

DARE Network Strategic Plan 2015 and Beyond Karen State



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Executive Summary

DARE Network is a community based organisation that provides drug, alcohol and substance abuse treatment and prevention education to the ethnic minorities of Burma.

For the people of the Burmese ethnic minorities, civil war, substance addiction and human rights abuses continue to dramatically affect their lives. Burma is not yet a peaceful democratic state and its people are not yet free from this painful reality.

Drug production and use is on the rise in Burma and Thailand. It continues to be used as an escape, stress relief or even forcibly.

Despite the continued flares of unrest, there is opportunity to address some of the consequences of substance abuse. We will expand our services into Karen State to build the capacity of the people there to respond to the problem, as well as build the services to assist those that return home to Karen State, from the refugee camps.

Substance addiction is an ongoing, cross-cutting problem that will deter the people of Burma's ability to rebuild a prosperous independent life for themselves.

Despite funding cuts to the border camps, addiction challenges will not abate, in fact they will worsen. People will still depend on DARE's program and we will continue to offer support. The camp based program offers a secure base for training and preparation for our Step Back to Burma expansion program.

It is almost impossible to predict the outcome of coming events that will impact significantly on the ethnic minority groups fighting for recognition, autonomy and peace. In our long term view, it is economically sound to continue to provide support to the camp based population. Our DARE Staff, both in and out of the camps have the most capacity to share knowledge and skills to new Addiction Workers for Karen State.

DARE will continue to be deeply embedded in the community. It will listen, collaborate and build the capacity of the local people and continue to provide culturally appropriate and necessary assistance.

Situational Analysis

The Drugs Situation



Burma/Myanmar is the world's largest producer of methamphetamines, according to UNODC. Production, distribution and forced use of drugs across Burma has been used to fuel war efforts, and disable local communities. Rates of use have risen dramatically in both Burma and Thailand. In some rural Karen State villages, rates of use are as high as 80% for the methamphetamine based drug "yaba", translated as "crazy medicine". It is cheap, widely available and often wrapped in brightly coloured wrappers to resemble candy, which puts children at high risk. Factory and farm owners have been known to give it to their workers to increase short term productivity, meaning that "everyone except kids and old people" are taking the drug (quote by a well know Karen National Union Leader).

The 2012 ceasefire between the Burmese Army and the Karen Freedom Fighters has opened the door to safe passage of drugs from Northern Burma straight to Karen State. Many ethnic people of Burma are exposed to drugs they have never seen before. Most rural villagers do not know that there is hope for recovery from addiction or have any options for addiction treatment.

History of Conflict

The civil conflict between the Burmese Military government and the ethnic minorities has been ongoing for over 60 years. It is estimated that more than 1.1 million people have been displaced due to constant human right abuses, persecution and terror inflicted by the military forces. It is a fight for autonomy, recognition and freedom from oppression from a government that is bent on ethnic homogeneity at the cost of lives and futures.

Documented abuses include: extra-judicial and summary executions, human minesweeping, torture, extortion, confiscation of minority lands, forced relocation for access to resources, and rape. While instance of these atrocities may have slowed, they have not stopped.

The Karen ethnicity is the largest minority ethnicity in the country. In Karen State alone there are over 100,000 internally displaced people, and much of the Thai-Burma border's nine refugee camps are of Karen ethnicity as well.

Despite ceasefire agreements across the country since 1989, including one in 2012, signed for the first time by the Karen Armed Groups, the Burmese Army has failed to gain the trust of the people by stepping back and improving conditions, so skirmishes continue.

Recent Events

Recently several outbreaks of fighting have caused further unrest and show a lack of commitment to a transition to peace.

In Kawkariek, close to Myawaddy and Mae Sot in October 2014 four people were killed and nine injured by shelling. A few hundred people fled the area to Thailand where they were turned away by the Thai Army.

In November, 23 people were killed in a “warning strike” by the Burmese Army against a Kachin training camp.

On the 15th of February 2015 in Kachin State, mortar shelling caused the displacement of 2,000 people. Further details have not yet been confirmed.

Mon State continues to be subject to fighting, as is Shan State, despite a state wide ceasefire in place.

Ceasefire agreement discussions including with Karen State groups have been unable to progress due to the disagreements and distrust among agreeing parties.



Future Events

The atmosphere of uncertainty and fear for the displaced people of Burma is unlikely to be resolved before the results of two major political developments planned for this year.

Firstly, the National Peace Agreement negotiations are ongoing, while agreement has not yet been reached, there are goals to reach an agreement early 2015.

The outcome of this meeting will have a significant impact on subsequent direction of the national election to be held in November this year. It is still very uncertain how the election will play out and what any outcome of the election will mean for ethnic governments.

Situational Outlook

There has been much international attention of Burma in recent years alongside talks of progress, development and reconciliation. On the ground, the basis for these claims seems unfounded. It is clear that both Thai and Burmese governments want the refugees to return. However it is almost certain that this will not happen until the situation is more stable and the refugees are ready.

UNHCR intends to assist in repatriation of refugees when the conditions are ready. These conditions include the outcome of the National Peace Agreement and the election and on-the-ground safety. It is likely that there will still be over 100,000 people in borderline camps for at least another year, if not two or three.

While we cannot predict the outcome of either the peace talks or the election, we are fairly certain that the international climate will help to ensure that the situation on the ground does not worsen. However ongoing and unpredictable skirmishes continue to be dangerous and unsettling for the people of Burma.

Trust will need to be built by evidence of reductions in armed forces, human rights abuses and persecution. Even with a real peace agreement it will a long time for actual peace across all regions to reign.

An Outlook on Substance Abuse



Despite the decreases in funding to the border camps, there are still approximately 130,000 people living there. The stress of uncertainty and reduction in services creates insecurity, fear and depression placing a larger demand on services such as DARE's treatment and prevention education programs.

Additionally, when repatriation becomes a reality, the risk of relapse, or new substance abuse will dramatically increase as the availability of drugs is higher, support networks separate and people experience the stress of beginning this new life.

DARE is committed to continue its prevention education, treatment and addiction worker training in the camps as well as Karen State to protect against this risk.

Background and History

Alcohol and substance abuse in refugee camps, migrant communities and villages along both sides of the Thai-Burma border severely affect the health, educational opportunities and future prospects for children and youth growing up in these areas.

DARE Network provides community based non-medical, culturally appropriate addiction treatment programs and prevention education to young people and their communities to reduce the social and personal harm of substance abuse.

The program is based on the recognition that addiction affects whole families and communities. However, addiction is particularly tough on children and youth. DARE has designed supportive programs that target each population. The prevention education program is called DARE for All and it encompasses a specific men's support group and a Teens for Kids program.

DARE has treatment centers in 5 refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border as well as a migrant community. The treatment program has a 60% success rate over more than a decade and directly benefits 20,000 people a year.

DARE Network was founded in 2000 by a Canadian addiction recovery specialist and local ethnic leaders, after the atrocities committed against the ethnic peoples of Burma and the subsequent family and social destruction caused by orchestrated drug and alcohol dependence revealed a void of response.

Together, they created a cutting-edge, effective program to prevent and treat addiction for local people, their families and communities in a context that has meaning for them.

Over the course of 13 years, DARE has treated, on average, over 400 clients a year and reaches 18,000 people a year in prevention education activities.

Community involvement and support is the core of DARE Network's philosophy and operation. DARE Network is a community operated organisation. All but 2 of our 60+ strong workforce are locals, who work for their own people.

Organisational Identity

DARE Network has a strong identity based in addiction recovery, that informs all that we do. Our identity can be summarized in the following statements



Vision

DARE Network envisions the strength of ethnic people from Burma to use the power of recovery from addiction as a means to freedom.

Mission

DARE Network is a local community based organization. DARE Network provides culturally appropriate non-medical treatment and prevention education to reduce substance abuse and associated social problems within the communities of the displaced ethnic people from Burma, on both sides of the Thai/Burma border.

Values

- Values of recovery are applied across the organisation: helping each other, honesty, hardwork, sharing, opportunity, equality.
- DARE tackles the hard problems with resilience and adaptability, finding a way to go where others cannot.
- Community involvement and support is the core of DARE Network's philosophy and operation

Our Program

Our program consists of 4 parts:

Addiction Treatment Program: 3 month residential and 6 week non-resident, including detox, education, relapse prevention, therapy and community support.

Prevention Education and Awareness: DARE for All, Teens for Youth, Men Working with Men for Happy Families, School and community outreach, Home visits, leadership education and cooperation.

Training: Training of Addiction Workers, Master Trainers, and Addiction Trainers is essential work and continuous throughout the year to maintain sustainability under adverse circumstances. DARE's Training Manual developed over many years is in Karen and Burmese, which makes it valuable inside Burma, in the refugee camps and even in resettled communities overseas.

Step Back To Burma: This program expands our reach to the rural villages of Karen State. In 2015, we will provide addiction education workshops and assessments in 20 Karen State Villages to recruit addiction worker trainees to undertake our 6-month training so that they can begin to provide addiction services to the people of their villages. At the same time, we will work within the villages to develop the capacity of village leaders to support addiction programming in their own environments.

Strategic Process

DARE's strategic planning process involves critically examining the internal and external factors that affect the outcomes of our target populations. To develop a strategy that is consistent with our mission and our abilities, we have undertaken firstly a stakeholder analysis, then a SWOT analysis. We used this information to create a scenario response matrix.



Stakeholder Analysis



SWOT Analysis



<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Challenges</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quick acting, responsive - Depth of experience - Work in local language - Program created and run by local people - Proven effectiveness - Loyal and committed staff - Good balance of autonomy and team work - Clients often want to contribute to organisation - Team-based management structure - Practical and continuous learning - Connected to and respected by local Karen community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy needs to be checked and balanced - Finding the right people to work in core staff - Very particular employment requirements - Communication skills internally and externally for local staff - Dependent on grants and external funding, proposal writing depends on specialized English
<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Risks</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First and only organisation doing our type of program in Karen State - Lead villages to contribute to and sustain their own addiction programming - Work with the ethnic people of Burma in their homeland - To make profound change in addiction related behavior in Karen State - To increase sustainability of our program through income support programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mass immediate repatriation for capacity and camp based training - War - Drug dealers unhappy about our work - Domination by Burmese Government - Inability to secure necessary funds - Thai Government restrictions - Collapse of CCSDPT - Salaween Dam construction

Scenario Response Matrix

The following matrix outlines a cross section of the main possible scenarios that have the largest impact on our program. It takes consideration of four main components of our program: staff, programs, funding, and security.



	<u>Peace in Karen State</u>	<u>No Peace in Karen State</u>
<u>Refugees Stay in Camps</u>	<p>Transition Phase</p> <p><i>If there is peace in Karen State it is likely that the refugees will return in the near future.</i></p> <p>Staff – Increase camp-based human resources, increase cross border staff and Karen State staff</p> <p>Program – We will be able to freely and quickly set up DARE centers in our planned areas. Programing will expand in Karen State and continue in the camps until they are closed. Training in camps will continue, moving to Karen State when addiction workers and trainers move back.</p> <p>Funding – There will be more funding available for Karen State activities but also more competition for that funding. We are developing relationships now to ensure we have the best chance. Funding for the camps is more difficult to find.</p> <p>Security – this will be less of an issue in peace time, but will still be taken into consideration.</p>	<p>Current Situation</p> <p><i>There are various levels of “no-peace” in Karen State, from stability to civil war. Currently the situation is stable with small skirmishes around the edges of Karen controlled areas.</i></p> <p>Staff - We will train village locals in our camp training centers. Recruiting from local side.</p> <p>Program – We will move slowly and carefully, assessing the security of each new village.</p> <p>Funding – Essential funding will be a challenge to find for the camps We will continue to seek funds for our Karen State program</p> <p>Security – developing relationships, with village and Karen State leaders will be essential to ensure our safety. This has begun already.</p>
<u>Refugees Return to Burma</u>	<p>Repatriation Phase</p> <p><i>This will be a continuation of the previous phase. The movement will disrupt our training schedule and staff. It will also mean an influx of people in some of our villages. Some people may be at increased risk of addiction due to the stress of starting their life again.</i></p> <p>Staff – Our camp based staff will be hired in Karen State and transition their homes and lives over. Our Karen State based staff will continue their village based programming</p> <p>Program – Camp based programming will reduce along with the population. Training may need to be put on hold while trainers relocate, depending on the level of training in Karen State.</p> <p>Funding – There will be Increased need and hopefully increased opportunities for funding to support the DARE’s repatriation effort.</p> <p>Security – less necessary, but still a consideration with the uncertain repatriation logistics</p>	<p>Emergency Zone</p> <p><i>This is a dramatic and unlikely situation. Unless repatriation triggered the destabilization, it is likely in this situation that refugees will move in an orderly way.</i></p> <p>Staff - Our camp staff will move with refugee populations. Staff will not be required to work in dangerous situations.</p> <p>Program – Programs will be set up in the Karen controlled areas, if fighting is too extreme programing will be put on hold in camps and villages.</p> <p>Funding – Discussions with donors will be needed, and reorganization of staff. The Mae Saraing head-quarters will be maintained.</p> <p>Security – need to increase security for any programming that continues.</p>

Strategic Outlook

Taking into consideration the current situation and organisation and situation analysis, DARE has concluded with two strategic goals.



- 1. Continue camp based training, treatment and prevention education for as long as the camps are operational**
- 2. Expand services into Karen State, with 60 village Prevention Education Centers and 3 Provincial Treatment and Training Centers in 5 years.**

DARE's five year strategic plan incorporates a dual focus; maintain and expand.

DARE will work to maintain the camp based training, prevention education and treatment centers to respond to the growing demand for our services.

Expansion will occur into Karen State, Burma with our program Step Back to Burma. This expansion responds to a growing and extremely concerning problem of drug use in the rural villages.

DARE envisions Step Back to Burma will continue into the foreseeable future and become embedded in the communities in Karen State. It may be possible at some point to reach other parts of Burma. DARE Network will integrate its refugee camp staff into this project when repatriation occurs, alongside this continuum.

Year 1 (2015)

1. Conduct and Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice Assessment in 20 villages in Hpa'an District
2. Provide initial addiction education workshops to 20 villages
3. Recruit Village Coordinators and Village Trainee Addiction Workers
4. Train trainees in the refugee camp training base
5. Conduct annual evaluation

Year 2 (2016)

1. Begin prevention education operations in the 20 Hpa'an villages with trained addiction workers and village coordinators
2. Assess and identify 20 villages suitable and in need of DARE services in Mutraw Province
3. Set up central Treatment and Training center in Hpa'an Province
4. Provide initial Addiction Education Workshops to 20 Mutraw villages
5. Recruit Village Coordinators and Village Trainee Addiction Workers for Mutraw
6. Conduct annual evaluation

Year 3 (2017)

1. Train trainees from Mutraw Province in the Hpa'an provincial Treatment and Training Center or Camp Training base depending on situation of refugee camps
2. Begin prevention education operations in the 20 Mutraw villages with trained Addiction Workers and Village Coordinators
3. Set up central Treatment and Training center in Mutraw Province
4. Assess and identify 20 villages suitable and in need of DARE services in Khler Lwe Thu Province
5. Provide initial Addiction Education Workshops to 20 villages in Khler Lwe Thu province

6. Recruit Village Coordinators and Village Trainees Addiction Workers
7. Conduct annual evaluation



Year 4 (2018)

1. Train trainees from Khler Lwe Thu Province in provincial treatment and training center (Hpa'an or Mutraw)
2. Begin prevention education operations in the 20 Khler Lwe Thu villages
3. Set up Provincial Treatment and Training Center in Khler Lwe Thu
4. Conduct annual evaluation

Year 5 (2019)

1. Evaluate and improve operations in 3 provinces (Hpa'an, Mutraw, Khler Lwe Thu)
2. Evaluate Step Back to Burma program as a whole
3. Create strategy for next 5 years based on evaluation

Key Considerations

These operations will be undertaken with these key considerations:

- Camp resident's need for our services will continue
- Refugee return may mean a temporary slowdown of activities, while we ensure we offer our workers a place at DARE in Karen State
- Current security concerns mean that training is best continued at our camp based treatment and training centers until refugees return to Burma
- If the outcomes of the ethnic peace negotiations and the national election in Burma do not lead to widespread peace, the location of our centers may be affected
- The political situation may affect those with whom DARE Network builds relationships.

DARE Network Strategic Map (next page).



DARE 5 Year Strategic Road Map

