# **Education and life course aspirations among Karen refugees in** Thailand

### **Research** question

What is the role of education in shaping the life course aspirations of Karen refugees in Thailand?

#### Research methods

- Participant observation
- Informal interviews with refugees and villagers
- Participatory research methods with a group of 18 Karen refugees from Myanmar aged 19-25 years currently participating to a programme of local integration in a Karen village in Chiang Mai province

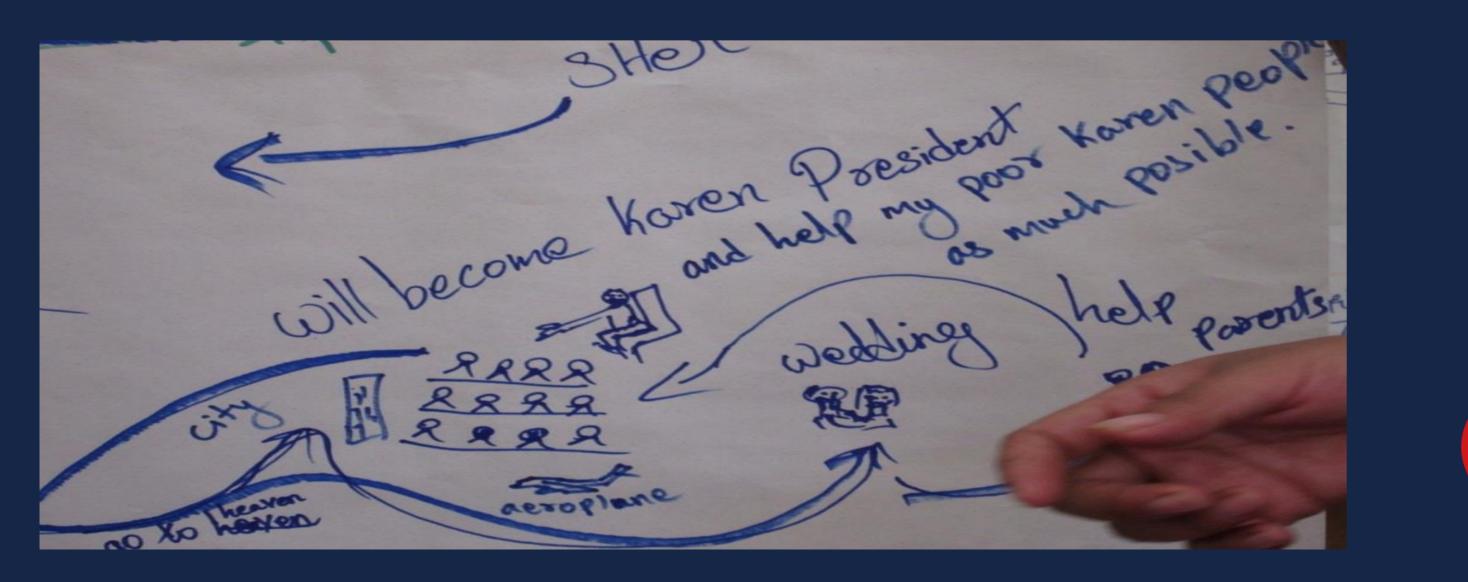












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## Displacement of the Karen people

•The situation of displacement at the Thailand-Burma border is one of the longest protracted refugee situations in the world: Camps along the border exist since more than 20 years

•In August 2014, a total camp population of 120, 174 persons, 78% of whom are ethnic Karen.

• Between 2005 and 2014 an estimated number of 92,000 refugees, most of them Karen, resettled in third countries, such as the USA and the UK

Sources: The Border Consortium Monthly Population Report, August 2014, UN High Commissioner for Refugees 29 Jan 2014

## Research findings





Research participants aspire – to locally integrate – To continue their education and work as medical and political professionals - To marry and to have children - To pursue a religious vocation maybe to return to Karen State in Burma at a later moment in life • They plan to postpone child bearing until after they have attained their educational aspirations They plan to have smaller families than their parents' generation • Young peoples' aspirations are shaped within a particular historical moment by their own experiences and the experiences of their peers, family and community members

The Oxford Institute of Population Ageing