schools	X			22%
Thai Public Schools	X			8%
Bangkok Refugee Learning Center – for refugees		X		12%
Ahmadi Temporary School		X		18%
IOM/Immigration Detention Center Daycare			X	8%
Bangkok Refugee Learning Center – for asylum seekers			X	16%
NGO classes – Somali English Classes			X	10%

This chart displays the number of schooling options for this population that meet national standards for education. Five out of seven do not meet the national standards. Yet, 64% of the urban refugees and asylum-seekers depend on these sources for education.

5.2.2 Expanding the criteria for critiquing schooling options in Bangkok

Using the criteria of meeting or not meeting national standards instantly disqualifies many of the schooling options in Bangkok and does not account for the unique situation that urban refugee and asylum-seekers are in. Understanding that in a country where this particular population is not legally recognized, but rather is viewed as a "problem" that the State would rather not have deal with, (interview with ex-

[14] Church schools not specifically included as the Lumpini schooling program is not currently running and there is not adequate information about other church programs at this time but this accounts for 6% of the children and that number is included in the total number of children receiving education.
[15] 12% of school aged children interviewed do not attend any sort of school and are not included in these figures.

immigration officer IDC) it is admirable that there are as many schooling options as there are. Also understanding that for a school to meet national standards there maybe additional barriers that do not pertain to education itself, such as political or financial.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Thailand has established criteria for assessing quality of formal, non-formal and in-formal learning centers. The First National Education Act lays down the foundation of standards for education. The Second National Education Act makes timely amendments to the act in several sections. The ministerial regulations on system principles and procedure of quality assurance 2553, Article 38 outlines rules and procedures for quality assurance for the three kinds of education institutions. Evaluation of the quality of education by the state's educational standards covers the following issues: 1) the standard of education at each level and type of study, 2) the standard of the management of education, 3) the standard for teaching and learning that is student-centered, and 4) the standard of the internal quality assurance (ONESQA, 2011). The following list goes further to highlight the criteria assessed after meeting these first four educational standards.

Basic Group Indicators

1. Good physical and mental health
2. Desirable ethics and values
3. Inquiring minds and continuous learning
4. Students ability to think and practice what they learn
5. Achievement of students
6. Effective teaching and learning that is student-centered
7. Effective management and institutional development
8. Internal quality assurance

The non-formal educational options available to the children of refugees and asylum-seekers could be measured by these eight indicators to evaluate their quality using the same system that the Thai education system uses, but most of the options from the study do not fit the first four standards. For instance there is a lack of means to assessment at various schooling levels, in most cases in the study various levels are not part of the learning centers, the education is informal to a degree that there is no structure of management for the education provided, and there was no found internal

standard set for quality assurance. The standard for teaching and learning to be student-centered might be the only guideline that could be assessed with this particular group in this study. Using just this criteria, all sources of formal and non-formal schooling studied met this last criteria.

In Section 53 of the National Education Act, it states that teachers and educational administers "shall have professional licenses" but adds that this is not necessary for educational personnel providing *informal* education which allows a wider range of learning centers to be included under the National Educational Act (Commission, 1999, 2002). Section 15 states that "credits accumulated shall be transferable between different types of educational facilities" which applies to non-formal and in-formal educational centers in Thailand, but not to the non-formal classes available to the population in this study (Commission, 1999, 2002).

Many of the educational options from the study do not fit in with the formal national standard of schooling in Thailand, nor the in-formal and non-formal groupings; yet the researcher believes that it is possible that these schooling options may still meet the needs of this population and require a looser framework in which to be assessed. The researcher finds it necessary to pursue this as the access to education is the purpose of this study. Understanding the qualities of education available and utilized in Bangkok by urban refugee and asylum seeker children, is significant to understanding if education is actually being accessed.

5.2.2.1 Three Tiers used to assess education and schooling

The researcher further explores the alternative education options comparing more refined criteria to test whether other factors could be used to measure the acceptability of the schooling options. The researcher groups the schooling options into three categories or 'tiers' to help differentiate between the various factors according to the criteria listed below. This highlights the various gradients of schooling offered and better represents the actual schooling situation available to the urban refugee and asylum-seeker children in Bangkok. The defining factors that underlie the Tiers are related to how closely an educational option *resembles* a formally accredited school, such as having a prescribed curriculum, the frequency in which classes are held, the number and variety of courses offered, the qualifications

of the teacher(s), the teaching resources available and class structure related to children's skill level and age.

The official and accredited educational options available to this population are the International and Thai Public schools in Bangkok, the researcher considers these to fit the criteria for First-Tier schooling options. The BRLC for refugees provides a number of teachers with varying skill levels to teach five different subjects. The classes are structured and students' take entrance exams for proper placement then progress from level one to level to the next. But the school is not accredited, some of the teachers are not certified, and there are just three core classes with a heaviest emphasis on Thai language class, this is considered 'Tier 2' schooling by the researcher. The Ahmadi school with regular classes and five subjects studied, is also considered 'Tier 2' schooling as there is just one class for all the children and the ages are restricted to six and ten years old, taught by a volunteer teacher from the community. All other forms of schooling do not resembling formal schooling according to the researchers listed criteria, so can only be considered 'Tier 3' informal classes. These include the BRLC for urban asylum-seeker children, the IOM/IDC Daycare, JRS's English classes and 'In Search of Sanuks' English classes. These classifications are illustrated in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Three Tiers to Assess Educational Standards of Various Schools and Programs that Urban Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Children in Bangkok Attend

Researchers Classification of Quality Indicators	Tier 1 Full Schooling		Tier 2 Moderate Schooling		Tier 3 Informal Classes			
	International Schools	Thai Public Schools	BRLC for urban refugees	Ahmadi School	BRLC for urban asylum-seekers	IOM/ IDC Daycare	JRS - English classes	In Search of Sanuk - English classes[16]
Officially accredited can receive a transcript	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Follow national or international curriculums	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Teachers all certified	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Regular classes four times a week	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
At least four different subjects taught	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Have a range of educational materials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Children can move through set levels based on skill	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No

(Data compiled from interviews with refugee and asylum-seeker families and key-informants from the various educational venues)

In the table above it is clear that when the criteria is segmented into quality indicators, rather than the meeting national standards, more of these educational options can be considered viable options. Interestingly, even with these expanded conditions, the two tables 5.3 and 5.4, show similar results for the available schooling options. This demonstrates that even with expanding criteria to include alternatives to

[16] The In Search of Sanuk weekend classes will not be included in the actual study as none of the children interviewed attended this schooling option.

formal schooling, the majority of the education offered still does not fulfill enough criteria to match in quality.

Consistent and regular schooling is important to provide a full education. Classes such as the BRLC's classes for asylum-seekers, are of the same quality as the BRLC classes for the refugee children, but because they are only offered one day a week, they can only be considered supplementary. The Table 5.5 below defines the various schooling options by the number of days that they are in session per week.

Table 5.5: Number of Days a Week That Urban Refugee and Asylum-Seekers Children Attend Various Types of Schooling and Education

	Number of children	**Type of School**[17]	**Researchers Classification**
5 day a week	15	International school	Tier 1 Full Schooling
		Thai Public School	
4 days a week	19	BRLC for refugees	Tier 2 Moderate Schooling
		Ahmadi school	
		IOM/IDC daycare	Tier 3 Informal Classes
2 days a week	5	NGO classes	
1 day a week	8	BRLC for asylum seekers	

From this table the majority of children in this study are offered educational options on a regular bases. Despite these results, the researcher is aware that based on information gathered during the interview with the general manager of the BRC, there are approximately 120 refugees and 100 asylum-seeker children attending classes at BRLC and around 80 refugee and asylum-seeker children attending Thai schools. These figures would balance out the results for the number of children attending five times, four times and once a week.

5.2.3 Summary

The researcher attempts to broaden the criteria for acceptable and unacceptable forms of schooling from the initial stipulation of meeting national standards, to the classification of education that *resembles* official schooling, in attempts to consider schools that did not fit the formal criteria, but met the needs of

[17] Two children from one family interviewed go to a church school. It is 5 days a week, but the researcher has limited information so it is not included in the comparison.

this population. Despite this attempt, the schools remain in the same general classifications as before with International and Thai public schools meeting all requirements, BRLC and the Ahmadi school meeting a moderate amount of the requirements, and the IDC Daycare, the JRS-URP classes and the BRLC classes for the asylum seekers not meeting requirements further than supplementary informal classes.

5.3 Access to Education Overview

Of the families interviewed, the researcher tallied 56 children of official school age, 6 to 18 years old, out of the total number of 71 children. Although the national policy states that free-education begins at five years of age, the UNHCR/BRLC officially provide education starting at six years of age and as this is the primary source of education for this population, this is the age range that the researcher will use (MOE 2008). Out of the 56 children in this age range, there are two children outside of this age range, that do attend schooling; one five year old girl attends the IOM/IDC daycare and one 19 year old girl attends an international school.

Table 5.6: Schooling Options in Bangkok of Urban Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Children

	Tier 1 Full schooling		Tier 2 Moderate schooling		Tier 3 Informal classes			
	International Schools	Thai Public Schools	BRLC for urban refugees	Ahmadi School	BRLC for urban asylum-seekers	IOM/ IDC Daycare	JRS - English classes	Church school
Number of school aged children attending	11	4	6	9	8	4	5	2
Total number of school aged children in this study accessing education = **49**								

Forty-nine of the fifty-six school-aged children of this population are accessing some sort of schooling, that's is a very high rate 88%. But only 15 school

aged-children or 27%, are attending full official schooling (Tier 1). The same amount 15 or 27% are accessing a moderate form of education (Tier 2), and the majority, 19, or 34% are receiving minimal education in the form of informal classes (Tier 3).

Table 5.7 Total Number of School Aged Children Accessing Education Currently

	Tier 1 Full schooling	Tier 2 Moderate schooling	Tier 3 Informal classes	**Total accessing education**	**Total not accessing education**
Number of school aged children accessing education	15	15	19	**49**	**7**
Percentage out of all school aged children	27%	27%	34%	**88%**	**12%**

Initially it seems that this population is satisfactorily meeting their schooling needs with 88% of the studied population accessing education, but on closer inspection the largest percentage of those 49 children, are only accessing the informal classes, which as demonstrated, does not constitute actual schooling. Just over a quarter of the population are receiving ample education, 73% are not.

5.4 Access to Education for four nationalities studied

For the four nationalities studied: Pakistani-Ahmadi, Sri Lankan – Tamil, Somali and Vietnamese Hmong, all have had very different experiences with schooling in Bangkok. Although the researchers study sample was small, it still illustrates the diversity of the situations that can be encountered by different families all in similar conditions. All the families are subject to the same laws in Thailand but due to differing circumstance, all four nationalities have had very different experiences accessing education in Bangkok.

The Pakistani-Ahmadi were able to conduct their own self-run and taught religious based schooling held in a rented classroom in a Thai school near their home. The Sri Lankan's have a high number of their children attending international schools and have spent extended periods studying at the BRLC. The Hmong access the one

day a week schooling at the BRLC but of the families interviewed, one had children in an international school and one had children in the IDC Daycare. The Somali families interviewed lived far out of central Bangkok and chose not to utilize the BRLC for financial and safety reasons, some classes were then created for them by the NGO JRS.

5.4.1 Pakistani - Ahmadiyaa: Refugees accessing education in Urdu

The Pakistani – Ahmadi community: as discussed earlier, had very special circumstance provided to the whole community through the organization TCR, that paid their bail out of the IDC. They are provided with a space to conduct their own schooling. The schooling itself is not comparable to formal schooling that they received in Pakistan or that they will receive in the countries in which they resettle, but it is access to education at an acceptable level.

> *"We know that this is not the complete education system but it keeps their habit." - Ahmadi Refugee family 3*

All the Ahmadi refugees interviewed seemed happy with the temporary education provided by their own volunteer teachers. It is taught in their language, which is important and it is intertwined with religious teachings, which is their preference. The only complaint was that the children had to be between six and ten years old in order to attend the classes. Out of eight families interviewed with a total of 17 children, four school aged children did not go to school due to age restrictions set by BRC allowing only 6 to 10 years olds attend.

Table 5.8 Pakistani Community: Children Accessing Education in Urdu

Total children in Pakistani community	Children too young for school	Children too old for school	Children going to school	Children not going to school	School aged children not going to school
17	5	3	**9**	8	**4**

This community, with the help of TCR and BRC was able to create their own schooling experience in Bangkok, unlike any other. This temporary schooling will disappear when this select group of people have resettled in third countries, which is

underway now. The Pakistani - Ahmadi continue to come to Bangkok as asylum-seekers but the new-comers are not included in this special arrangement between TCR, BRC and the special group of Ahmadi who were bailed out of the IDC. 69 % of the Ahmadi children studied attended this school and 31% of school aged children did not, due to the limited age range.

5.4.2 Sri Lankan - Tamils: Accessing International Schools

The Sri Lankan - Tamils are the largest group of urban refugees in Bangkok (BRC interview). As the largest group they embody an extensive range of experiences; at one end of the spectrum there are families with four children on full-ride scholarships to an international school, at the other end of the spectrum there is a family whose request for refugee status has been rejected repeatedly and their file permanently closed, leaving them with no assistance, even from organizations who help asylum-seekers.

Table 5.9 Sri Lankan Community: 94% of Interviewed Families Have Access to Education

Total children in Sri Lankan community	School aged children	Children under 6, too young for school	Children over 17, too old for school	Children accessing education	School aged children not accessing education
42	33	7	2[18]	**31**	**2**

It is obvious from these figures that most Sri Lankan urban refugee and asylum seeker children do access education. Of the two that are not accessing education; one is six years old and hasn't started going to BRLC yet, and one is eight-teen who dropped out when she was 17.

[18] One 19 year old girl is going to international school and one 18 year old is not going to school, the rest that are not attending school are under 6 or over 18

Table 5.10 Sri Lankan Community: Children Accessing a Variety of Sources of Education

Sri Lankan children accessing education	International School	BRLC Refugee - 4 days a week	BRLC Asylum seeker - 1 day a week	Thai School	Church classes	Total all together
Asylum Seekers	3	--	8	1	--	**12**
Refugees	8	6	--	3	2	**19**
Total:	11	6	8	4	2	**31**

In this community, there isn't a stark difference between refugees and asylum-seekers. Roughly the same number of asylum-seekers as refugees access BRLC. There are almost three times as many refugees in international schools as there are asylum-seekers, but this may be because the refugees have been in Bangkok longer and have had more opportunity to pursue scholarships from international schools, or the data might be unevenly weighted due to one refugee family that has four children all enrolled in an international school. Overall 56% of the children attend 'Tier 1' schooling, either International or Thai schools. 15% access 'Tier 2' schooling, BRLC for refugees, and 30% access 'Tier 3' informal education, BRLC for asylum-seekers. The researcher cannot comment on the church school due to anonymity of this organization by the interviewed family.

5.4.2.1 Sri Lankan Educational Background

The Sri Lankans primarily come from excellent schooling backgrounds and are very concerned about their children's education. They prove to be highly motivated as a community to advocate for their children's schooling. When the BRLC changed educational focus to try to integrate the children into local schools, the Sri Lankans objected. An Australian government volunteer who witnessed the situation explained:

> *"The Sri Lankan's did not want their children to go to Thai schools because of fears of prejudice, lower standard of education and also safety…they quite rightly thought they could more easily be singled out and possibly arrested and go to IDC. Many Sri Lankan parents went to the general manager [at*

BRC] to protest but she didn't listen to them. Their argument was that they would be resettled into English speaking countries and that's what they wanted taught." (Interview with Australian Government Volunteer)

Yet those families interviewed with kids currently in Thai schools are pleased. A grandmother of a young Sri Lankan boy going to Thai school speaking about her grandson learning in Thai:

"……at least he is in a proper school now. It's better than the BRC. At the BRC they don't feel like they are in school." - Asylum Seeker family 21

The findings show that, Sri Lankans in this study were readily able to access educational opportunities regardless of refugee or asylum-seeker status. The majority of the children, 56% attend formal accredited schooling options, but a significant number, 30%, attend sub-standard schooling options. The Sri Lankans interviewed put an enormous emphasis on their attempts to access education for their children.

5.4.3 Somali – better than home

For the Somalis who fled the constant fighting in Somalia and came to Bangkok, any educational opportunity offered is better than the complete lack of schooling in their home country. Refugee family 23 said: "we had no school, it was not safe, there is fighting all the time." Both families are single parent families. One of the mothers has no education at all and the other went to elementary school. Both families interviewed have children attending the JRS English classes that are provided in their community. All the five children attend the classes two to three times a week for approximately three hours each time. Only one child had previous English skills, the other four were learning for the first time. When the two families interviewed came to Bangkok both said they didn't know anyone here but they both ended up living outside of Bangkok near a Mosque near many other Somali families. They say that they need to live near the temple for religious reasons and to share the community with those of the same nationality that enjoy the same culture, and food. Due to this draw factor the families are unwilling to move closer into Bangkok where they would

be able to access education through the BRLC. When asked about traveling to BRLC this was the response:

> *"The school is much too far away, it is too expensive to afford the transport." – Family 22*

Besides the cost of transport the Somali's are concerned about their security.

> *"See police going to the market, I have to go home. Three to five months I stay home. One time a month I went out. Now I am a refugee, I feel better. – Refugee Family 22*

The Somali's are very communal all living in one area of the city. All the children in these families accessed the informal schooling that was provided for them, but did not seek out further educational opportunities.

5.4.4 Vietnam Hmong – Majority not accessing schooling

As is mentioned previously in Chapter II, there is a large population of Vietnamese-Hmong in Bangkok, over 300 strong, but due to their situation of extreme vulnerability, they suffer from very restricted freedom of movement and do not access education to the knowledge of the anonymous informant TP. The key informant stated that the area where most Hmong families live is too far from the BRC to easily or safely access the BRLC.

The two Vietnamese-Hmong families in this study are not part of the larger community of Vietnamese-Hmong, and therefore not representative of the greater population in Bangkok. Nevertheless they share the same background and so are useful to the study to better understand the various populations of refugees and asylum-seekers in Bangkok.

Despite the challenges of persecution and poverty, a high percentage of Hmong Hills tribe children attend schooling in Vietnam. In 2003 Vietnam adopted the Education For All national framework that extend full access to primary education to "disadvantaged children and excluded children". The schools offered formal education five days a week, ten hours a day. Classes were taught in Vietnamese so Hmong children were required to learn Vietnamese before attending. One year of

school cost the equivalent of 500 baht, which is affordable for these families. According to interview family 30, there were no Hmong schools.

Of the two families interviewed one family has both children on scholarship attending an international school and the other family is in the Immigration Detention Center accessing the IOM/IDC Daycare. The international school is 'Tier 1' formal accredited education, and the IDC Daycare is 'Tier 3' supplementary informal education. Interestingly the children attending the international school were previously in IDC attending the IDC Daycare for almost two years and this is where they learned the English skills that they now use to study in the International school.

5.5 The 4 A's. Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, Adaptability.

As discussed in Chapter III, Section 3.4.2, in order for education to be meaningful it needs to be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable (Tomasevski 2001). This is the Four-A framework that supports the right to education through putting the responsibility on governments to enable education. This works well in this study due to Thailand's recent strong focus on reforming education and reaching all inclusive goals of education by 2015.

Using the Four-A framework to analyze the data has proven extremely useful as the findings are central to these four key areas. The researcher hypothesized that the primary barrier to accessibility was the implementation of the Immigration law that superseded humanitarian rights. Although this is definitely a factor in the access to consistent education the researcher found that it was much more of a barrier in the past than it is now. The researcher found that although there is a persistent threat of arrest and detention, most families take the risk in order to provide their children with education. The larger barrier to education is the standard of the education, with many of the options available only acceptable as informal education rather than proper schooling.

5.5.1 Availability

The first factor is "Availability" this means that the government is obliged to permit educational institutions and to fund them in order to make education available to all. Thailand has done this on the policy level and the implementation level. Thai

schools are available to all children providing they speak the language in which classes are taught, Thai. This is where the BRLC comes in as a preparatory-establishment to ready urban refugee and asylum-seeker children to enter these fully funded Thai public schools. Through the UNHCR the BRC even offers a transportation stipend and covers extra costs such as uniform and lunches.

Thailand is fulfilling all of its national and international obligations to provide and make schools available to all including stateless, minority and disadvantaged children. Thailand goes further and permits the UNHCR and COERR to provide a school that prepares foreign children for entry into the Thai public school system which allows children formal education with accreditation.

Availability also includes the government allowing non-state actors to establish educational facilities, which points directly to the international schools in Bangkok and the BRLC, but also extends to NGO's and charity organizations that supply informal education to this population. The Thai government does not block these schooling programs, yet sometimes these programs can fail due to increased attention from immigration police who are obliged to follow the law and arrest those who overstay their visas and are residing in Bangkok illegally. To the researchers knowledge there are at least three instances of this; a NGO supported learning center, a weekend program facilitated by an international school and a charity church based informal school.

In conclusion, Thailand's government facilitates the availability of educational sources for all children in Thailand. But success of some educational programs might depend on the non-interference of the immigration authorities.

5.5.2 Accessibility

The government is obliged to provide basic education for all children for twelve years, nine years mandatory according to the National Education Act of 1999. In 2008 Thailands' Prime Minister announced at the National Assembly that 15 years of free education shall be provided and fair and equal educational opportunities should be created for the disadvantaged including persons in distress, and those of different cultural backgrounds (Abhisit Vejjajiva 2008). As of 2005 children do not need to show any documentation to attend Thai Public Schools (Ministry of Foreign

Affairs 2011). Although in practice there are issues as demonstrated by the Migrant community in Thailand who are to attain ID cards for each student in order the school to be reimbursed. This has proven not to be straightforward in practice (Sanee, 2010). Still there is no official barrier to the access to education from the stand point of the government. All children are allowed to attend public schools with the only barrier being language.

5.5.2.1 Barrier to Freedom of Movement

Another barrier to access is discrimination. The Education for All policy dictates that education should be provided to all without discrimination. Thailand's polices uphold the basics of accessibility to education for all, but there is a disconnect in implementation.

As discussed in Chapter III, Section 3, the laws in Thailand do not advocate special protections for refugees and asylum-seekers, therefore this population unwittingly over-stays their visa during the Refugee Status Determination period and are consequently deemed illegal-immigrants. Due to this legal situation this population lives daily under the threat of arrest and indefinite detention. This defines the manner in which they conduct their lives here in Bangkok, resulting in fearful behavior that leads to the restriction of free movement.

Case Study: Illegal Status in Bangkok

Asanka is a bright eyed beautiful Sri Lankan teenager. She is sitting on a bed laughing with three of her friends and her brother as they watch a popular Sri Lankan comedy on TV. She looks happy and relaxed, which is how she feels most of the time now, but things couldn't have been more different when she first arrived in Bangkok with her family five years ago. Asanka and her family of one younger sister and two younger brothers arrived in Bangkok June 2007 right after a coup d'état that installed a military backed government. Immigration rules were extremely tight and she and her family were on guard at all times. Asanka was only twelve but she remembers that time vividly.

"When we first arrived immigration was very strict. Military ruled the country. We had to lock our door from the outside and in the morning we slept under the bed."

Asanka explained how a friend of the community with a valid visa, would come to the rooms where the urban refugees and asylum seekers stayed and padlock them from the outside in the evening so that they looked uninhabited. According to Asanka, sunrise was the most dangerous time of the day, this is when immigration police were out looking for illegal immigrants. The family of six would squeeze under the bed and lay perfectly still and not make a sound for at least an hour every morning until they heard the familiar sound of their friend coming to unlock the padlock on the door, only then was safe to come out from under the bed. Asanka said that the whole family had to be quiet all day and could not leave the room. If they heard the sound of police outside, they would hide under the bed again.

"For one year there was no schooling, no nothing."

Asanka said that in a year the military rule was over and the government changed, it was more relaxed. By 2009 there was much more freedom and all four kids in the family attended one day of school at the BRLC. In 2010 the whole family was officially granted refugee status. Although this does not offer them any protection from the threat of arrest and indefinite detention, they are now allowed a small stipend from the UNHCR, and their dream of resettlement is closer.

(Asanka is a fictional name for the teenage daughter in interviewed Refugee Family 14)

Every family interviewed told a similar story of restriction of movement due to the fear of immigration authorities. This constant constraint naturally affects the children and their access to education as well. The most common story from those interviewed was that if an urban refugee or asylum-seeker saw police[19] or immigration authorities, they would avoid them, often turning around and going home.

"If they see immigration police they can't go to school". – Family 18

"Even I can't send my children to BRC to study something because of immigration problem" – Family 28

According to the interviews, this happens quite frequently. One family interviewed stated once a week on their way to the BRLC they would see police and have to go home, and another stated that this happened about once a month.

"Sometimes the BRC says don't come, the situation is not good" – Refugee Family 1

"The kids don't go to school if they see the police. It happens often, maybe once a week" – Asylum seeker Family 19

Due to this same restriction on movement these families will not travel far to access education. The longer they are in the public eye, the more at risk they are. This is a barrier as the primary source of education created intentionally for this population has just one location in Bangkok. Most of those who chose to send their children to the BRLC live in that location to reduce travel time and risk of detection. Although, as the BRC is the contact point for all urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok , it also is a magnet for immigration police. The researcher found that although some urban asylum-seekers and refugees have been arrested and put in detention outside of the BRC, most often they are asked for bribe-money not to be arrested. Various interviewed families have given anywhere from a few hundred baht to 2000 baht to

[19] Primarily immigration police are in charge of arresting those who have over stayed their visa, but local police are sometimes notified and have jurisdiction to arrest these individuals as well. The ex-immigration officer stated that often police did not want to do this duty as they "have few skills to talk to them and check their visa". They often do not speak English so they are uncomfortable interacting with these individuals. They, also do not have full knowledge of the immigration laws needed to assess valid visas.

police that stop them near BRC. When asking the general manager of the BRC about this situation, she stated that:

> *"It is always dangerous for them [to go outside]. If they don't take the chance they have nothing." (BRC interview)*

The interviewer asked the ex-immigration officer about this situation of immigration police exploiting the urban refugees and asylum-seekers and he stated that:

> *"This depends on the officer and how they use the law in the situation" –Ex-immigration officer*

Of the urban refugees and asylum-seekers interviewed 100% reported being fearful of the immigration police and taking actions that limited their visibility. From minor occurrences, such as going home when they see an immigration police officer, to major changes such as locking themselves in a room from the outside to make it appear that no one is in the room and hiding under the bed.

> *"In Sri Lanka we are very scared of the government and the army, now here it is the same." – Refugee Family 12*

> *"Before I used to take my son to school, now I stopped because of fear of immigration police. He goes with a friend and is less noticeable. I don't go to the market that often, I only go out if it's very important." – Asylum-seeker Family 21*

This situation of living in fear with restricted freedom of movement blocks access to education in two ways; actual physical access to the location of the education facility and the ability to pursue education without threat and fear.

> *"Kids should have sports and fun, in the apartment they can't have fun or sport, they have to be quiet all the time." – Asylum seeker Family 21*

In summary, there is definitely a barrier to accessing education caused by the restriction on freedom of movement. But this barrier acts more as a disruption to accessing education rather than a full hindrance. As displayed in the urban refugee and asylum-seeker family quotes, the threat is quite real, but in comparison to the

situation explained in the case study, due to the changes in the government, it appears to be less oppressive than before.

5.7.2.2 Various Statuses: Refugee verses Asylum Seeker and Closed File

In terms of illegal status due to over staying ones visa, there is no difference between refugees, asylum-seekers or those with a closed-file. Although many in this population erroneously believe that having refugee status will help them, it has nothing to do with the immigration law.

> *"The UNHCR said that if you are arrested we will try and help you" - Refugee Family 2*

> *"If we violate Thai Law then we will be arrested but we were unaware that a very big law was broken with over staying the visa. The UNHCR told us about overstaying but we didn't think we would be arrested bc there were so many living here, so we can also stay here w/o valid documents. When we overstayed our visa we started to worry but we have UNHCR documents and it should help, but we didn't know that it wouldn't." – Refugee Family 4*

If an urban refugee or asylum-seeker is arrested the UNHCR has a hotline number that can be called for assistance. One interviewee claimed that no one answered when they used they tried to call after being arrested. Interestingly enough one family said that they were not afraid of being arrested because they heard that you case would be processed faster by the UNHCR if you were being held in the IDC. Some have found this to be true, such as the Pakistani-Ahmadi's who received Refugee status two to three months after arriving in IDC and were consequently bailed out seven months after they arrived. Some have not experienced the same, such as the Vietnamese-Hmong Family 30, that has been in the IDC for one year and seven months so far, still as asylum-seekers.

Those most at risk when arrested are the cases such as Families 25 and 26 who have been refused refugee status by the UNHCR and their file has been closed. If these families are arrested and taken to the IDC, the only way out is to voluntarily repatriate to their country of origin. Interestingly, despite this immense risk, both of

these families continue to send their children to school regularly. One family[20] has two children going to Thai Public school, and one family has one child[21] attending the BRLC once a week.

Asylum-seekers are not restricted from accessing international schools. All of the international schools that the researcher interviewed did not note the difference between refugee or asylum-seeker status. In one of the international schools that only has two scholarships available for this population, both are filled by asylum-seekers. Refugees are provided a stipend from the UNHCR, but considering that tuition-fees for international schools are far over that amount, this does not make a difference.

Financial factors are an accessibility issue, not just for to being able to access international schools, but also in external fees such as transportation. The UNHCR recently started subsidizing transportation costs to and from school for these children (Interview with General Manager of BRC). Even for the families receiving this stipend, they claim that it is not enough to cover the child and the parent every day. Despite this, most families make do, and only two families stated that this is the reason that they did not attend school. For all other families education was of central importance and most often the family moved to the area of the school to lower transportation fees.

According to the study a stipend from the UNHCR for a three person family in Bangkok is 4500 baht per month. Rent is approximately 1500 to 2000 baht, and food is about 1000 to 2000 baht per month. This equals 2500 to 4000 baht. Visa renewals are at the very least 3500 baht, and often closer to 10,000 baht with the use of an agent. International schools can cost from 2500 to 30,000 baht a month and even transportation costs can be prohibitive at approximately 300 to 500 baht a month. It is apparent that there is little money left over at the end of the month to cover over the most basic needs.

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[20] This family returned back to their home country when their file was closed and then returned to Bangkok and re-filed. This is beyond the researchers scope of knowledge to address but the family represented themselves as having their case closed rather than being asylum-seekers or refugees.

[21] The file was closed recently and it is unknown if the BRLC will continue to provide this child with education or end this service when they learn of the status change.

Case Study: One International School in Bangkok

One of the international schools in Bangkok supports access to education for refugee and asylum-seeker children more than all the rest. They have no political agenda or even special interest in the cause but over the last ten years they have facilitated top-notch education for many urban refugees and asylum-seeker children in Bangkok.

In 2003 it was brought to the attention of the head master that there was a refugee child receiving a summer school scholarship at another Bangkok international school but his nine brothers and sisters were not receiving any education. The head master spoke with the board members at his school and they had empathy for this family and agreed to open a scholarship program that would accept all nine children from this family. The head master along with friends, teachers and various charities, helped to pay for the scholarship including the uniforms and meals. More refugee and asylum-seeking families approached the school, but there wasn't enough funding to accept any one else. Seeing the obvious need, the school allowed teachers who wanted to volunteer, to teach these additional students on the weekends. Outside volunteers started to help and a few churches donated supplies. The popularity of the weekend school drew the attention of the immigration police and soon the program was shut down due to the risk of detection to refugee and asylum-seeker families.

"It is the birth-right of every child to receive an education" - Headmaster International School 2

The headmaster had a heavy heart knowing that there were so many children that wanted an education but could not get it so he continued to fight for the right to education for these students. After a few years and much negotiation between the board members of the school, the local police, and immigration police, now a select number of scholarship funded refugee and asylum-seeker children attend this school without worry for their safety or the safety of their family.

From the 10 initial scholarship slots, the number has grown and the head-master himself has funded many of these scholarship slots himself. He says he has a "big heart and can't say no" when a family comes to him begging to allow their children to attend his school. Most of the refugee students attend the school for three or four years, but some are resettled in as short as three months.

The school is 80% international and 20% Thai. The refugee and asylum seeker children are not singled out and they blend well with the large population of international kids, so there is little problem with discrimination. Only a few times in the last ten years have there been any complaints about the refugee children. Once a parent stated that they didn't want their child going to school with an "undeserving" child, but the headmaster said that sentiments like this are rare.

"Throughout history all societies have developed a sense of empathy, but somewhere along the line we have hijacked it." Headmaster at the international school speaking about the threat of arrest and detention for the urban-refugee and asylum-seeker population in Bangkok.

5.5.3 Acceptability

The government is obliged to ensure that the education available is accessible and of good quality. The content of the education should be relevant, non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate and of an acceptable quality. The school itself should be safe and the teachers professional. As mentioned before, Thailand has no special provisions for urban refugees and asylum-seekers specifically in Bangkok. With that said, it is gracious of the government to extend free education to all children regardless of their legal status in this country. The policy framework is established to allow for all children to access education, and in the case of urban refugees and asylum seekers this comes in the form of international school, the BRLC, Thai public schools and an assortment of informal education options.

5.7.3.2 Barriers to access to acceptable schooling options

The primary issue is that the schools that are acceptable and do meet national standards, International and Thai schools, have distinct barriers restricting access to them for this population. International schools are unaffordable for most families, especially families barred from working while in Thailand. There are limited scholarship opportunities. Thai Public schools are free but language is a large barrier. The BRLC does what it can to prepare students for studying in Thai, but the process of learning another language is time consuming and creates a gap in the child's education.

5.7.3.3 Not acceptable schooling options

The most easily accessible schooling options are not up to standard. As discussed at length in section 5.2.

> *"The time spent at BRC – the teachers are not qualified, just volunteers and refugees. They only teach Math and English. The teachers know the class levels are uneven, but they can't do anything." – Family 13*

Children have the right to quality education that enables him or her to develop the life skills needed to lead a prosperous life. The Acceptability guidelines in the 4A

framework states that accessible schooling must reach a certain standard and quality to be considered “education” as is deemed necessary and essential for development. Acceptable schooling must be of good quality and taught by professional teachers.

5.5.3.4 Disruption to Education

In addition to the disruption that has already been encountered during the process of fleeing the country of origin and perhaps the disruption prior caused by the situations in the home country, such as fighting and persecution.

It is understandable that there is a certain amount of unavoidable disruption caused by the circumstances surrounding becoming a refugee, but the time is unduly extended if the child must learn a second language in order to access formal education in the interim between fleeing their home country and being resettled in a third country.

> *“We are worried about recovery when we resettle, worried that it’s too long, our girls and older boy are getting dull.” – Refugee family 1*

> *“My kids have lost many years of education.” – Refugee family 2*

Large and irregular gaps in education are disruptive and cannot be considered acceptable in the attainment of a primary education that is to lay the groundwork for life. The specifics of the unacceptability of the schooling options for this population in Bangkok are discussed thoroughly in this chapter, Section 5.2. For these reasons, the researcher does not find the schooling options meet the requirements for Acceptability by the standards outlined in the Four-A’s framework.

5.5.4 Adaptability

Education ought to adapt to children with the best interest of the child in mind. This is related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and should be flexible to evolve with the changing needs of the society. It should be possible to adapt education locally to meet specific needs of a community.

The largest adaptability issue in this study is the issue of language. The schooling solution for urban refugee and asylum seeker children in Bangkok is to

place them in Thai schools. This requires an extended amount of time studying the language before it is possible. In that time the children receive less than adequate schooling sometimes for years especially if the child is an asylum-seeker and can only attend the BRLC once a week.

> *"The education is not enough, our youngest doesn't know Tamil, we do not need Thai, we will leave and so we need to study English" – Asylum Seeker Family 20*

The need to learn a second language creates a gap in education and consequently older children end up attending lower level classes strictly based on their mastery of the second language rather than their skill in the topic. These children who have studied Thai to the level of proficiently that they are able to study in the language, including reading and writing, are held back in their other studies until this mastery is sufficient. This results in urban refugee and asylum-seeker children often being much older than the Thai kids at the same level. Two of the families interviewed have children at 11 and 12 years of age, attending first and second grade.

> *"There are other's [urban refugees] in the school, so it's ok" – Refugee family 28*
>
> *"She is the oldest kid in the class, so the kids look at her" – Refugee family 24 with an 11 year old in second grade.*

Additionally, many families don't see the point in having their children learn Thai when they will be resettled in a third country. The approximate time of the RSD process and the resettlement process is variable but can take anywhere from under a year to over several years. If the process takes a year and a half, spending that time studying Thai in a non-formal schooling situation creates an unnecessary gap in the child's education.

5.6 Conclusion

Although there is a real threat to urban refugee and asylum-seekers in Bangkok, due to their legal-status, most families take the risk in order to provide their children with an education, some going to detention because of the increased

visibility. An important finding that the researcher discovered is that the acceptability of the schooling offered is sub-standard. There are only two educational options that can be considered formal schooling, International schools and Thai public schools, but there are major barrier to access to both these options. A financial barrier to International schools, as this population is unable to work in their current temporary situation, and a language barrier to the other viable option, Thai Public schools. All the other education offered falls below the national standards. The researcher created a different model for assessing quality of schooling and receives the same results; only two schools are viable options.

The three main barriers to education for urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok are the threat and restriction of freedom of movement caused by the legal status of this population in Thailand, the financial barrier to accessing International schools, and the Language barrier of accessing Thai Public schools.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

Urban refugees now make up almost half of the world's total refugee population. Thailand is host to a large number of refugees from Myanmar but also receives a regular flow of urban refugees and asylum-seekers from Asia Pacific and beyond. Thailand is a popular country of first asylum for a wide range of nationalities due to the relative ease of obtaining entry and presence of the UNHCR's Regional Office.

Thailand has not signed the 1951 Convention Related to Refugees and does not have national frameworks to protect this population specifically. The refugee population thus remains vulnerable and subject to arrest and indefinite detention if they overstay their permitted period of entry during their effort to attain refugee status and resettle in a third country.

Thailand has recently put great emphasis on education; upgrading and reforming the current system and extending education access to all children in the Kingdom, regardless of their legal status. Despite urban refugees and asylum-seekers being included in this framework their actual access to education is hindered by several key factors as discussed below.

6.2 Barriers to Accessing Education

The hypothesis of this thesis tested if the main barrier to accessing of primary education for the children of asylum-seekers and refugees in Bangkok is that their presence in the country is viewed by Thai authorities in a national security, rather than humanitarian framework.

This barrier is apparent as the restriction to freedom of movement resulting from individual's stay in Thailand exceeding that allowed under the entry visa. The imposed status of 'illegal immigrant' puts individuals at risk of arrest and indefinite detention.

The findings presented in this thesis do not support the hypothesis that the main barrier to access of primary education is restriction to freedom of movement. Certainly the lack of freedom of movement causes severe disruptions in children's access to continuous schooling, but the findings show that access to education is not completely hindered by this. If the study had covered a larger number of more highly vulnerable populations, such as the Vietnamese- Hmong, the results would likely reflect stronger consequences of more severely restricted movement, that might align closer with the studies hypothesis.

Despite a substantial threat from immigration authorities, almost every family sent their children to school when possible. The irregular routine caused by the lack of freedom of movement can be seen as a barrier to education. Children with disrupted attendance are obviously not receiving the level of education that they would without the disruption. Disruptions did not however deter these families from trying to access education for their children.

Further the study showed that a percentage of urban-refugees and asylum-seekers have received bail from IDC and are protected from re-arrest prior to resettlement. This sub-population does not suffer restriction of movement and does not experience the same disruption to education that as the rest of the population does.

A key finding of the study is that the main barrier to accessing education is the quality of education available. The majority of the school aged refugees and asylum-seekers studied do have access to education but more than half receive education that is far below national standards and can only be considered informal education. This level of education is not robust enough to be equally compared to basic education offered at formal schools. Informal and non-formal education is important in itself and acts to support the wellbeing of this population as well as offering a certain level of learning experiences to the children, but is not a replacement for formal schooling which is the right of every child.

The current strategy to enroll urban refugee and asylum-seeker children in Thai public schools appears to be a viable option considering the goal of providing formal education in an affordable way. But the barrier of language creates a prolonged gap while the child attempts to learn a second language, causing a substantial disruption to education.

Gaps in education are largely inevitable considering that refugees are fleeing the home country and starting life anew in a second country. But this disruption could be viewed as unnecessary when the language learned to access formal education, is only used temporarily by these families during their limited stay in Thailand.

The two educational options available outside of learning Thai and attending Thai public school, are attending international schools or receiving an informal or non-formal education. International schools are prohibitively expensive, especially to a population restricted from working. There are scholarships available to assist these children into international schools, but they are few and cannot be considered a viable option for the hundreds of urban refugee and asylum-seeker children in need. The informal educational options fall short of providing the structure and quality of formal schooling and although better than nothing, are no substitute for proper schooling and education.

Simply put, there is not just one barrier to basic education for urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok, there are four barriers that lead to the one significant problem of unacceptable gaps in education for this population. The four barriers are as follows:

1. The current model of integrating children into the Thai public school system creates a significant gap in education while the new language is being learned. The lack of potential for refugees to integrate into Thailand itself, means that the benefit derived from learning the new language may also be short-lived.
2. The most accessible sources of education are informal or non-formal and cannot be considered robust enough to equate to basic education. This causes a significant gap in education.
3. Financial barriers and the scarcity of scholarships limit access to other formal schooling options, such as international schools.
4. The restriction to freedom of movement, although not the primary barrier to accessing education, does play a role in restricting access to the extent that consistent education is more difficult to obtain, and this can lead to a gap in education.

6.3 Theoretical Analysis

The research followed a conceptual framework strata that first investigated the institutional level allowing for comparison of national security implementation with the formal asylum seeking process to highlight inconsistencies that lead to the restrictions on freedom of movement. Although this is important to the continuance of education provided, it did not prove to be the primary barrier to access to education. Socio-economic, community and individual factors all played a role to some extent, but none of these proved to radically open, or inhibit access to education. Most relevant was the use of the '4A' framework that defined access to education using the four principles of Accessibility, Acceptability, Adaptability and Availability.

Accessibility, in particular 'physical accessibility' was initially thought by the researcher to be the most applicable guideline of the four considering that the hypothesis pointed towards the lack of freedom of movement as the crux of the primary barrier to accessing education. Upon completion of the study the researcher found that Accessibility took on a new meaning. Physical accessibility to schooling did not take into account that the schooling and education provided by the different sources, are not equal. Access to informal schooling cannot be compared equally with access to formal schooling. Nor can access to schooling once a week be equally compared to schooling that occurs five days a week.

The Acceptability and Adaptability guidelines highlight the most important findings; that accessible schooling must reach a certain standard and quality to be considered "education" as is deemed necessary and essential for development. Acceptable schooling must be of good quality that is equal to basic education received by other children of the same age and skill level. The researcher argues that it must also be consistent. Large and irregular gaps in education are disruptive and cannot be considered acceptable in the attainment of a primary education that is to lay the groundwork for life.

The guideline of Adaptability is important as it addresses what is in the best interest of the child. For children with recent trauma in their lives, the stability of regular schooling is vital to their unfettered development. The children of Bangkok-based urban-refugees and asylum-seekers only have the option of resettlement in a third-country or repatriation to their country of origin. Therefore taking the time to

learn a language that will only be used for a short period of time, creates an unacceptable disruption in their continued education. If education in this situation is to adapt to the needs of the child, it should be aimed at recognizing the need to receive a consistent education as soon as possible that minimizes disruption in their lives.

Education is needed for the ability to exercise all other human rights (UNESCO, 2007). This depth of education cannot be attained though infrequent access to supplementary classes. What is required is formal education that transforms a child from a non-actor into a participant, from a receiver to a leader, and from a victim into a capable empowered individual.

6.4 Observations

The following observations were made in relation to changes that could be made to reduce the gap in education for this population.

Immigration reform: *End the condition that cause this vulnerable population to be further victimized*[22].

- Provide a six to eight month visa upon arrival for urban asylum-seekers pending their registration and active involvement in the Refugee Status Determination process. The exact amount of the time allowed for legal stay should reflect the current wait times that the UNHCR predicts for asylum seekers going through the RSD process.
- Allow a free temporary-stay visa for recognized urban refugees in the resettlement process.
- Allow urban-refugees the right to work during their stay in Thailand.

UNHCR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reform: *Shorten the Refugee Status Determination process.*

[22] The researcher understands that suggesting that Thailand's government sign the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, is not feasible at this time. In the interview with the Executive Director of TCR he discussed why amending current laws in this sector is difficult. He explained two points; firstly Thailand has never created their own refugees and has only ever accepted refugees into the country, after many years, this has caused "humanitarian fatigue" especially when "Thai citizens have a number of problems themselves". Secondly, in nation building, Thailand has focused on creating and protecting "Thai-ness", the Thai identity. It takes time to shift from this mindset into a more inclusive approach.

- Put additional resources into funding and upgrading the Refugee Status Determination Department to adequately handle the case load. The UNHCR claims that this process can take anywhere from a few weeks to six to eight weeks (U. f. UNHCR, 2005). The average time it took for the population studied was two years.

Education: *Offer appropriate formal education options*

- Develop accredited schooling options for urban refugees and asylum-seekers that are as soon as possible after arrival.
- If creating accredited schooling options for this population are not possible, bring the standards of the current informal schooling options up to match formal schooling, so that children who resettle will be able to continue their education without a debilitating gap.
- So as not to overburden the UNHCR, the schools could partner with NGO's that provide education to refugees and receive funding for operation by donors, similar to the schools in the temporary shelters along the border of Myanmar.

6.5 Suggestions for Further Research

It is recommended that further research be carried out in the following areas related to urban refugees and asylum-seeker children's basic education in Bangkok.

- A special refugee education model that would work in this diverse urban environment. The challenge would be that unlike refugee camps that cater to children from one country of origin, the children in Bangkok are from multiple countries of origin with extremely varied backgrounds. Research could be done on the type of school that would best meet the needs of these children, offer them formal education and prepare the children for resettlement in a third country.
- There is need for further study into the barrier that urban-refugees and asylum-seekers face in attaining their basic human rights and meeting their needs in countries that do not offer specific protections to refugees and asylum-seekers.

- This study should be expanded to account for a larger population made up of a wider diversity of nationalities, with special attention paid to locating individual families that are isolated from the wider community.
- There remains a gap in knowledge concerning the restriction of freedom of movement towards one of the most vulnerable communities of urban refugees and asylum seekers in Bangkok, the Vietnamese- Hmong. Due to their heightened vulnerability, the researcher suggests that for this community, the hypothesis would be correct - the primary barrier to education would be caused by the restriction of movement due to the threat of immigration authorities enforcing national immigration law.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Urban Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Family Interviews Overview

Code	Origin	Refugee Status	How Long in Bangkok	Method
Families				
1	Pakistani	Refugee	2 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
2	Pakistani	Refugee	1 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
3	Pakistani	Refugee	1 y 9 m	Semi-Structured Interview
4	Pakistani	Refugee	2 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
5	Pakistani	Refugee	2 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
6	Pakistani	Refugee	2 y	Semi-Structured Interview
7	Pakistani	Refugee	2 y 2 m	Semi-Structured Interview
8	Pakistani	Refugee	1 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
9	Sri Lankan	Refugee	1 y 11 m	Semi-Structured Interview
10	Sri Lankan	Refugee	2 y 9 m	Semi-Structured Interview
11	Sri Lankan	Asylum-seeker	2 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
12	Sri Lankan	Refugee	1y 1 m	Semi-Structured Interview
13	Sri Lankan	Asylum-seeker	2 y 9 m	Semi-Structured Interview
14	Sri Lankan	Refugee	5 y 1 m	Semi-Structured Interview
15	Sri Lankan	Refugee	1 y 1 m	Semi-Structured Interview
16	Sri Lankan	Refugee	4 y 4 m	Semi-Structured Interview
17	Sri Lankan	Refugee	2 y 2 m	Semi-Structured Interview
18	Sri Lankan	Refugee	3 y	Semi-Structured Interview
19	Sri Lankan	Asylum-seeker	2 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
20	Sri Lankan	Refugee	3 y 4 m	Semi-Structured Interview
21	Sri Lankan	Asylum-seeker	3 y	Semi-Structured Interview
22	Sri Lankan	Asylum-seeker	3 y	Semi-Structured Interview
23	Somali	Refugee	11 m	Semi-Structured Interview
24	Somali	Refugee	1 y	Semi-Structured Interview
25	Sri Lankan	Refugee	3 y 7 m	Semi-Structured Interview

26	Sri Lankan	Asylum-seeker	2 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
27	Sri Lankan	Asylum-seeker	2 y 8 m	Semi-Structured Interview
28	Sri Lankan	Refugee	2 y 10 m	Semi-Structured Interview
29	Sri Lankan	Refugee	3 y 1 m	Semi-Structured Interview
30	Hmong	Asylum-seeker	1 y 8 m	Semi-Structured Interview
31	Hmong	Asylum-seeker	1 y	Semi-Structured Interview

APPENDIX B

List of Key-Informant Interviews

Aumphornpun Buavirat	General Manager, Bangkok Refugee Center (BRC), on 16 July 2012
Dot Laughton	Australian Government Volunteer 2009, 2010 Bangkok Refugee Center (BRC) and Immigration Detention Center (IDC), Bangkok on 12 July 2012
Dunnapar Tilakamonkul	Associate Protection Officer (Statelessness), UNHCR, Bangkok, 20 July 2012
Dwight Turner	Founder and Executive Director of charity organization, 'In Search of Sanuk', Bangkok, 15 July 2012
Veerawit Tianchainan	Founder and Executive Director, Thai Committee for Refugee Foundation (TCR), Bangkok, 17 July 2012
Rufino Seva	Project Director, Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), Urban Refugee Program (URP), Bangkok, 22 June 2012
Zarah K. Alih	Psycho-Social Case Worker, Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), Urban Refugee Program (URP), Bangkok, 22 June 2012
Varaporn Naisanguansri	Project Officer Counter-Trafficking Unit, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Immigration Detention Center (IDC) Daycare, Program Manager, Bangkok, 9 July 2012

International School 1	Teacher, International School that receives refugees and asylum seekers, Bangkok, 26 June 2012
International School 2	Head Master, International School that receives refugees and asylum seekers, Bangkok, 13 July 2012
International School 3	Board Member International School that receives refugees and asylum seekers, Bangkok, 6 July 2012
Anonymous	Ex-Immigration Officer Immigration Detention Center, Bangkok, 13 July 2012
Grace Pasigado	Lumpini Park School, Informal schooling for disadvantaged children, Calvary Baptist Church , Bangkok, 9 July 2012
TP Anonymous Informant	Volunteer working with the Urban asylum-seeker Vietnamese-Hmong population in Bangkok, Bangkok, 11 July 2012

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions for Urban Refugee and Asylum-Seeker Families with Children

Family #_____

Factual Data:

1. Which **nationality** best describes you and your family?

Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Somali, Hmong, Other _____.

2. Which **living arrangement** best explains your situation most days of the week?

____ You are a mother or a father living together with your **wife/husband** here in Bangkok

____ You are a mother or a father married but **not living together** with your wife/husband in Bangkok

____ You are a **single mother** head of household

____ You are a **single father** head of household

____ You are the **primary care-taker** of a child (children) but you are not the mother or father, Please explain

_____

____ You are a **child alone** without mother and father here in Bangkok

4. What is the **gender** and **age** of your children?

I have ____ (total number) girls,

My **girls** are age: ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, (enter the various ages of your girl children)

I have ____ (total number) boys,

My **boys** are age: ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, (enter the various ages of your boy children)

5. What is the highest level of education that **you** reached before coming to Bangkok.

(‘**W**’ = wife, ‘**H**’ = husband, **X** = single)

___ Primary school (grade level 1 – 6)

___ Secondary school (grade level 7 – 10)

___ Post secondary (11-12)

___ College (?)

___ University (finished: 1 yr ____, 2 yr ____, 3 yr ____, 4 yr ____,)

Graduated with a degree? (please circle one) Yes No

___ University Post-Graduate (finished: 1yr ___, 2yr ___, 3yr ___, 4yr ___,)

Graduated with a Master degree?) Yes No

___ Trade school

___ Other (please explain:) _____

6. What is the last job/profession **you** had before coming to Thailand?

_____

7. What is the last job/profession your **spouse** had before coming to Thailand?

_____

8. Does your family have any **source of income** now? Yes No

List sources of income (exp - bank account, working now, selling possessions, money from family/friends, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

Refugee Status Information

1. Have **you** and your **family** applied to the Refugee Status Determination process with the UNHCR in Bangkok?

Yes No

*If '**yes**' answer the following:

1a) When did you **first apply** for **yourself**? (month/ year)

_____

1b) When did you first apply for **your children**? (month /year)

_____

or circle for the **SAME** time as the parents.

1c) Did you apply for **all** of your children? Yes No

If ‘No’ please explain _____

2a) Right now are you waiting for RSD from the UNHCR for **yourself**?

Yes I am waiting

No I was granted refugee status _____ (month/year)

2b) Right now are you waiting for **RSD** from the UNHCR for **your children**?

Yes I am waiting

No they were granted refugee status _____ already (month/year) or **SAME**

3a) If **you** were **denied refugee status**, did you made an appeal?

Yes No N/A

If ‘yes’ when did you make the appeal

(1)_____ (month/year)

(2)_____ (month/year)

(3)_____ (month/year)

3b) If **your children** were **denied refugee status**, did you made an appeal for them?

Yes No N/A **SAME**

If ‘yes’ when did you make the appeal _____ (month/year)

3c) How many **appeals for refugee status** have you and your family made to date total?

N/A or number of times appealed _____.

3. Are you and your family in the **resettlement process** waiting for the third country to approve you?

Yes No N/A

4. Have you or your family been **denied resettlement** by a third country?

Yes No N/A

If ‘yes’ please write the month and year of the denial _____

If you were denied, have you made an appeal? Yes No N/A

If ‘yes’ when did you make that appeal? (month/ year) _____

- more than one appeal, list: _____

School Data:

1. How many of your children **go to school**? _____.

2. How many **do not** go to school? _____.

3. If you have children who **do not go to school**, please explain why?

_____

If different reasons, list:

Child, age ___ M/F

_____

Child, age ___ M/F

_____

Child, age ___ M/F

_____

4. How many **days a week** do your children go to school? _____.

Or if different, list:

Child, age ___ M/F _____

Child, age ___ M/F _____

Child, age ___ M/F _____

5. What kind of school do they attend **now**? (note frequency, exp: “once a week for 5 months” or “full time for 3 weeks” or “most days for 6 weeks” or “once or twice during 1 month”)

___ Thai school _____

___ International school _____

___ NGO run school _____

___ Church run school _____

___ Mosque run school _____

___ Self-administered class _____

___ Other (please explain) _____

6. What **grade** level has your child reached?

___ Kindergarten ___ 1st grade ___ 2nd grade

___ 3rd grade ___ 4th grade ___ 5th grade

___ 6th grade ___ 7th to 12th grade ___ higher level _____

Other

7. How do your children **travel** to school?

___ walk ___ bus (public) ___ bus (private)

___ Taxi (motorcycle or car) ___ bicycle ___ my child does not travel to school

8. Is your child **accompanied** by anyone to travel to school?

___ Parents ___ family member (adult) ___ family member (child)

___ Friend/community member ____ Other (please explain) _____

9. What is the **distance** to school? _____ (kilometers) or time _____ (minutes)

10. How much are **transportation** costs each day? _____ baht

11. How **safe** do you feel your child is traveling to school most days?

Very safe somewhat safe not very safe not safe at all I don't know

If **not** safe, explain:

_____

_____

12. Has your child ever not attended school due to the threat of Immigration police?

Yes No N/A

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

13. If your child/children **attended school while in Bangkok**, note all of the various experiences that they have had with schooling in Bangkok and for how long they attended that schooling.

*Frequency, exp: “once a week for 5 months” or “full time for 3 weeks” or “most days for 6 weeks” or “once or twice during 1 month”

_____ Bangkok Refugee Center school _____

_____ Immigration Detention Center Day-Care _____

_____ Thai school _____

_____ International School _____

_____ Church/Mosque School _____

_____ NGO run school/classes _____

_____ Other (please explain) _____

____ N/A

14. How would you **rank the importance** of providing your child with formal **education** when you were in your **former country**?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1) not as important as other things (10) the most important thing

15. How would you **rank the importance** of providing your child with formal **education** in your **current** situation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1) not as important as other things (10) the most important thing

15. Do you feel that the **education** that they have received since they have been here has been **adequate**? Explain:

_____

_____

_____

Social Capital

1. Did you have any **friends/family/acquaintances** in Bangkok **before** you came to Bangkok? Yes No

If **No**, how long did it take you to establish friends/acquaintances after you arrived in Bangkok? (approximate days/weeks/months or N/A).

_____

2. Have your **friends/family/acquaintances** helped you managing/surviving in Bangkok?
Yes No
If **yes** - mark all that apply:

____ Information sharing ____ Advice ____ Direct financial support
____ Rent assistance/sharing ____ Food assistance/sharing ____ Child care
____ Emotional support _____ Information on schooling for your children
____Other _____

3. If you received information on **schooling for your children** from your friends/acquaintances, what information did you get? N/A
Explain:
_____
_____

4. Have any **organizations** (such as the UNHCR, NGO's, Charity groups, etc.) helped you manage/survive in Bangkok? Yes No
If **yes** please mark all that apply:

____ Information sharing ____ Advice ____ Direct financial support
____ Rent assistance/sharing ____ Food assistance/sharing ____ Child care
____ Medical assistance____ Legal assistance
____ Emotional support _____ Information on schooling for your children
____Other _____

5. If you received information on **schooling for your children**, from organizations, what information did you get? N/A
_____

6. Who provided you with the **most support** since you have been in Bangkok?

____ Friends ____ Family ____ NGO's (JRS, Asylum Access,TCR etc.)
____ UNHCR ____ Bangkok Refugee Center____ Church/Mosque groups
____Other _____
____ N/A

7. How **knowledgeable** do you feel about your situation in Bangkok concerning the **options** that are available to you while living here?

a) what basic services are **available** to you and your family to help you manage and survive while in Bangkok?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

b) do you know how to **access** these services?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1) I don't feel that I know what options are available to me

(10) I feel that I understand all of the options that are available to me

8. How concerned or threatened do you feel by the **Thai Immigration authorities** in Bangkok currently?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1) Not concerned or threatened at all

(10) Extremely concerned and threatened

Explain: -

_____

_____

_____

9. If your situation has changed, how concerned or threatened did you feel by the **Thai Immigration authorities** in Bangkok?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1) Not concerned or threatened at all

(10) Extremely concerned and threatened

Explain: -

_____

_____

_____

10. If you feel or felt a high level of threat or concern, how are/were your **actions/behaviors affected** by this situation?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Does/did this have an effect on your child being able to **access education**?

Yes No N/A

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

12. How do you see your stay in Bangkok as effecting your child's education in the **future**? (or future prospects for them all together based on the education they received/didn't receive?)

_____

_____

_____

BIOGRAPHY

Sharonne Broadhead is an American who has been living in Thailand for five years with her husband and daughter. After Graduating from Bastyr University with a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition, She pursued various careers from a Research Librarian at Microsoft, to a Kindergarten teacher in Thailand. Finally Sharonne found her calling volunteering with urban refugees and asylum-seekers through Jesuit Refugee Services – Urban Refugee Program in Bangkok. She attended the MAIDS program to further her knowledge and skills towards the her future career working in forced migration.