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I'm Prepared: Year 1 Research Findings Gender Analysis

Prepared for: Act for Peace, OfERR, TBC

Australian Aid 

I'm Prepared: Equality for Refugee Women in the Return and Reintegration Context is supported by the Australian Government and implemented by Act for Peace, Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Elangai/Eelam Refugees (OfERR), the Border Consortium (TBC) and Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney (ISF).

This publication has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.

About the authors

The Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) is an interdisciplinary research and consulting organisation at the University of Technology Sydney. ISF has been setting global benchmarks since 1997 in helping governments, organisations, businesses and communities achieve change towards sustainable futures. We utilise a unique combination of skills and perspectives to offer long term sustainable solutions that protect and enhance the environment, human wellbeing and social equity.

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Citation

Please cite as: Megaw, T., Winterford K. 2018. I'm Prepared: Year 1 Research Findings Gender Analysis, Prepared for Act for Peace, OfERR, TBC, by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Act for Peace, OfERR, TBC, KNWO, and local researchers for their valued contributions to this research and ongoing work supporting refugees. Most importantly, warm thanks go to women and men who were so generous with their time to participate in this research. We hope that this report supports them in their struggles for social justice and a better life for themselves and their families.

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1. Introduction

This document provides learnings from Year 1 research activities of the I'm Prepared Project, and sets out a gender analysis for locations in India and Thailand where the project is being implemented. The report has been prepared by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney (ISF), who has been leading research activities in partnership with Act for Peace, Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Elangai/Eelam Refugees (OfERR) and the Thailand Border Consortium (TBC).

This report is a culmination of a series of activities to support research which commenced in October/November 2017 and has continued up until preparing this report inclusive of: researcher training; data collection; collation and analysis carried out by ISF, OfERR and TBC.

The report is primarily intended to be of use to I'm Prepared implementing partners as well as key stakeholders engaged in work with Tamil and Karenni refugees. The research aims to provide learnings to support the ongoing implementation of the project to ensure best outcomes for refugees are met. The report may also be of interest to stakeholders beyond the I'm Prepared Project working with refugees.

As described in the research approach, the research seeks to learn about women and men's experience of the I'm Prepared Project and the extent to which the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment is achieved. The research provides a longitudinal study of a sample group of project participants to learn about the experience of the I'm Prepared Project and extent to which higher level project objectives have been realised.

The report is structured to:

- Provide a background to the I'm Prepared Project (section 2)
- Overview of the research approach (section 3)
- Context information about the research location and participants (section 4)
- Research findings (section 5)

The report also includes detailed analysis of interview responses for Thailand and India in attachments (separate documents) to this report.

2. Background to I'm Prepared Project

This section provides a brief overview of the I'm Prepared Project, especially for audiences of this report beyond the organisations implementing the Project. The section details the objectives of the Project, key elements of the theory of change and types of activities included in the Project. The rationale, where the Project is implemented and organisations implementing it is also provided.

As noted in the Project Design:

The Project pioneers a refugee-led approach, using protection preparedness methods, to strengthen women's resilience and gender equality in the return and reintegration process for Tamil and Karenni refugees while developing evidence-based guidance to help women prepare for safe, dignified voluntary repatriation.

This project builds from Act for Peace's partnership and decades of work experience with the Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Elangai/Eelam Refugees (OfERR) in Sri Lanka and India and the Border Consortium (TBC) in Thailand to strengthen the preparedness of refugees, increase self-reliance and promote gender equality approaches in return.

After over thirty years of conflict, indigenous Karenni refugees from Kayah state in Myanmar now residing in refugee camps inside Thailand are preparing themselves for potential return. Similarly, Tamil refugees who fled the civil war in Sri Lanka are now, after nearly three decades, preparing to return from Tamil Nadu in India to their homeland.

The experience of Act for Peace and its partners indicates that often women's empowerment status diminishes during the return process, as women refugees become increasingly dependent on family members to survive. Within refugee return and reintegration praxis, community-led preparedness is rarely a priority focus and the capacity and desire of women to play a central role in decision making within the family and community is very limited often due to patriarchal norms. However, when refugee and returnee women are able to help drive these processes, they enhance their knowledge and preparedness for decision making, an experience that can build confidence individually and collectively across a camp population.

This project applies an innovative model¹ for return and reintegration based on coordinated activities between host country and home country, empowering women to manage the challenges they are likely to face in the reintegration process and strengthening community-based livelihood support systems. This program will mobilise resources and existing support mechanisms and systems in order to strengthen women-led networks and to boost community-driven support for female

¹ This innovative model was first trialled in the Sri Lanka Refugee Return and Reintegration Project (SLRRRP) in India and Sri Lanka commencing in July 2016, and continuing currently under SLRRRP Phase II. "I'm Prepared" has provided the opportunity to expand the pilot of the model into the Thailand-Myanmar while tailoring it to that context based on the expertise of The Border Consortium.

returnees to improve their protection capacity and enhance their livelihood opportunities.

Source: Act for Peace, "I'm Prepared" proposal to the Gender Action Platform (GAP) grant 2016.

The Project theory of change has three pathways to influence change and associated objectives²:

KNOWLEDGE: Increased preparedness and capacity to make informed decisions regarding safe, dignified and voluntary return and reintegration for Karenni refugee women in Thailand and Tamil refugee women in India.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: Refugee and returnee women have increased participation in sustainable livelihood and income development initiatives during return and when they are integrating in their respective country

LEADERSHIP: Karenni and Tamil refugee and returnee women have increased leadership and influence in the decision-making, design and delivery of return and reintegration programming both in camp settings and in areas of return

Within these pathways to influence change types of activities include trainings; establishing groups in locations of return/reintegration (welcome groups and economic empowerment groups); information and experience sharing between refugee communities and those in return/reintegration communities; support for referral services; and advocacy and influence to decision makers.

In addition to the implementation focused outcomes, a fourth outcome is focused on research and learning to inform ongoing programming. This research report sits within this Outcome 4, and contributes to the evidence base of the project.

EVIDENCE BASE: Return & reintegration stakeholders have a strong evidence base for effective planning & preparedness programming.

The long-term outcome of the project is:

Increase and strengthen women's resilience and gender equality in the return and reintegration process (in Thai/Burma and India/Sri Lanka context)

The Project has two DFAT program-wide GAP objectives:

Objective 1: Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through the delivery of innovative or transformational NGO projects that reduce violence against women, increase women's economic opportunities and improve leadership for and by women through collective action.

Objective 2: Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through shared learning on good gender equality practice and lessons from trialling new approaches with GAP NGOs and the broader ANCP.

² See Annex 1 for more details about the theory of change and pathways to influence change. \

3. Overview of the research approach

3.1 Purpose and scope of the research

The research (within Objective 4) seeks to:

- learn about the return and reintegration experiences of women and men in the 'I'm Prepared' Project, and provide Project partners with an in-depth understanding of what gender equality and women's empowerment changes are taking place and how/why these changes have happened.
- provide opportunities for learning and reflection for Project partners and Project participants, in order to identify strengths that can be built upon as well as areas for improvement, within years 2 and 3 of the Project.
- provide an evidence-base that can be used to strengthen return and reintegration programs aiming to achieve women's empowerment in other country contexts³.

The research is conducted over the three years of the Project and provides different types of learning which will inform the Project. Year 1 research is different to Year 2 and Year 3:

- Year 1 research (as described in this report) will provide a baseline of locally informed understandings of gender relations (practical and strategic needs, gender roles, and access and control of resources) and decision-making about return / reintegration
- Year 2 and 3 will provide an assessment of changes to gender relations (practical and strategic needs, gender roles, and access and control of resources) and decision-making about return / reintegration and contribution of program interventions as well as other factors to influencing any changes experienced within different project locations and for different stakeholder groups.

A sample group of project participants has been selected in year 1, and they have been invited to participate in the research in Years 2 and 3. The longitudinal study of same women and men in household units aims to reveal the trajectory of change and lived experiences of participants within the project. The yearly 'snap shots' of experience will provide a means of assessing the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment is experienced for different types of men and women. Research that includes men and women ('a family unit'), means that multiple perspectives of women's empowerment and changes in power dynamics and gender

³ The research therefore aligns closely with the DFAT GAP objective 2 "Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through shared learning on good gender equality practice and lessons from trialling new approaches with GAP NGOs and the broader ANCP" and DFAT GAP Objective 3 "Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through increased collaboration on gender equality development challenges, including between NGOs and DFAT bilateral and regional programs."

relations are revealed. The research will explore local and culturally appropriate meanings of equality for men and women.

3.2 Research questions

The research questions are adapted for year 1, which provides a baseline assessment / gender analysis before project activities commence.

Life of Project Research Questions	Year 1 Research Questions
1. What are women and men’s experience of change in the fulfilment of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?	What is the present state of women’s and men’s experience of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?
2. What mechanisms within the theory of change (program interventions) influence change and what is the similarity / difference within and across country contexts?	Not relevant for year 1
3. What impact do gender changes have on women and men’s decision making in return / reintegration?	What impact does gender equality and women’s empowerment (current state) have on women’s and men’s’ decision making in return / reintegration?
4. What learning can be generated from the projects to inform livelihood projects for women's empowerment and resettlement in other contexts?	What learning from the baseline can inform ongoing project implementation?

3.3 Analytical framework / Gender Analysis

Because the Project aims to promote and bring about gender equality, we have used the Moser Framework⁴ to guide gender analysis. The Moser Framework helps us to

⁴ Moser, C.O.N (1993). Gender Planning and Development: theory, practice and training, Routledge, London and New York.

understand the different needs and interests of women and how development programs may be able to meet these.

The Moser Framework divides women's needs into two categories; 'practical needs' and 'strategic needs.'

- *Practical needs* are needs that help women to have easier lives, for example, access to goods or services (water, food, health care), safety and protection.
- *Strategic needs* are those that will help women to become more equal with men and to share equal power with men in the household, community and society they live in.

The women's empowerment changes that the research will explore will link to the Project outcomes of 'I'm Prepared', so may include:

- Women's increased preparedness and capacity to make informed decisions;
- Women's increased participation in sustainable livelihood and income development initiatives; and
- Women's increased leadership and influence in decision-making.

Important elements of the Moser Framework include an interest to explore:

- Practical and strategic needs
- Gender roles (productive, reproductive and community work)
- Access and control and benefits of resources

3.4 Relevance of research to GAP multi-year outcome indicators

This research also seeks to gather learnings relevant to the GAP multi-year outcome indicators defined for the I'm Prepared Project. Whilst not all outcome indicators are measured through the research, key indicators relevant to gender equality, women's empowerment and the return and reintegration process are captured in the research findings. Where data is not able to be collected specific to indicators, proxy indicators or data relevant to gender equality/women's empowerment is provided. Particular care was taken to ensure appropriate indicators of outcome measures are included in the research findings and comparison of baseline to multi-year targets will be presented in year 2 and year 3 research reports.

3.5 Research methods

Structured interviews

Structured interviews were used as the primary research method for Year 1 research and an interview guide was prepared in collaboration between ISF, OfERR, TBC, and

Act for Peace. The same interview guide was used in both India and Thailand. The interview includes 72% qualitative questions and 28% quantitative questions. Informed by the Moser Framework, questions explored gender roles, access and control of resources and practical and strategic needs of women in line with focus of the I'm Prepared Project and lives of the women and men in refugee camps in India and Thailand. Practical needs relate to access to services; information; safety and protection; and resources. Strategic needs relate to control; influence; and choice to influence decisions that affects one's life.

Researcher training and piloting of the interview guide

Researcher training and piloting of the interview guide was carried out in both India and Thailand through five-day workshops designed and facilitated by ISF. In Thailand (Monday 30 October to Friday 3 November) the training was attended by 17 females, 9 males, representing members of TBC, KNWO, KNRC and KRC camp leaders. In India (Monday 6 November to Friday 10 November), the workshop was attended by 16 females, 12 males, who were OfERR personnel. Act for Peace partner focal points also attended both trainings.

Experience of the pilot data collection and data collation exercise led to reflection and revision of questions within the interview guide. Revisions made in Thailand were employed in India and those made in India were proposed back to Thailand and incorporated into the final set of questions which were translated locally. Protocols for ethical research and to ensure informed consent were also revised informed by experience of the piloting exercise (see below for more details on ethical research).

Sampling and data collection

During March –May 2018 interviews with refugees (men and women) were carried out before women participated in planned I'm Prepared activities. With the objective of learning about female refugees' experiences of the I'm Prepared Project, research participants were randomly sampled from lists of women who registered their interest in upcoming core project activities⁵ from which some women were invited to participate in the research.

Conducting the interviews before participation in an activity, e.g. Protection training, means that the research can provide a baseline of gender equality / women's empowerment. Once women have participated in the project activities, in Year 2 and Year 3, the research can identify experiences of change as a result of participation in the Project.

Project staff provided information about the three-year research project and obtained consent from the refugees for their participation. Following this initial recruitment, interviews were scheduled with participants, at a time and place convenient to them. Once women had accepted the invitation to participate, a man in the same household was asked if they would participate in the research as well. Research participants are

⁵ For OfERR these core activities are: Protection training; Livelihoods training; Financial literacy training; Women's networks
For TBC these core activities are: Protection training; Gender training

included in the data where both a woman and man within a household both consented to participate in the research.

Each interview generally took 1 - 1.5 hour, conducted by one interviewer and one note taker who recorded responses on a printed (translated into local language) interview form / notetaker booklet. Women and men were interviewed separately from one another in a private setting.

Background about the information sites and information about the research participants is provided in Section 4 below.

Data collation

A collation template (excel spreadsheet) was prepared by ISF and orientation provided to OfERR and TBC who then tested it. Based on feedback the template was slightly refined. Collation of survey responses was prepared by OfERR and TBC and their partner organisation KNWO. Translation from local languages (usually Karenni and Tamil) to English was needed for the ISF researchers. In order to ensure a streamlined process, translation was carried out as part of the collation, ie. the collation template was prepared only in English, with responses translated as part of entering data into the collation template.

Data analysis

ISF conducted both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data, in line with the interview questions and broader research questions.

In order to inform ongoing Project implementation, it is important that the research findings provide a transparent and detailed understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, detailed analysis was carried out for all interview responses and data analysis is presented in separate attachments for each country context.

The analysis prioritised learnings about experiences of female refugees and considered three elements of gender:

- a) women compared with women: this illustrated whether their practical needs were being met, and trends in their experiences of being female refugees
- b) comparison of women and men in the same household: This considered how women and men experienced gender equality in their family relationships and their home setting, and
- c) the group of women compared with the group of men overall: This provided insights into experiences and perceptions of women's empowerment and gender equality common in each group.

In addition, ISF considered cross-linkages across interview questions and relevant variables such as age differences of participants.

Ethics

Ethical research was a key component of the proposed research agreed between ISF and Act for Peace and has been a core practice implemented by ISF, OfERR and TBC.

During researcher training, the topic of ethical research was included and principles of ethical research (beneficence, respect, justice, research merit and integrity) were introduced and contextualised by the local researchers. Local researchers identified the potential risk of triggering reactions to sensitive topics raised, and ensured questions did not direct responses in this direction, as well as being prepared to refer participants to support services (counselling) if the need arose. Ethical conduct of research was piloted and based on this experience and reflections, ethics protocols refined. An information sheet was prepared and translated to local language, a script to gain verbal informed consent from research participants was also prepared and read out at the start of interviews. Documentation of verbal consent was completed by local researchers which was collated and recorded as part of the collation process. Each entry of interview responses also included checking and recording that informed consent was documented by interviewers.

Records and storage of interview data have ensured the privacy of research participants. Data has been de-identified at the earliest point using a filing system which replaces participants' names with identification codes. The list of research participants and codes is kept separately to the interview responses. The coded list will be used to identify and interview again the same individuals in Years 2 and 3 of the Project as part of the longitudinal study.

Limitations

It is helpful to note limitations of the research to inform interpretation of the research findings, and describe how these were mitigated to the extent possible.

Translation of key concepts relevant to the I'm Prepared Project from English to local language was a challenge in both defining the interview guide questions and also in translation of interview responses to English. The researcher training and piloting of the interview guide sought to mitigate these challenges and importantly detailed reflection on the interview guide questions and key words was important to define local meanings. TBC raised that some research participants had difficulty understanding and answering the interview questions. In collating interview responses, translation to English also posed risks, and it is important to recognise that local meanings may have been lost in translation/collation processes. In India spot-audits of the collated responses was undertaken to assess the quality of translation presented in the collation template. Translation connected to collation process may also have resulted in summarising of actual interview responses. Data presented in the collation template especially for Thailand is brief and summarised and actual (verbatim responses) are not present.

Data collection was carried out by in-country partners, and whilst ISF sought to provide remote support this was intermittent and dependent on staff availability of ISF, OfERR and TBC. Both OfERR and TBC had delays in implementation of project activities which delayed data collection. Meanwhile there was staff turnover and some staff who had participated in the researcher training with ISF were no longer available for data collection. Trouble-shooting and improvements to researcher practice was done in real-time or on an ongoing basis. During conversations of remote support,

OfERR raised issues with organising researchers and logistics to travel to refugee camps. Early provision of a small set of data highlighted the need for probing in order to reveal research responses. Whilst researcher training sought to strengthen interviewing skills, particularly relevant to qualitative research, the research data highlighted that probing may still require further development.

It is important to recognise that the sample size is not inclusive of marginalised groups as intended. The research sought to include people living with disability (PWD), however only one of the in-country partners had protocols for selecting PWD to participate. In India PWD were not eligible for the I'm Prepared program because they did not elect to return to Sri Lanka, due to the provision of support for PWD who remain in the camp. Further the number of PWD in the camps is minimal (1%) which gave no scope to include PWD as research participants. In Thailand 6 women and 5 men with a disability were recruited. This group is lowly represented within the research participants (5.5%) and the group is too small to disaggregate data meaningfully and compare experience of these research participants with others. The research focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment primarily inside the home (intra-household) and includes interviews with a woman and a man from one household. This has meant that experiences of women living in female-headed households (single women, sexual minorities and widows) were outside of the scope of the research.

4. Context information about the research location and participants

In Thailand the research was carried out in the two refugee camps where the I'm Prepared activities are being implemented: Ban Nai Soi Camp (Site 1) Muang District, Mae Hong Son and Ban Mae Surin Camp (Site 2) Khun Yuam District, Mae Hong Son.

Likewise in India the research was carried out in locations where the I'm Prepared activities are being implemented in 107 camps in Tamil Nadu

50 households from Thailand and India participated in the research. The age profiles of research participants are as follows:

Thailand⁶

	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
Female	14	15	20	1	50
Male	18	16	10	6	50

India

	18-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total
Female	5	30	15	0	50
Male	5	27	17	1	50

Background to research contexts is provided by TBC and OfERR below:

Source: TBC I'm Prepared Year 2 Plan (current context)

At the conclusion of April 2018, a total of 93,382 refugees from Myanmar remained in nine refugee camps along the Thailand/Myanmar border, with seven of these camps populated primarily by refugees from the Karen ethnic group and two of the camps populated primarily by Karenni refugees.

The "I'm Prepared" program is implemented in the two primarily Karenni camps, Ban Mai Nai Soi (BMNS) and Ban Mae Surin (BMS) was 11,973 (49.5% female and approximately 55% over 18 years of age).

These refugees experience restricted mobility and minimal official means of gaining employment or income. Hence, the refugees continue largely to be dependent on external aid for food, shelter, protection and essential services. The Border Consortium (TBC) has been the sole organisation providing food assistance and shelter to Burmese refugees, in these nine refugee camps, since the first arrivals in 1984. TBC's more than 30 years of collaboration with refugee camp management has built trust and mutual understanding between the organisation and the refugees,

⁶ Due to an error with data entry, two males in Thailand were originally included in the dataset as females. The error affects results in the report by approximately 3% and, while regretful this error was not detected earlier, it is not a significant difference.

making it possible to continue facilitation of community cooperation and engagement in the context of decreasing donor support for NGO presence and services.

December 2017 there was a reported ambush and summary killing of three Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) soldiers and a civilian by the Myanmar military - Tatmadaw. Civil society leaders peacefully protested the Tatmadaw's transgression but were subsequently imprisoned. After months of tension, the the Government of the Union of Myanmar (GoUM) and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) agreed, in April 2018, to establish a monitoring mechanism for their bilateral ceasefire agreement as a step towards KNPP signing the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). Conflict in Kachin and northern Shan States has escalated in 2018, and induced another round of displacement of over 5,000 people in recent months. New skirmishes in northern Karen State, resulting from the Tatmadaw's clearance operations and contravention of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), caused displacement of 2,700 people from 11 villages. This is in the wake of massive exodus of some 700,000 Rohingyas to Southeast Bangladesh, from attacks in Rakhine State (2017-2018); a humanitarian crisis of immense proportion and unacknowledged by the incumbent National League for Democracy (NLD). The UN has condemned the Tatmadaw for crimes of sexual violence, atrocities committed in Rakhine State and international crimes in Kachin State. Freedom of expression and the media remain under attack.

Voluntary Repatriation Centres are operational in all camps. However, the GoUM and the KNPP are still somewhat unready for large scale return, with other issues taking priority. Nevertheless, a meeting between the Royal Thai Government (RTG) and the GoUM, on repatriation of refugees, was held at the end of March 2018. This reopened the door to the UNHCR-facilitated voluntary repatriation (Volrep) which had stalled since 2016. Consequently, 92 refugees (down from the registered 247) successfully returned from all camps in May 2018. 20 of these were from BMNS and BMS including five females. A further group repatriation under this process is anticipated for late 2018, however this is expected to involve no more than a few hundred refugees in total and a small proportion of these will be Karenni refugees that "I'm Prepared" engages, with more of the refugees being from the Karen camps. The UNHCR considers the current situation not conducive to "promoted" return. In addition to Volrep, according to TBC records for 2017, over 4,000 refugees from all camps returned to Myanmar spontaneously. At the same time, the RTG remains committed to repatriation given agreement from the GoUM. The ongoing instability within Myanmar intensified refugees' concerns about return. TBC continues to closely monitor the developments in Burma/Myanmar to ensure accurate and timely information-sharing with refugees and all stakeholders.

Source: OfERR I'm Prepared Year 2 Plan (current context)

The population of camp refugees is 63,000 who live in 107 camps in Tamil Nadu, and roughly 40,000 refugees are estimated to live outside the camps across Tamil Nadu. Since 1990 the refugees have received assistance from the Government of India (GoI) and the Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN). There has been a substantial increase over the years. Today the dole is Rs. 1000 for the head of the family, this was Rs.400 a few years back. Previously, the refugees did not have the benefit of the assistance given by GoTN to its citizens, today refugees enjoy all the welfare schemes given by GoTN. Education support given by the GoTN exclusively to the Sri Lankan refugee students has more than doubled through an order of the government passed in July 2018. Refugees have access to several welfare measures including health and education benefits. The camp refugees, who are registered by the host government, are still entitled to government's welfare schemes including monthly cash dole and subsidized ration materials.

OfERR's main focus is to provide protection and empowerment of the refugees which contributes to an informed decision making of returning to Sri Lanka or remain in India. By working through strong existing Self Help Groups (SHG), women inclusive networks (WIN), women's sports groups and women's health group, in the camps, the project will enable refugees, particularly women, to access and capitalize on social and economic opportunities.

Could we insert more context here for the India-Sri Lanka component related to this context being safer to return to, more people returning, OfERR's work on setting up ferry services to help refugees return with their belongings etc.?

Some of the women who were part of these groups have returned to Sri Lanka with the same energy and enthusiasm that they had when there in India. OfERR Ceylon had formed SHGs in which there are similar activities to those conducted in India. As part of the SHG, these women are involved in other activities of OfERR Ceylon as well. OfERR is working on setting up the ferry service between India and Sri Lanka. There has been various levels of conversations with Government officials both from central and state government. In a show of interest, the Government of India has sent a letter to the Government of Sri Lanka offering to return 3815 refugees and seeking the response of the Government of Sri Lanka. There are several officials within the government system who through the advocacy of OfERR have begun to realize the need for ferry service in light of refugees being able to take back their belongings which may not be possible in an airplane.

5. Research Findings

This section provides a summary response to the research questions as outlined in Section 3.2 above. Since the research has been carried out in different country contexts (Thailand and India), and the findings are to inform ongoing programming in each country by OfERR and TBC, findings are presented per country, to offer specific insights and best contribution to country level programming. A brief summary comparing findings in Thailand and India are offered in conclusion to support the overall I'm Prepared Project.

Findings have been written in brief and in plain English to maximise engagement by multiple audiences and assist with translation of key research findings.

Detailed analysis of interview responses is provided in separate attachments to this report. The intent of providing detailed analysis is to share transparent findings with Project partners, and to maximise their engagement in the research findings and use within implementation of I'm Prepared.

5.1 Thailand

Research Question:

What is the present state of women's and men's experience of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the sections of the interview guide which are relevant to practical and strategic needs of women, but the response also goes beyond this to consider elements of the Moser Framework / Gender Analysis: access and control of resources; and gender roles (productive, reproductive and community work).

Information

This section of the interview guide sought to explore extent to which women's practical needs (access to information and services) are met and equality between women and men.

In 4 out of the 6 types of information⁷ the majority of women described having access. The majority of women described 'not accessing' or 'don't know for': 'peace process and political situation in Myanmar' and 'duration of support to refugees from donors'

For 2 types of information men describe more access than women 'peace process and political situation in Myanmar' and 'duration of support to refugees from donors'

Across all types of information there was some difference in access between men and women but not significant. How women and men described access was

⁷ The types of information are: "Resettlement to third country", "Peace process and political situation in Myanmar", "Duration of support to refugees from donors", "Return and reintegration planning from Karenni leaders", "Thai government policy towards refugees", and "Voluntary repatriation".

varied within the household. For example, in some households where men described not accessing, women described accessing the information.

Across all types of information men described more access than women.

- Women described sharing types of information they had access to a greater extent than men described sharing types of information they had access to.
- Reasons for not being able to access information was similar for women and men: no one shares; didn't attend training; didn't leave the house

Services

Across all 6 services⁸ the majority of women described accessing services. There are very few women who described 'don't know' about a service.

In the minority of women who did not access some services, the services least accessed were 'counselling'; 'justice and legal services'; and 'livelihood training'. Experience of men and women in access to services are similar (more similar than access to information).

Within households' women and men described same (high level) access to 'health and education services' and 'rations/food support'. For 'counselling', 'livelihood training' and 'shelter related support' women and men described similar types of access. The only different trend in households is in relation to access to 'justice and legal services' – where men in households say they don't access, more women are saying they do access.

In households where men don't access a service, similarly women don't access as well.

Women and men described accessing similar 'other types of services' such as hygiene, safety, security, training. Though women described accessing gender-based training, such as prevention of gender-based violence and early marriage.

Women and men described different types of services they want to access and different reasons for not accessing services. Women wanted access to support for their livelihoods: and they described little access to committees; being at home; or not being invited or encouraged by husband, as reasons they could not access services. Whereas men wanted handouts such as food, money and loans: and reasons for not accessing included no organisations to support, being outside the camp, poor health and lack of income.

Resources

This section of the interview guide sought to explore extent to which women's practical needs (access to resources) are met and equality between women and men.

⁸ The types of services are: "Counselling", "Health and education services", "Justice and legal services", "Rations/food support", "Livelihoods training", and "Shelter related support".

In addition, the interview guide explored management and control of resources; i.e. women's strategic needs.

In four of the five types of resources⁹ women described relatively high access (nearly 80% and higher). In the fifth type of resource of motorcycle, women described low access (around 24%).

Perceptions of management of resources in households was different between men and women. Women responded they had a management role of resources in more instances than men recognised women's management role. But in households where men described management by women, nearly half of these women described that both men and women managed resources (ie. cash management, food management).

Across 4 of the resources, the majority of women described both women and men controlling resources. (For the 5th resource, motorcycle, the majority of women did not respond.)

Comparing women and men in households, perceptions of control of resources was different between women and men. For example, in some households where men say they both control the resource, women say women control it. But in some households where men say women' control cash, 40% of women say they both control cash. So there are strong difference of views within households.

Decisions about how to use resources is generally made in discussion between men and women except in emergencies when women make decisions on their own.

Income levels for women and men are similar and both low. The research revealed that both women and men have reproductive roles, productive roles and community-based work, though the research did not count the relative time spent on these roles for women and men. In some instances, women or men are the sole bread winners in their household.

Roles and Division of Labour:

This section of the interview sought to learn if there were gendered differences in division of tasks and reproductive, productive, and community roles of refugees within households.

- Responses within this section were patchy, with limited detail, therefore the research findings are not considered as strong as from other areas of the interview responses.
- There is no substantial difference between roles taken by women and men, though the research does have limitations that we don't understand the actual time divided between tasks, and relative time spent on productive, reproductive and community-based work.

⁹ Types of resources are: cash, food, solar panel, livestock and motorcycle.

- Of those that described 'going out to work' (productive work) there was no difference between men and women.
- Both women and men described work within the home (reproductive) and they often described same tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water and animal husbandry.
- Both women and men described differences in the type of community-based work women and men did: men were more often involved in physical infrastructure improvements, with only some women describing doing physical infrastructure work, whilst women more often described their community-based work as cleaning. Within most households where one (woman/man) didn't do any community work, the other participant in the household responded that they also didn't do any community work.

When asked if there was a difference in types of work between women and men, the majority described no difference. Those that did describe a difference, cooking, cleaning, child rearing is described as a woman's job, and outdoor activities of cutting firewood, bamboo and building and repairs a male job. Only few described men's role as going outside camp for work, which was different to women.

- There is a difference between men and women in relation to obstacles to work opportunities. First, more women than men described obstacles. Second, they described different types of obstacles which related to their household: such as reproductive roles, lack of education and needing to look after other family members (father, children, person living with disability). Third, women mentioned obstacles specific to female roles, such as they "can't be a fire guard" and "can't cut down bamboo".

Safety, justice and dignity

This section of the interview guide sought to explore extent to which women's practical needs are met.¹⁰

Safety

- Most women provided ranking 'in the middle'.
- For women in the youngest age group (16-24), they experience a lower level of safety than other women, and 6% within this age group ranked 'not safe at all'

Men's experience of safety tends to be ranked higher than women within individual households

Reduction in camp security staff has reduced the experience of safety.

Protection of camp committee and leaders was considered a strength.

¹⁰ Participants were asked to rate their experience of safety between: "very safe", "in the middle" and "not safe at all". They were asked to rate their experience of justice between: "experience a high level of justice", "in the middle" and "no experience of justice". They were asked to rate their experience of dignity between: "treated with a high level of dignity", "in the middle" and "treated with no dignity".

Justice

- Most women say their experience of justice is 'in the middle' ranking.
- More women than men ranked their experience of no justice.
- Men's experience of justice tends to be higher than women within individual households.

Similar reasons for their rating of justice were expressed for women and men, commonly that individuals are treated with respect, individuals have equal access to services and opportunities, and that camp management serves the whole community.

Dignity

- Most females say their experience of dignity is in the middle. More women than men describe no experience of dignity
- Men's experience of dignity tends to be higher than women within households

Livelihood opportunities

This section of the interview guide sought to explore livelihood opportunities for refugees in countries of origin.

Only few women (10%) ranked themselves as 'very confident' in their skills and knowledge to carry out livelihood activities for themselves in their country of origin. The majority described themselves as 'not confident' at all or 'in the middle.'

- Comparing women within age groups, women are most confident in the age group 25-44 years, compared to other age groups.

Decision-making about the future

This section of the interview guide sought to explore refugees' aspirations for their living situation in the future and how they make decisions and prepare for the future.

Women and men expressed similar ideas about where they will live in the future –

- o the most commonly reported category – 'third country';
 - o then second most common response 'don't know'; and
 - o third most common responses 'Myanmar' and 'camp'; and
 - o Thailand was lower on the list.
- Both women and men described both being involved in family-level decision-making about where to live in the future.

- Both women and men described their confidence about their decision where to live as 'in the middle'

For what actions to take to achieve what they have decided about the future, the most common response from women and men was 'don't know' and the second most common response was speaking to or appealing to UNHCR.

Research Question:

What impact does gender equality and women's empowerment (current state) have on women's and men's' decision making in return / reintegration?

- The majority of both women and men stated that they decide together where they will live in the future, and this relates to mixed experience of gender equality as demonstrated through aspects of the gender analysis / research findings.
- The research described a mixed picture in terms of women's experience of meeting practical needs. With some types of services and information, women and men had equal access, while with other types it was not equal. Women had similar access to resources as men, however women were more likely to describe their control of resources while men did not recognise women's control.
- The analysis identified that women have agency and voice and whilst not perceived equally to men, they describe their active role in decision-making and control of resources in their households.

The research revealed elements of gender equality that may influence women's decision making:

- Access to information on peace process and political situation in Myanmar - less than men
- Access to information on duration of support to refugees from donors – less than men
- Confidence in skills and knowledge to carry out livelihood activities in country of origin – less than men
- Confidence in livelihood opportunities in country of origin – less than men
- Confidence/ preparation for decisions about where to live in the future – less than men

Whilst women did not experience levels of gender equality across all areas, there is no significant trend of gender inequality. This may influence women's role in relation to decision-making about the future, where women were active with men in decision-

making, they experienced similar (though slightly lower) low levels of confidence about preparedness. Both men and women described similar avenues to get support.

Research Question:

What learning from the baseline can inform ongoing project implementation?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the theory of change of the I'm Prepared Project and more specifically the three outcomes related to Knowledge; Economic empowerment and Leadership, as well as consideration for the long-term (goal) outcome.

Knowledge

Informed by the research findings:

There is value in delivering information directly to women since they are more likely than men to share with others. Men did not respond that they shared information, so most likely don't share information. There was difference in access to information between women and men in the same households, with men having access to information in the same households were women described not accessing information.

There is a need to strengthen women's access to information, since the research revealed that women have less access to information about: (i) peace process and (ii) duration of support to refugees from donors. This research finding affirms the relevance of the Project focus/outcome objective.

Knowledge about return and reintegration is relevant, however for decisions where they will live in the future, the first-ranked response of women is they plan to live in a third country and the second-ranked response is they don't know where they will live., The third-ranked response of women (ranked fourth for men) is return & reintegration to Myanmar. They give a range of reasons including: not having necessary documentation; no other options (because camp closes or no third country options); concern about safety and security in Myanmar; concern about safety and security in the camps. It will be important for the Project to navigate the current political context and return options for refugees, as they themselves recognise risks and potential of return and reintegration.

Economic empowerment

Livelihood training for women is relevant since women expressed less confidence (than men) in relation to livelihood opportunities in their country of origin.

The research identified that women have cash incomes, and in few cases provide the primary source of cash income in the household. Ensuring strengthened and continued income opportunities is important for the future and particularly in scenarios of return and reintegration.

Leadership

Women and men are making decisions together about 'where to live in the future', therefore it is valuable for the Project to strengthen shared capacity for decision-making in line with the current practice (e.g. for both men and women to be engaged in protection training)

Women rated their experience of safety, justice and dignity less than men which indicates a need to strengthen women's own protection measures but also, as indicated through other parts of the research findings, to strengthen men's attitudes and actions for gender equality

The research identified instances where gender equality and women's empowerment is related to notions of individualised empowerment focused only on strengthening women's agency, but there is also a need to work with men and the broader systems and structures (such as camp committees) to realise equality.

A few women interviewed identified being female as a barrier and also limited access to committees as a reason why they didn't access services (see response to question 9 – "because I am always home" / "my husband didn't encourage and empower me")– so whilst aspects of gender equality are expressed this is not universal for all and more is required to support women's role in leadership positions.

Return and reintegration / gender equality and empowerment - Long term outcome (goal)

Both women and men most often described living in a third country in the future and the reasons why was relatively similar (better services, lifestyle, future for children, reunite with family, no peace in Myanmar). This finding will need to be considered within the broader understanding of current political dynamics, that for most refugees in Karenni camps in Thailand, they don't have options for third country resettlement anymore. While it would certainly be preferred by many refugees, this ranking doesn't consider that the option isn't available / possible for the most part. Preference for third country options, not return/resettlement also need to be considered within current broader political contexts in Thailand/Myanmar.

Response to question 8, (services that you access but are not on the list) indicates that gendered services may potentially undermine gender equality and women's empowerment. Women identified engagement in services related to early child marriage and prevention of gender-based violence, whilst men did not. Whilst this finding doesn't show that men did not participate in the trainings (they may have just not have described their participation), it does highlight the need to engage with men, and with broader social systems and structures to influence gender equality.

5.2 India

Research Question:

What is the present state of women's and men's experience of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the sections of the interview guide which are relevant to practical and strategic needs of women, but the response also goes beyond this to consider elements of the Moser Framework / Gender Analysis: access and control of resources; and gender roles (productive, reproductive and community work).

Information¹¹

This section of the interview guide sought to explore the extent to which women's practical needs (access to information and services) are met and equality between women and men.

- Access to types of information was similar for women and men overall, but within households there were no trends in access to particular types of information.
- When asked about other types of information they access, there was a trend for women to access information related to practical needs, while men access information related to livelihoods and future opportunities.
- Women are more likely than men to share information, particularly about practical needs. Both women and men share information about aspects of return.
- Women commonly want to access information related to practical needs, livelihood opportunities (training and jobs) and return. Men commonly want to access information about land tenure and the political and security situation in Sri Lanka.
- More women than men are taking steps to increase their access to information. Women's avenues for support were narrower i.e. OfERR and camp management, while men were seeking support from a broader network of friends and relatives.

Services¹²

- The majority of women are accessing services, and had a slightly higher level of access than men. Within households, women and men's access to services was similar.

¹¹ Types of information are: livelihood opportunities in Sri Lanka; support from the government of Sri Lanka on return; Political and economic situation in Sri Lanka; security situation in Sri Lanka; documentation to support citizenship in Sri Lanka; ferry service to Sri Lanka.

¹² Types of services are: counselling; documentation for citizenship; access to return and reintegration information; travel documents and expenditure for flights; livelihoods training.

- When asked about types of services they want to access but can't, men described many more services than women. Men focused on accessing services for the community (eg. water and drainage, street lights, education and training), whereas women focused on individual household and welfare services for family members.
- Women were taking some steps to increase access to services and several mentioned engaging with relatives, OfERR, or other NGOs in the camp. Men were connecting with a broader range of stakeholders (eg. government officials, schools, camp committees, youth etc.) who they mobilised for support.

Resources¹³

This section of the interview guide sought to explore extent to which women's practical needs (access to resources) are met and equality between women and men. In addition, the interview guide explored management and control of resources; i.e. women's strategic needs.

- Women have access to 4 out of 5 types of resources, women do not have access to vehicles. Most households do not have livestock.
- Women and men said that women manage cash and gold/jewellery, and both women and men manage household appliances. Men managed the vehicles.
- Perceptions of control of resources in households was different between men and women. In households where men responded they controlled resources, approximately two-thirds of women responded that women controlled the resource or they both controlled it together. Women responded they had a control role more than men in relation to cash, gold/jewellery and household appliances.
- Perceptions of management of resources in households was different between men and women. Women responded they had a management role of resources in more instances than men recognised women's management role.
- In relation to decision-making about how money is spent, men and women had similar responses that decisions about cash were discussed together. Only few women said they were the primary decision-makers regarding spending cash and decided on their own with no discussion.
- There is some difference in decision-making about spending money between women and men. The majority of women said they both make decisions together about how money is spent to be effective in meeting the needs of the family and avoiding disputes, while one third of women said that they make decisions alone. The majority of men also said they (women and men) make decisions together, or women alone make decisions for the household, but several (a minority few) said that men make decisions.

¹³ Types of resources are: cash, gold & jewellery, household appliances, vehicle and livestock.

- Income levels for women and men shows difference and inequality within households, with women usually earning significantly less than men.

Roles and Division of Labour:

This section of the interview sought to learn if there were gendered differences in division of tasks and reproductive, productive, and community roles of refugees within households.

- There is a significant difference between tasks taken by women and men, with women doing more reproductive work and men doing more productive work (for wages).
- Women and men described some tasks which were carried out by men and women, and some tasks which were only done by women or only done by men. Women described medical and education related roles, while men described doing infrastructure improvements or political and camp management roles.
- Many women are doing productive (home-based or outside work) and community work, alongside taking primary responsibility for reproductive work in their households. Whereas men have productive and community roles, but less reproductive roles.
- There was a difference between women and men in barriers to work opportunities. More men described lack of suitable job opportunities with high incomes as their main barriers. Women described attitudes of family members, lack of support from husband, their responsibility for child care and lack of equipment for livelihood activities as barriers to earning income.
- When asked if there was a difference in types of roles for women and men, the majority described differences in roles, with household maintenance and childcare being seen as women's work and occasional infrastructure tasks being seen as men's work.

Safety, justice and dignity

This section of the interview guide sought to explore extent to which women's practical needs are met.¹⁴

Safety

- There was a high level (more than 60%) of women who said they were 'very safe'. Across age groups of women there was no significant difference in ranking of safety.

¹⁴ Participants were asked to rate their experience of safety between: "very safe", "in the middle" and "not safe at all". They were asked to rate their experience of justice between: "experience a high level of justice", "in the middle" and "no experience of justice". They were asked to rate their experience of dignity between: "treated with a high level of dignity", "in the middle" and "treated with no dignity".

- Between women and men in households, there was some difference in safety, ie reasons for feeling safe. Living close to community and relatives were strong reasons both women and men who experienced a high level of safety. Insecurity due to refugee status and financial debts was a common safety concern for both women and men.
- Security issues such as fear of burglary, assault and concerns about people drinking alcohol were only described by women.
- Five men felt 'not safe at all' whereas no women ranked themselves 'not safe at all'.

Justice

- Most women said their experience of justice was 'in the middle'. Of the minority which said they had 'no experience of justice', they were mostly in the 25-44 age group.
- Between women and men in households, there were different experiences of justice.
- Refugees gave a range of reasons for rating of justice and ways to improve justice.

Dignity

- The majority of women said their experience of dignity was 'in the middle'.
- The rating of 'treated with a high level of dignity' was highest amongst the 18-24 age group, while 'in the middle' was highest amongst the 45-64 age group.
- Between women and men in households, there were different experiences of dignity.
- Refugees gave a range of reasons for rating of dignity, common reasons were their honesty, good behaviour and respect reciprocated in their community.

Livelihood opportunities

This section of the interview guide sought to explore livelihood opportunities for refugees in countries of origin.

- The majority of women ranked themselves as 'very confident' in their skills and knowledge to carry out livelihood activities in their country of origin.
- Comparing women across age groups, women aged 18-24 were more likely to rank their confidence 'in the middle' while women aged 45-64 all ranked themselves as 'very confident'.
- The majority of women ranked themselves as 'very confident' in livelihood opportunities in their country of origin.
- Women aged 18-24 were the most likely to say they were 'not at all confident'. These women most likely may not have worked in Sri Lanka before.

- Within households there were some differences between men and women in confidence rankings.
- Refugees gave a range of reasons for their confidence in livelihood skills and knowledge and opportunities, though there were a raft of reasons provided. These included; access to land, skills in agriculture, trained in activities such as tailoring, handicraft, masonry, connecting with relatives.

Decision-making about the future

This section of the interview guide sought to explore refugees' aspirations for their living situation in the future and how they make decisions and prepare for the future.

- Women and men expressed the same preference for living in Sri Lanka in the future.
- Majority of women and men described both being involved in decision-making about where to live in the future. In six households where men said they made the decisions, women said they both made the decisions together.
- Majority of women described themselves as 'very confident' in their preparation about their decision on where they will be living in future.
- Comparing across age groups, women aged 18-24 were the most likely to say they were 'not at all confident'.
- Both women and men described a large variety of actions they have done or will do to return to Sri Lanka, such as getting documentation ready and preparing finances.

Research Question:

What impact does gender equality and women's empowerment (current state) have on women's and men's' decision making in return / reintegration?

- Majority of women and men had similar aspirations and said they make decisions together about where they will live in the future. They had comparable levels of confidence in skills and knowledge to carry out livelihood opportunities
- The research showed women and men had a reasonably equal experience of their practical needs being met through access to information, services and resources. However, women sought access to particular services to expand their opportunities while men already had access to a greater range of services and livelihood opportunities, indicating inequality in strategic needs.
- Division of labour revealed there were strong gender roles and perceptions about women's work and men's work. This indicates gender was a barrier to empowerment of women in having equal choices and capacity to take up opportunities.

- The research showed that women do have a voice in decision-making and control of household resources, whilst their influence was not perceived equally by men.
- There was inequality in incomes of women and men that may influence women's economic empowerment and decision-making about return.

Research Question:

What learning from the baseline can inform ongoing project implementation?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the theory of change of the I'm Prepared Project and more specifically the objectives related to Knowledge; Economic empowerment and Leadership, as well as consideration for the long-term (goal) outcome.

Knowledge

- The research revealed that women share information more than men, therefore there is value in the Project sharing information with women as a means to share information more broadly within the community.
- Men expressed different and more types of avenues to source information and services, with external organisations and authorities, which is different to women who sought access to information/services from within families, community and OfERR. This finding indicates that women are not as engaged (or empowered to engage) with external authorities/institutions. This may be an area for the Project to strengthen women's skills in this area.

Economic empowerment

- The majority of women are very confident about their skills and livelihood opportunities for return to Sri Lanka, however those in the lowest age group are the only group who describe feeling 'not at all confident'. This finding suggests women in the lowest age group may be the group most in need of support from the Project
- Based on the finding in India that women have primary responsibility for reproductive work, as well as often carrying out productive and community work, the project should consider women's availability to participate in activities might be constrained by their responsibilities.

Leadership

- Men are more active in seeking information, services from external organisations, institutions and are more likely than women to advocate to (government, NGOs, camp committee etc), or mobilise external resources (school, community, youth). Based on this learning, there may be an opportunity for the Project to strengthen women's agency to seek support, and beyond existing family and community networks.

Return and reintegration - Long term outcome (goal)

- Majority of both men and women describe aspirations to return to live in Sri Lanka, this intent is an important foundation which the project builds on. Reasons for return to Sri Lanka are similar between men and women including: living together with relatives already settled there; a better future for children; and wishing to live in own homeland/motherland.
- Women in the younger age group (18-24 years) are the only group to express least confidence in livelihood skills and opportunities in Sri Lanka, meaning they may be a particular group most in need and for the Project to focus on. Other groups described that they are very confident. Experiences of confidence for women are similar to men, and likewise provide an important foundation for the project to build on.

5.3 Summary: I'm Prepared

This section provides summary reflections on the research findings for the I'm Prepared Project. The purpose of this research was not to provide a country comparison, since that is not helpful to inform local programming and inappropriate to compare research findings across different country contexts. Nonetheless, summary comments are helpful to distinguish the unique contexts for refugees in Thailand and India and, importantly to ensure that these unique contexts are and should be considered as part of Project implementation.

Comparing experiences of gender equality and women empowerment between the two research locations, women in both locations experienced mixed aspects of gender equality as framed by the Moser Framework. In relation to practical needs being met, in both locations, women experienced relatively high access to services. Information relevant to refugees is accessed, though to a lesser extent, and in Thailand women had less access than India. In India women were both accessing more types of services and information and taking more steps, engaging with a wider range of actors to access. This is compared to Thailand where travel restrictions limit refugees' ability to access a broad range of services and information sources.

Another big difference between the two research sites is in relation to practical needs, and income within the household. In India men had high amounts of income compared with women, whereas in Thailand income for men and women was more similar. Within India, there was a greater range of income sizes, compared to Thailand where income sizes were relatively low and similar.

In relation to strategic needs, in both countries, women experienced control and management of resources, though men did not recognise women's role in control and management to the same extent as women. In both countries, women were responsible for control and management of cash. In Thailand both women and men

shared resource management whereas in India women were managing more resources.

In relation to experiences of safety/dignity/justice, the research revealed difference between the two research sites. In Thailand men were more likely to experience these than women, whereas in India women and men had a similar experience. Overall, refugees in India had a higher experience of safety, dignity, justice than in Thailand. Women of a younger age group in both countries were more likely to experience low safety, justice, dignity.

Women and men were both involved in decisions about where to live in the future, which is an important indicator of women's strategic needs being met. In Thailand men were more confident/prepared about decisions of where they will live in the future than women, whereas in India women and men had a similar experience. Overall, refugees in India were more confident/prepared than in Thailand and were taking more actions. The younger age group in India (18-24 years) were more likely to be less confident than other age groups in India, whereas for Thailand lower confidence was spread across all age groups, though mainly experienced in middle age (25-44 years).

In relation to return/reintegration the research identified differences in refugee aspirations. In India, the majority of refugees (both women and men) intended to live in Sri Lanka, whereas in Thailand return to Myanmar ranked either 3rd or 4th of the list of most common locations, the most common being 'third country', 'don't know', 'Myanmar/camp'. In line with current Project planning, it is important that these differences in experience and aspirations about the future, and recognition of broader political and social contexts, are considered as part of ongoing implementation.

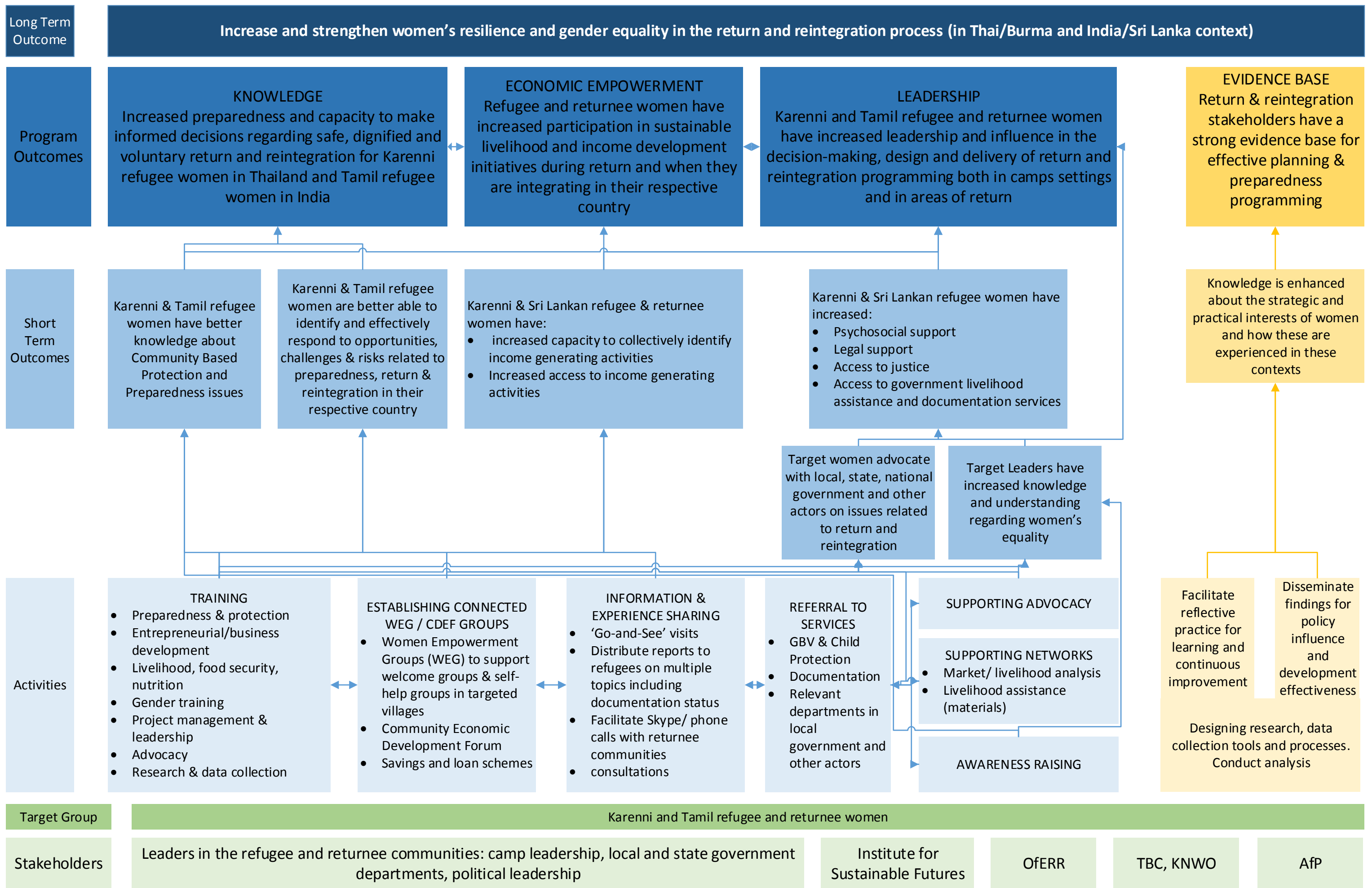
6. Detailed Analysis

For detailed analysis of interview responses for Thailand and India, see attachments (separate reports) to this report.

Annex 1- Program Logic for 'I'm Prepared' Equality for Refugee Women in Return & Reintegration Process

See next page.

Program Logic for 'I'm Prepared' Equality for Refugee Women in Return & Reintegration Process (draft 12/5/17)



Theory of Change "I'm Prepared" Equality for refugee women in return and reintegration-process

Enhancing the capacity of women to make informed decisions, enable them to participate in family and community decision-making, and actively prepare for return and reintegration together, results in more informed decisions, better preparedness for those who chose to return and sustainable reintegration in their respective country.

Underlying assumptions of the Project are:

If women have knowledge about protection and opportunities, challenges and risks related to preparedness, return and reintegration then they will have the information to make informed decisions regarding return to increase the chance of a successful and sustainable return for themselves and their families. Women may feel empowered and have increased capacity to provide advice and propose solutions that are contextually appropriate and women and their families will be better prepared to make informed decisions related to safe, dignified and voluntary return and sustainable reintegration (Knowledge).

Upon return, often women's voices and status are reduced, whereas through participation in this program women will have the opportunity to contribute to their household financial needs through entrepreneurship (economic empowerment) and meet with local leaders and government officials to lobby for access to services (leadership) and amplify their voice in decision-making which may increase their social and political status.

In the return and reintegration context of Karenni and Tamil refugees women play an informal role in the decision-making processes related to preparedness and returning to and reintegrating in their respective country (cultural assumption). If women are better empowered then there may be more equality in that decision-making process and when refugee women are able to help drive these processes then women and their families will be better prepared to make informed decisions related to safe, dignified and voluntary return and sustainable reintegration (knowledge) and women's status in the family could be enhanced (leadership).

Often women's empowerment status diminishes during the return process, as women refugees become increasingly dependent on family members to survive (assumption based on experience in working in the context). If refugee and returnee women have their own source of income through income generating activities then their status will less likely diminish and could even support and/or amplify their voice in the decision-making process as they are seen as more equal when they can provide for their family (Leadership). The lack of livelihoods interferes in a family's willingness to return. Not being able to provide for the family makes it hard to see opportunities and it is also difficult to reintegrate in the local community if they can't provide for their family (assumption based on experience in working in the context). If women have access to income generating activities and can provide for their family then they are better able to make an informed decision about returning to their country and they are better able to reintegrate (Economic empowerment).

Theory of Change for research and learning

If we implement above Project ToC through the project activities, collect data about results and share lessons between partners then this will provide a key evidence base for reflective learning and continuous improvement and offer opportunities to develop a comprehensive set of guidelines with wide applications for 'what works' in the context of gender equality in voluntary refugee return scenarios.

ASSUMPTIONS for 'I'm Prepared' activities

TRAINING

- Participants want to take action
- Participants are able to take action / have opportunities to take action
- Participants have the skills to take action
- Participants will take (collective) action
- If participants gain knowledge they will be able to
 - make a decision
 - Use the knowledge
 - Share the knowledge/educating others
 - Retain the knowledge

INFORMATION & EXPERIENCE SHARING

- People share accurate and up-to-date information
- Having a better understanding equips people to
 - Want to take action
 - Able to take action / have opportunities to take action
- Participants will take (collective) action
- If participants gain knowledge they will be able to
 - Make a decision
 - Use the knowledge
 - Share the knowledge/educating others
 - Retain the knowledge

SUPPORTING NETWORKS

- Through capacity building: will lead to more effective action
- There is a willingness present with all stakeholders to connect with
 - each other
 - communities
 - government
 - other stakeholders

RESEARCH

- quality of data collection is sufficient
- quality of data is sufficient
- data analysis is done properly
- people are willing to do the research
- people are willing to be participants
- willingness to learn from the results

ESTABLISHING CONNECTED WEG / CDEF GROUPS

- Willingness to join
- Willingness to take action
- Able to take action / have opportunities to take action
- There is a willingness present with all stakeholders to connect with
 - each other
 - communities
 - government
 - other stakeholders

Related to Savings & Loans activity: assumption that it leads to positive change but there are risks of harm too.

REFERRAL SERVICES

- there are services available
- services available are appropriate
- appropriate services are accessible for target group (physical and cultural)

SUPPORTING ADVOCACY

- any risk of harm is managed
- participants have a willingness to take risk
- that participants have advocacy skills or that an advocacy training gives them the skills to advocate

AWARENESS RAISING

- Creates a supportive environment