

## Terms of Reference for Research Assistant Service

### Background

Thailand has long served as a humanitarian shelter for individuals fleeing conflict and instability in Myanmar. Over the past four decades, tens of thousands of Myanmar nationals have sought refuge in Thailand, and the 2021 military coup in Myanmar triggered a new wave of displacement, pushing over 3.3 million people into internal displacement and prompting more than 126,000 to cross into Thailand. Currently, the nine refugee camps along the Thai–Myanmar border shelter over 107,000 refugees, including about 91,000 verified by the Thai government and the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR.<sup>1</sup> Among them, approximately 33.2% (34,173 children) are of school age.<sup>2</sup> Inside and outside of these camps, an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 migrant and stateless children live<sup>3</sup> in precarious conditions throughout the country. Children make up approximately 35.7% of these displaced populations, representing a significant portion of those in shelters and border areas.

Education for these displaced and migrant children is not only a fundamental right acknowledged by Thailand’s Education for All policy but also a critical tool for protection, psychosocial well-being, and long-term development. However, the education sector along the Thai–Myanmar border has faced chronic underfunding, relying heavily on international aid, local NGOs, and community-based organizations. The recent influx of displaced children has strained already limited resources, leading to overcrowded classrooms, insufficient learning materials, and undertrained teachers.

Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs) have emerged as the primary education providers for Myanmar migrant children in Thailand,<sup>4</sup> largely in Tak province. These centres offer instruction in familiar languages and curricula aligned with Myanmar’s education system, reflecting communities’ hope for eventual return. Despite Thailand’s Education for All policy, uptake among migrant children remains low due to language barriers, lack of documentation, and financial burdens. MLCs are often unregistered and underfunded, with enrolment surging from 8,000 in 2021 to 17,824 by the end of 2024. Most MLCs lack Thai government recognition, resulting in unaccredited curricula and limited transition pathways to Thai public schools.

The situation has been further exacerbated by significant cuts in U.S. funding, which have impacted food assistance, healthcare, and livelihoods.<sup>5</sup> These ripple effects have led families to deprioritize education, increasing dropout rates and exposing children to heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. The reduction in protection services has weakened the role of schools as safe spaces, undermining the broader ecosystem of care and support for displaced children. These involving situations compounded by Myanmar’s political instability, foreign aid cuts and RTG’s recent decisions to potentially close camps by the end of 2026, complicate education governance and delivery, stressing the need for integrating Myanmar children in Thailand into Thai education system.

In this content, it is essential to conduct comprehensive research to understand existing barriers preventing migrant and refugee children from Myanmar from integrating into the Thai education system. Evidence generated through such research will inform relevant stakeholders in designing more targeted interventions, investing and coordinate support, to enable the education access for Myanmar refugee and migrant children.

Save the Children Thailand is designed to deliver a rigorous, inclusive, and context-sensitive data collection survey that responds to the complex educational realities of Myanmar refugee and migrant children along the Thailand–Myanmar border. This approach integrates a mixed method research with both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to ensure a holistic understanding of access to education across MLCs, refugee camp schools, and Thai public schools. The survey, scheduled for implementation in the final quarter of 2025, aims to examine the key issues, challenges, and good practices in educational service provision for displaced and migrant children from Myanmar. It will focus on how access to education is being facilitated or hindered across different modalities, and assess the extent to which the Thai Policy Framework’s commitment to “promoting access to education for children affected by conflict in Myanmar” is being realized in practice.

#### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

- To provide an update on the current educational situation for refugee and migrant education service providers, and identify key issues during the transition period.
- To examine documentation-related barriers that hinder access to educational pathways for Myanmar children.
- To identify good practices and challenges in enabling Myanmar children to access education within the Thai education system.
- To offer policy, administrative, and school-level recommendations for effective implementation of the Policy Framework, with particular emphasis on Thai language learning.

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

##### **Primary Data Collection:**

Using both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape for Myanmar refugee and migrant children along the Thailand–Myanmar border.

**Qualitative Data Collection:** The qualitative component will focus on capturing in-depth, narrative insights into the lived experiences of children, parents, teachers, and education stakeholders. Data will be collected through key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observations.

**Quantitative Data Collection:** The quantitative component will involve structured surveys to collect statistical data from education providers and households.

##### **The target sample includes:**

- 600 teachers and children in 10 MLCs
- 600 parents of MLC students
- 1,200 students from refugee camps (including 200 enrolled in Thai language classes)
- 110 teachers from refugee camps (including 50 teachers conducting Thai language classes)

- 200 students from Thai public schools accommodating Myanmar children

#### Secondary Data Collection:

To complement the primary data, the study will include a desk review of existing literature and secondary data sources. This will provide essential contextual background and inform the design and interpretation of the primary data collection.

### Consultancy Description

#### Purpose and Scope of the consultancy

The Research Assistant will play a central role in the executing field management and data collection of research initiatives. This includes leading hands-on research activities across the full research cycle:

##### 1. Inception phase

- Support the recruitment of enumerator team.
- Support in develop training materials for data enumerators, or field staff.
- Lead the enumerator training with support from Research analyst.
- Support in identify translation service for data collection tool if needed.

##### 2. Data Collection

- Leads the planning and coordination with key stakeholder and respondent for data collection activities.
- Schedule interview and preparation of necessary document and issue letters.
- Ensures adherence to research protocols, ethical standards, and data protection policies.
- Lead teams of enumerator, monitors progress, and ensures data quality through spot checks and validation.
- Troubleshoot of any issue in the field with consultation with Research Analyst.

##### 3. Data Analysis

- Support Research analyst in validating of data, interprets findings, and contextual understanding.

##### 4. Reporting

- Support in review of the report and input for any correction and clarification.

##### 5. Cross-Cutting Responsibilities

- Collaborates with program teams to ensure data collection is aligned with project activity.
- Participates in the design of research methodologies and tools.
- Maintains documentation and archives of invitation letter, respondent list, and communication.

**Deliverables:**

The successor will be engaged to deliver on the following objectives within a total duration not exceeding 45 days. The schedule shall remain flexible to accommodate the partners' availability

The consultant will deliver on the following objectives:

<b>Deliverable / Milestones</b>
Kick off and regular meeting with research team and field team.
<b>Inception Phase:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop TOR and Shortlist of qualified candidates for enumerator roles.</li> <li>• Enumerator training manual and presentation (including research protocols, ethical standards, and data collection procedures).</li> <li>• Completed training agenda and schedule.</li> <li>• Enumerator Training Facilitation</li> <li>• Training report with key outcomes and feedback.</li> <li>• Identification and engagement of translation service provider (if needed).</li> <li>• Participant Information Sheet</li> </ul>
<b>Data collection:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection plan including timeline, locations, and stakeholder engagement strategy.</li> <li>• Coordination log with stakeholders and respondents.</li> <li>• Interview schedule and respondent list.</li> <li>• Electronic copies of invitation letters and consent forms.</li> <li>• Incident report log (if any ethical concerns arise).</li> <li>• Fieldwork progress reports.</li> <li>• Summary of field challenges and resolutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Analysis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Validation and Interpretation Support</li> <li>• Cleaned and validated dataset (in collaboration with Research Analyst).</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report Review and Feedback</li> <li>• Reviewed draft report with tracked changes/comments.</li> </ul>

**Management**

The consultant will report to MEAL technical Expert with dot line reporting to Research Analyst, REL Coordinator, and Senior Field Coordinator. The consultant will work closely with Measot field team and MEAL officer. Save the Children will approve all plans and documents developed by the consultant.

The consultancy will be base in Measot. Any travel costs related to the consultancy will be covered by Save the Children in addition to the consultancy fee.

## **Budget**

The applicant is requested to submit the proposal, work plan, and detailed budget (including estimated cost per day) with their application. The financial competitiveness of application will be considered in the selection process. All costs associated with delivery must be included; Save the Children will not pay for non-work travel, per diem, translation, supplies, or any additional staff support time needed.

## **Qualifications**

### **Education:**

- Bachelor's degree in a relevant field such as Social Sciences, Economics, Statistics, Public Health, Development Studies, or a related discipline.

### **Experience:**

- Minimum 1 years of experience in research, monitoring & evaluation, or data analysis.
- Proven experience in conducting field research, including training and supervising data collectors.
- Experience working with NGOs, international organizations, or academic institutions is an asset.
- Experience working with migrant and refugee context is an asset.

### **Technical Skills:**

- Experience with digital data collection platforms (e.g., KoboToolbox, ODK, SurveyCTO).

### **Research & Analytical Skills:**

- Foundational understanding of research methodologies (quantitative and qualitative).
- Familiar with data collection tool and methodology (surveys, interview guides, and sampling strategies)

### **Communication & Reporting:**

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to manage teams of enumerators.
- Experience in tailoring communication for different audiences (e.g., technical, donor, community).

### **Other Requirements:**

- Fluency in Thai and Good in English; proficiency in local (Burmese and Karen) languages is an advantage.
- Willingness to travel to field sites as needed.
- Understanding of ethical research practices and data protection principles.

## **Submission for the consultancy application**

Submissions for the consultancy must address the TOR and include:

- Name and contact details of the applicant
- Resume of the lead consultant
- A cover letter outlining the relevant experience and expertise of the consultant as well as initial ideas on the approach to be taken to achieve the consultancy objectives
- A draft summary proposal (design, methods, approach) to meet the scope of the consultancy (max 5 pages)

**Close date for submission: 26 September 2025**