

# Water problem in Karenni Refugee Camp 1

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Researched and written by Poe Reh Soe, Taw Reh and Maw Soe Meh Tway

Translated by SDC students, staff and volunteers

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Karenni Refugee Camp 1

## **Part A**

### **1) Introduction**

We are students of Karenni Social Development Center, 2013-2014. We are staying in Karenni refugee camp 1 and we have studied, researched and written this report about water problems.

The community in Karenni Refugee Camp 1 provided us information about their water challenges. Teachers gave us training, books and materials for writing this report. Citizens tried to give us some information. After we received information, we were able to write this report.

In Karenni Refugee Camp 1, if we do not have enough water, we have challenges everywhere. We need to be careful with water. We need to look after our health. Water needs to be managed for everybody to receive it equally.

### **2) Acknowledgements**

We would like to say thank you to our donors for supporting SDC with funds in order for us to write reports. We used these funds on materials for our report. In addition, we would like to thank our advisors, Teacher Myar Reh and Teacher Than Nge. Furthermore, thank you to the citizens who provided us with information.

### **3) Objectives**

We study at SDC School in Karenni Refugee Camp 1. Our fieldwork is related to our studies. The subjects we have studied at SDC are Humans rights, Environment, Rule of Law, Criminal Law and Democracy. In Karenni Refugee Camp 1, we are researching about water problems.

### **4) Comments**

- In Karenni refugee camp 1, everyone needs to have equal access to water. The organisation, Environmental Health (EH) needs to manage water equally.
- Every section should have equal access to wells. We need enough wells for the entire population.
- In each section, we need to get an equal amount of water to use.
- Every home needs to have access to water and not to have to carry it to their homes.
- Citizens needs to follow EH's rules and guidelines.
- Elderly people, who cannot take the water, need to make other people aware of their problem.
- If we are staying on the mountain, we need to build a well.

- Citizens should not use too much water.
- People who live near the source of the spring should not cut down trees.

### 5) Background Information

Karenni Refugees started to live in Hsaw Roe Lan village, on the Thai-Burma border, in 1990. In Hsaw Roe Lan, there were 3,000 houses. There were 19,000 people. Groups of people started to come there on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1986. It took them two days to travel there. They arrived there during a one week period. When they lived in Hsaw Roe Lan, nobody supported them. In 1990, they started to receive support. At this time, they supported a little but it was not enough.

In 1992, TBC recognised these people as refugees. After being recognised as refugees, the support from TBBC increased and it was enough for them. When they lived in Hsaw Roe Lan, they didn't have any pipes. They only collected water from the river. After, they started to receive support from the donors, their situation improved. In 1995-1996, Karenni Development Department, KNDD, was created. This group had 60 people. The original leader of the group was Roseya. At first in the camp, they needed water so Roseya created a pipe for them. After doing this, in order for all people in camp to have good health, Roseya created KnDD group.

## **Part B**

### **6) Summary**

On the Karenni-Thai border, there is a natural source of water. Karenni citizens have a spring that we can rely on forever. We should not reduce the natural forest that we have as this will affect the spring. We need to share education and training with citizens about how to protect the forest. We need to protect the forest from deforestation. If there is a lot of deforestation, there are problems with water. Without trees, only a little water comes. The water is not enough so citizens have a serious problem. When we have a little water, life becomes more challenging. In Karenni Refugee Camp 1, citizens cut down trees to make farms.

On the Karenni-Thai border, when citizens make farms, the water is no longer enough. If we don't have enough water because of deforestation, it is dangerous for animals in the summer. It is common for conflict to occur when citizens do not have enough water. If citizens only have a little water, we do not receive clean water. This is not good for our health. Some people live in the mountains and always have difficulties for getting water and for living. We can see a lot of problems in families that don't have enough water.

### **7) Consumers of water**

Water is really important for drinking, showering and washing clothes. Everybody has a responsibility for looking after the water supply. Everybody needs to be careful with water. We need buckets to carry water. When we go to collect water and there are a lot of people, we have to wait. Sometimes when there are a lot of people at the well, we need to use the tap for drinking water to shower. Occasionally, trees fall on the pipes and water does not come. If citizens don't receive water, we need to ask EH. If there is only a well it is difficult for all people to use.



Karenni refugees at work

Section 13 receives water that is later passed on to section 9. We have seen that some people throw their waste near the spring.

Citizens can have a problem with water. When water is contaminated, citizens can get rashes. Normally, people under 25 get skin irritations. If people are getting skin irritations, the well has to be cleaned. Every month, the well needs to be cleaned once. In all sections, citizens have a responsibility to keep the well clean. Some citizens drink the water directly from the spring and get ill.

### **8) About Chlorine**

The water comes from the forest so it is not combined with chlorine. The water is stored in a reservoir, cleaned and chlorine is added. After this, the water is clean. The chlorine protects from diseases and waste contamination.

There is a system for putting chlorine into the water. When chlorine is put in the water, it needs to be measured. There is a specific amount of chlorine needed to clean any diseases in the water. The amount of water in the reservoir is measured. Once a month, the reservoir is checked for diseases. If there is 200 litres of water, it needs 9.5 grams of chlorine. When chlorine is put in, it needs to be weighed. If the water is high, more chlorine needs to be used. Chlorine is added to the reservoir and shared with every section. If chlorine is not added, there are a lot of diseases. When chlorine is added to the reservoir the diseases in the water gradually disappear. In the reservoir, there are a lot of diseases. If we only put a little chlorine in, the diseases cannot disappear. However, if a lot of chlorine is put in the reservoir, it is dangerous for citizens who drink the water.

### 9) VG group activities

VG group is a member of EH. VG group collect rubbish in Karenni Refugee Camp 1. This group cleans waste around the refugee camp. They look after citizens' health. They only protect the environment. Citizens need to be responsible for their rubbish.

*There is a rubbish tip but some citizens don't use it*

VG group collects the rubbish and dispose of it outside the camp. It is very difficult to collect rubbish inside the camp. If rubbish is not disposed of properly, water pollution is increased. They collect rubbish from the sections in camp on Monday to Thursday. On Fridays, they only collect the clinics' rubbish. Some citizens throw rubbish near the river. There is a rubbish tip but some citizens do not use it. If rubbish is burnt, the fumes are dangerous for children. VG group cannot take burnt rubbish outside the camp because it is dangerous for the environment. It can be dangerous for some plants and animals. Therefore, it is dangerous for people's health.

### 10) Water problems in summer

Water is really important for people. Our bodies need to be 70% water. It is necessary for cleaning our bodies. It is one of the essential things for life. In summer, there is not enough water. Therefore, everybody experiences problems especially those who live far from the water store. When there is a little water, they only use the tap. In summer, not having enough water can create problems within neighbouring families in our society. When there is not enough water, we need to wait for a long time to get water. When we wait a long time to get water, we have to miss work. In summer, when the water is not enough, access to this is limited. They first allow people to get water between 6AM and 11AM, then they allow again between 4PM and 7PM. People spend a lot of time collecting water especially those who live far from the water. Additionally, there are problems within families because of not enough water. In summer, trees', animals' and people's lives are endangered by the lack of water. When we don't have water, it affects all life.



During summer, the land in Karenni Refuge Camp 1 is very dry.



Deforestation is caused by not having enough water.

### 11) About the connection between deforestation and water problems

Everywhere has forest. This forest needs to be green and beautiful. In the forest, all animals need to be safe. The forest supports the whole world. The world will become dangerous if we do not protect the forest. There are water problems when people cause a lot of deforestation. The forest needs to be protected so a legal group was created for Karenni State. This forest has existed for a long time so it should be protected. In Karenni Refugee Camp 1, citizens live in the area beside the spring. Citizens and animals are affected if there is deforestation. In the Karenni and Thai border area, there are farms. The farms are always rotated. This causes deforestation. This increases social problems. Deforestation affects animals and plants that live in the water or on the land. It also affects fish. If we don't reduce deforestation, citizens' livelihoods will be affected as well as the environment and animals.



Deforestation around Karenni Refugee Camp 1

All around the Thai-Burma border, stronger trees can no longer be found. The remaining trees are weaker trees. During the rainy season, the trees cannot control the flow of water causing flooding, soil erosion and landslides. If this deforestation continues, it will become very dangerous. Deforestation will cause the spring to become smaller. The water then is not enough. Therefore, citizens in Karenni Refugee Camp 1 have a problem. Around Karenni Refugee Camp 1, there has been a lot of deforestation. Burma is recognised internationally as having one of the highest rates of forest loss in the world.

**Part C****12) Importance of access to water**

Water can be used everywhere. For example, it is used for drinking or cooking rice. Water is very important for animals. For ducks, we need a lake for them to swim. Ducks and other types of animals like swimming in the water. Therefore, water is very important and necessary for ducks. Ducks are not kept in a pen, they can go anywhere. Food is very important for animals but so is water. Quails live near the water so the water is also necessary for them. Furthermore, water is very important for plants to survive. It is also easy for them to grow with a steady water supply. Additionally, pigs need enough water to live. We need to collect water so that we can get water easily. Pigs are different from horses and dogs because they don't sweat.

**13) About lack of water problem**

Water is useful for everyone. If we don't have enough water then we have difficulties. Due to deforestation, there is not enough water,

*Everyday, they experience this water problem*

especially during the hot season. The common cause of this problem is deforestation. Water has been impacted because of deforestation. Without enough water, we can get health problems. Some people take buckets and they wait near the well. When there is not enough water, they limit the time for the water to flow. Sometimes, we have seen there is not enough water. This causes problems within households. They said also that their neighbours talk about this. This problem is especially serious in summer. Every day they experience this water problem. In summer, there is only a little water. This causes citizens to suffer.

**14) About problems during rainy season**

We have seen problems during rainy season. When the rain comes, we have seen a lot of rubbish. A lot of plastic and bottles fall in the river, it impacts people living downstream. When it rains, a lot of children go to play in the river so they get rashes. They are mostly under 15 years old. It is very bad for them. When there is heavy rain, a lot of rubbish comes, fences are destroyed and the land is eroded causing landslides. It is terrible for people who live near the river. People who live upstream throw a lot of rubbish in the river, so people who live downstream have more problems. If there is heavy rain, a lot of rubbish and sand come into the reservoir. If we shower with rainwater, it will impact on our health. During the rainy season, the most common illnesses are sore throats, colds, coughs and malaria. When there is heavy rain, roads are destroyed. We have seen people walking, slip. Additionally, people who live far from a water source have difficulties going to collect water. It is difficult for people to go to work. When the rain comes, excrement from pigs and chickens is mixed in with the river water, so it is very dirty. A lot of rubbish comes into the



The river gets high during rainy season

spring and the water is dirty, so if we drink we can get diseases.

### 15) Health

In 2002 in Karenni Refugee Camp 1, the Community Health Workers (CHW) started. This group campaigns about health in the refugee camp. They have four offices. When there are health

#### *Children under 13 often get diseases*

problems in the refugee camp, they share information about the problems to citizens. Most of the citizens in camp have a lot of rubbish or they do not keep their area clean. There are also a lot of handicapped people. Once a month, CHW needs to share information. CHW don't have enough volunteers, so sometimes they have difficulties. CHW needs to give information but often citizens are not at home or are not free, so it is difficult for them. Water is for cleaning your body. Sometimes, they call citizens to their office to share information. When they share information, only women come to listen. During rainy season, there are a lot of health problems such as malaria, skin irritations, diarrhea, sore throats, shivers and coughs. In rainy season, children under 13 often get diseases. If we keep the water for a long time, it can become contaminated with insects and mosquito eggs. This causes diseases. People collect rain water in the rainy season to use. If we use the water, we can start shivering because it is very dirty. This dirtiness causes diseases and effects camp citizens. Camp citizens need to protect their health.



**Part D****16) Recommendations**

These recommendations are about the water problem, we have seen in Karenni Refugee Camp 1. Water is the most important for people. All life depends on water. Additionally, we need water everywhere. The forest controls the water. Therefore, if we make deforestation, there will be water problems. A lot of people cause deforestation to grow crops so the water is less than before. This means citizens have problems. We recommend to people in camp that we need water to clean, cook and wash so when we store water, we need to ensure that we use it.

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## 17) Interviewee list

Number	Name	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Section and House number	Date of Interview	Religion	Place of interview	Occupation
1	Shar Reh Say	Male	29	Married	9/8	11/10/2013	Roman Catholic	Environmental Health office	Administrative staff
2	Poe Reh	Male	73	Married	13/163	11/10/2013	Animist	Section 13	School caretaker
3	Nga Meh	Female	52	Married	13/87	11/10/2013	Animist	Section 13	Unemployed
4	Peli	Male	57	Married	16/18	11/10/2013	Baptist	Section 16	Unemployed
5	Bu Reh	Male	37	Married	12/83	15/10/2013	Roman Catholic	Section 12	Unemployed
6	Beh Reh Sue	Male	43	Married	14/106	16/10/2013	Buddhist	Section 14	Unemployed
7	Say Reh	Male	37	Married	4/22	17/10/2013	Baptist	Environmental Health office	Chlorine Director
8	Maw Lie	Male	36	Married	12/206	17/10/2013	Buddhist	Environmental Health office	Engineering director
9	Boe Reh	Male	27	Married	6/79	17/10/2013	Animist	Environmental Health office	V.G. Assistant Director
10	Mi Reh	Male	49	Married	4/64	16/10/2013	Roman Catholic	Section 4	Section leader's helper
11	Twa Meh	Female	25	Married	1/207	18/10/2013	Buddhist	Section 1	Unemployed
12	Ti Ti Shar	Female	63	Married	2/39	14/10/2013	Baptist	Section 2	Unemployed
13	Dar Reh	Male	61	Married	3/37	18/10/2013	Roman Catholic	Section 3	Unemployed
14	Thu Reh	Male	22	Single	4/49	17/10/2013	Animist	Environmental Health office	Unemployed
15	Teh Meh	Female	27	Married	5/108	14/10/2013	Animist	Section 5	Unemployed



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To achieve our mission statement we rely on various avenues of support including core organizational and project funding from our major donors. We are also supported by our own community, local staff and the generous help of volunteers from across the globe.



Mae Hong Son,  
Thailand  
PO BOX 20  
58000  
+66 0898526619  
officesdc@yahoo.com

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Finally, we would like to thank you the reader for showing an interest in supporting the cause of our people with your support we can go from strength to strength in the future.

**Thank you!**



**The Curriculum Project**

