

Developing a Sustainable Refugee Employment Model in Thailand

Evidence-Based Policy Pathways for
Camp-Based Refugees' Transition
to Self-Reliance



Final Report

Developing a Sustainable Refugee Employment Model in Thailand: Evidence-Based Policy Pathways for Camp-Based Refugees' Transition to Self-Reliance

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We are also sincerely indebted to representatives from government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector who generously shared their knowledge, experiences, and insights through in-depth interviews and consultative discussions. Their contributions were critical in ensuring that the research findings and recommendations are grounded in practical realities and policy considerations.

Most importantly, we would like to express our deep appreciation to the refugees and camp leaders who participated in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Their openness in sharing lived experiences, aspirations, concerns, and recommendations provided the foundation for this research and ensured that refugee voices remain central to the analysis.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BOT	Bank of Thailand
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CCSDPT	Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand
DOPA	Department of Provincial Administration
DOE	Department of Employment
DWLP	Department of Labor Protection and Welfare
EMPP	Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot
EPRI	Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IDI	In-Depth Interview
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IO	International Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOL	Ministry of Labor
MOPH	Ministry of Public Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWACs	Migrant Worker Assistance Centers
NBTC	Office of The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OSS	One-Stop Service
PEO	Provincial Employment Office
PMO	Program Management Office
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
REMC	Refugee Employment Management Cycle
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSO	Social Security Office
TMR	Thailand Migration Reform
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Executive Summary

Thailand has hosted displaced persons from Myanmar for over four decades in nine temporary shelters located along the Thai–Myanmar border. As of June 2025, a total of 77,728 refugees were registered with the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) across these shelters. Of this population, 42,601 individuals are of working age (18–59) and are therefore potentially eligible for employment. Under the Cabinet Resolution dated 26 August 2025, all registered refugees holding DOPA identification numbers beginning with “000” are eligible to work legally outside the camps, subject to administrative procedures and sectoral restrictions, across 43 designated provinces in Thailand.

The Cabinet Resolution represents a significant policy shift, enabling refugees to access formal employment outside camps for the first time at scale. The policy aims to promote refugee self-reliance, reduce long-term dependency on humanitarian assistance, address labor shortages in selected sectors, and ensure that employment is managed in a manner consistent with national security and protection considerations. However, as implementation commenced in late 2025, it became evident that while formal procedures exist, the overall system remains fragmented, highly discretionary, and uneven across locations.

In this context, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) commissioned this research to generate evidence-based analysis and policy recommendations to support the development of a coherent, protection-sensitive, and scalable refugee employment system in Thailand.

The overall objective of this research is to support the effective, sustainable, and scalable implementation of refugee employment outside camps in Thailand. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Examine how refugee employment has been implemented following the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025;
2. Assess refugees’ capacities, needs, expectations, motivations, and constraints in accessing employment;
3. Analyze employer readiness, incentives, expectations, and support needs;
4. Identify legal, regulatory, administrative, and operational gaps affecting sustainability and worker protection;
5. Draw relevant lessons from international refugee employment models; and
6. Propose a Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model together with actionable policy recommendations.

The study applies a qualitative research methodology combining desk review, 41 in-depth interviews with government agencies, employers, CSOs, international organizations, and refugees, and 11 focus group discussions conducted in Mae La and Tham Hin camps. In total, 176 participants contributed to the research. Analysis is structured around the Refugee Employment Management Cycle, comprising five stages: (1) Preparation and System Coordination; (2) Recruitment, Screening, and Matching; (3) Contracting and Legal Authorization; (4) Deployment and Early Employment Support; and (5) Monitoring, Protection, and Post-Employment Pathways.

Summary of Key Findings

Implementation Framework and System Design

Thailand has established a formal administrative framework for refugee employment outside camps, consisting of nine sequential procedural steps, from employer contact with district offices to post-employment reporting. In practice, implementation depends heavily on informal coordination and discretionary decision-making by district offices, camp commanders, and provincial employment offices. While this flexibility has enabled early implementation, it has also resulted in inconsistent practices across provinces and camps, creating uncertainty for refugees and employers and limiting scalability.

A central constraint is the absence of a unified national SOP and a formal inter-agency governance mechanism. Refugee employment is managed under a temporary, survival-level policy approach adapted from migrant-worker frameworks. As a result, critical issues—such as mobility, identity verification, permit renewal, standardized contracts, and long-term planning—remain unclear, positioning refugee employment as a pilot-based arrangement rather than a durable national system.

International Lessons

Comparative analysis of refugee employment models in Jordan, Turkey, Germany, Australia, and other contexts highlights the importance of national labor-market planning, inter-agency coordination, standardized documentation, trusted intermediaries, pre-departure preparation, and integrated data systems. These elements are largely absent or weakly developed in the Thai context, limiting system effectiveness.

Refugees' Capacities, Needs, and Decision-Making

Refugees possess substantial experiential skills, particularly in agriculture, construction, factory work, and service-related activities, as well as semi-professional capacities developed through camp-based roles. Refugees perceive themselves as flexible and capable workers across sectors and are willing to undertake physically demanding work when wages and conditions are fair.

However, recruitment practices emphasize basic work readiness—physical fitness and minimal Thai-language ability—rather than effective skill utilization, resulting in underemployment. Refugees' employment decisions are shaped by access to clear information, financial readiness, language skills, and household-level considerations, including caregiving responsibilities. Information gaps regarding recruitment criteria, wages, documentation, insurance, and grievance mechanisms undermine informed decision-making and contribute to early withdrawal from employment pathways.

Barriers, Protection Risks, and Employer Constraints

Legal, administrative, and social barriers accumulate across the employment cycle. Documentation and identity-verification processes adapted from migrant systems are poorly aligned with camp realities, leading to delays and repeated verification. Short validity periods for travel authorizations and work permits constrain both refugee stability and employer workforce planning. Monitoring and grievance mechanisms formally exist but are rarely accessed, resulting in reactive enforcement and diffuse accountability.

Employers view refugees as a potential response to labor shortages but face high transaction costs due to fragmented procedures, unclear renewal rules, and inconsistent interpretation across locations. In the absence of system-level support, employers often absorb costs and risks informally, leading to uneven protection outcomes and limiting sustained engagement.

Employer Perspectives

Employers view refugees as a potential solution to labor shortages but face significant transaction costs arising from fragmented procedures, unclear renewal rules, and inconsistent interpretation across provinces. Many employers absorb pre-employment costs and provide informal support to compensate for system gaps;

however, reliance on employer discretion leads to uneven protection outcomes and masks structural deficiencies. Administrative complexity and regulatory uncertainty discourage long-term engagement and investment in workforce development.

Proposed Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model

Drawing on empirical findings and international experience, the study proposes a Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model structured around the five stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle. The model emphasizes end-to-end system coherence, rather than isolated procedural fixes.

At each stage, the model clarifies roles, information flows, and protection responsibilities, while cross-cutting enablers support the entire system. These include: (i) a unified national SOP; (ii) inter-agency governance with a designated lead agency; (iii) an interoperable refugee employment data system; (iv) standardized documentation and contracts; and (v) integrated monitoring and welfare-protection mechanisms. The model is designed to transform refugee employment from a discretionary, case-by-case process into a predictable and scalable system aligned with labor-market planning and protection standards.

Policy Recommendations

To operationalize the proposed model, the study advances twelve interlinked policy recommendations:

1. Develop and formally adopt a unified “One SOP” mapped to the five stages of the employment cycle

A unified national Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) should be formally adopted to consolidate all refugee employment procedures into a single, authoritative framework mapped to the five stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle. The SOP should clearly specify institutional roles, approval authorities, documentation requirements, timelines, and coordination points across ministries, provincial authorities, district offices, and camp administrations. By replacing fragmented, case-by-case interpretation with standardized guidance, the One SOP would reduce administrative uncertainty, improve predictability for refugees and employers, and provide a foundation for scalable implementation across provinces.

2. Institutionalize a standardized pre-employment information and decision-support program in shelters

A standardized pre-employment information and decision-support program should be institutionalized within shelters to ensure that refugees receive clear, accurate, and complete information before deciding to work outside camps. This program should cover job conditions, wages, costs, health insurance, social security, mobility rules, grievance mechanisms, and household-level implications. Delivered through trained facilitators and supported by standardized materials, the program would enable informed decision-making, reduce mismatched expectations, and lower early withdrawal rates driven by uncertainty rather than lack of motivation.

3. Make shelter-based One Stop Service (OSS) / Job Fairs the default recruitment mechanism

Shelter-based One Stop Service (OSS) platforms or Job Fairs should be established as the default recruitment mechanism for refugee employment. These platforms should bring together employers, district offices, employment offices, health providers, and camp authorities in a single, coordinated setting. OSS arrangements would streamline recruitment, documentation, health checks, and information provision, reduce travel and transaction costs, and ensure consistent screening and protection standards. Making OSS the default mechanism would shift recruitment away from ad hoc arrangements toward an orderly, transparent process.

4. Introduce employment contract templates for refugee workers and integrate refugee identity

Standardized written employment contract templates should be introduced for refugee workers, aligned with Thai labor law and adapted to the specific legal status of refugees. Contracts should clearly specify wages,

working hours, job scope, accommodation, welfare benefits, grievance channels, and conditions for termination. Refugee identity references should be integrated into contract templates to ensure consistency with administrative systems and reduce documentation discrepancies. This measure would enhance legal clarity, worker protection, and enforceability while reducing disputes arising from verbal or informal agreements.

5. Integrate mobility, dependent accompaniment, and education safeguards

Clear and consistent safeguards should be established to govern refugee mobility, including conditions for leave, emergency return to camps, dependent accompaniment, and access to education for accompanying children. These safeguards should be embedded within the One SOP and communicated clearly to refugees and employers. Integrating mobility and family-related provisions would reduce household-level risks, support participation by women and caregivers, and prevent employment decisions from undermining child education and family well-being.

6. Build an integrated monitoring, complaint, and joint-inspection system

An integrated system should be developed to link monitoring, labor inspection, and grievance redress across agencies. This system should combine routine inspections, joint inspections involving relevant authorities, and accessible complaint mechanisms supported by language assistance and trusted intermediaries. Moving beyond complaint-driven enforcement, the system should function preventively by identifying risks early and ensuring that responsibility for worker protection is institutionalized rather than diffused among individual actors.

7. Promote digital and financial inclusion as cross-cutting enablers

Digital and financial inclusion should be promoted as cross-cutting enablers across all stages of the employment cycle. This includes facilitating access to digital identity verification, mobile communication, banking services, and wage payment mechanisms. Improving refugees' access to formal financial services would reduce reliance on cash handling, improve transparency, and enhance financial security, while supporting data integration and system efficiency.

8. Invest in skills development, inclusive job design, and employer engagement

Targeted investment should be made in skills development linked to actual labor-market demand, inclusive job design for older workers and persons with disabilities, and structured employer engagement. Rather than generic training, skills programs should be job-linked and developed in partnership with employers. Employer engagement should focus on reducing compliance burdens, clarifying procedures, and promoting retention, thereby improving both employment outcomes and employer confidence.

9. Create a permanent Program Management and Coordination Mechanism for Model implementation

A permanent Program Management and Coordination Mechanism should be established to oversee implementation of the Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model. This mechanism should coordinate across ministries, provincial authorities, and partners; monitor progress; resolve operational bottlenecks; and ensure alignment with policy objectives. Establishing a permanent coordination structure would move refugee employment beyond pilot arrangements and provide institutional continuity.

10. Develop a Refugee Employment Data and Information System

A dedicated Refugee Employment Data and Information System should be developed to track refugees across all stages of the employment cycle. The system should include a minimum core dataset covering identity reference, employer information, permit status, mobility events, welfare coverage, and grievances, with appropriate data-protection safeguards. An integrated data system would support monitoring, policy learning, and continuity of protection while reducing duplication and administrative burden.

11. Establish a Sustainable Financing and Cost-Sharing Framework

A sustainable financing and cost-sharing framework should be established to clarify how costs related to recruitment, documentation, health checks, insurance, monitoring, and support services are shared among government, employers, and development partners. Transparent cost-sharing arrangements would reduce reliance on ad hoc employer contributions, improve equity, and enhance the long-term viability of the refugee employment system.

12. Establish a Strategic Communication and Public Information Framework

A strategic communication and public information framework should be developed to provide consistent, accurate messaging on refugee employment to refugees, employers, officials, and the public. This framework should address misinformation, clarify policy intent, and communicate safeguards to reduce stigma and political sensitivity. Clear communication is essential to building trust, sustaining public support, and enabling coordinated implementation across actors.

Thailand's refugee employment policy creates an unprecedented opportunity to promote self-reliance and address labor-market needs. However, without stronger policy coherence, standardized procedures, and institutionalized coordination, refugee employment will remain fragmented and limited in scale. Implementing the proposed model and twelve recommendations provides a pathway to transform refugee employment into a sustainable, protection-sensitive component of Thailand's labor-market and development strategy—benefiting refugees, employers, and the state alike.

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Executive Summary in Thai

บทสรุปผู้บริหาร

ประเทศไทยได้ให้ที่พักพิงแก่ผู้พลัดถิ่นจากประเทศเมียนมาเป็นเวลากว่า 40 ปี โดยมีพื้นที่พักพิงชั่วคราว จำนวน 9 แห่ง ตั้งอยู่ตามแนวชายแดนไทย-เมียนมา ณ เดือนมิถุนายน พ.ศ.2568 มีผู้ลี้ภัยที่ขึ้นทะเบียนกับกรมการปกครอง รวมทั้งสิ้น 77,728 คน โดยในจำนวนนี้มีผู้ลี้ภัยวัยแรงงานอายุระหว่าง 18-59 ปี จำนวน 42,601 คน ซึ่งถือเป็นกลุ่มที่มีศักยภาพในการเข้าสู่ตลาดแรงงาน

ตามมติคณะรัฐมนตรีวันที่ 26 สิงหาคม 2568 ผู้ลี้ภัยที่ขึ้นทะเบียนกับกรมการปกครองและมีเลขประจำตัวขึ้นต้นด้วย “000” ทุกคน มีสิทธิทำงานนอกพื้นที่พักพิงอย่างถูกต้องตามกฎหมาย ภายใต้เงื่อนไขด้านขั้นตอนทางปกครองและข้อจำกัดตามประเภทกิจการ ในพื้นที่ 43 จังหวัด ที่กำหนดทั่วประเทศ มติดังกล่าวถือเป็น การเปลี่ยนแปลงเชิงนโยบายที่สำคัญ โดยเปิดโอกาสให้ผู้ลี้ภัยสามารถเข้าถึงการจ้างงานในระบบอย่างเป็นทางการเป็นครั้งแรก นโยบายนี้มีเป้าหมายเพื่อส่งเสริมการพึ่งพาตนเองของผู้ลี้ภัย ลดการพึ่งพาความช่วยเหลือด้านมนุษยธรรมในระยะยาว ตอบสนองต่อปัญหาการขาดแคลนแรงงานในบางภาคเศรษฐกิจ และดำเนินการจ้างงานโดยคำนึงถึงความมั่นคงของรัฐและการคุ้มครองแรงงาน อย่างไรก็ตาม เมื่อเริ่มดำเนินการในช่วงปลายปี 2568 พบว่า แม้จะมีกรอบขั้นตอนอย่างเป็นทางการ แต่ระบบการดำเนินงานโดยรวมยังคงมีลักษณะกระจัดกระจาย อาศัยดุลพินิจสูง และมีความแตกต่างกันอย่างมากในแต่ละพื้นที่

ในบริบทดังกล่าว องค์การ International Rescue Committee (IRC) จึงมอบหมายให้มีการศึกษาวิจัยฉบับนี้ เพื่อจัดทำการวิเคราะห์เชิงประจักษ์และข้อเสนอเชิงนโยบาย สนับสนุนการพัฒนาระบบการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยที่มีความเป็นเอกภาพ คำนึงถึงการคุ้มครอง และสามารถขยายผลได้ในระดับประเทศ

วัตถุประสงค์หลักของการศึกษานี้ คือ การสนับสนุนการดำเนินการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยนอกศูนย์พักพิงในประเทศไทยให้ มีประสิทธิภาพ ยั่งยืน และสามารถขยายผลได้ โดยมีเป้าหมายเฉพาะดังนี้

1. ศึกษาการนำมติคณะรัฐมนตรีวันที่ 26 สิงหาคม 2568 ไปสู่การปฏิบัติในเชิงนโยบาย กฎหมาย และการบริหารจัดการ
2. ประเมินศักยภาพ ความต้องการ ความคาดหวัง แรงจูงใจ และข้อจำกัดของผู้ลี้ภัยในการเข้าถึงการจ้างงาน
3. วิเคราะห์ความพร้อม แรงจูงใจ ความคาดหวัง และความต้องการการสนับสนุนของนายจ้าง
4. ระบุช่องว่างเชิงนโยบาย กฎหมาย การบริหาร และการปฏิบัติที่ส่งผลต่อความยั่งยืนและการคุ้มครองแรงงาน
5. สังเคราะห์บทเรียนจากประสบการณ์การจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยในต่างประเทศ
6. เสนอแบบจำลองการบริหารจัดการการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยอย่างยั่งยืน (Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model) พร้อมข้อเสนอเชิงนโยบายที่สามารถนำไปปฏิบัติได้

การศึกษานี้ใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ประกอบด้วยการทบทวนเอกสาร การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกจำนวน 41 ราย จากหน่วยงานรัฐ นายจ้าง องค์กรภาคประชาสังคม องค์กรระหว่างประเทศ และผู้ลี้ภัย รวมถึงการสนทนากลุ่ม จำนวน 11 กลุ่ม ในศูนย์พักพิงแม่ลาและศูนย์พักพิงสวนผึ้ง โดยมีผู้เข้าร่วมการวิจัยรวมทั้งสิ้น 176 คน

การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้กรอบวงจรการบริหารจัดการการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัย ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 5 ระยะ ได้แก่ (1) การเตรียมความพร้อมและการประสานระบบ (2) การสรรหา คัดกรอง และจับคู่แรงงาน (3) การทำสัญญาและการอนุญาตทางกฎหมาย(4) การเข้าทำงานและการสนับสนุนระยะแรก (5) การติดตาม คຸ້ມครอง และเส้นทางหลังการจ้างงาน

ข้อค้นพบหลักโดยสังเขป

กรอบการดำเนินงานและการออกแบบระบบ

ประเทศไทยได้จัดตั้งกรอบการบริหารจัดการด้านการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยนอกค่ายอย่างเป็นทางการ โดยประกอบด้วย ขั้นตอนเชิงกระบวนการ จำนวน 9 ขั้นตอน ต่อเนื่องตั้งแต่การที่นายจ้างติดต่อสำนักงานอำเภอ การคัดเลือกแรงงานในค่าย การอนุญาตเดินทาง การตรวจสุขภาพ การออกใบอนุญาตทำงาน ไปจนถึงการรายงานผลหลังการจ้างงาน อย่างไรก็ตาม ในทางปฏิบัติ การดำเนินงานยังคงพึ่งพาการประสานงานแบบไม่เป็นทางการและดุลยพินิจของหน่วยงานระดับพื้นที่เป็นหลัก อาทิ สำนักงานอำเภอ ผู้บังคับบัญชาค่าย และสำนักงานจัดหางานจังหวัด แม้ว่าความยืดหยุ่นดังกล่าวจะช่วยให้สามารถเริ่มดำเนินการได้ในระยะแรก แต่ก็ส่งผลให้แนวปฏิบัติมีความแตกต่างกันระหว่างพื้นที่ สร้างความไม่แน่นอนให้แก่ทั้งผู้ลี้ภัยและนายจ้าง และเป็นข้อจำกัดศักยภาพในการขยายผลในระยะยาว

ข้อจำกัดเชิงโครงสร้างที่สำคัญคือ การขาดระเบียบปฏิบัติมาตรฐานระดับชาติ (National SOP) ที่เป็นเอกภาพ และกลไกกำกับดูแลข้ามหน่วยงานอย่างเป็นทางการ ปัจจุบันการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยยังถูกบริหารจัดการภายใต้กรอบนโยบายชั่วคราวในระดับ “การดำรงชีพขั้นต่ำ” ซึ่งปรับใช้จากระบบแรงงานข้ามชาติ ส่งผลให้ประเด็นสำคัญหลายด้าน เช่น การเคลื่อนย้ายแรงงาน การพิสูจน์ตัวตน การต่ออายุใบอนุญาตทำงาน สัญญาจ้างงานมาตรฐาน และการวางแผนระยะยาว ยังคงขาดความชัดเจน ทำให้การจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยถูกมองเป็นเพียงโครงการนำร่องมากกว่าระบบระดับชาติที่ยั่งยืน

บทเรียนจากต่างประเทศ

การศึกษาประสบการณ์การจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยในประเทศต่าง ๆ เช่น จอร์แดน ตุรกี เยอรมนี และออสเตรเลีย ชี้ให้เห็นถึงปัจจัยสำคัญที่เอื้อต่อความสำเร็จ ได้แก่ การบูรณาการการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยเข้ากับการวางแผนตลาดแรงงานระดับชาติ การประสานงานระหว่างหน่วยงานอย่างเป็นระบบ การใช้เอกสารและกระบวนการมาตรฐาน การมีตัวกลางที่น่าเชื่อถือ การเตรียมความพร้อมก่อนเริ่มงาน และระบบข้อมูลที่เชื่อมโยงกัน อย่างไรก็ตาม องค์ประกอบเหล่านี้ยังขาดหรือพัฒนาได้ไม่เต็มที่ในบริบทของประเทศไทยส่งผลให้ประสิทธิภาพของระบบยังมีข้อจำกัด

ศักยภาพ ความต้องการ และการตัดสินใจของผู้ลี้ภัย

ผู้ลี้ภัยมีทักษะจากประสบการณ์การทำงานจริงในหลายสาขา โดยเฉพาะด้านเกษตรกรรม ก่อสร้าง งานในโรงงาน และงานบริการ รวมถึงทักษะกึ่งวิชาชีพที่พัฒนาจากบทบาทภายในพื้นที่พักพิง เช่น การสอน การดูแลสุขภาพ และงานชุมชน ผู้ลี้ภัยส่วนใหญ่มองว่าตนเองสามารถทำงานได้หลากหลายภาคส่วนและยินดีทำงานที่ใช้แรงกายหากค่าจ้างและสภาพการทำงานมีความเป็นธรรม

อย่างไรก็ตาม แนวปฏิบัติในการคัดเลือกแรงงานยังให้ความสำคัญกับ “ความพร้อมพื้นฐานในการทำงาน” เช่น สุขภาพร่างกายและทักษะภาษาไทยขั้นพื้นฐาน มากกว่าการใช้ทักษะที่มีอยู่จริง ส่งผลให้เกิดภาวะการจ้างงานต่ำกว่าศักยภาพ การตัดสินใจของผู้ลี้ภัยยังขึ้นอยู่กับการเข้าถึงข้อมูลที่ชัดเจน ความพร้อมทางการเงิน ความสามารถด้านภาษา และปัจจัยระดับครัวเรือน เช่น ภาระการดูแลบุตรหรือสมาชิกในครอบครัว ช่องว่างข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับเงื่อนไขการจ้างงาน ค่าจ้าง เอกสาร ประกันสุขภาพ และกลไกร้องเรียน ส่งผลให้ผู้ลี้ภัยตัดสินใจภายใต้ความไม่แน่นอน และถอนตัวออกจากกระบวนการจ้างงานในระยะแรก

อุปสรรค ความเสี่ยงด้านการคุ้มครอง และข้อจำกัดของนายจ้าง

อุปสรรคทางกฎหมาย การบริหาร และสังคมสะสมตลอดวงจรการจ้างงาน ระบบเอกสารและการพิสูจน์ตัวตนที่ปรับจากแรงงานข้ามชาติไม่สอดคล้องกับบริบทของค่ายผู้ลี้ภัย ทำให้เกิดความล่าช้าและการตรวจสอบซ้ำ ระยะเวลาการอนุญาตเดินทางและใบอนุญาตทำงานที่สั้นส่งผลต่อเสถียรภาพของแรงงานและการวางแผนของนายจ้าง แม้มีกลไกการตรวจแรงงานและการร้องเรียนอย่างเป็นทางการ แต่ผู้ลี้ภัยเข้าถึงได้จำกัด ส่งผลให้การบังคับใช้กฎหมายเป็นเชิงรับมากกว่าป้องกัน

นายจ้างมองว่าผู้ลี้ภัยสามารถช่วยบรรเทาปัญหาการขาดแคลนแรงงานได้ แต่ต้องเผชิญต้นทุนธุรกรรมสูงจากกระบวนการที่ซับซ้อนและไม่เป็นเอกภาพ หลายกรณีนายจ้างต้องแบกรับต้นทุนและความเสี่ยงเองอย่างไม่เป็นทางการ ซึ่งนำไปสู่ผลลัพธ์ด้านการคุ้มครองที่ไม่สม่ำเสมอ และลดแรงจูงใจในการมีส่วนร่วมระยะยาว

แบบจำลองการบริหารจัดการการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยอย่างยั่งยืน

จากหลักฐานเชิงประจักษ์และบทเรียนจากต่างประเทศ การศึกษานี้เสนอ แบบจำลองการบริหารจัดการการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยอย่างยั่งยืน ซึ่งยึดโครงสร้างตาม วงจรการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัย 5 ขั้นตอน โดยมุ่งเน้นความเชื่อมโยงของระบบ ทั้งกระบวนการ มากกว่าการแก้ไขปัญหาเฉพาะจุด

แบบจำลองนี้กำหนดบทบาท การไหลของข้อมูล และความรับผิดชอบด้านการคุ้มครองในแต่ละขั้นตอน พร้อมด้วย กลไกสนับสนุนแบบตัดขวาง ได้แก่ (1) ระเบียบปฏิบัติมาตรฐานระดับชาติที่เป็นเอกภาพ (One SOP) (2) กลไก กำกับดูแลข้ามหน่วยงานโดยมีหน่วยงานเจ้าภาพหลัก (3) ระบบข้อมูลการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยที่เชื่อมโยงกัน (4) เอกสาร และสัญญาจ้างงานมาตรฐาน และ (5) ระบบติดตามและสวัสดิการที่บูรณาการ เป้าหมายคือการยกระดับการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยจากกระบวนการเฉพาะกรณี ไปสู่ระบบที่คาดการณ์ได้ ขยายผลได้ และสอดคล้องกับการวางแผน ตลาดแรงงานและมาตรฐานการคุ้มครองแรงงาน

ข้อเสนอเชิงนโยบาย

เพื่อให้การดำเนินการตามแบบจำลองการบริหารจัดการการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยอย่างยั่งยืนสามารถนำไปสู่การปฏิบัติได้จริง การศึกษานี้เสนอ ข้อเสนอเชิงนโยบายที่เชื่อมโยงกันจำนวน 12 ประการ ดังต่อไปนี้

1. พัฒนาและรับรอง “ระเบียบปฏิบัติมาตรฐานเดียว (One SOP)” ที่เชื่อมโยงกับ 5 ขั้นตอนของวงจรการจ้างงาน

ควรจัดทำและรับรองระเบียบปฏิบัติมาตรฐานระดับชาติ (Standard Operating Procedure: SOP) ฉบับเดียว เพื่อรวบรวมกระบวนการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยทั้งหมดให้อยู่ในกรอบเดียวที่ชัดเจนและเป็นทางการ โดยเชื่อมโยงกับทั้งห้าขั้นตอนของวงจรการบริหารจัดการการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัย ระเบียบดังกล่าวควรกำหนดบทบาทหน้าที่ของหน่วยงานอำนาจในการอนุมัติ ข้อกำหนดด้านเอกสาร ระยะเวลาดำเนินการ และจุดประสานงานระหว่างหน่วยงานส่วนกลาง จังหวัด อำเภอ และการบริหารจัดการค่ายอย่างชัดเจน การมี SOP เดียวจะช่วยลดความคลุมเครือทางการบริหาร เพิ่มความคาดการณ์ได้ของระบบ และรองรับการขยายผลในหลายพื้นที่ได้อย่างเป็นระบบ

2. จัดตั้งระบบให้ข้อมูลและสนับสนุนการตัดสินใจก่อนการจ้างงานในค่ายอย่างเป็นมาตรฐาน

ควรจัดทำโครงการให้ข้อมูลและสนับสนุนการตัดสินใจก่อนการจ้างงานอย่างเป็นระบบภายในค่าย เพื่อให้ผู้ลี้ภัยได้รับข้อมูลที่ครบถ้วน ถูกต้อง และเข้าใจง่ายก่อนตัดสินใจออกไปทำงานนอกค่าย เนื้อหาควรครอบคลุมเงื่อนไขงาน ค่าจ้าง ค่าใช้จ่าย ประกันสุขภาพ ประกันสังคม กฎระเบียบด้านการเดินทาง กลไกร้องเรียน และผลกระทบต่อ

ครัวเรือน การดำเนินการผ่านผู้ให้ข้อมูลที่ผ่านการอบรมและใช้สื่อมาตรฐานจะช่วยให้ผู้ลี้ภัยตัดสินใจได้อย่างรอบคอบ ลดความคาดหวังที่คลาดเคลื่อน และลดการถอนตัวจากงานในระยะเริ่มต้นอันเกิดจากความไม่แน่นอน

3. กำหนดให้ One Stop Service (OSS) หรือ Job Fair ในค่ายเป็นกลไกหลักของการสรรหาแรงงาน

ควรกำหนดให้กลไก One Stop Service (OSS) หรือกิจกรรม Job Fair ที่จัดภายในค่ายเป็นช่องทางหลักของการสรรหาแรงงานผู้ลี้ภัย โดยรวมหน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้อง เช่น นายจ้าง อำเภอ สำนักงานจัดหางาน หน่วยบริการสาธารณสุข และผู้บริหารค่าย ไว้ในพื้นที่เดียวกัน กลไกดังกล่าวจะช่วยให้การคัดเลือก การจัดทำเอกสาร การตรวจสอบสุขภาพ และการให้ข้อมูลเป็นไปอย่างเป็นระบบ ลดต้นทุนการเดินทางและการประสานงาน และยกระดับมาตรฐานการคุ้มครองแรงงาน

4. จัดทำแบบสัญญาจ้างงานมาตรฐานสำหรับผู้ลี้ภัยและเชื่อมโยงข้อมูลอัตลักษณ์ผู้ลี้ภัย

ควรจัดทำแบบสัญญาจ้างงานเป็นลายลักษณ์อักษรสำหรับผู้ลี้ภัยให้เป็นมาตรฐาน สอดคล้องกับกฎหมายแรงงานไทย และปรับให้เหมาะสมกับสถานะทางกฎหมายของผู้ลี้ภัย สัญญาควรระบุรายละเอียดค่าจ้าง ชั่วโมงการทำงาน ลักษณะงาน ที่พัก สวัสดิการ ช่องทางร้องเรียน และเงื่อนไขการเลิกจ้างอย่างชัดเจน พร้อมทั้งเชื่อมโยงข้อมูลอัตลักษณ์ของผู้ลี้ภัยในสัญญาเพื่อลดความคลาดเคลื่อนด้านเอกสาร แนวทางนี้จะช่วยเพิ่มความชัดเจนทางกฎหมาย เสริมการคุ้มครองแรงงาน และลดข้อพิพาทจากข้อตกลงแบบไม่เป็นทางการ

5. บูรณาการมาตรการด้านการเดินทาง การติดตามผู้พำนัก และการคุ้มครองด้านการศึกษา

ควรกำหนดมาตรการคุ้มครองด้านการเดินทางของผู้ลี้ภัยอย่างชัดเจน รวมถึงเงื่อนไขการลา การกลับค่ายในกรณีฉุกเฉิน การพาผู้พำนักติดตาม และการเข้าถึงการศึกษาของบุตร มาตรการเหล่านี้ควรถูกบรรจุไว้ใน One SOP และสื่อสารอย่างชัดเจนต่อทั้งผู้ลี้ภัยและนายจ้าง การบูรณาการประเด็นด้านครอบครัวจะช่วยลดความเสี่ยงในระดับครัวเรือน สนับสนุนการมีส่วนร่วมของผู้หญิงและผู้ดูแล และป้องกันไม่ให้เกิดการจ้างงานกระทบต่อการศึกษาของเด็ก

6. พัฒนาระบบติดตาม ตรวจสอบ และร้องเรียนแบบบูรณาการและตรวจร่วม

ควรพัฒนาระบบบูรณาการที่เชื่อมโยงการติดตาม การตรวจแรงงาน และการรับเรื่องร้องเรียนระหว่างหน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้อง โดยผสมผสานการตรวจตามปกติ การตรวจร่วมระหว่างหน่วยงาน และกลไกร้องเรียนที่เข้าถึงได้ง่าย มีการสนับสนุนด้านภาษา และใช้กลไกตัวกลางที่น่าเชื่อถือ ระบบดังกล่าวจะช่วยเปลี่ยนจากการบังคับใช้กฎหมายแบบตั้งรับ ไปสู่การป้องกันความเสี่ยงเชิงรุก และทำให้ความรับผิดชอบด้านการคุ้มครองแรงงานเป็นหน้าที่ของระบบไม่ใช่บุคคล

7. ส่งเสริมการเข้าถึงดิจิทัลและบริการทางการเงินในฐานะปัจจัยสนับสนุน

ควรส่งเสริมการเข้าถึงเทคโนโลยีดิจิทัลและบริการทางการเงินในทุกขั้นตอนของการจ้างงาน เช่น การยืนยันตัวตนดิจิทัล การสื่อสารผ่านโทรศัพท์มือถือ การเข้าถึงบัญชีธนาคาร และการรับค่าจ้างผ่านระบบอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ การเข้าถึงบริการทางการเงินอย่างเป็นทางการจะช่วยลดการใช้เงินสด เพิ่มความโปร่งใส เสริมความมั่นคงทางการเงินและสนับสนุนประสิทธิภาพของระบบข้อมูล

8. ลงทุนในการพัฒนาทักษะ การออกแบบงานแบบครอบคลุม และการมีส่วนร่วมของนายจ้าง

ควรลงทุนในโครงการพัฒนาทักษะที่เชื่อมโยงกับความต้องการของตลาดแรงงานจริง การออกแบบงานที่เหมาะสมกับแรงงานสูงอายุและคนพิการ และการมีส่วนร่วมของนายจ้างอย่างเป็นระบบ แทนการฝึกอบรมทั่วไป การพัฒนาทักษะควรผูกกับตำแหน่งงานจริงและดำเนินการร่วมกับนายจ้าง พร้อมทั้งลดภาระด้านกฎระเบียบและส่งเสริมการรักษาแรงงานในระยะยาว

9. จัดตั้งกลไกบริหารจัดการและประสานงานถาวรเพื่อขับเคลื่อนแบบจำลอง

ควรจัดตั้งกลไกบริหารจัดการและประสานงานถาวร เพื่อกำกับการดำเนินงานของแบบจำลองการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยอย่างยั่งยืน ทำหน้าที่ประสานหน่วยงาน ติดตามความก้าวหน้า แก้ไขอุปสรรคเชิงปฏิบัติ และรักษาความสอดคล้องกับนโยบาย การมีกลไกถาวรจะช่วยให้การดำเนินงานไม่จำกัดอยู่เพียงโครงการนำร่อง และสร้างความต่อเนื่องเชิงสถาบัน

10. พัฒนาระบบข้อมูลและสารสนเทศด้านการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัย

ควรพัฒนาระบบข้อมูลและสารสนเทศเฉพาะด้านการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัย เพื่อใช้ติดตามผู้ลี้ภัยในทุกขั้นตอนของวงจรการจ้างงาน ระบบควรประกอบด้วยชุดข้อมูลขั้นต่ำ เช่น ข้อมูลอัตลักษณ์ นายจ้าง สถานะใบอนุญาต การเคลื่อนย้าย สิทธิประโยชน์ และข้อร้องเรียน พร้อมมาตรการคุ้มครองข้อมูล ระบบดังกล่าวจะช่วยลดความซ้ำซ้อน เพิ่มประสิทธิภาพการบริหาร และสนับสนุนการเรียนรู้เชิงนโยบาย

11. จัดทำกรอบการเงินและการแบ่งปันต้นทุนอย่างยั่งยืน

ควรกำหนดกรอบการเงินและการแบ่งปันต้นทุนที่ชัดเจน เพื่อระบุบทบาทของภาครัฐ นายจ้าง และภาคีการพัฒนา ในการรับผิดชอบค่าใช้จ่ายด้านการสรรหา เอกสาร การตรวจสอบคุณภาพ การทำประกัน การติดตาม และบริการสนับสนุน กรอบที่โปร่งใสจะช่วยลดการพึ่งพาการสนับสนุนแบบเฉพาะหน้า เพิ่มความเป็นธรรม และเสริมความยั่งยืนของระบบ

12. จัดทำกรอบการสื่อสารเชิงกลยุทธ์และข้อมูลสาธารณะ

ควรจัดทำกรอบการสื่อสารเชิงกลยุทธ์และข้อมูลสาธารณะ เพื่อให้ข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยอย่างถูกต้อง สม่ำเสมอ และเข้าใจง่ายแก่ผู้ลี้ภัย นายจ้าง เจ้าหน้าที่รัฐ และประชาชนทั่วไป กรอบดังกล่าวควรช่วยแก้ไขข้อมูลคลาดเคลื่อน ชี้แจงเจตนาารมณ์เชิงนโยบาย และสื่อสารมาตรการคุ้มครอง เพื่อลดอคติและความอ่อนไหวทางการเมือง การสื่อสารที่ชัดเจนเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญต่อการสร้างความเชื่อมั่นและการดำเนินงานร่วมกันของทุกภาคส่วน

นโยบายการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยของประเทศไทยเปิดโอกาสสำคัญอย่างไม่เคยมีมาก่อนในการส่งเสริมการพึ่งพาตนเองของผู้ลี้ภัยควบคู่ไปกับการตอบสนองต่อความต้องการของตลาดแรงงาน อย่างไรก็ตาม หากยังขาดความเชื่อมโยงเชิงนโยบายที่ชัดเจน แนวปฏิบัติที่เป็นมาตรฐานเดียวกัน และกลไกการประสานงานเชิงสถาบันที่เข้มแข็ง การจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยจะยังคงดำเนินไปอย่างกระจัดกระจายและมีขอบเขตจำกัด การนำแบบจำลองที่เสนอและข้อเสนอแนะเชิงนโยบายทั้ง 12 ข้อ ไปสู่การปฏิบัติอย่างเป็นระบบ จะช่วยเปลี่ยนการจ้างงานผู้ลี้ภัยจากมาตรการเฉพาะหน้าไปสู่องค์ประกอบที่ยั่งยืนและค้ำประกันการคุ้มครอง ในยุทธศาสตร์ตลาดแรงงานและการพัฒนาของประเทศไทย ซึ่งจะก่อให้เกิดประโยชน์ร่วมกันทั้งต่อผู้ลี้ภัย นายจ้าง และรัฐ

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1. Research Approach

1.1 Background

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world’s worst humanitarian crises, helping to restore health, protection, safety, education, economic wellbeing, and power to people devastated by conflict and disaster. Founded in 1933 at the call of Albert Einstein, IRC is at work in over 40 countries and 26 U.S. cities helping people to survive, reclaim control of their future and strengthen their communities. IRC has been operating in Thailand since 1975 and currently provides essential services to displaced persons in Tak, Kanchanaburi, Ratchaburi and Mae Hong Son provinces. Assistance programs encompass health, education, institutional capacity building, water and sanitation services, protection and access to justice services, women protection and empowerment, livelihood services, protection in emergency and disaster services, resettlement, and advocacy. .

IRC Thailand has prioritized expanding its advocacy efforts to enhance the acceptance and integration of refugees within host communities. This initiative specifically targets local authorities and representatives of the business sector to promote refugees' access to employment opportunities, healthcare, and legal services. Thailand's advocacy includes advocate for national policy changes to grant refugees the right to work, integrate refugee services into national healthcare policy, and establish an administrative system for refugees and migrants.

In August 2025, the Royal Thai Government approved a landmark Cabinet Resolution on 26 August 2025 authorizing the formal employment of registered refugees residing in temporary shelters along the Thailand–Myanmar border. This development marks a significant policy shift from a decades-long humanitarian assistance model toward a more sustainable framework centered on economic inclusion and self-reliance. The resolution mandates the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labor to develop the regulatory, administrative, and coordination mechanisms required to operationalize refugee employment at the national and provincial levels—including worker registration, work-authorization processes, sectoral eligibility, and safeguards to ensure protection and decent working conditions. While the policy creates new opportunities for refugees to contribute to Thailand’s economy and reduce dependency on aid, many practical questions remain regarding implementation pathways, inter-agency alignment, employer readiness, and the implications for local labor markets and host communities. In this context, the present research is critical for generating evidence-based analysis to guide Thailand in designing a refugee employment model that is effective, coordinated, and sustainable.

1.2 Objectives

- To generate evidence and policy recommendations that support the effective, sustainable, and scalable implementation of refugee employment in Thailand, ensuring benefits for both refugee employees and employers
- To identify and propose collaborative mechanisms among government agencies, private sector actors, and humanitarian partners that can strengthen coordination and promote refugees’ transition into self-reliance through employment

1.3 Scope of Work

Under the overall guidance of the Deputy Director of Programs and the direct supervision of the National Advocacy Focal Point, the research consultant team will conduct an in-depth analysis of Thailand’s emerging refugee employment framework during November–December 2025. The study will examine employment readiness, barriers, and enabling conditions for camp-based refugees, and will include a desk review of all relevant policies, regulations, and stakeholder actions issued after the Cabinet Resolution of August 2025, using all information available up to December 2025. This will be complemented by stakeholder mapping, qualitative data collection, and the development of research tools—including interview guides, focus group discussion

(FGD) protocols, and consent forms—ensuring all tools are gender-sensitive, ethically appropriate, confidentiality and data-protection standards.

Throughout the assignment, the consultant team will conduct FGDs and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders—including government agencies, refugee communities, employers, civil society organizations, and United Nations/international non-governmental organization (UN/INGO) partners—and will work closely with IRC’s team through regular progress updates through biweekly meeting. Upon completing data collection and analysis, the consultant team will present preliminary findings and actionable recommendations to the Research Committee prior to drafting the final deliverables.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Research Framework

The research is guided by eight key research questions focusing on the current practices of refugee employment in Thailand, the capacities and motivations of camp-based refugees, employer readiness and expectations, gaps in the policy and regulatory framework, and the design of a sustainable refugee employment model. To address these questions systematically, the study applies a structured analytical framework based on the Refugee Employment Management Cycle, comprising five stages: Preparation and Coordination; Recruitment and Selection; Contracting and Legal Authorization; Deployment and Orientation; and Monitoring and Post-Employment Support. Each stage explores operational processes, barriers, enabling conditions, and coordination mechanisms that influence how camp-based refugees can access and sustain employment opportunities outside the camps.

Data will be collected from four complementary stakeholder perspectives—policy and regulation side (government agencies), demand side (employers), supply side (camp-based refugees), and service provider side (INGO/NGO/CSO partners)—to ensure a holistic understanding of the employment ecosystem. Sub-questions under each stage guide detailed inquiry into procedures, roles, information flows, administrative requirements, and worker protection mechanisms. Findings from these perspectives will be triangulated to generate robust evidence, identify systemic gaps and opportunities, and formulate actionable policy recommendations for establishing a feasible, safe, and sustainable refugee employment model for Thailand.

Refugee Employment Model

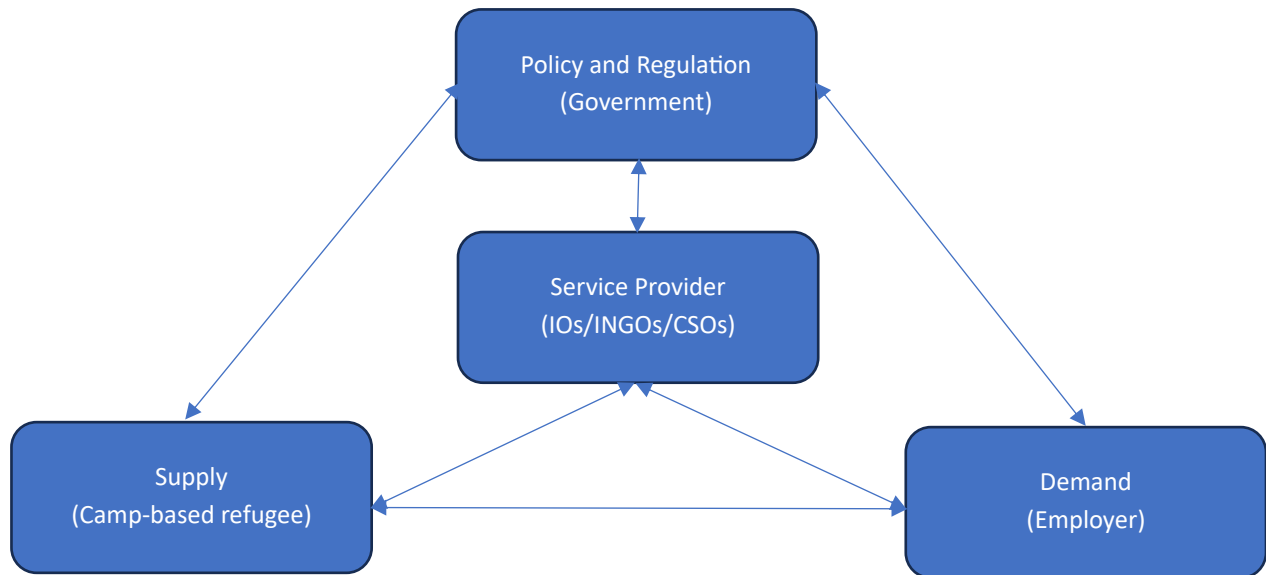


Figure 1 : Research Framework Diagram

1.4.2 Research Questions

This research comprises the following research questions.

- What refugees' employment has been implemented in Thailand following the cabinet resolution dated 26 August 2025, which allows refugees to work legally outside the camps?
- What are the capacities, needs, expectations, and motivations/demotivation of camp-based refugees in Thailand regarding employment outside the camp? How do refugees' skills, education, and prior work experience match the demand in Thai labor sectors (e.g., agriculture, manufacturing, services)?
- What barriers (legal, administrative, social) do refugees face in accessing formal employment under the new work permit system?
- What are the offers/benefits, expectations, support needs, and motivations/demotivation of employers regarding the hiring of camp-based refugee workers? Eg. What kind of incentives encourage private sector engagement in hiring refugees?
- What gaps, barriers and challenges in the policy/regulatory framework and the operational mechanism should be addressed to establish the sustainable refugee employment model?
- How effective are current regulatory frameworks (e.g., Ministry of Labor guidelines, work permit processes) in preventing exploitation and ensuring decent work standards?
- What should be the refugee employment model for work outside the camp?

- What are the specific recommendations for Thai policymakers and service providers to implement and support the proposed sustainable refugee employment model? How can humanitarian actors support skills development and vocational training to meet private sector needs?

1.4.3 Data collection and analysis methods

To assess the refugee employment and propose a suitable employment model for camp-based refugees in Thailand, the research will apply a qualitative research approach.

Data collection methods

The three primary data collection methods include desk review of relevant documents, key informant interviews, and Focus Group Discussions.

Desk review

To establish a comprehensive understanding of camp-based refugee employment in other countries and to conduct a review of all relevant policies, regulations, operational instructions, and stakeholder actions in Thailand issued after the Cabinet Resolution of August 2025—using all available information up to 25 December 2025—the research team carried out an extensive desk review. This review synthesizes national policy developments, administrative procedures, coordination mechanisms, and emerging practices that shape the implementation of refugee employment outside temporary shelters. Key documents reviewed include the following:

National Policy and Regulatory Framework

- Cabinet resolution on measures for managing the employment of foreigners residing in temporary shelters for displaced persons from Myanmar (dated 26 August 2025)
- Ministry of Interior (MOI)’s announcement on permission for foreigners residing in controlled areas to work (dated 8 September 2025)
- Ministry of Labor (MOL)’s announcement on permission for foreigners residing in controlled areas to work (dated 5 September 2025)
- Department of Public Administration (DOPA)’s guideline for requesting permission for foreigners residing in controlled areas to leave the designated zones (dated 25 September 2025)
- Ministry of Public Health (MOPH)’s guideline for implementing health examinations and health insurance for foreigners residing in controlled areas who have been granted permission to stay and work (dated 20 October 2025)
- Ministry of Public Health (MOPH)’s letter addressing obstacles in conducting health checks and issuing health insurance for migrants residing in the controlled areas (dated 6 November 2025)
- National/provincial/district-level operational guidelines on the refugee employment management from Tak, Ratchaburi, and other refugee-hosting provinces (e.g., procedures for employing foreigners residing in temporary shelters)

Stakeholder Actions and Implementation Mechanisms

- Meeting minutes for the meetings on refugee employment organized by CSOs and closed-door consultation on the right to work for displaced persons organized by Ministry of Interior, UNHCR, CCSDPT, and Thailand Migration Reform

Evidence on Employment Models in Other Countries

- Jordan: Work-Permit System and Jordan Compact operational assessments
- Turkey: Temporary Protection Regulation and refugee labor-market integration reports
- Germany: Integration through Work/Ausbildung pathway analyses
- Canada: The Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) documentation and labor-mobility pilots

- Australia: The Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration (EPRI) initiative and settlement-employment integration mechanisms
- United Arab Emirates(UAE): Labor-migration system, Work Bundle documentation, and regional refugee skilling initiatives

Existing IRC Research and Technical Materials

- IRC Thailand Advocacy Strategy on refugee employment

Area Selection

Mae La and Tham Hin camps were selected for this research because Mae La is a large camp with a substantial refugee population, while Tham Hin is a smaller camp with a comparatively limited population. In addition, both camps were selected for practical reasons, as they were relatively accessible for fieldwork within the limited data collection timeframe.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

To gather detailed, individual-level insights from key stakeholders — including relevant government agencies at the central, provincial, and district levels; the private sector; civil society organizations; international organizations; international non-governmental organizations; and the IRC team — the study focus on the opportunities and constraints related to refugee employment in Thailand. Semi-structured interview guides were developed and aligned with the research questions. The topics include the implementation of refugee employment in Thailand; the benefits offered to and expectations of employers; the support needs and motivations or demotivation related to hiring camp-based refugee workers; recommendations for the refugee employment model for work outside the camps; gaps, barriers, and challenges in the policy and regulatory framework and operational mechanisms; and recommendations for Thai policymakers and service providers to implement and support the proposed refugee employment model. Interviews were conducted in Bangkok, Tak, and Ratchaburi, either in person or remotely (online), depending on access and logistical considerations.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were conducted in both camps (Mae La and Tham Hin) with participants - including refugees with no work experience outside the camp prior to the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025, refugees who worked outside the camp prior to the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025, and refugees who are currently employed under the recent refugee employment policy according to the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025, and refugee who are persons with disability — to capture the information about the employment practices on the ground; refugees' capacities, needs, expectations, and motivations /demotivations of camp-based refugees regarding employment outside the camp; and general suggestions for Thai policy makers and service providers to support the refugee employment. A total of 11 FGDs were conducted with refugees inside the camps with the working-age refugees and camp leaders and camp committees residing in both Mae La and Tham Hin, as follows:

- 6 FGDs with refugees with no prior work experience outside the camps prior to 26 August 2025 (3 groups x 2 camps)
- 2 FGDs with camp leaders, camp committee members, and zone/section leaders(1 group per camp x 2 camps)
- 2 FGDs with refugees who previously worked outside the camps prior to 26 August 2025 (1 group x 2 camps)
- One FGD with refugee who are persons with disability (PWD) in Mae La Camp

Selection for research participants

Both interview informants and FGD participants were purposively selected to ensure representation from all relevant stakeholder groups involved in refugee employment policy and implementation.

Key informants and FGD participants were purposively selected across three levels — camp, district/provincial, and central/national. The selection aimed to include government actors, refugee representatives, employers, and service providers. Details disaggregated by sex, age, and respondent type are presented in Section 2, Profile of Research Participants, and in Annex 6, List of Key Informants Interviewed.

The selection criteria for FGD participants are for both refugees who are inside the camps (15 participants per FGD). There are two sub-groups of refugee participants with the following selection criteria.

Sub-Group 1:

- Must be a camp-based refugee holding an identification card for displaced persons fleeing conflicts from Myanmar or camp residents (with three digits starting with 000) issued by the Ministry of Interior
- Must be of working age, between 18 and 59 years old
- Have no experience working outside the camp prior to the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025
- Must represent different sections and zones within the camp
- Gender balance is ensured by including an appropriate mix of female and male participants
- Also include people with disabilities if they are convenient to join

Sub-Group 2:

- Must be a camp-based refugee holding an identification card for displaced persons fleeing conflicts from Myanmar or camp residents (with three digits starting with 000) issued by the Ministry of Interior
- Must be of working age, between 18 and 59 years old
- Have previous work experience outside the camp prior to the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025
- Must represent different sections and zones within the camp
- Gender balance is ensured by including an appropriate mix of female and male participants

For refugees who are currently working outside the camps under the permission granted by the Cabinet Resolution, six in-depth interviews were conducted via an online platform.

Data Analysis

Data from all collection sources were systematically triangulated across stakeholder groups and research sites to enhance analytical rigor and ensure that the findings are empirically robust and contextually grounded. The analysis combined thematic coding of interview and FGD data with cross-case comparison and validation against evidence from the desk review. Emerging patterns were mapped to the five stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle to identify convergences and divergences in policy intent, operational practice, and lived experiences across provinces and actors. Particular attention was given to stakeholder interests, protection safeguards, gender and inclusion considerations, and implementation risks.

The results of this process directly inform the design of an evidence-based and context-appropriate sustainable refugee employment management model, together with policy recommendations that promote safe, coordinated, and sustainable employment pathways for camp-based refugees. In addition, the findings and recommendations were validated through a consultative meeting held on January 26, 2026 with key informants interviewed during the data collection phase. The meeting was attended by 14 participants from civil society organizations, government agencies, and the private sector.

1.4.4 Research Limitations

- **Time Constraints in Data Collection and Reporting:** Time limitations affected the overall research process, particularly in relation to data collection, analysis, and report writing. The study was conducted within a two-month period (November to December 2025), which was relatively short given the nature and scope of the work. A substantial amount of time was required to coordinate with key informants and arrange in-depth interviews, especially across multiple agencies and locations. As a result, most of the project timeline was devoted to data collection, leaving the research team with limited time for data analysis and preparation of the final report.
- **Participation of Private-Sector Stakeholders in Interviews:** Some private-sector stakeholders were unable to participate in interviews. In one instance, a company perceived the request for this study as overlapping with prior engagements, as it had already participated in an online meeting related to refugee employment with another organization. As a result, the company did not engage in additional interviews. Some employers (including two food processing factories, a sugarcane plantation, three employers' associations) were not available to participate in the online interviews by the end of the data collection period.
- **Employer Willingness to Participate in Interviews:** Some employers who were currently hiring refugee workers expressed hesitation about participating in interviews, despite having received a formal invitation letter and detailed information about the study, including assurances of confidentiality and non-disclosure of company identities. Consequently, the research relied on interviews with employers who had been met in person during refugee recruitment activities in the camps, as well as those introduced through existing professional networks.
- **Gender Composition of Focus Group Discussions:** Although efforts were made in advance to recruit a balanced number of male and female participants for the focus group discussions, in both Mae La and Tham Hin camps women were more likely to participate than men. This was largely because many men were working outside the camps during the daytime, while women were more available to attend the FGDs. This pattern persisted despite prior coordination and repeated announcements made through the camp committees' loudspeaker systems to remind invited participants to attend.
- **Section-Level Participation in Focus Group Discussions:** Participation in FGDs varied across camp sections. Although invitations were extended to multiple sections and section leaders assisted in coordinating participation within their respective areas, attendance ultimately depended on individuals' availability and interest in joining the discussions.

2. Profile of research participants

Between 4 November and 25 December 2025, the research team conducted qualitative data collection using In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), with a total of 52 data collection activities (41 In-depth Interviews and 11 FGDs). Data were collected from a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society and international organizations, the private sector, and refugees in the study areas. The data collection aimed to capture policy, system-level, and lived-experience perspectives related to refugee employment following the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025. The research engaged a total of 176 participants through focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs). These included refugees, camp leaders and camp committee members, and external stakeholders from government, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector.

Table 1 : Summary of Participants by Data Collection Method and Gender

Data Collection Method	Male	Female	Total
FGDs with Refugees (Mae La & Tham Hin) including five persons with disability	45	60	105
FGDs with Camp Leaders, Camp Committee Members, and Zone/Section Leaders	13	12	25
In-depth interviews with refugees working outside camp according to the permission granted by the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025	5	1	6
In-depth interviews with stakeholders	24	16	40
Total Participants	87	89	176

In total, the study engaged 176 participants across all qualitative data collection activities. This included 105 refugees participating in FGDs, 25 camp leaders/camp committee members/zone or section leaders engaged through FGDs, and 40 stakeholders interviewed through in-depth interviews. Overall gender representation was balanced, with 87 male and 89 female participants. The inclusion of refugees, camp governance structures, and external stakeholders enabled triangulation of perspectives across policy, operational, and lived-experience dimensions of refugee employment following the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025.

In-depth Interviews with Stakeholders

The research team conducted a total of 46 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders from government agencies, CSOs, private sector, and refugees.

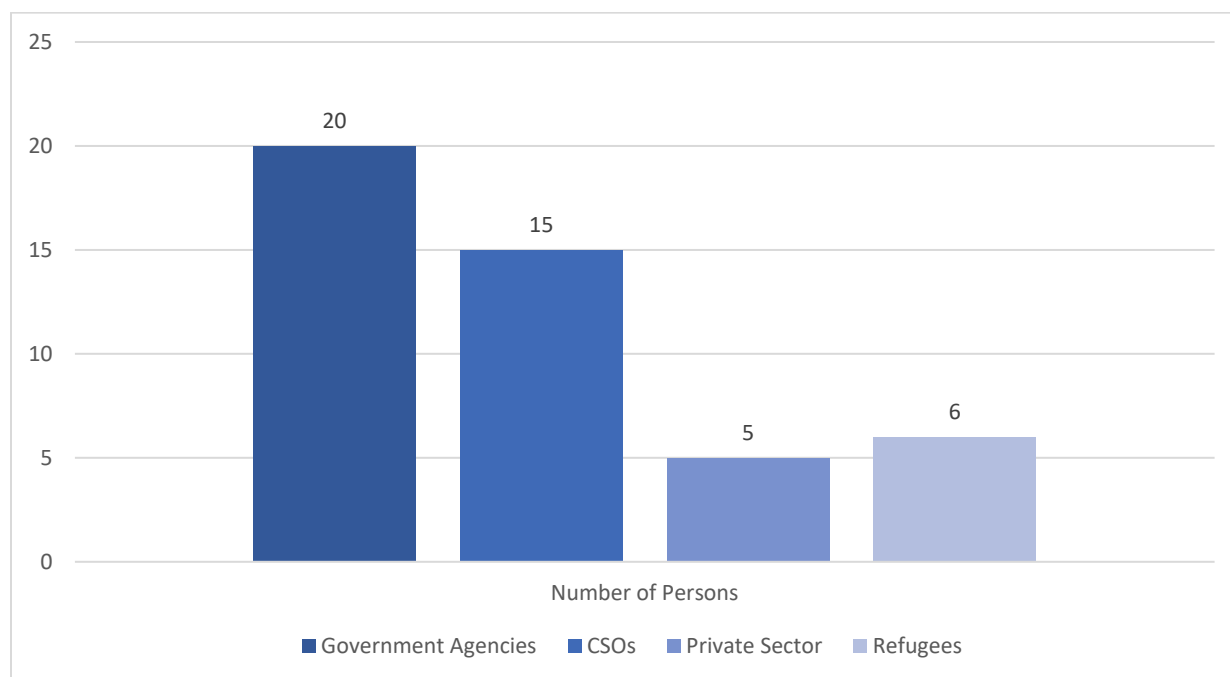


Figure 2 : Key Informant Distribution by Type of Organization

Most interviewees were from government agencies and CSOs, reflecting the key roles of these actors in policy formulation, protection, and implementation related to refugee employment. Representation from the private sector was relatively limited, as some employers declined to participate or faced time constraints. Consequently, private-sector interviewees were primarily employers encountered during field observations of job fair activities, and contacted through formal invitation.

In-depth Interviews with Refugees Working Outside Camps

In addition, the research team conducted in-depth interviews with six refugees who had taken up employment outside camps following the Cabinet Resolution of 26 August 2025. Snowball sampling was used, drawing from FGD participants, to reduce potential bias and ensure confidentiality. Interviews were conducted via social media applications. Interviewees were employed in the agriculture, service, and food-processing sectors.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The research team organized 11 FGDs in Mae La Camp and Tham Hin Camp. Key participant groups included:

- Camp leaders, camp committee members, and zone/section leaders
- Refugees seeking employment and meeting eligibility criteria for working outside camps
- Refugees with disabilities (Persons with Disabilities: PWDs)

Qualitative data collection across Mae La Camp and Tham Hin Camp engaged a total of 130 participants through multiple FGDs with both refugees and camp leaders, camp committee members, and zone/section leaders, providing a broad range of perspectives on refugee livelihoods, employment readiness, and camp-level governance. Overall, participation in both camps reflected relatively balanced gender representation, though with notable differences in composition: Mae La Camp showed an almost equal gender split, while Tham Hin Camp had a higher proportion of female participants. Age-disaggregated data, available only for refugee FGD participants in both camps, indicate that the majority of participants fell within the 20–39 age range, corresponding to the core working-age population. At the same time, a substantial share of participants aged 40 years and above—particularly in Mae La Camp—highlighted the inclusion of older refugees whose employment experiences, constraints, and perspectives differ from younger cohorts. Camp Committee members in both locations contributed important structural, governance, and coordination insights related to camp management and external employment processes; however, individual age data for this group were not systematically collected, representing a consistent data limitation across both camps.

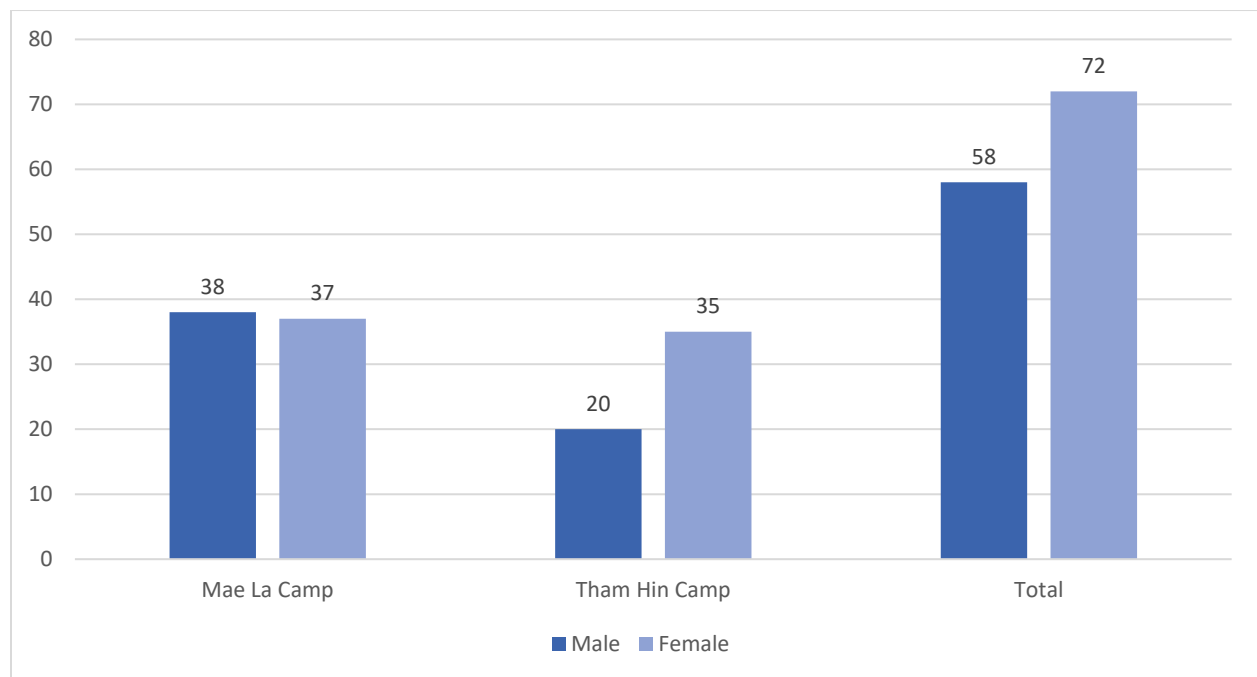


Figure 3 : Number of FGD Participants by Gender (Mae La vs. Tham Hin)

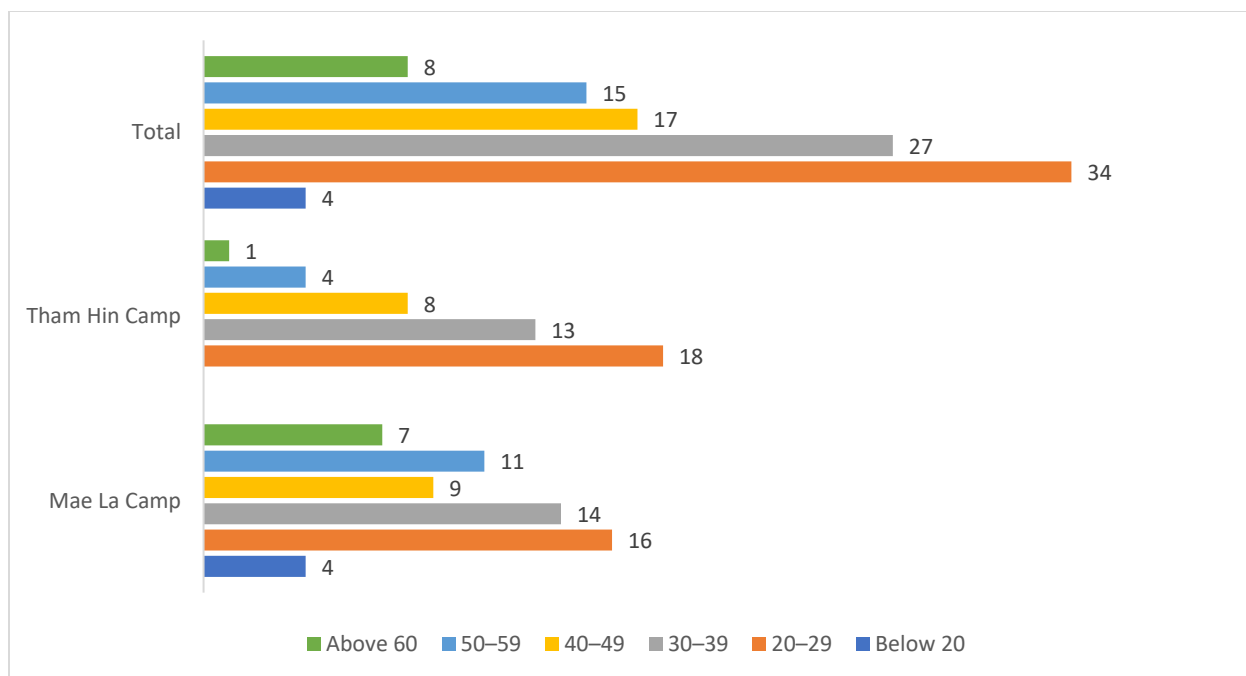


Figure 4 : Number of FGD Participants by Age Group (Refugee FGDs Only)

Note:

1. The age-disaggregated table covers FGD participants among refugees only.
2. Individual age data for camp leaders, camp committee members, and zone/section leaders in both camps were not collected.

3. Findings

3.1 Refugee Situation for Employment Outside Temporary Shelters

This section provides an overview of the refugee situation in relation to employment outside temporary shelters. It is organized into three main areas: the refugee context and relevant policy background, the procedures for refugee employment outside temporary shelters, and the practices observed in the employment process.

3.1.1 Refugee Context and Policy Background

Thailand has hosted displaced persons from Myanmar for over four decades, with nine established *temporary shelters* (also known as *temporary shelters for displaced persons fleeing armed conflict*) located along the Thai-Myanmar border in four provinces: Mae Hong Son, Tak, Kanchanaburi, and Ratchaburi. According to the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA)'s statistics as of June 2025, a total of 77,728 individuals registered with DOPA were residing in these nine shelters. This population is composed of two groups:

- 37,437 displaced persons who fled from Myanmar to Thailand in 1984 and whose displaced-person status was approved by the Provincial Admission Board. Children born to this group are included in this number.
- 40,291 individuals who arrived later and entered the camps either due to economic hardship in Myanmar or by crossing the border irregularly. DOPA refers to this group as the “unregistered population” to distinguish them from the first group.

Both groups have been issued DOPA ID numbers beginning with the digits 000 and are eligible to work outside the shelters under the Cabinet Resolution dated 26 August 2025. These refugees—mostly ethnic Karen, Karenni, and other minority groups—have lived under restricted mobility with limited access to formal education, livelihoods, or employment opportunities outside the shelters.

However, in recent years, international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing humanitarian assistance have significantly reduced their funding. This has led to increased responsibility for the Thai government in maintaining the welfare of refugees. In response, the Thai Cabinet approved a new policy on 26 August 2025, titled *“Measures for Managing the Employment of Foreign Nationals Residing in Temporary Shelters for Displaced Persons Fleeing Armed Conflict from Myanmar.”*

This policy marked a significant shift in Thailand’s refugee management framework. It aimed to:

- Alleviate the financial burden on the Thai state;
- Promote self-reliance among refugees through lawful employment;
- Contribute to national economic growth by addressing labor shortages; and
- Advance human rights protection in line with international humanitarian principles.

Following the Cabinet resolution, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) issued the *Notification on the Permission for Foreign Nationals Residing in Controlled Areas to Work in the Kingdom as a Special Case* on 8 September 2025, while the Ministry of Labor (MOL) issued a corresponding notification on 5 September 2025. Together, these measures officially allowed registered refugees residing in nine temporary shelters to apply for permission to work outside the shelters, starting from 1 October 2025.

Under these regulations, refugees holding identification numbers beginning with 000, verified by the MOI and listed in the *Registry of Displaced Persons from Myanmar*, are eligible to apply for work outside the shelters in 43 designated provinces across Thailand (See Table 2). These provinces span the Northern, Central, and Eastern regions. Refugees are permitted to work in any occupation not prohibited to foreign workers, similar to workers under the MOU system.

Table 2: Provinces Permitted for Refugee Employment by Region

Northern Region	Central Region	Eastern Region
1. Kamphaeng Phet	1. Bangkok	1. Chanthaburi
2. Chiang Rai	2. Kanchanaburi	2. Chachoengsao
3. Chiang Mai	3. Chai Nat	3. Chonburi
4. Tak	4. Nakhon Pathom	4. Trat
5. Nakhon Sawan	5. Nonthaburi	5. Nakhon Nayok
6. Nan	6. Pathum Thani	6. Prachin Buri
7. Phayao	7. Prachuap Khiri Khan	7. Rayong
8. Phichit	8. Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya	8. Sa Kaeo
9. Phitsanulok	9. Phetchaburi	
10. Phetchabun	10. Ratchaburi	
11. Phrae	11. Lopburi	
12. Mae Hong Son	12. Samut Prakan	
13. Lampang	13. Samut Songkhram	
14. Lamphun	14. Samut Sakhon	
15. Sukhothai	15. Saraburi	
16. Uttaradit	16. Sing Buri	
17. Uthai Thani	17. Suphan Buri	
	18. Ang Thong	

Demographic and Labor Characteristics of Refugees in Temporary Shelters

According to the Department of Employment's infographics on work management for migrants residing in the temporary shelters, it shows the DOPA's statistics on the number of the working-age (18-59) camp population of **42,601** in the nine shelters.¹ Their distribution across provinces is as follows:

- **Mae Hong Son Province** (4 shelters – *13,649 persons*):
 - Ban Mai Nai Soi, Mueang District: 3,813
 - Ban Mae Surin, Khun Yuam District: 1,046
 - Ban Mae La Ma Luang, Sop Moei District: 4,840
 - Ban Mae La Oon, Sop Moei District: 3,950
- **Tak Province** (3 shelters – *25,662 persons*):
 - Ban Mae La, Tha Song Yang District: 15,674
 - Ban Umpiem Mai, Phop Phra District: 5,253
 - Ban Nu Po, Um Phang District: 4,735
- **Kanchanaburi Province** (1 shelter – *954 persons*):
 - Ban Don Yang, Sangkhla Buri District: 954
- **Ratchaburi Province** (1 shelter – *2,336 persons*):
 - Ban Tham Hin, Suan Phueng District: 2,336

This data suggests that the **majority of potential refugee workers (around 60%) are located in Tak Province**, particularly in Mae La Camp—the largest and most accessible camp for labor recruitment.

3.1.2 Procedures for Refugee Employment Outside Temporary Shelters

Following the enactment of the policy permitting refugees to work outside temporary shelters (camps), both central and provincial authorities developed detailed administrative procedures to facilitate lawful employment. These procedures are based on the Ministry of Labor's announcement permitting non-Thais residing in temporary shelters to work in Thailand; the Ministry of Interior's announcement permitting non-Thais residing in temporary shelters (controlled areas) to travel outside the shelters for employment and requiring residence reporting to authorities; the Ministry of Interior's guideline on requesting permission to travel outside temporary shelters; the Ministry of Public Health's operational guideline on health check-ups and health insurance for non-Thais residing in temporary shelters who are permitted to stay and work; the official letter dated 6 November 2025 from the Ministry of Public Health to all provincial public health offices addressing operational issues related to health check-ups and health insurance; and information sheets issued by the Provincial Employment Offices in Tak, Ratchaburi, Kanchanaburi, and Mae Hong Son on procedures for hiring non-Thais residing in temporary shelters. Based on these instruments, the employment process consists of nine main steps, as in figure 5 and outlined below.

¹ Department of Employment. (2025, September 30). [refugee employment]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/DoeCenter/?locale=th_TH



Figure 5: Nine Steps of Employment Process

Step 1: Contacting the District Office

Employers contact the District Office responsible for overseeing the temporary shelter to notify their demand for hiring workers. The District Office then schedules a date for the employer to enter the shelter to explain job details and conduct worker interviews.

Note: In Mae Hong Son Province, employers who already know the workers and do not wish to enter the shelter may first contact the Provincial Employment Office to submit a list of workers. The employer then proceeds to the District Office to request travel permission for the selected workers.

Step 2: Coordination within the Shelter

The District Office coordinates with the camp leader and camp committee to publicly announce job vacancies within the temporary shelter in advance of the employer’s visit. This ensures that interested workers can attend interviews at the designated date and time.

Step 3: Worker Selection

Employers conduct interviews and select workers either inside the temporary shelter or at designated meeting points, such as the checkpoint at the shelter entrance.

Step 4: Submission of Worker List and Travel Permission

Employers submit Form 1 — “Information Form for Displaced Persons from Myanmar Wishing to Work” to the Provincial Employment Office. The form includes the employer’s details, the list of workers, the type and location of work, and the duration of employment.

Supporting documents must also be submitted, including:

- For individual employers: copies of the Thai national ID card, household registration, and commercial registration certificate (if applicable);
- For juristic persons: a copy of the company registration certificate; and
- Other supporting documents, such as a construction contract, agricultural registration certificate, or power of attorney (if applicable), together with the household registration document of displaced persons from Myanmar or camp residents issued by the Ministry of Interior.

Upon receipt, the Provincial Employment Office issues Form 2, acknowledging submission of worker information.

The employer then submits Form 2, supporting employer documents, and two 1.5-inch photographs of each worker to the District Office to request permission for workers to leave the temporary shelter. Upon approval, the District Office issues Form Or.Nor.2, authorizing the worker to leave the controlled area for up to 15 days to undergo health check-ups, purchase health insurance, report to authorities in the destination province, and apply for a work permit.

Step 5: Health Check-Up and Health Insurance

Workers must undergo a health check-up at state hospitals under the Ministry of Public Health in the originating provinces—Mae Hong Son, Tak, Kanchanaburi, or Ratchaburi.

After being certified free from the six prohibited diseases, workers may purchase health insurance at participating state hospitals in either the originating province or the destination province. Insurance premiums are THB 900 for six months or THB 2,100 for one year. Once insured, workers may proceed with the work permit application through the Department of Employment’s e-work permit system.

Health insurance coverage must be valid for at least the same duration as the work permit. Workers employed in enterprises or positions covered by the Social Security Act must maintain health insurance coverage until they become eligible for compensation benefits in accordance with social security law.

Step 6: Worker Movement

The employer escorts the worker to the destination province. Upon arrival, the worker must report within 48 hours to the District Office or the Internal Security Affairs Bureau, depending on the local administrative arrangement.

Step 7: Work Permit Application

The employer submits the worker's health certificate and proof of health insurance to the Provincial Employment Office in the destination province to obtain a work permit valid for up to one year. The initial work permit application fee is waived.

Step 8: Exit Authorization for Employment

The District Office issues Form Or.Nor.1, authorizing the worker to remain outside the controlled area for employment for the same duration as the work permit.

Step 9: Periodic and Post-Employment Reporting

Workers permitted to remain outside the shelter for more than six months must report to the authorities every four months during employment. Upon completion of the authorized employment period, workers must return to the temporary shelter and report to the District Office within three days.

3.1.3 Practices Observed in the Employment Process

Findings from interviews with refugees and government officials indicate that, while a formal administrative framework exists for refugee employment outside temporary shelters, its implementation in practice varies across provinces and camps, shaped by local administrative arrangements, resource availability, and the roles assumed by different actors.

Dissemination of Job Information within Camps

In practice, job information is disseminated within camps primarily through loudspeaker announcements, supplemented by additional communication channels depending on the camp. Across camps, camp authorities routinely use loudspeakers to announce job opportunities, including information on the type of work and recruitment dates. Refugees who miss these announcements often seek clarification from section leaders or rely on peer networks.

In Tham Hin camp, loudspeaker announcements are complemented by the use of projectors, particularly when employers provide job information in the form of video clips or visual materials. These projector screenings, typically held near the school in the evening, allow refugees to better understand the nature of available jobs. Refugees may also seek further information directly from the camp committee.

Dissemination practices rely almost exclusively on loudspeaker announcements, usually made once in the evening. As a result, refugees who do not hear the announcements depend more heavily on section leaders or informal communication among peers, including information shared by refugees who have previously worked outside the camp.

Role of Camp Commander

In practice, the Camp Commander—a district officer for security affairs appointed by the District Chief—plays a gatekeeping and coordination role in facilitating refugee employment from temporary shelters within the district. When an employer expresses interest in recruiting refugees, the employer must first notify the Camp Commander, who reviews the request and coordinates access to the camp. Upon approval, the Camp Commander informs the Territorial Defence Volunteers stationed at the camp entrance to allow employers to enter and set up recruitment booths at designated times and locations. The Camp Commander also notifies camp leaders and camp committees so that recruitment announcements can be disseminated to refugees in advance. Once refugees are selected, the Camp Commander authorizes their temporary exit from the shelter—typically for up to 15 days—to complete required procedures such as health checks, health insurance purchase, and work permit applications. Following completion of these requirements, the Camp Commander grants permission for refugees to leave the shelter for employment purposes for a period of up to one year, aligned with the validity of the work permit.

In one district, the Camp Commander additionally conducts informal screening of employers by verifying their business activities to ensure that they are genuine employers rather than brokers. However, there was an incident in which, despite this initial screening, a broker disguised himself as an employer and recruited refugees to work on a plantation. The broker collected 15,000 Thai baht from the employer for selecting and transporting the refugees to the workplace. After the refugees had begun working, the employer informed them that they were required to repay this amount. The refugees contacted their families in the camp, who sought assistance from the Camp Commander. In response, the Camp Commander requested the broker to return the refugees, and they were safely brought back to the camp. This incident highlights the important role of the Camp Commander in providing protection and assistance to refugees, while also underscoring the need for support from other relevant agencies—such as the provincial employment office, which has technical expertise in employment matters—to strengthen employer screening processes.

Moreover, the Camp Commander collects basic information about employers for public announcement within the camp and assigns a district official to follow up with employers to confirm that recruited workers have arrived at their workplaces and have reported to the destination district as required.

Role of Camp Committees and Section Leaders

The role of camp committees differs notably across camps. In Tham Hin, camp committees play an active intermediary role by coordinating with employers, publicizing job vacancies, and facilitating communication between employers and interested refugees. Refugees who wish to apply for employment may register their names with the camp committee for coordination purposes; however, this registration is not mandatory and does not constitute screening or selection on behalf of employers. Refugees who do not register in advance may still meet employers when they visit the camp to conduct interviews and make recruitment decisions. Final recruitment decisions remain with employers, who typically interview refugees directly at designated checkpoints at the camp entrance. Nevertheless, the name-registration practice reflects an initiative by the camp committee to support a more orderly and efficient recruitment process. Without prior registration, refugees may apply for and verbally agree to employment with multiple employers simultaneously, later withdrawing from some offers in favor of others. This can result in employers who have already selected workers being unable to recruit the agreed number of workers. To mitigate this issue, the camp committee encourages refugees to register their names with only one employer at a time. If a refugee is not selected by that employer, they may subsequently register to apply for other job opportunities. In addition, prior to the interview dates, the camp committee meets with each employer to confirm that the required number of workers has been identified. At this stage, the camp committee also requests additional details about the job positions offered to refugees.

In Mae La, the role of camp committees primarily focuses on receiving basic information from the district office and relaying it to section leaders, who disseminate job opportunity information through loudspeaker announcements. Refugees who are interested in employment typically approach employers directly during recruitment visits, without prior registration with the camp committee. Section leaders often serve as points of contact for providing additional information or clarification on recruitment details when needed. This is due to the camp committee's preference to avoid being perceived as having a vested interest or direct involvement in the recruitment process. As a result, refugees who are interested in job opportunities are encouraged to obtain further details directly from employers during interviews.

Employer Recruitment and Selection Practices

Employers' recruitment practices are generally brief and pragmatic. Interviews typically last one to two minutes per candidate, though factory employers may spend up to five minutes per interview. Individual and group interviews are conducted, depending on the employer. Refugees report that details regarding wages, benefits, and working conditions are usually explained directly by employers during recruitment visits.

Government Coordination and Evolving Institutional Roles

The implementation model has evolved over time. In the initial phase, a provincial employment office played a central role in screening employers, verifying job positions and welfare conditions, coordinating with the district office, and organizing job fairs inside camps. During these activities, employers presented job information directly to refugees.

However, this approach was later revised due to concerns that Provincial Employment Offices were exceeding their legal mandate or being perceived as exercising excessive discretion. Under the revised model, district offices now take primary responsibility for organizing job fairs and coordinating recruitment activities, while Provincial Employment Offices continue to issue Form 2 and provide support when formally requested, including observing recruitment activities.

Pre-Departure Training and Worker Preparation

In some provinces, notably Tak, Provincial Employment Offices provide preparatory training for refugees prior to employment outside camps. Training sessions are conducted two times per week, lasting one to two hours per session, and focus on daily life outside the camp, workplace norms, and work permit procedures. These trainings draw on curricula previously developed for migrant workers under bilateral MOUs. Participation, however, is not mandatory, as some refugees depart quickly with employers due to labor demand.

Health Check-Up and Health System Practices

Health check-up procedures demonstrate adaptive practices within the public health system. Initially, Mae Sot Hospital conducted mobile health examinations inside the Mae La camp due to its superior capacity, including laboratory testing and biometric data collection. Over time, community hospitals in border districts were trained to conduct health check-ups independently, with Mae Sot Hospital serving as a referral hub and mobile support provider when demand exceeds local capacity.

Health service capacity varies by hospital. For example, Tha Song Yang Hospital can accommodate approximately 100–200 examinations per day, while Mae Ra Mad Hospital can process around 100–150 per day. District offices coordinate appointment scheduling, and in some cases transmit worker information electronically in advance to expedite registration at the hospital. Nonetheless, workers are still required to present original household registration documents during examinations to verify DOPA numbers.

Reporting and Mobility Practices

Upon arrival in destination provinces, refugees can report to the district office where they reside, even if their workplace is located in another district. This practice is intended to facilitate monitoring and periodic reporting, particularly for refugees staying outside camps for extended periods.

3.2 Key Practices on the Employment of Refugees Outside Camps in Other countries

International experience shows that refugee employment is central to promoting self-reliance, reducing aid dependency, and supporting host-country labor markets, as reflected in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and the ILO’s Inclusive Market Systems (AIMS) approach (*UNHCR, 2023; ILO, 2019*).

Drawing on six country cases—Jordan, Germany, Australia, Canada, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—this section synthesizes key practices not by country, but along the five stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle used in this study: (1) Preparation and Coordination; (2) Recruitment and Selection; (3) Contracting and Legal Authorization; (4) Deployment and Orientation; and (5) Monitoring and Post-Employment Support.

Rather than presenting country-by-country descriptions, the analysis distills cross-cutting lessons that are directly relevant to Thailand’s evolving refugee employment framework.

3.2.1 Policy Design, Labor-Market Planning and Institutional Set-Up

Across all six countries, effective refugee employment begins with clear policy direction and deliberate labor-market planning (*World Bank, 2022; UNHCR, 2023*). In Jordan, the Jordan Compact created a formal policy bargain that explicitly linked refugee work rights to national labor-market needs and international economic support, while authorizing the Ministry of Labor to issue permits in clearly defined “open sectors” such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing and services (*World Bank, 2022; ILO, UNHCR, 2022; UNHCR Jordan, 2024*).

Turkey follows a similar logic under the Temporary Protection Regulation, combining refugee registration, residence controls and sectoral quotas (e.g. 10 per cent cap per enterprise, with exceptions for agriculture and seasonal work) to reconcile domestic employment concerns with the inclusion of Syrian refugees (*DGMM, 2023; ILO, 2022; MoFLSS, 2023*).

In Germany and Australia, preparation and coordination are embedded in broader integration and settlement policies. Germany’s Residence Act and Employment Regulation define when and how asylum seekers and refugees may work, while federal agencies (BAMF and the Federal Employment Agency) coordinate with Länder and municipalities to align language training, skills programs and local labor demand (*BMAS, 2018; UNHCR, 2022; BCG, 2017*). Australia integrates employment from the outset of resettlement through the Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration (EPRI) initiative, where settlement providers assess skills and link refugees to Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes and job-placement services (*Department of Home Affairs, 2023; Refugee Council of Australia, 2023*).

Canada, through the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP), similarly uses national coordination between the federal immigration authority (IRCC), provinces and NGO partners to align refugee mobility with employer demand (*IRCC, 2023; TalentLift, 2023*). Digital and institutional coordination mechanisms are also prominent. Turkey uses shared databases between the migration authority and labor ministry to verify identity, residence and work-permit status (*DGMM, 2023; ILO, 2022*), while the UAE’s “Work Bundle” platform integrates approvals from multiple agencies (labor, immigration, health) into a single online process, demonstrating what a streamlined, multi-agency employment gateway can look like—even though it currently targets migrant workers rather than refugees (*UNHCR MENA Bureau, 2023; AGFE, IFC, 2024*).

Key lessons and policy implications

- Refugee employment policy is most effective when it is explicitly anchored in national labor-market planning and sectoral analysis (e.g. defining “open sectors” with labor shortages), rather than treated as a stand-alone humanitarian measure (*World Bank, 2022; ILO, 2019*).
- Multi-ministry coordination mechanisms—linking the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labor, health authorities and social-security agencies through shared procedures and data—are critical to avoid fragmented implementation (*ILO, UNHCR, 2022; DGMM, 2023*).
- A “single-window” or integrated digital process (similar in spirit to the UAE’s Work Bundle or Turkey’s linked databases) can reduce transaction costs for employers and officials, and is directly relevant to Thailand’s existing use of the e-work permit system and Or.Nor.1/Or.Nor.2 procedures for camp-based refugees (*UNHCR MENA Bureau, 2023*).

3.2.2 Outreach, Matching and Private-Sector Engagement

At the recruitment and selection stage, successful models actively connect refugees with real vacancies through structured matching mechanisms. In Jordan, the Ministry of Labor, ILO and UNHCR organize joint job fairs in and around camps, where employers present vacancies and conduct on-site interviews. These are coupled with online job-matching platforms and cooperative schemes for sectors like agriculture (*ILO & UNHCR, 2022; UNHCR Jordan, 2024*).

Turkey uses its public employment service (İŞKUR) to deliver vocational training and maintain job databases, linking trained refugees to employers via job fairs and provincial labor directorates (*MoFLSS, 2023; ILO, 2022*). Germany and Australia rely on strong public employment and settlement services. The Federal Employment Agency in Germany operates the Make-it-in-Germany platform and provides individualized counselling, while apprenticeship schemes (Ausbildung) function as a recruitment pipeline into specific occupations (*BMAS, 2018; UNHCR, 2022*). Australia’s Jobactive and local councils play a similar intermediary role, connecting refugees who have completed TAFE or settlement programs with employers in care, horticulture and service sectors (*Department of Home Affairs, 2023; Refugee Council of Australia, 2023*).

Canada’s EMPP goes further by using specialized NGOs (TalentLift, RefugePoint, Talent Beyond Boundaries) to identify suitable candidates overseas and broker job offers with Canadian employers under the National Occupation Classification Framework (*IRCC, 2023; TalentLift, 2023*). Across these contexts, recruitment is consistently mediated by trusted public or non-profit intermediaries that reduce information asymmetries for both refugees and employers (*ILO, 2019; UNHCR, 2023*).

Key lessons and policy implications

- Dedicated intermediaries—such as Provincial Employment Offices, public employment services or accredited NGO partners—are essential to transform refugee employment from opportunistic recruitment into systematic matching aligned with labor demand (*ILO, 2019*).
- Camp-level job fairs and structured briefing sessions, as already piloted in Mae La and Tham Hin, can be strengthened by adopting clearer job descriptions, standard information packages on wages/benefits, and a transparent registration process inspired by practices in Jordan and Turkey (*ILO, UNHCR, 2022; MoFLSS, 2023*).
- Partnerships with employer associations (e.g. industry federations, chambers of commerce) can mirror the role of Jordan’s garments association or Germany’s sectoral bodies in creating predictable recruitment channels into priority sectors (*BCG, 2017; UNHCR, 2022*).

3.2.3 Work-Permit Systems, Quotas and Documentation

The contracting and authorization stage marks refugees’ transition from selection to formal legal status as workers and reveals trade-offs between flexibility, control, and administrative burden. In Jordan, refugees may

access employer-tied permits or more flexible permits allowing mobility across employers and regions, supported by reduced fees and simplified procedures (*World Bank, 2022; UNHCR Jordan, 2024*). This flexibility has enabled the issuance of more than 250,000 permits since 2016, although renewal requirements and sectoral limits continue to push some workers into informality (*World Bank, 2022*).

Turkey's system is more restrictive: work permits are tied to the province of registration, subject to a 10 per cent enterprise-level quota, and processed entirely online through the e-Çalışmaİzni system. Permits are valid for one year, renewable, and automatically linked to social-security registration, supported by strong inspection and penalty provisions (*DGMM, 2023; ILO, 2022*). In Germany and Australia, once protection status is recognized (or after a short waiting period in Germany), work rights are relatively broad, shifting the primary bottlenecks from legal authorization to language, skills recognition, and employer willingness (*BMAS, 2018; Department of Home Affairs, 2023*).

Canada's EMPP uses existing economic-migration channels but adapts documentation requirements and processing timelines to refugee realities, with many cases finalized within six months (*IRCC, 2023; TalentLift, 2023*). The UAE's fully digital labor-migration framework illustrates how permit issuance, residence status, and health checks can be consolidated into a single workflow, offering lessons for administrative efficiency (*UNHCR MENA Bureau, 2023*).

Key lessons and policy implications

- Simpler, more predictable work-permit procedures—minimizing renewals, limiting discretionary steps and integrating health checks/insurance with permit issuance—are associated with higher levels of formalization and employer uptake (*ILO, 2022*).
- Flexibility tools (such as Jordan's "flexible permits" or Canada's labor-mobility approach) can inform Thai discussions on whether, and how, to allow camp-based refugees to change employers or provinces without restarting the entire authorization process (*World Bank, 2022; IRCC, 2023*).
- Thailand's current process—combining Form 1, Form 2, Or.Nor.2, health checks, health insurance and e-work permits—could be progressively consolidated into a more integrated, digital pathway, drawing on elements of Turkey's e-permit system and the UAE's bundled model while ensuring accessibility for refugees and smaller employers (*UNHCR MENA Bureau, 2023*).

3.2.4 Pre-Departure Training, Settlement and Workplace Support

International practice suggests that deployment is most successful when legal authorization is accompanied by targeted preparation for both workers and employers. In Jordan, vocational training and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programs run by ILO, UNHCR and the Vocational Training Corporation in camps feed directly into job fairs and cooperatives (*ILO, UNHCR, 2022*), so that workers arrive at jobs with at least basic, sector-specific skills. Turkey's İŞKUR combines occupational training with Turkish-language and rights education, and then links graduates to employers via job fairs and job-matching databases (*ILO, 2022; MoFLSS, 2023*).

Germany embeds deployment in the dual vocational training (Ausbildung) system and integration courses, blending classroom learning, language acquisition and on-the-job work (*BMAS, 2018; UNHCR, 2022*), while post-placement mentoring supports both workers and firms. Australia's EPRI and Career Pathways Pilot connect settlement support directly to labor-market entry: refugees receive English language training (AMEP), vocational courses through TAFE, and structured internships and wage-subsidized placements via Jobactive (*Department of Home Affairs, 2023*). Canada's EMPP model ensures that, upon arrival, refugees are linked to housing, language training and local settlement services that support their initial period in employment (*IRCC, 2023*). The UAE's contribution is largely regional, funding skills programs for displaced youth in neighboring countries to prepare them for employment across the Gulf. Thailand has already begun to develop elements of such deployment support, for example pre-departure training sessions by Provincial Employment Offices in Tak focusing on daily life, workplace norms and work-permit procedures for refugees leaving camps.

Key lessons and policy implications

- Pre-departure orientation and combined language-plus-vocational training are key to reducing workplace misunderstandings, early drop-outs and exploitation risks (*ILO, 2019*). International models suggest these should be linked directly to concrete job opportunities rather than stand-alone training.
- Training is most effective when directly linked to concrete job opportunities rather than delivered as stand-alone courses (*UNHCR, 2023*). Thailand could systematically integrate its emerging orientation sessions into a standard “Refugee Employment Preparation Package” covering rights and obligations, basic Thai language for work, financial literacy, and mechanisms for seeking help, following the logic of Germany’s integration courses and Australia’s settlement-employment linkage.
- Given evidence from all countries that women face greater barriers (care responsibilities, mobility constraints, safety concerns), deployment support in Thailand should explicitly incorporate gender-responsive measures such as safe accommodation options, support for childcare and targeted outreach to women (*UNHCR, 2023*).

3.2.5 Inspections, Data Systems and Mobility Pathways

Finally, sustainable refugee employment depends on ongoing monitoring, accessible grievance mechanisms and opportunities for progression. Jordan and Turkey illustrate relatively strong inspection and permit-monitoring systems. Jordan’s Ministry of Labor conducts labor inspections in cooperation with UNHCR and trade unions, while Turkey’s provincial labor directorates and migration authority jointly inspect workplaces and rely on integrated digital systems linking work permits to social-security registration (*ILO, 2022; DGMM, 2023*). Employers hiring without valid permits face substantial fines, and inspection results feed into national reporting under the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey.

Germany, Australia and Canada focus monitoring more on long-term integration outcomes: municipal authorities, labor ministries and NGO partners track employment retention, transitions from temporary to permanent status, and participation in further training (*UNHCR, 2022; Refugee Council of Australia, 2023; IRCC, 2023*). Apprenticeship schemes in Germany and EPRI in Australia report high retention rates (often above 80 per cent) among participants two years after placement, while Canada monitors EMPP outcomes in terms of job retention and pathways to permanent residency. The UAE’s digital wage-payment and complaint mechanisms demonstrate how electronic systems can strengthen enforcement of basic worker protections, although these are not refugee-specific (*UNHCR MENA Bureau, 2023*). At the same time, the cross-country review highlights consistent challenges: limited disaggregated data on refugee employment, persistent informality, underutilization of complaint channels, and gender gaps in access to decent work.

Key lessons and policy implications

- Integrated data systems are essential for tracking employment trajectories and protection outcomes (*DGMM, 2023*). Thailand’s existing requirements for periodic reporting and return to camps after employment (e.g. four-monthly reporting and post-employment return within three days) could be complemented by a more systematic data system tracking employment trajectories, sectors, locations and basic protection incidents, building on international examples of integrated permit-and-social-security databases.
- Accessible, multilingual grievance channels—hotlines, online platforms or partner-based referral systems—are necessary to make protection mechanisms usable in practice, particularly for refugees who may fear jeopardizing their status by reporting abuse (*ILO, 2019; UNHCR, 2023*).
- Partnerships with trade unions, labor inspectors and civil society organizations can help monitor working conditions for camp-based refugees, similar to the role of trade unions in Jordan and ILO/UNHCR collaboration in Turkey (*ILO, UNHCR, 2022*).

3.2.6 Key Lessons and Policy Implications for Thailand’s Refugee Employment Model

Across the five stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle, the international cases converge on several strategic lessons for Thailand:

1. **Anchor refugee employment in labor-market planning and clear legal pathways.** Successful models treat refugee workers as part of national workforce strategies, using sectoral analysis to identify “open sectors” with shortages and designing permits accordingly. Thailand can build on its existing list of 43 provinces and open occupations by further clarifying sectoral priorities and communicating them to employers.
2. **Create a coordinated, digital “single-window” process for authorization.** Online permit systems in Turkey and integrated platforms in the UAE show that consolidating steps (registration, health checks, insurance, work permits, residence status) reduces delays and confusion. Thailand’s current forms and e-work permit system could evolve toward a more unified refugee employment portal.
3. **Invest in intermediaries and structured matching mechanisms.** Job fairs, public employment services and NGO “talent brokers” are central to translating policy into actual jobs. Provincial Employment Offices and trusted NGOs in Thailand can play a similar role in organizing recruitment events, pre-screening candidates and supporting employers.
4. **Link training and orientation directly to real job opportunities.** Combined language, vocational and rights-based training—delivered shortly before deployment and tailored to specific sectors—are more effective than generic training. Thailand can draw on elements of Germany’s dual system, Australia’s TAFE pathway and Jordan/Turkey’s camp-based training to design a “train-to-job” pipeline for camp-based refugees.
5. **Strengthen monitoring, data and protection mechanisms.** Integrated data systems and regular inspections in Jordan and Turkey, combined with long-term integration tracking in Germany, Australia and Canada, underline the importance of monitoring not only permit issuance but also retention, working conditions and progression. For Thailand, developing a basic refugee employment data system that links stages 1–5, as well as accessible grievance channels, will be essential to manage risks and support policy learning over time.

These lessons will inform the proposed Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model in Chapter 5, including recommendations on legal design, coordination mechanisms and support services to enable safe, lawful and sustainable employment pathways for camp-based refugees in Thailand.

3.3 Refugees’ Capacities, Needs, Expectations, Motivations and Demotivations for Employment Outside the Camp

3.3.1 Refugees’ Capacities

Finding 1: Refugees in camps have practical work experience and skills largely relevant to agriculture.

The findings indicate that refugees in camps have accumulated substantial hands-on experience, particularly in agriculture, through seasonal and informal work both inside and near camps. Many refugees reported prior experience in planting and harvesting crops (e.g., corn, rice, potato, sugarcane, rubber tapping), animal husbandry, and basic construction. In addition, some refugees served in semi-professional roles within camps, including as teachers, midwives, nurses, and community service workers with NGOs, demonstrating latent human capital beyond manual labor.

However, vocational training provided in camps—often delivered by NGOs—was frequently described by refugees and CSOs as being primarily oriented toward livelihood activities within camps (such as baking, cooking, and sewing) or preparation for resettlement to third countries, rather than alignment with labor demand in the Thai formal sector. As a result, these skills often do not match the requirements of employers recruiting refugees for factory or other formal-sector jobs. Employers and government officials noted that refugees are therefore commonly hired into generic labor positions, where formal skills certification is not required. An exception is the agricultural sector, where refugees’ existing agricultural experience can be more readily applied to available jobs, particularly in areas where employers have previously employed refugees and are familiar with their work capacities.

These findings suggest a structural mismatch between refugees’ existing capacities and the way labor demand is articulated and assessed. While refugees possess transferable skills—particularly in agriculture—the jobs for which employers recruit refugees are more diverse and extend beyond agricultural work. As a result, employer selection processes tend to rely on general physical fitness, assessed through physical appearance, and basic Thai-language ability, especially for service-sector jobs that require regular communication.

Given this context, it is difficult to prepare refugees with technical skills tailored to specific job requirements in advance. Instead, refugees require preparation in cross-cutting soft skills that support employability across sectors. These include the ability to work with others in formal workplaces, basic Thai-language communication, understanding everyday life outside the camps, adapting to social norms in Thai society, and awareness of relevant laws and regulations. Strengthening these foundational skills is therefore more critical than narrowly focused vocational training for improving refugees’ readiness for employment.

Finding 2: Refugees perceive themselves as flexible and capable workers across diverse sectors, willing to undertake demanding work when pay and conditions are fair, with better job opportunities influencing household decisions and longer-term exits from camps.

Refugees identified a wide range of jobs that they believe they are capable of doing, drawing largely on prior work experience, everyday household responsibilities, and informal skills developed both inside and outside the camps. Female refugees commonly mentioned factory work—such as garment and food processing—as well as beauty services, petrol stations, housekeeping, childcare, cooking, and small-scale trading. Several women explained that they felt confident in domestic and care-related work because of their own experience raising children and managing households; for example, some noted that having cared for their own young children made them capable of working as nannies or caregivers, particularly when childcare support from extended family was available. Others expressed interest in restaurant work or sales based on previous experience as servers or vendors, while some indicated that they could undertake weaving, baking, or sewing, including piece-rate packing work similar to e-commerce logistics activities within camps.

Male refugees most frequently identified construction, factory work (such as canned fish processing), and trading as feasible options. Older refugees emphasized agricultural work, gardening, and livestock-related activities as suitable given their experience and physical capacity. Across groups, refugees highlighted that construction work, despite being physically demanding, was attractive due to overtime opportunities and relatively higher monthly earnings, indicating a willingness to undertake hard labor when compensation is perceived as fair. Refugees also identified employment opportunities in resorts and the service sector, including housekeeping, basic service roles, factory work, agriculture, and animal husbandry.

Refugees who were already working outside camps noted that access to better-quality jobs could influence broader household decisions, including the possibility of bringing family members to live together outside the camps. Overall, these responses suggest that refugees perceive themselves as flexible and capable workers, willing to engage in a wide range of sectors, provided that jobs are accessible, remuneration is adequate, and working conditions align with their skills, experience, and family circumstances.

3.3.2 Refugees' Needs and Job-Related Expectations

Finding 3: Refugees' needs and expectations center on access to clear information, language skills, financial readiness, and institutional support, as well as household-sensitive considerations, to enable a safe and informed transition from camps to formal employment.

Refugees consistently expressed the need for accurate and accessible information about employment opportunities, recruitment criteria, legal procedures, and associated costs. In particular, refugees emphasized the importance of clear and advance disclosure of recruitment criteria, including the specific characteristics or qualifications sought by employers. In several cases, employers did not communicate such criteria prior to recruitment visits to the camps, leaving refugees uncertain about their eligibility until the time of interviews. Examples cited included requirements related to physical appearance or personal characteristics—such as restrictions on chewing betel nut, the presence of tattoos, or minimum height—which were only disclosed during interviews. This lack of prior information led some refugees to attend interviews without knowing whether they met the criteria and contributed to perceptions that selection may favor individuals with certain physical appearances.

In addition, refugees working outside the camps on plantations reported a lack of clarity regarding wage arrangements, particularly whether the work was paid on a piece-rate basis. Some refugees learned only after starting work that wages were calculated based on output—for example, being paid one Thai baht per stalk cut, with an average of approximately 200 stalks per day, while other tasks were paid based on weight. This resulted in earnings that were lower and less predictable than expected. Refugees emphasized that this information had not been clearly communicated prior to recruitment.

Furthermore, refugees expressed the need for assistance from relevant authorities or organizations to facilitate their return to the camps when employment conditions did not match what had been promised by employers. For example, refugees working on plantations who did not receive the wages they had been promised reported that they were unable to return to the camps on their own, even when they wished to do so. Although employers did not force them to remain at the workplace and stated that refugees were free to leave if they chose, employers did not arrange transportation back to the camps. As a result, refugees were left without assistance and did not know how to travel back independently. In addition, many lacked sufficient funds to cover transportation costs and therefore had to wait for camp authorities to arrange their return.

Financial vulnerability emerged as a critical need, as most refugees lacked savings when leaving camps and relied on borrowing from employers, supervisors, or peers to cover initial living costs. Refugees working outside camps described uncertainty regarding documents they signed, rights under insurance or social security schemes, and available grievance redress mechanisms (GRM). CSOs and government officials acknowledged gaps in pre-departure orientation, as well as the limited capacity of camp committees to support large-scale employment transitions. In addition, employment-related needs are shaped by household-level risk management. Refugees from households with young children, older persons, or persons with disabilities prioritize jobs that allow proximity to the camp, predictable schedules, and the ability to return quickly in emergencies, even when such jobs offer lower wages.

The findings indicate that refugee employment readiness depends not only on job availability but on access to transparent information, financial preparedness, and institutional support throughout the employment process. Gaps in advance disclosure of recruitment criteria, wage arrangements, and job scope—particularly when information is not provided in refugees' native languages—limit informed decision-making and increase risks of income insecurity and debt dependency. These risks are compounded by the absence of clear return and grievance mechanisms and by household-level constraints, such as caregiving responsibilities, which shape refugees' employment choices toward proximity and predictability rather than higher wages. Together, these

findings underscore the need for employment support systems that integrate clear information provision, financial and legal literacy, accessible exit pathways, and household-sensitive preparation.

3.3.3 Refugees' Expectations from Employers

Finding 4: Refugees expect employers to offer fair and predictable wages, safe and decent working conditions, clear and transparent communication, and basic welfare support, alongside flexibility and safeguards that reduce uncertainty and accommodate diverse needs related to age, gender, health, and household responsibilities.

Refugees' expectations from employers focused on high wages, followed by decent and safe working conditions. Many expected employers to pay wages as promised, provide free or affordable accommodation, food, and utilities, and ensure timely payment. Refugees with health concerns or older age preferred lighter work, while younger refugees were more willing to accept physically demanding jobs if compensation and welfare were adequate. Female refugees emphasized the importance of safety, group travel, and secure accommodation. Refugees also expected employers to communicate job details clearly in advance, including workload, working hours, overtime arrangements, physical requirements, and living conditions. For example, a female refugee reported that she only learned after starting work that the job involved carrying heavy items. Although the factory applied different weight limits for men and women, these physical requirements were not communicated prior to recruitment.

Refugees suggested visual information materials, such as photos or short video clips about jobs, workplace and accommodation, to support informed decision-making. Employers interviewed acknowledged that refugees often lacked realistic expectations about work intensity, while CSOs noted that insufficient disclosure of information by employers contributed to early job exits and mistrust. Moreover, refugees from households with dependents expect employers to provide flexibility, including emergency leave, predictable rest days, and clear arrangements for returning to the camp when family needs arise.

These expectations indicate that transparent and legal recruitment practices are critical to sustaining refugee employment. When expectations are not properly managed, mismatches between promised and actual working conditions lead to high turnover, worker dissatisfaction, and reputational risks for employers. The findings therefore highlight the need for standardized employer information disclosure, clear ethical recruitment guidelines, and effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure that working conditions are consistent with what is communicated during recruitment. At the same time, current refugee employment practices largely do not take into account the needs of specific worker groups, such as refugees with family care responsibilities and persons with disabilities. As a result, these groups are often excluded from employment opportunities, despite having relevant capacities and a willingness to work. This exclusion reflects the absence of inclusive job design and recruitment options that accommodate diverse refugee worker needs.

3.3.4 Refugees' Motivations in Legally Working Outside Camps

Finding 5: Refugees are mainly motivated to work outside camps by the need for stable income, family well-being, and greater independence.

Economic motivation was the dominant driver of refugees' interest in working outside camps. Irregular and insufficient income from seasonal work near camps, combined with uncertainty around humanitarian assistance, particularly concerns that food assistance would soon come to an end, pushed refugees to seek more stable employment. Refugees associated formal employment with dignity, independence, and the ability to support family members through remittances. Motivation to work is often conditional or hesitant, shaped by household considerations. Refugees weigh potential income against risks to family care, health, and the ability to fulfill responsibilities toward children, older parents, or persons with disabilities. Younger refugees viewed

external employment as an opportunity to gain life experience and mobility, while refugees with families prioritized income stability, welfare benefits, and the possibility of family visits.

Refugees already working outside camps reported feelings of pride and increased self-worth from earning income and navigating life beyond the camp. Peer influence also played a significant role, as positive experiences shared by relatives or friends increased confidence and motivation among potential job seekers.

The findings suggest that refugees' motivation aligns closely with labor market demand in low-skilled sectors. However, motivation alone is insufficient without structural support. Policies and programs that enhance income stability, ensure family-friendly employment options, and communicate positive role models can strengthen participation while reducing reliance on humanitarian aid. Policies that frame motivation purely as individual willingness to work risk misinterpreting hesitation as a lack of motivation, rather than as a rational household-level risk assessment.

3.3.5 Refugees' Demotivation in Legally Working Outside Camps

Finding 6: Demotivation to work legally outside camps stems from a combination of fear, uncertainty, family responsibilities, health concerns, and perceived risks associated with employment beyond the camp setting.

Refugees identified multiple deterrents to working outside camps, including fears of exploitation by employers, unclear wage arrangements, and potential debt obligations arising from the recruitment process. These obligations include costs related to health checks, health insurance, initial set-up expenses, and basic living costs outside the camps during the initial period of employment. Refugees also cited limited flexibility to return to camps in emergency situations as a significant concern. For example, some refugees reported that work permit conditions require them to complete a specified period of employment before returning to the camp, raising concerns about their ability to return temporarily—using leave—in the event of family illness or other urgent needs. At present, there is no clear guidance from the Ministry of Interior on whether refugee workers are permitted to return to camps during leave periods, nor on the procedures required to do so. Employers noted that migrant workers recruited from Myanmar under the MOU framework are generally allowed to travel home during leave periods and expressed the view that refugee workers should be granted similar flexibility.

Moreover, family care responsibilities—particularly caring for children, older persons, or persons with disabilities—strongly influence employment decisions, especially among women and older refugees. Refugees with dependent family members reported reluctance to take up jobs located far from the camps due to ongoing caregiving obligations. Health conditions and employer-imposed age limits (commonly 18–45 years for factory work) further constrained access to employment. Persons with disabilities and older refugees consistently expressed a willingness to work; however, they reported that most available jobs are physically demanding, age-restricted, and not adapted to their capacities. This exclusion reflects inadequate job design and the absence of adapted work arrangements, rather than a lack of motivation to work.

Language barriers and unfamiliar living and working environments outside camps heightened feelings of insecurity. Some refugees feared that engaging in formal employment could jeopardize their eligibility for resettlement to third countries, reflecting persistent misinformation. Refugees currently working outside camps also reported that unmet expectations—such as lower-than-promised wages, harsh working conditions, or inadequate facilities (e.g., insufficient toilets)—reinforced negative perceptions among those still in the camps and discouraged others from applying.

These demotivating factors underscore the central role of risk perception in refugees' employment decisions. Without credible safeguards, accessible grievance mechanisms, and clear assurances regarding mobility and the ability to return to camps, when necessary, many refugees are likely to remain hesitant to participate in formal

labor schemes. Addressing demotivation therefore requires not only improved information and communication, but also enforceable protections, family-sensitive employment arrangements, and trust-building measures among refugees, employers, and government agencies. Moreover, without deliberate inclusion of persons with disabilities and older persons—through adapted job design, adapted work arrangements, or in-camp income-generating options—employment policies risk reinforcing existing structural exclusion and inequality.

3.4 Barriers to Refugees' Access to Formal Employment under the Work Permit System

Despite the introduction of a new work permit system, refugees continue to face interconnected legal, administrative, and social barriers that limit their ability to access, remain in, and benefit from formal employment. These barriers arise at multiple stages of the employment pathway—from eligibility and recruitment to job retention—and disproportionately affect refugees with insecure legal status, family care responsibilities, limited language skills, and little financial capital.

3.4.1 Legal Barriers

Finding 7: A key legal barrier is refugees' restricted legal status and limited freedom of movement, which directly shape access to formal employment.

Refugees without DOPA No. 000 are entirely excluded from applying for work permits. Even those who are eligible are typically tied to specific employers and locations, limiting mobility and the ability to change jobs. Employers and government officials noted that work permits are generally issued for one year and require refugees to return to the camps for renewal. This creates uncertainty for both workers and employers and discourages longer-term employment relationships. Employers further emphasized that restrictions on changing work locations—especially in sectors such as construction where worksites change frequently—reduce the practicality of hiring refugees. In addition, many refugees expressed fear that taking up legal employment could jeopardize their eligibility for future resettlement, reflecting ongoing misinformation and the absence of clear, authoritative communication.

3.4.2 Administrative Barriers

Finding 8: Recruitment information is fragmented, time-sensitive, and unevenly disseminated, often announced only once through loudspeakers.

Information about upcoming recruitment by employers—typically transmitted from district offices to camps for announcement via loudspeakers—is limited and often lacks sufficient detail. In particular, written information about employers and job conditions is rarely provided in advance, and materials translated into Karen are generally unavailable prior to employers' recruitment visits. As a result, refugees have limited time and information to assess job conditions and make informed decisions.

Recruitment procedures also vary widely across camps, with inconsistent roles played by camp committees, district offices, and provincial employment offices. Refugees further reported confusion regarding required documentation, noting that forms they were asked to sign—such as those completed at district offices—were often in Thai and not adequately explained, leaving them unsure of what they were consenting to. In addition, refugees reported uncertainty over responsibility for pre-employment costs, such as health checks, insurance, travel. Decision-making timeframes were described as particularly constrained: refugees often only learned details about job conditions, wages, and benefits when employers arrived to conduct interviews, after which medical checks and travel to workplaces typically followed within a few days or a week. This compressed timeline further limited refugees' ability to evaluate job offers and consider alternatives.

3.4.3 Social and Household-Level Barriers

Finding 9: Social and household factors strongly influence refugees' decisions to seek employment.

Many decisions are made at the household level, shaped by childcare responsibilities, care for older persons or persons with disabilities, and the inability to live together as a family outside the camps. Women, older refugees, and persons with disabilities reported particular exclusion due to age limits, physically demanding job requirements, and the lack of job designs adapted to reduced mobility or care obligations. Language barriers remain pervasive. Limited Thai proficiency reduces refugees' confidence during recruitment, restricts their understanding of job roles and conditions, and heightens fears of exploitation or police encounters. Employers and government officials similarly cited communication difficulties and unfamiliarity with workplace norms or "industrial discipline" as perceived risks when hiring refugees. Refugees also reported social isolation and fear of workplace discrimination as deterrents, noting that they often perceived themselves as different from other workers. For example, refugees living in camps who had never worked outside the camps expressed concerns about whether Thai people would look down on or discriminate against them. By contrast, some refugees working in agriculture reported that their employers and Thai shopkeepers did not treat them in a demeaning manner. In another case, a refugee who had worked as a waiter at a restaurant outside the camp prior to the August 2025 Cabinet Resolution perceived that a Thai employer treated him in a demeaning way compared to Thai workers. In a further example, a refugee currently working in a factory initially believed that Myanmar co-workers were speaking negatively about her because she could not understand the language; she later learned that this was not the case. While some refugees currently working under the Cabinet Resolution policy described positive relationships with Thai employers and co-workers, others experienced discrepancies between promised and actual wages and working conditions. Such experiences reinforced mistrust and contributed to refugees' reluctance to engage in formal employment.

These findings demonstrate that formal work authorization alone is insufficient to enable meaningful access to the labor market for refugees. Household-level constraints, social vulnerabilities, legal rigidity, and fragmented procedures interact to produce high drop-out rates at multiple stages of the employment process. In practice, some refugees withdraw after being selected by employers but before undergoing health checks; others decide not to proceed after completing health checks; and some who begin work subsequently return to the camps due to dissatisfaction with wages, working conditions, or overall job arrangements. Without clearer and more flexible legal pathways—including options for job mobility and permit renewal—simpler and more standardized administrative procedures, and stronger pre-employment preparation and communication, the current system risks formalizing recruitment processes without achieving the intended policy objective of enabling refugees to take up and remain in employment outside the camps.

For refugee employment to be sustainable, policy responses must therefore extend beyond work permit authorization to address system-wide coordination, clear and transparent information on costs, rights, and obligations, employment models that take household responsibilities into account, and targeted support for language development, financial readiness, and protection.

3.5 Employers' Offers/Benefits, Expectations, Support Needs, Motivations/Incentives and Demotivations for Hiring Refugees

3.5.1 Employers' offers and benefits

Finding 10: Employers' offers to refugee workers often extend beyond minimum requirements, with some companies covering up-front costs and providing basic welfare and on-the-job orientation to reduce entry barriers and stabilize recruitment.

Employers reported offering cost coverage and welfare support to make recruitment feasible and attractive. Several employers stated that they paid for work permit–related expenses, including work permit application fees, health checks, health insurance, and travel, sometimes without deducting these costs from wages. Some employers emphasized that they would not charge recruitment fees and would absorb losses even if workers later withdrew. This position was linked to corporate standards and market requirements; for example, one employer noted adherence to a no-recruitment-fee policy partly due to export market expectations (e.g., European buyers).

Employers also described providing orientation and workplace onboarding, often relying on existing Myanmar MOU workers and supervisors to train new refugee recruits. Many noted that jobs did not require specialist skills and could be learned on the job. In addition, employers highlighted a principle of non-stigmatization, arguing that refugees should not be “labelled” and should have equal opportunities to progress and compete for higher-skilled roles.

Employers further emphasized that these offers and benefits are often designed to compensate for systemic gaps in the employment process rather than to provide exceptional incentives. Covering up-front costs and providing welfare support were described as necessary to offset uncertainties in documentation, coordination across agencies, and delays before workers become productive. Employer-provided benefits are therefore frequently risk-mitigation measures rather than optional perks, particularly in the absence of standardized procedures and clear government guidance.

These findings indicate that employers can act as important gap-fillers where policy guidance is unclear, especially with regard to cost responsibilities and worker readiness. However, reliance on discretionary employer support leads to uneven practices. There is therefore a need to shift from reliance on individual employer capacity toward system-level solutions that reduce uncertainty and pre-employment risks, rather than expecting employers to absorb these costs on a discretionary basis.

3.5.2 Employers' Expectations

Finding 11: Employers' selection criteria for refugee workers are driven less by certified skills and more by indicators of “work readiness,” particularly health and physical fitness, basic Thai-language communication, reliability, and workplace discipline.

Across informants, employers' expectations included age and health screening—commonly 18–40 or 18–45 years for factory work, with some flexibility for older workers in agriculture or for physically suitable candidates. Employers also emphasized behavioral norms, such as refraining from chewing betel while working and managing visible tattoos in accordance with workplace rules. Thai-language ability was repeatedly highlighted as a critical criterion, especially for service-sector roles and jobs involving customer interaction, handling money, or coordination with supervisors. Some employers stated that they preferred refugees because they perceived them to speak Thai better than some MOU workers, based on one-on-one interviews. Employers further stressed expectations around industrial discipline, diligence, honesty (particularly for small firms), and

commitment to remain employed for at least one year. Refugee accounts echoed these expectations, noting employers' preferences for specific age ranges and basic work-readiness indicators.

Employers also emphasized that their expectations are shaped by concerns over legal compliance. Beyond worker performance, employers expect recruitment processes that minimize administrative steps and coordination burdens, particularly where employers are required to engage with multiple authorities, such as district offices, employment offices, and local hospitals. Employers further emphasized the need for clear and consistent communication regarding health checks and health insurance arrangements, including clarification on whether health insurance can be purchased in either the origin or destination province. Several employers noted that inconsistent interpretation of requirements across authorities—for example, whether health checks conducted in the origin province must be re-requested by the hospital in the destination province prior to health insurance purchase—creates legal uncertainty and increases administrative burdens for employers. These inconsistencies discourage hiring by raising compliance risks and transaction costs for employers.

The evidence points to a mismatch between how labor demand is assessed—primarily through language ability, discipline, and fitness—and how refugee skills are often framed, such as informal sector experience. This underscores that employer expectations extend beyond worker attributes to include system reliability and legal certainty. Pre-employment preparation should therefore prioritize Thai-language communication, workplace norms, and realistic job previews, alongside clear and consistent health and fitness requirements, to reduce misunderstandings and early drop-outs.

3.5.3 Employers' Support Needs for Hiring Refugees

Finding 12: Employers' main support needs relate to simplified inter-agency coordination, standardized documentation, and recruitment mechanisms that reduce transaction costs, particularly for employers located far from refugee camps.

Employers reported needing practical operational support to navigate recruitment and compliance requirements. Some indicated a willingness to use agents or intermediaries to connect with camps and source workers, primarily to reduce the need for repeated travel for worker selection. Others suggested that a training or preparation center could serve as an intake point where employers could recruit workers who are already “work-ready.” Language training—especially basic Thai—was highlighted as a key support need.

Employers also raised concerns about documentation errors by authorities, such as incorrect province or work-location details, which resulted in additional costs and repeat trips to correct paperwork. Small-scale employers, including farmers, noted that assistance from government offices in completing administrative procedures—such as submitting work permit applications through the e-work permit system—would make participation more feasible. In addition, some employers reported information gaps, indicating that they had never received direct government outreach or clear guidance on procedures for hiring refugees.

Employers repeatedly proposed the establishment of a process-level “Single Window,” supported by a standardized operating manual or checklist, to reduce confusion arising from engagement with multiple agencies. Uncertainty was commonly reported regarding the sequencing of steps—such as worker selection, health check-ups and insurance, work permit applications, and reporting—as well as the lack of clarity over which agency serves as the lead coordination body for the refugee employment system.

These findings highlight the need for an enabling mechanism that reduces transaction costs and standardizes processes. This includes a one-stop coordination model, standardized operating procedures across camps, and, where appropriate, an authorized matching or intermediation function to pre-screen potential workers based on employers' job requirements, with safeguards in place to prevent abusive brokerage and ensure ethical and efficient recruitment.

3.5.4 Employers' Motivations and Incentives in Hiring Refugees

Finding 13: Employers' engagement is primarily motivated by acute labor shortages and constraints in alternative recruitment channels, while perceptions of workforce stability and reputational or corporate social responsibility (CSR) considerations further strengthen interest.

Employers consistently cited labor shortages as a primary motivation for hiring refugees, particularly in light of constraints associated with other recruitment channels. Key motivations included disruptions and delays in recruitment under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) framework with Myanmar and Cambodia, border instability, and limitations related to border-pass arrangements. Employers emphasized the need to recruit workers quickly, noting that the process of hiring refugees is often faster and less costly than MOU recruitment, which is typically time-consuming and expensive. In addition, work permit fees for refugees are waived under the current policy, further reducing employers' recruitment costs.

Employers in construction and service sectors reported especially urgent labor needs. In such cases, even employment periods of one year were considered acceptable. Several employers also viewed refugee workers as a more stable workforce, as refugees cannot freely change employers without returning to the camps. This was perceived to reduce the risk of workers leaving for other employers offering higher wages—a concern commonly associated with other migrant labor channels. Employers further noted that refugees have a fixed place of residence in the camps, making their whereabouts known and predictable, in contrast to other migrant workers recruited through private brokers or recruitment agencies, whose living arrangements may be unclear to employers.

Several employers characterized refugee hiring as a “win-win” situation, in which businesses are able to fill vacancies, the state reduces care and assistance burdens, and refugees gain income and dignity through formal employment. Employers and refugees alike also highlighted compliance-related motivations, noting that formal refugee employment reduces the risk of arrest or penalties associated with working without valid work authorization. Employers stressed that overall recruitment costs remain lower than those associated with MOU-based migrant worker recruitment, particularly in cases where employers are required to pay broker/recruitment service fees.

In addition, some employers identified reputational and commercial incentives for hiring refugees. Employers noted that linking refugee employment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments could generate tangible business benefits, such as increased order volumes from international buyers. For example, some employers pointed out that buyers in the European Union may place larger orders with companies on the condition that they employ refugee workers, creating a direct commercial incentive to hire refugees. This perspective aligns with views expressed by civil society organizations that promote refugee employment as part of broader CSR strategies within global supply chains.

Employer motivation was also strongly shaped by broader system conditions. Employers emphasized that labor shortages translate into actual hiring only when procedures are predictable and administrative risks are manageable. Several noted that uncertainty regarding timelines, documentation requirements, and inter-agency coordination can outweigh labor shortages as a decision factor, leading employers to delay or abandon recruitment plans despite immediate workforce needs.

These findings indicate that employer motivations are largely structural rather than purely incentive-driven. Converting employer interest into actual hiring therefore requires greater procedural certainty and risk reduction. Addressing operational bottlenecks related to speed, predictability, and documentation is essential, alongside targeted measures that reinforce ethical recruitment practices, such as reduced administrative burdens or carefully designed incentives linked to the hiring of refugees.

3.5.5 Employers' Demotivations in Hiring Refugees

Finding 14: Employer participation is discouraged by high transaction costs, procedural uncertainty, perceived risks of worker drop-out, and unfavorable labor market conditions.

Beyond the costs and procedural confusion associated with refugee recruitment, a major demotivating factor is worker drop-out at multiple stages of the recruitment process. Employers described cases in which workers were selected and up-front costs—such as health checks, travel, and insurance—were paid, only for workers to withdraw before health checks, after health checks, or prior to departure. These withdrawals result in unrecoverable costs and disrupt workforce planning. Employers also cited the burden of traveling to camps, coordinating with multiple authorities, and uncertainty over whether workers would remain employed long enough to justify investment, concerns that were particularly pronounced among smaller employers. Additional demotivating factors included demand-side volatility associated with economic slowdown or reduced orders, which reduced employers' need to recruit additional workers.

Employers further highlighted challenges related to employment continuity after job placement. Requirements for workers to return to camps or origin provinces for permit renewal or administrative changes were described as costly and disruptive, especially for employers operating in destination provinces far from camps. Employers noted that even post-employment changes—such as transferring workers to a different work location or province—often require initiating procedures in the origin province, creating delays and additional costs.

These demotivating factors indicate that employer engagement will remain limited unless the system reduces risk and cost while improving predictability. Key priorities include standardized job information disclosure and realistic job previews to reduce mismatch and early exits; clearer rules on cost responsibilities; and streamlined, predictable procedures, including targeted support for employers located far from camps. Addressing post-employment administrative constraints—such as procedures for changes in work location, more flexible work permit renewal at destination locations for subsequent years of employment, and consistent policy communication across provinces—is also essential to sustaining employer participation.

3.6 Policy, Regulatory, and Operational Gaps and Challenges in Establishing a Sustainable Refugee Employment Model

3.6.1 Policy and Regulatory Gaps and Challenges

Finding 15: The establishment of a sustainable refugee employment model is constrained by policy ambiguity, regulatory rigidity, and the absence of a shared long-term framework that balances security concerns, labor market needs, and protection objectives. Government officials emphasized that Thailand's approach to refugee employment is shaped by competing policy considerations, including national security, human rights obligations, economic needs, and international relations—particularly sensitivities related to Myanmar. Refugees are therefore not granted a distinct legal status but are treated under a minimum “survival-level” framework, comparable to irregular migrant workers, to avoid domestic political backlash amid rising nationalist sentiment. Officials described this approach as a deliberate attempt to provide limited access to work while avoiding perceptions that refugees are receiving preferential treatment over Thai citizens.

A cross-cutting concern raised by government actors is the challenge of monitoring and tracking refugees in an “open system,” as Thailand does not operate closed camps. Officials highlighted the need for reliable identification mechanisms to ensure traceability, with proposals to issue standardized identity cards or 13-digit identification numbers to enable monitoring, banking access, and service delivery. At the same time, policy uncertainty remains regarding mobility, including whether refugee workers are permitted to return to camps during leave periods and under what conditions.

Policy-Level Gap – Absence of a Unified National SOP

In practice, a key policy gap lies in the absence of a unified, operational national standard operating procedure (SOP) for refugee employment. While policy direction exists at the central level, implementation continues to rely heavily on case-by-case interpretation and informal coordination across agencies and locations. As a result, similar procedures are applied differently across camps and provinces, depending on local practices and individual officials. Government officials and CSOs noted that this lack of a standardized SOP limits scalability, increases uncertainty for employers, and undermines consistent protection for refugee workers.

Regulatory inconsistencies across sectors further complicate implementation. While certain sectors—such as marine fisheries—are governed by ministerial regulations requiring written employment contracts prior to work permit issuance, refugee employment currently does not require standardized contracts. Government informants suggested that existing regulatory model in the fisheries sector could serve as precedents for introducing employment contracts for refugees to strengthen protection and clarity. Specifically, the Ministerial Regulation on Labour Protection in Sea Fishing, B.E. 2565 (2022) stipulates that employers must issue written employment contracts for sea fishing workers in two identical copies, with one copy retained by the worker for inspection by labour inspectors.

Similar regulatory ambiguity was noted in construction, where it remains unclear whether work authorization should be tied to employers or specific worksites, creating barriers for sectors with mobile or multi-site operations.

Documentation and Identity Verification Gap

Another critical regulatory gap concerns documentation and identity verification. Current documentation requirements are largely adapted from migrant worker frameworks and are not fully aligned with the legal and administrative realities of refugees residing in camps. Employers and CSOs reported inconsistencies between camp-issued documents, civil registration records, and labor administration systems, resulting in rejected applications, repeated verification requests, and heightened compliance risks. These documentation challenges were identified as a structural barrier, rather than an issue of worker readiness or employer willingness.

Employers echoed concerns, particularly regarding the one-year duration of work permits and the requirement to return workers to camps for work permit renewal. Many expressed uncertainty about whether permits would be extended in subsequent years, discouraging longer-term workforce planning. Employers also highlighted the limited validity period of travel authorizations (e.g., 15 days), which is often insufficient to complete recruitment, health checks, and transportation to worksites, especially in distant provinces.

CSOs further pointed to the absence of a comprehensive, publicly articulated government plan for refugee employment and camp transition. Donors reported reluctance to commit funding without clarity on medium- to long-term policy direction, timelines, and institutional roles. The lack of a shared Theory of Change across government and humanitarian-development actors has resulted in fragmented interventions and declining donor confidence.

Lack of Formal Inter-Agency Governance Mechanism

Policy implementation is further constrained by the absence of a formal inter-agency governance mechanism for refugee employment. Coordination among ministries, provincial authorities, and camp administrations currently depends on ad hoc communication, personal networks, and informal messaging channels. Government informants acknowledged that no designated lead agency or formal coordination body exists to oversee end-to-end implementation. This limits accountability, weakens policy coherence, and restricts the ability to scale refugee employment beyond pilot arrangements. These findings indicate that sustainable

refugee employment cannot be achieved without greater policy coherence, regulatory clarity, and long-term strategic direction. Addressing these gaps requires clearer legal parameters for mobility, renewal, and sector-specific employment arrangements; standardized requirements such as employment contracts; and a shared policy framework that enables donor engagement and inter-agency coordination. Without these reforms, refugee employment will remain limited to short-term pilots rather than evolving into a scalable and sustainable system.

3.6.2 Operational Gaps and Challenges

Finding 16: Operational implementation of refugee employment is hindered by fragmented procedures, weak inter-agency coordination, limited digital infrastructure, and inadequate preparation and support for both employers and refugees across the employment cycle.

Fragmented Recruitment Information and Short Decision Windows

Refugees reported that recruitment information is often disseminated with minimal notice—sometimes only one day before employer selection—typically through a single announcement via camp loudspeakers. This limited timeframe restricts informed decision-making and increases reliance on informal word-of-mouth networks. Camp-level practices also vary significantly, with some camps restricting applications to one job at a time, while others allow refugees to apply for multiple jobs simultaneously. These differences across camps affect refugees’ ability to compare opportunities and make informed employment choices.

Administrative and Logistical Burdens Across Multiple Agencies

Employers and refugees both described significant logistical and administrative burdens throughout the recruitment process. Employers reported extensive travel to camps, repeated engagement with district offices, employment offices, and hospitals, as well as documentation errors that required correction. Refugees highlighted challenges in accessing banking services and mobile phone connectivity, which limit wage payment options, emergency communication, and access to employment-related information. Both employers and government officials noted that the e-work permit system remains difficult to use in practice, often requiring assistance from provincial employment office staff or the use of agents to complete applications.

Inter-Agency Coordination Gaps

Inter-agency coordination gaps were widely reported. Government officials acknowledged the absence of formal national- and provincial-level working groups, relying instead on ad hoc communication channels such as informal messaging via the LINE application or phone calls. There is no designated lead agency responsible for coordinating refugee employment across ministries, resulting in inconsistent practices and procedural delays. In practice, each agency tends to operate within a narrow interpretation of its own mandate—for example, district offices focus on issuing travel authorizations, provincial employment offices oversee recruitment and work permit issuance, and hospitals are responsible for health check-ups and health insurance. This fragmented approach limits information-sharing across agencies and contributes to coordination gaps throughout the employment process.

Weaknesses in Recruitment Information and Job Matching

Gaps in recruitment information and job matching further undermine employment sustainability. CSOs and refugees reported that job information is often incomplete or insufficiently detailed, particularly regarding workload, physical requirements, living conditions, and costs associated with working outside camps. This lack of standardized information contributes to mismatched expectations and early exits, indicating that recruitment challenges originate at the information and preparation stage rather than during employment itself.

Post-Employment Administrative Constraints and Limited Continuity

Post-employment challenges further undermine sustainability. Employers reported that reporting obligations within 48 hours of arrival, restrictions on changing worksites or provinces, and work permit renewal requirements at the originating province impose high costs and create significant administrative burdens. Government officials confirmed that post-employment monitoring and labor protection remain fragmented, with limited data sharing between employment offices and labor protection and welfare offices responsible for labor inspection. Provincial Social Security offices also lack clear guidance on refugees' identity documentation, while local hospitals are often unclear about responsibilities for health check-ups and insurance costs. In addition, uncertainty remains regarding the ability of spouses to claim social security benefits on behalf of refugee workers, particularly where refugees lack official marriage certificates or other formally recognized proof of spousal relationship.

Absence of Grievance Mechanisms for Refugees

There is currently no formal grievance mechanism available to refugees to lodge complaints or seek redress when they experience disputes or problems with employers after taking up employment. In practice, assistance has largely been provided through ad hoc and informal arrangements, involving camp commanders (district deputy chiefs), camp leaders, camp committee members, and CSOs. These actors have often played a role in facilitating refugees' return to the camps or coordinating with employers to bring refugees back when problems arise.

Refugees reported limited awareness of formal grievance or complaint channels. Many refugees who encountered problems with employers indicated that they preferred to seek help from family members or section leaders with whom they have established informal relationships, rather than approaching government authorities. This reluctance was attributed to several factors, including the lack of accessible contact information, uncertainty about the availability of Karen-language interpretation, and limited confidence that formal channels would be able to provide effective assistance.

Employers similarly noted the absence of clear guidance on how to address labor disputes or protection concerns involving refugee workers. As a result, responses to grievances tend to rely on personal connections and informal mediation rather than standardized procedures. This reliance on informal and relationship-based assistance constrains refugees' access to existing grievance mechanisms—whether government-led or NGO-operated—and limits the consistency, transparency, and accountability of protection responses.

Data Monitoring Constraints

Finally, the absence of a systematic data monitoring system limits evidence-based policy adjustment. For example, at the provincial level, government officials regularly report the number of refugees employed across different sectors in destination provinces—often on a daily basis—and share these figures with the Ministry of Interior. However, other types of data that are critical for policy improvement are not systematically collected. These include information on working conditions, living conditions, refugees' adaptation to life outside the camps, and employer feedback on recruitment procedures and worker performance. To date, such information has largely been drawn from informal and formal meetings with relevant government agencies and CSOs, rather than from a structured and routine data collection process.

These operational gaps indicate that refugee employment will remain fragmented and difficult to sustain without systemic reforms that improve coordination, predictability, and support across the employment cycle. Fragmented recruitment information, short decision windows, and weak job matching contribute to early withdrawal and mismatch, while administrative complexity and limited inter-agency coordination increase transaction costs and limit employer participation, particularly among smaller firms. Post-employment constraints and the absence of formal grievance mechanisms further weaken retention and protection, pushing

problem resolution toward informal and ad hoc arrangements. In parallel, the lack of a systematic data monitoring system prevents timely policy learning, resulting in reactive rather than evidence-based adjustments. Without standardized procedures, clear agency roles, accessible protection mechanisms, and structured data collection, the current operational model risks reinforcing inefficiencies and informality within a formally authorized employment framework. Coordinated operational reforms are therefore essential to embed protection, transparency, and accountability into routine processes and to translate policy intent into sustainable and scalable refugee employment outcomes.

3.7 Effectiveness of Regulatory Frameworks in Preventing Labor Exploitation and Ensuring Decent Work for Refugees

Finding 17: Regulatory frameworks provide initial safeguards but focus primarily on administrative control rather than substantive labor protection.

Current regulatory frameworks—particularly those led by the Provincial Employment Offices—have established basic administrative safeguards to prevent overt abuse, such as unauthorized recruitment and broker-led trafficking. However, these mechanisms focus mainly on verifying employer identity and documentation rather than assessing compliance with labor protection standards, such as wages, working conditions, and welfare.

Employers and government officials described recruitment practices which the Provincial Employment Office serves as the first screening body, verifying employer documents, job vacancies, and authorization letters to prevent broker involvement. While this process helps reduce the risk of fraudulent recruitment, officials acknowledged that the screening does not extend deeply into labor protection issues, which legally fall under the mandate of the Labor Protection and Welfare Office. Employment officers reported that they lack access to labor inspection databases and cannot verify employers' past labor violations, limiting their ability to assess risks beyond surface-level documentation. CSOs further noted that while the presence of Employment Office staff in camps signals state oversight, refugees often receive only limited information about actual working conditions and mainly understand expected daily wages (e.g., 300–500 baht), rather than broader labor rights

These findings indicate that existing framework function more as gatekeeping mechanisms than as comprehensive labor protection systems. While they reduce blatant illegality, they do not systematically prevent exploitative working conditions. This suggests a need for regulatory reforms that shift from document-based screening toward substantive assessment of labor standards, including clearer coordination with labor protection authorities—an issue that will need to be addressed through standardized pre-recruitment review mechanisms.

While administrative screening by Provincial Employment Offices provides an important first safeguard, evidence suggests that regulatory effectiveness is front-loaded at the recruitment and authorization stage and weakens significantly along later stages of the employment cycle. Regulatory oversight is strongest before departure from camps but becomes fragmented during contracting, deployment, and post-employment monitoring, resulting in intermittent rather than continuous protection. This uneven application limits the framework's ability to prevent exploitation that emerges after job placement, despite formal authorization. This highlights the need to assess regulatory effectiveness across the entire employment chain rather than at isolated entry points, reinforcing the importance of stage-based regulatory design.

Finding 18: The effectiveness of regulatory frameworks is constrained by fragmented institutional coordination and weak integration between work authorization, enforcement, and welfare-protection systems

Evidence from government informants and CSOs indicates that the effectiveness of current regulatory frameworks for refugee employment is significantly diminished by siloed institutional responsibilities and

limited coordination among key agencies. Employment Offices reported that they cannot access databases of the Department of Labor Protection and Welfare, preventing systematic checks on employers' compliance histories or prior labor violations. As a result, employer screening and risk assessment rely heavily on informal judgment or ad hoc initiatives rather than standardized procedures. In one reported case, a provincial authority independently cross-checked employer records with another province after suspecting broker involvement, leading to delays in approval through discretionary actions rather than guidance from a centralized protocol. Desk review findings further indicate that in several provinces, district offices assume leading roles in early recruitment stages despite limited expertise in labor law, prohibited occupations, and employer compliance obligations. CSOs expressed concern that the absence of coordinated screening increases risks of labor exploitation and trafficking, particularly given refugees' limited experience working outside camp environments.

Coordination gaps also weaken enforcement mechanisms. Although labor inspection and complaint systems formally apply to refugee workers, refugees rarely perceive these mechanisms as accessible or safe. Language barriers, limited awareness of complaint procedures, and fear that raising concerns may jeopardize employment or legal status discourage reporting. As a result, enforcement relies primarily on complaint-driven inspections, which are rarely triggered in practice. This reactive approach substantially reduces the preventive capacity of the regulatory framework and limits early detection of abusive practices. When protection mechanisms depend on worker-initiated complaints that refugees cannot realistically use, regulatory enforcement becomes fragmented and inconsistent, leaving no single agency clearly accountable for ensuring decent work conditions.

In addition, regulatory effectiveness is further constrained by weak integration between work authorization systems and welfare and social-protection mechanisms. Current arrangements prioritize permit issuance and recruitment but do not consistently ensure refugees' access to social security and health insurance. Stakeholders highlighted uncertainty regarding eligibility criteria, documentation requirements, and the portability of health insurance and social security benefits, particularly when workers move across provinces. Refugees reported wage deductions for insurance and social security contributions without a clear understanding of coverage or entitlements, creating financial and protection-related risks. These gaps demonstrate that legal authorization alone does not guarantee decent work if welfare protections are unclear or inconsistently implemented.

These findings indicate that fragmented coordination across institutions, combined with weak linkage between authorization, enforcement, and welfare systems, creates regulatory blind spots in which responsibility for worker protection is diffused rather than institutionalized. This weakens accountability, shifts risk management onto individual officials or employers, and limits the capacity of the regulatory framework to function as a preventive system. Addressing these gaps will require clearer role allocation among agencies, strengthened data-sharing protocols, and integrated screening, monitoring, and welfare-linkage mechanisms embedded across the employment cycle.

Finding 19: The absence of standardized employment contracts and pre-deployment information limits regulatory protection against exploitation.

Current regulatory frameworks do not require standardized employment contracts or detailed disclosure of wages and welfare for refugee workers, limiting both government oversight and refugees' ability to make informed employment decisions.

Desk review revealed that unlike MOU migrant workers, employers hiring refugees are not required to submit formal employment contracts detailing wages, benefits, and working conditions. Instead, provincial procedures rely on a general employment certification form (Form Bor Tor.46), which does not capture substantive labor conditions. Government officials acknowledged that this leaves Employment Offices without sufficient information to review job quality before vacancies are announced in camps. CSOs expressed concern that refugees often lack a clear understanding of job conditions prior to departure and emphasized the need for post-placement monitoring and worker education using existing government mechanisms. The absence of standardized contracts not only limits government oversight but also undermines enforceability of rights after employment begins.

Without standardized documentation and transparent disclosure requirements, regulatory frameworks cannot effectively prevent exploitation or ensure decent work standards. This gap weakens both preventive oversight and post-employment accountability. The findings point toward the need for standardized wage-and-welfare declaration forms, clearer contractual requirements, and strengthened worker orientation.

Finding 20: Complaint and inspection mechanisms exist structurally but are not effectively accessible to refugees as protection tools.

Although Thailand's labor inspection and complaint systems formally apply to refugee workers, these mechanisms are not effectively accessible in practice, limiting their role in preventing exploitation and enforcing decent work standards. Government officials acknowledged that inspections are often triggered by complaints, while CSOs and refugee representatives reported that refugees rarely submit complaints due to limited Thai-language ability, lack of clarity on procedures, and fear of retaliation or negative impacts on work authorization. Refugees tend to resolve problems informally or endure unfavorable conditions rather than engage formal mechanisms.

The gap between structural availability and practical accessibility of complaints and inspections weakens regulatory effectiveness. Without refugee-adapted, safe, and proactive enforcement mechanisms, regulatory frameworks cannot function as reliable protection systems, pointing to the need for multilingual, confidential, and preventive monitoring approaches.

Finding 21: The absence of clear standards on pre-employment costs and wage deductions creates structural risks of exploitation.

Pre-employment expenses and post-employment wage deductions constitute significant but insufficiently regulated risks within the current framework, weakening refugees' bargaining power and increasing vulnerability to exploitation. Refugees reported incurring up-front costs related to travel, accommodation, food, and documentation, often leading to borrowing or acceptance of wage deductions during initial months of employment. CSOs noted the absence of standardized cost ceilings or disclosure requirements, making such practices difficult to monitor or challenge.

In the absence of clear rules on permissible costs and wage deductions, regulatory frameworks remain unable to fully prevent debt-related vulnerability and unfair labor practices. Strengthening effectiveness therefore requires clearer standards, transparent disclosure requirements, and systematic monitoring mechanisms embedded early in the employment process. More broadly, the ability of current regulatory frameworks to prevent abusive practices and ensure decent work depends not only on entry-level controls, but on continuous protection across the employment cycle, accessible and trusted enforcement mechanisms, and effective integration with welfare, financial, and monitoring systems.

3.8 Cross-cutting Issues

From this research, several cross-cutting issues related to the self-reliance of the camp population were identified. These issues shape refugees' employment opportunities and household-level capacity to sustain livelihoods.

Population Structure and Life-Course Dynamics

This analysis is based on camp population data compiled by the International Rescue Committee from seven camps—Ban Mai Nai Soi, Ban Mae Surin, Mae La, Umpium Mai, Nupo, Tham Hin, and Ban Don Yang—covering 81,565 camp residents, with and without DOPA No. 000, as of October 2025. When compared with Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) records for the same camps (as of June 2025), approximately 74 percent of the camp population possesses DOPA No. 000, while around 26 percent remain without this status, rendering them ineligible to apply for work outside the camps. This legal constraint directly limits household-level self-reliance, as a significant share of potentially productive individuals cannot access formal employment.

As shown in Figure 6, the population pyramid indicates that the working-age population (18–59 years) constitutes a large proportion of camp residents, with particularly high concentrations in the 20–34 age groups, suggesting substantial labor potential in the short to medium term. At the same time, the data point to a growing elderly population (60 years and older) and a gradual decline in younger cohorts over time. These trends underscore the need to plan for both labor market participation and long-term support for aging populations within the camps.

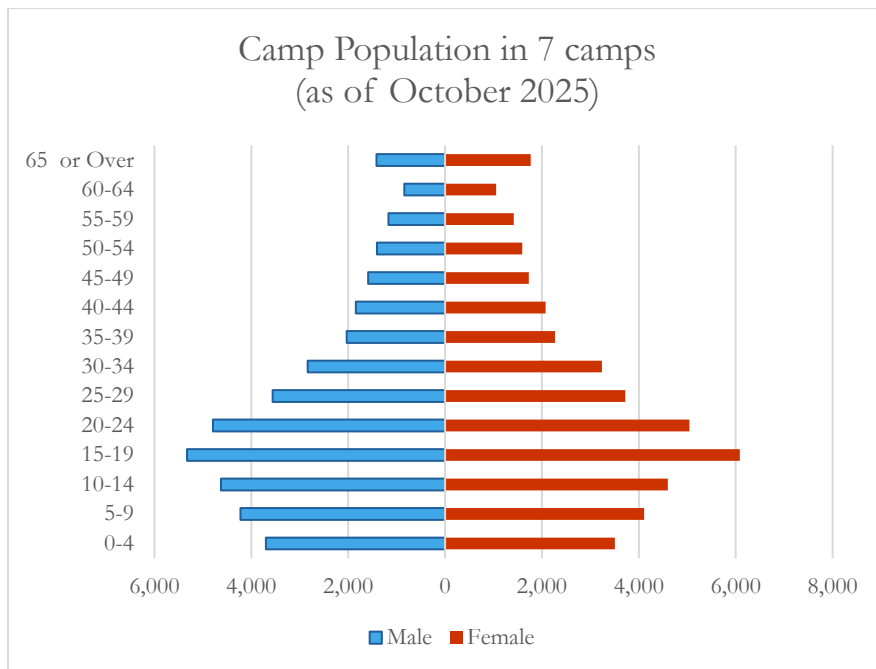


Figure 6 : Population Pyramid of Camp Populations in Seven Camps, October 2025

Self-Reliance through a Life-Course Lens

A life-course approach is essential for understanding and strengthening self-reliance among camp populations. Children under 18 are primarily recipients of investment and require sustained access to health services, education, and skills development aligned with labor market demand and realistic career pathways. These investments form the foundation for future self-reliance as this cohort transitions into the workforce.

Adults aged 18–45 represent the main income earners and are central to household self-reliance. Access to decent work, skills upgrading, and opportunities for savings is critical for enabling them to support dependents

and withstand economic shocks. In the absence of stable employment pathways, households remain vulnerable despite the availability of labor capacity.

Older working-age adults (46–59) and older persons (60 years and above) play an important supportive role in household self-reliance, although their employment opportunities are often constrained. For individuals aged over 45, access to factory or manufacturing jobs is frequently limited, as employers tend to prioritize younger workers. Consequently, many in this group are directed toward agricultural or farm-based work. However, for those experiencing declining health or reduced physical capacity, such work may not be feasible. In practice, this places a portion of the 46–59 age group in a situation similar to that of older persons aged 60 and above, requiring access to light or adapted work that accommodates health limitations. Enabling these groups to remain economically active through age-appropriate employment, caregiving roles within households, and continuity of health or social protection is critical for reducing dependency burdens and sustaining household-level self-reliance across the life course.

Gender and Care Responsibilities as a Cross-cutting Constraint

Gendered care responsibilities constitute a critical cross-cutting constraint on refugee self-reliance that cuts across age, household structure, and employment opportunities. Women refugees—particularly those with young children or caregiving responsibilities for older persons—face compounded barriers to employment due to limited access to childcare, safety concerns related to travel and workplaces, and the lack of flexible or part-time job options. Even when labor demand exists, these constraints restrict women’s effective participation in the labor market, reducing household income diversification and increasing dependency on a narrow group of earners. Without explicit attention to childcare arrangements, safe transportation, and gender-responsive employment design, employment interventions risk reinforcing existing inequalities and limiting household-level self-reliance.

Legal Status and Eligibility to Work

Legal status is a foundational determinant of self-reliance, as the absence of DOPA No. 000 excludes a significant share of camp residents from lawful employment and constrains household-level income generation, regardless of available labor capacity.

Legal eligibility remains a major cross-cutting constraint. Approximately one-quarter of camp residents do not possess DOPA No. 000, rendering them ineligible to apply for work outside the camps. This limits not only individual employment opportunities but also household self-reliance, as families may depend on members who are legally excluded from formal employment. Employment management mechanisms that do not address this gap risk reinforcing dependency and inequality within camps.

Legal Status and Household-Level Inequality

Legal ineligibility affects self-reliance not only at the individual level but also through its impact on household strategies and risk distribution. When some household members lack eligibility to work outside the camps, families become increasingly dependent on a smaller number of earners who are legally authorized to work. This concentration of economic responsibility heightens vulnerability to income shocks, illness, or job loss, and may push households toward riskier employment decisions. Employment management mechanisms that do not account for mixed legal status within households risk reinforcing structural inequality and undermining the sustainability of self-reliance outcomes.

Information, Language, and Decision-Making Risks across the Employment Cycle

Information and language barriers function as cross-cutting risks that shape refugee decision-making throughout the employment process. Many refugees lack clear, accessible information on job conditions, legal requirements, costs, and rights at early stages of recruitment, relying instead on word-of-mouth communication or partial information. This constrains informed consent and increases the likelihood that households accept employment arrangements involving hidden costs, unclear welfare coverage, or unfavorable conditions. When accurate information and language support are introduced only after problems arise, protection mechanisms become corrective rather than preventive. Strengthening self-reliance therefore requires early-stage, multilingual information provision that enables refugees and households to assess employment options realistically before committing to work outside the camps.

Education and Health as Preconditions for Employment

Access to education and health services is fundamental to building and maintaining the human capital required for sustained employment and self-reliance across generations.

Education and health services emerged as critical enabling factors for employment and self-reliance. Refugees consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining schools and health facilities inside the camps, including the continued presence of teachers and nurses. Parents expressed strong aspirations for their children to learn Thai language and, where possible, to access Thai schools, while also voicing concerns about affordability of education costs. Health security is similarly central, as refugees indicated willingness to contribute to health insurance schemes if these ensure access to care for family members remaining in camps or accompanying workers outside. Without reliable education and health systems, employment outside the camps is perceived as risky and unsustainable.

Retention and Transition of Skilled Camp-Based Service Providers

The transition to employment outside camps risks depleting essential camp-based human resources, creating a trade-off between individual income opportunities and the continuity of education, health, and social services within camps.

Another cross-cutting issue concerns refugees who currently work in camps with NGOs, schools, or health facilities. Many of these individuals perceive work outside the camps as more attractive due to higher income opportunities. However, the loss of skilled camp-based workers—such as teachers, medics, and community health workers—poses risks to service continuity during transition periods. Legal and regulatory constraints, including requirements for professional certification, further complicate the formal engagement of refugees with medical skills. This creates a tension between supporting individual income generation and maintaining essential services within camps.

Accompanying Children

Accompanying children is not feasible in the pilot phase due to income uncertainty, childcare and schooling constraints, and the absence of a government policy, and should be addressed in later implementation phases.

At present, many refugees are not prepared to bring their children with them when taking up employment outside the camps. They prefer to first assess actual living costs and income stability to determine whether their earnings would be sufficient to support accompanying family members. Additional concerns include the availability of childcare for young children and uncertainty over access to Thai schools for school-aged children once outside the camps. Moreover, there is currently no government policy permitting children to

accompany refugee workers outside the camps. As a result, family accompaniment is widely viewed as a subsequent phase of implementation rather than part of the initial pilot phase.

Protection, Social Stability, and Community Impacts

Employment strategies must balance income generation with protection and social stability, as large-scale labor outflows risk weakening community cohesion and safety within camps.

Concerns about protection and social stability cut across employment discussions. Employers expressed worries about crime and drug-related risks associated with camp populations, while refugees voiced fears that large-scale labor outflows could leave camps with increased safety risks for children, women, and older persons. These concerns highlight the importance of balanced employment strategies that do not undermine community cohesion or protection within camps. Some refugees suggested bringing work opportunities into the camps—such as subcontracted or piece-rate work—as a way to generate income while maintaining family and community stability.

Monitoring, Data, and Policy Learning as Cross-cutting Enablers of Self-Reliance

The absence of systematic and disaggregated monitoring data represents a cross-cutting constraint on effective policy design and learning. While existing systems capture procedural steps related to recruitment and work authorization, limited data are available on post-employment outcomes such as job retention, access to welfare and health services, workplace conditions, or the resolution of grievances. Without evidence on these outcomes, it is difficult to assess whether employment initiatives translate into sustained self-reliance at the household level. Strengthening monitoring and feedback mechanisms is therefore essential not only for accountability but also for adaptive policy learning that can respond to emerging risks and changing household dynamics.

These cross-cutting issues highlight that employment alone cannot deliver sustainable self-reliance unless it is embedded within a broader framework that accounts for demographic and life-course dynamics, legal eligibility, gender and care responsibilities, access to education and health services, informed household decision-making, protection and social stability, and continuous monitoring and policy learning. Addressing these interlinked factors is essential for ensuring that employment initiatives contribute to durable and equitable self-reliance for refugees and their families.

4. Conclusion

The findings collectively demonstrate that the introduction of Thailand's refugee employment policy has created an important and unprecedented pathway for refugees to legally access work outside temporary shelters. However, the emerging system remains highly procedural, unevenly implemented across locations, and shaped by household-level realities and risk considerations, rather than operating as a predictable labor-market mechanism. The evidence indicates that the ability of refugees to take up and remain in formal employment depends not only on work-permit authorization, but also on information access, financial readiness, mobility arrangements, documentation clarity, and the alignment between labor-market structures and the lived circumstances of refugee households.

From a structural perspective, the research shows that Thailand's policy represents a major shift from long-term camp-based humanitarian assistance toward a model that encourages self-reliance, reduces fiscal burden, and responds to labor shortages. At the same time, implementation occurs within a context of restricted mobility, complex documentation systems, and differentiated legal status within the camp population, which shapes who can participate and under what conditions. The administrative process is procedurally clear on paper, yet in practice varies across provinces and camps, relies heavily on local coordination arrangements, and generates transaction costs for both workers and employers. These variations

reinforce the finding that system performance is contingent on local interpretation, institutional capacity, and informal problem-solving, rather than standardized rules or shared operating procedures.

At the level of refugee capacities and aspirations, the findings reveal that refugees possess substantial practical experience and transferable skills, particularly in agriculture, construction, factory work, basic services, and informal livelihoods. Refugees perceive themselves as flexible and capable workers willing to accept physically demanding jobs where remuneration and conditions are fair. However, there is a structural mismatch between refugees' existing skills and the types of jobs commonly available under the scheme, which tend to prioritize general labor roles. As a result, employer selection is driven less by certified competencies and more by work-readiness indicators such as basic Thai-language ability, physical fitness, perceived reliability, and discipline. This indicates that pre-employment preparation needs to focus on soft skills, communication, and workplace orientation, rather than narrowly defined job-specific technical training.

Across all camps, refugees' readiness to work is strongly mediated by information transparency, financial security during transition, language support, and institutional assistance. Refugees require reliable information on job conditions, legal procedures, and cost responsibilities before deciding to leave the camp; yet, dissemination remains fragmented and time-sensitive, often relying on single announcements or informal peer networks. These gaps heighten perceived and actual risks related to debt, misunderstanding of contracts, and uncertainty about rights and entitlements. At the same time, employment choices are deeply embedded in household-level decision-making, particularly among women, older refugees, and persons with disabilities, whose decisions reflect caregiving responsibilities, mobility constraints, health conditions, and proximity needs. These dynamics show that employment participation cannot be understood solely at the individual level; rather, it is negotiated within household risk-management strategies.

Motivation to work outside the camps is strong and primarily economic, linked to dignity, stability of income, and the desire to support family well-being. However, motivation co-exists with fear, uncertainty, and mistrust, shaped by previous negative experiences, unclear procedures, and concerns regarding the ability to return to the camp in emergencies. Demotivation is therefore not a lack of willingness to work, but a rational response to perceived vulnerability and structural constraints. Without credible safeguards, accessible grievance mechanisms, and clearer mobility arrangements, many refugees choose to withdraw at various stages of the process, even after selection or health screening.

The findings demonstrate that barriers are cumulative and systemic rather than isolated. Legal restrictions on mobility and status eligibility interact with administrative fragmentation, high pre-employment costs, documentation inconsistencies, and social vulnerabilities to produce high drop-out rates and uneven outcomes. The current system therefore risks formalizing recruitment procedures without fully enabling sustainable employment participation. For employment to translate into durable socio-economic inclusion, policy responses must move beyond authorization and focus on coordination, clarity, financial and linguistic support, inclusive job design, and risk-mitigation across the employment pathway.

At the same time, the findings also point to significant opportunities. Refugees demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and strong work motivation; employers are willing to recruit where processes are predictable and transaction costs manageable; and government and humanitarian actors already provide critical bridging functions in information, documentation, and worker preparation. These elements provide a solid foundation for strengthening the refugee employment system into a coherent, rights-aware, and market-responsive model.

Overall, findings confirm that the pathway to sustainable refugee employment in Thailand lies not only in expanding work-permit access, but in embedding predictability, transparency, protection, and household-sensitive support as structural features of the system. Doing so would increase the likelihood that refugees can take up, remain in, and benefit from formal employment, while enabling employers and government institutions to participate with confidence and shared accountability.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model

5.1.1 Model Overview and Rationale

This section presents a Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model developed from the research findings and aligned with the analytical framework. The model conceptualizes refugee employment not as a one-time job placement outcome, but as a continuous, iterative, and system-based process that links employment pathways with household realities, protection and welfare access, employer participation, and inter-agency coordination across provinces.

The model responds to four core systemic challenges identified in the findings:

1. fragmentation and procedural inconsistency across stages of the employment cycle,
2. misalignment between employment design and household-based decision-making,
3. gaps between legal authorization and effective, lived protection, and
4. weak post-employment continuity, including renewal, mobility, re-matching, and retention support.

Accordingly, the model is structured around a five-stage employment cycle, supported by cross-cutting enablers, clearly defined actor roles and coordination mechanisms, and an adaptive learning approach that allows implementation to evolve based on evidence from pilot settings and provincial practice.

The model treats employment as an adaptive pathway rather than a linear sequence. Refugees may exit, temporarily return to the camps, re-enter employment, or transition between jobs. Sustainable employment therefore requires mechanisms that support mobility, renewal, re-matching, and protection throughout the employment cycle, rather than focusing only on initial recruitment and work authorization.

Figure 7 presents a conceptual Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model, which consists of two core components: the Employment Management Cycle and a set of Cross-Cutting Enablers that support all stages of the cycle. Together, these components illustrate how refugee employment can be managed in a systematic, inclusive, and protection-sensitive manner, ensuring continuity across preparation, recruitment, deployment, and post-employment processes, while strengthening coordination, risk reduction, and equitable access to opportunities. The key elements under each component are described in detail in the following sections.

Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model



Figure 7 : Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model

5.1.2 Employment Cycle: A Stage-Based Pathway for Sustainable Refugee Employment Management

The Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model is organized around a five-stage employment cycle. The research shows that outcomes are shaped not by a single administrative decision, but by a chain of interlinked processes, where weaknesses at early stages—particularly in information provision, matching, and contracting—cascade into later stages, leading to early withdrawal, unmet expectations, debt vulnerability, and

protection risks. The strengthened model incorporates additional functions and safeguards identified in findings to ensure continuity, retention, and protection.

Stage 1: Preparation, Information, and System Coordination

This stage ensures that employment decisions are informed, voluntary, and household-sensitive, while establishing a coordinated institutional foundation before recruitment begins. In practice, many refugees currently receive fragmented or last-minute information and must make decisions collectively as households. The strengthened model reframes preparation as a decision-support and risk-reduction stage, rather than simply an entry point into recruitment.

Key Activities

- Provide **standardized, multilingual employment information packages** covering job conditions, wages, fringe benefits, rights and obligations, mobility rules, and grievance options, delivered with sufficient lead time for household consultation.
- Deliver a **Work-Readiness Package** combining Thai workplace language, workplace norms, financial-literacy and cost awareness, and practical knowledge to prevent labor-rights violations and trafficking, including how and where to seek help.
- Conduct **household-sensitive counseling** that considers age, caregiving responsibilities, health limitations, proximity needs, and the feasibility of temporary family separation.
- Establish **formal coordination and referral mechanisms** among district offices, provincial employment offices, camp committees, health facilities, CSOs, and employers, supported by shared SOPs and data-sharing arrangements.
- Introduce **refugee participation and feedback channels** (peer educators, focal persons, community feedback loops) to identify misinformation, expectation gaps, and emerging risks.
- Recognize **provincial variation and evolving practices**, ensuring that SOPs function as **adaptive coordination tools**, updated through monitoring and implementation learning.

Stage 2: Recruitment, Screening, Matching, and Trust-Building

This stage promotes ethical, transparent, and realistic recruitment, shifting away from single-event announcements toward a decision-support matching process that reflects both labor-market demand and household constraints.

Key Activities

- Use a **standardized job-information disclosure format**, including wages, workload, hours, accommodation, welfare, deductions, leave arrangements, safety conditions, and grievance channels.
- Introduce a **Verified Job Information and Realistic Job Preview mechanism**, including photographs or short videos of the workplace and accommodation to reduce misunderstanding and mistrust.
- Ensure **recruitment information is shared with sufficient time** to allow household consultation, not only same-day announcements.
- Match workers based on **gendered care responsibilities, health status, age-appropriate or light-work options, mobility needs, and realistic task requirements**.
- Conduct **standardized employer screening** to reduce risks of trafficking, abusive practices, or severe non-compliance.
- Where appropriate, allow use of **authorized recruitment intake points or matching centers**, with strong safeguards to prevent abusive brokerage and ensure ethical recruitment.

Stage 3: Contracting, Documentation, and Legal Authorization

This stage translates job offers into clear, enforceable, and understandable employment conditions and reduces administrative uncertainty that currently creates cost burdens and legal risk for both workers and employers.

Key Activities

- Issue **standardized, multilingual employment contracts or wage-and-welfare declarations**, provide copies to workers, and explain key terms prior to signing.
- Clearly define **cost responsibilities** for health checks, insurance, transportation, work-permit fees, deductions, repayment conditions, and employer-covered support.
- Strengthen communication on **health-insurance and social-security coverage** using accessible, non-technical language.
- Establish a **Single-Window Coordination Node** for submission, verification, correction, and processing to reduce duplication, repeat travel, and procedural inconsistency across provinces.
- Improve **identity and documentation integration** between camp records, civil-registration systems, and labor-administration databases (e.g., use of personal identity digits across different agencies)

Stage 4: Deployment, Orientation, and Early Employment Support

This stage stabilizes employment during the initial adjustment period, which is critical for retention. Evidence shows that anxiety about safety, separation from family, unfamiliar environments, and unmet expectations strongly influences continuity.

Key Activities

- Provide **workplace orientation** in accessible languages, including rights awareness, safety procedures, and grievance options.
- Ensure access to **bank accounts, mobile connectivity, and welfare enrollment**, enabling secure and traceable wage payment and communication with family.
- Promote **predictable rest days, emergency-leave flexibility, and temporary return-to-camp arrangements** to reduce household-level risk perception.
- Ensure **safe transportation, adequate accommodation, gender-sensitive workplace conditions, and buddy/mentor support** from experienced workers.
- **Monitor early placement outcomes** during the first one to three months to identify emerging risks, mismatch, or potential early withdrawal.

Stage 5: Monitoring, Protection, Mobility, and Post-Employment Pathways

Originally focused mainly on grievance handling and inspections, this stage is expanded to support continuity, mobility, and system learning.

Key Activities

- Operate **refugee-adapted grievance mechanisms** that are multilingual, confidential, and non-retaliatory.
- Conduct **proactive labor inspections** that do not rely solely on worker complaints.
- Introduce **mobility and renewal pathways**, including flexible work and travel permit renewal at destination provinces, job re-matching after exit, procedures for temporary return to camps, and sector-appropriate flexibility (e.g., rotating construction sites).
- Monitor **outcome-level indicators** such as retention, wage compliance, welfare access, and grievance resolution, and feed findings back into policy and operational improvement.
- Implement **pilot-to-scale learning cycles**, enabling adaptive reform based on evidence from provincial practice.

5.1.3 Cross-Cutting Enablers Supporting All Stages

The effectiveness of the five-stage employment cycle depends not only on the proper functioning of each individual stage, but on a set of enabling conditions that operate continuously across the system. These cross-cutting enablers address the structural, household-level, and institutional constraints that repeatedly emerged in the research findings, ensuring that refugee employment pathways are viable, protective, and sustainable over time. When these enabling conditions are weak or absent, employment processes may appear compliant on paper yet still result in early withdrawal, financial risk, or exclusion of vulnerable groups. Strengthening these enablers therefore transforms the employment cycle from a sequence of administrative steps into a functioning employment system.

Household and Life-Course Sensitivity

Household and life-course sensitivity recognizes that employment decisions among refugees are shaped by the composition, responsibilities, and risk-management strategies of entire households, rather than by the preferences of individual workers alone. The research shows that participation in employment must be balanced against caregiving duties, health limitations, aging-related constraints, and the feasibility of temporary separation from family members remaining in the camp. Embedding this sensitivity across stages of the employment cycle requires differentiated options for workers with care burdens or medical conditions, including local job placements, flexible working arrangements, or access to light-work roles where appropriate. When employment pathways reflect life-course realities, households are able to engage in work opportunities without compromising care, safety, or stability, thereby strengthening both participation and resilience.

Gender and Care Responsibilities

Gender and care responsibilities emerged as a structural factor shaping access to employment, particularly for women whose decision to work is strongly influenced by childcare arrangements, household labor expectations, and concerns about safety during travel, accommodation, and work environments. A gender-responsive approach requires that these constraints be addressed from the earliest stages of the employment cycle, rather than only at the point of deployment. This includes safe and predictable transport options, attention to childcare needs during preparation and matching, inclusive job design that avoids reinforcing gendered limitations, and participation pathways that enable women to engage without disproportionate trade-offs. When employment systems acknowledge care as a collective and gendered responsibility, participation becomes more equitable and household economic outcomes improve.

Protection, Welfare, and Financial Inclusion

Legal authorization alone does not guarantee meaningful protection or decent-work outcomes. The findings highlight that refugees may remain vulnerable to debt, wage insecurity, or welfare exclusion where access to banking services, e-wage systems, mobile connectivity, or social protection mechanisms is incomplete or limited understood. Treating protection, welfare, and financial inclusion as cross-cutting enablers means integrating these elements across every stage of the employment cycle—rather than treating them as after-placement add-ons. This includes ensuring access to bank accounts and traceable wage systems, providing clear information on deductions and benefits, supporting financial preparedness before departure, and strengthening mechanisms that prevent debt dependency or exploitative cost-recovery practices. When these conditions are in place, protection becomes preventive, employment stability increases, and workers are better able to manage financial risk.

Employer Engagement and Risk Reduction

Employers play a decisive role in shaping refugee employment opportunities, yet their willingness to participate is closely tied to perceptions of administrative burden, financial risk, and procedural uncertainty. The findings indicate that unpredictable documentation requirements, unclear allocation of costs, and variation across provinces increase transaction costs and discourage sustained employer engagement. Positioning employer engagement and risk reduction as a system-wide enabler therefore requires predictable

and transparent procedures, standardized documentation, clear cost responsibilities, and alignment with sector-specific realities and operational constraints. When employers have confidence in rules and processes, they are more likely to invest in worker orientation, early-stage support, and longer-term retention, strengthening both employment continuity and compliance outcomes.

Governance, Coordination, and Policy Learning

Governance, coordination, and policy learning function as the backbone of the employment system, ensuring that otherwise well-designed procedures are implemented consistently and responsively across locations. The findings show that fragmented roles, weak coordination mechanisms, and limited data sharing contribute to uneven enforcement and protection gaps. Strengthening this enabler requires clear institutional role allocation, shared SOPs, coordinated referral and case-handling pathways, and monitoring systems that track employment outcomes rather than approvals alone. Equally important is the establishment of adaptive policy feedback loops, allowing lessons from implementation—especially provincial variation and pilot contexts—to inform procedural refinement over time. When governance operates as a learning system, employment pathways become more coherent, accountable, and sustainable.

Inclusive-Design Safeguards

Inclusive-design safeguards ensure that employment pathways do not unintentionally exclude worker groups with specific vulnerabilities, such as older workers, persons with disabilities, single-caregiver households, or individuals with chronic health conditions. The findings indicate that without explicit design measures, these groups face higher barriers to participation and are more likely to be filtered out during matching, deployment, or retention. Embedding inclusive-design safeguards across stages involves identifying differential risks, enabling reasonable accommodation or light-work alternatives where appropriate, and providing participation routes that do not require households to choose between employment and essential care functions. By institutionalizing these safeguards, the model promotes fairness and broad-based participation while avoiding the concentration of risk among already vulnerable groups.

Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion is an essential enabler of both compliance and welfare access within the employment system. The research shows that access to communication tools, SIM registration, mobile connectivity, and digital platforms is often necessary for wage transfers, documentation processes, emergency communication, and access to grievance or support services. At the same time, gaps in digital access or literacy can reinforce dependency, create barriers to administrative procedures, and undermine protection outcomes. Integrating digital inclusion across stages therefore means ensuring that workers are able to use digital systems associated with employment—banking, registration, communication, and reporting—while receiving support to navigate them safely. When digital access is reliable and equitable, workers are better able to remain informed, connected, and protected throughout the employment cycle.

These cross-cutting enablers transform the refugee employment cycle from a set of procedural steps into an integrated and functioning system. They ensure that employment pathways are aligned with household realities, gendered care responsibilities, and life-course conditions; that protection, welfare, and financial systems operate alongside legal authorization rather than after it; and that employers are able to participate within a predictable, low-risk operating environment. By embedding inclusive-design safeguards, digital and financial access, and data-driven coordination across all stages, the model shifts the focus from short-term job placement toward sustained participation, retention, and protection outcomes. In doing so, the employment system becomes more equitable, adaptive, and resilient—capable of supporting diverse refugee households while maintaining coherence across institutions, locations, and implementation contexts.

5.2 Policy Recommendations for a Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model

The following recommendations are designed to operationalize the Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model by translating the model’s five stages and cross-cutting enablers into concrete, sequenced actions for government, employers, and partners. They respond directly to the evidence from findings — which highlight cumulative, system-wide barriers across the employment pathway—and to the core features of the Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model outlined in Section 5.1. The recommendations are also aligned with the Royal Thai Government’s emerging roadmap following the 26 August Cabinet Resolution, including the “One SOP” process, One-Stop Service (OSS) models, legal identity, financial inclusion, and monitoring arrangements discussed in the closed-door consultation and subsequent priority notes.

These measures aim to shift implementation from ad-hoc, paper-based and location-dependent practices toward an integrated, predictable, and learning-oriented system, ensuring that refugees can safely enter, remain in, and move through formal employment; employers can participate with reduced risk and clearer guidance; and line ministries can implement the Right-to-Work policy through coherent, staged and cross-ministerial coordination.

Recommendation 1: Develop and adopt a unified “One SOP” aligned with the Core Employment Cycle

Implementation currently varies widely across provinces and depends on informal interpretation rather than a predictable system. A unified One SOP is essential to convert the Sustainable Refugee Employment Management Model into an operational framework that clearly allocates roles, steps, documentation, and decision-points across Stages 1–5.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Develop and formally adopt a unified “One SOP” mapped to the five stages of the employment cycle	Fragmented and inconsistent procedures increase transaction costs and uncertainty for employers, refugees, and frontline officers, undermining system performance	<p>What: Consolidate and harmonize procedures, documents, workflows, and role allocation across MOI, MOL, MOPH and provincial offices, explicitly mapped to Stages 1–5.</p> <p>When: Draft → consult → pilot → approve → roll-out.</p> <p>How: Establish a technical working group; develop process maps, standardized forms, FAQs; define revision cycle (every 6–12 months) and learning feedback loop through NSC</p>	<p>Lead: MOI and MOL</p> <p>Co-lead: MOPH</p> <p>Oversight: NSC</p> <p>Support: UN agencies and CSOs</p>	<p>Short term: Draft SOP + conduct consultation with stakeholders</p> <p>Mid-term: Formal approval + roll-out</p> <p>Long term: Annual review cycle</p>

Recommendation 2: Institutionalize Stage 1 “Preparation, Information, and System Coordination” as a structured pre-employment program

Refugees often make decisions with incomplete or late information, resulting in misunderstanding, financial risk, and drop-out. Stage 1 must operate as a decision-support and risk-reduction phase, not just an entry step.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Institutionalize a standardized Stage-1 pre-employment information and decision-support program in shelters	Information gaps at the beginning of the pathway reduce participation, create confusion, and generate avoidable risks for households	<p>What: Provide structured orientation on rights, stages, costs, timelines, complaint channels, and mobility rules; establish information points and regular sessions.</p> <p>When: Pilot in some shelters → refine → expand.</p> <p>How: Conduct monthly mobile clinics co-hosted by MOI and MOL; multilingual materials; digital access options for shelters</p>	<p>Lead: MOI</p> <p>Co-lead: MOL</p> <p>Support: UNHCR, CCSDPT, CSOs/INGOs, Office of The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC)</p>	<p>Short term: Pilot in priority shelters</p> <p>Mid-term: Scale to all shelters</p> <p>Long term: Embed in SOP</p>

Recommendation 3: Make shelter-based One Stop Service (OSS) / Job Fairs the default mechanism

Multi-step, paper-heavy processes create delays, costs, and drop-out. OSS / job fairs reduce uncertainty by integrating recruitment, screening, documentation, health checks, and insurance processes in one coordinated event.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Institutionalize OSS / job fairs in shelters as the default modality for Stages 2–3	Integrated, single-location processing reduces burden and accelerates legal onboarding for both employers and workers	<p>What: Conduct recruitment (i.e., worker interviews and selection), prepare documentation, conduct health checks, purchase health insurance, and apply for work permit</p> <p>When: Introduce regular scheduled OSS events → embed as</p>	<p>Lead: MOL and MOI</p> <p>Co-lead: MOPH</p> <p>Support: Provincial Employment Offices, district offices, CSOs, and employer associations</p>	<p>Short term: OSS pilots</p> <p>Mid-term: Provincial scheduling</p> <p>Long term: National standard</p>

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
		national standard for job application How: Joint deployment between MOL, MOI, MOPH with minimum standards and SOP provisions		

Recommendation 4: Standardize contracts and documentation

Inconsistent contracting and documentation processes weaken protection and transparency.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Introduce employment contract template for refugee workers and integrate identity into Stage-3 contracting	Standardization strengthens worker protection, reduces informality.	What: Issue employment contract; define identity verification documents. When: Contract templates How: MOI–MOL agree on ID/Identify Verification, and employment contracts requiring employers to use	Lead: MOI and MOL	Short term: Employment contract template + ID guidance Mid-term: Bank/SIM integration Long term: Streamlined documentation

Recommendation 5: Enable safe mobility, family unity, and education access

Fear of family separation, limited mobility, and school-access barriers undermine motivation and retention in formal employment.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Integrate mobility, dependent accompaniment, and education safeguards in Stage-4 deployment	Household-level concerns are key drivers of withdrawal; addressing them improves sustainability and participation	What: Allow appropriate dependent accompaniment; ensure children’s access to schools; pilot commuting between camps and workplaces / work schemes near the camps When: Interim	Lead: NSC Co-lead: MOI and MOE Support: Local authorities, employers, CSOs	Short term: Interim mobility + pilots Mid-term: Education access arrangements Long term: Regulatory

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
		measures first → regulatory reforms. How: NSC sequences policy decisions; MOI–MOE develop flexible documentation pathways		reforms + scale-up

Recommendation 6: Build an integrated monitoring, complaint, and joint-inspection system

Authorizing work without structured follow-up and protection mechanisms risks gaps in decent-work compliance, grievance handling, and worker mobility pathways.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Establish a coordinated Stage-5 monitoring and protection architecture	Joint monitoring and complaint integration ensure continuity, grievance resolution, and policy learning	What: Link DOE/DLPW complaint system with shelter reporting; enable CSO-assisted case registration; plan periodic joint inspections; track employment continuity and re-matching. When: Build on existing systems and expand gradually. How: Configure refugee-specific category; develop annual monitoring plans; feed data to NSC learning cycle	Lead: MOL Co-lead: MOI Support: DOE, DLPW inspectors, MWAC, and CSOs	Short term: Complaint + reporting linkages Mid-term: Joint inspection roll-out Long term: Integrated national monitoring

Recommendation 7: Promote digital and financial inclusion as cross-cutting enablers

Without identity, connectivity, SIM, and banking access, refugees remain dependent on intermediaries and digital systems across all stages cannot function effectively.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Implement a coordinated digital-and financial-access	Digital inclusion underpins documentation, wage	What: Improve shelter connectivity; issue secure ID/13-digit	Lead: MOI, BOT, NBTC Support: NSC,	Short term: Connectivity + interim ID

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
package across all stages	transfer, communication, and grievance access	references; simplify bank/SIM procedures. When: Quick-win connectivity → progressive integration. How: Joint guidance from MOI–BOT–NBTC; pilots in priority shelters; integrate indicators into Stage-5 monitoring	MOL, telecoms, banks, and CSOs	pilots Mid-term: identity and documentation verification alignment Long term: Full integration

Recommendation 8: Invest in skills development, inclusive job design, and employer engagement

Skills mismatch, limited training structure, and exclusion risks for older workers, PWDs, and caregivers reduce matching efficiency and retention.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Standardize job-readiness training and embed inclusive recruitment and job-design safeguards	Improves matching quality, participation equity, and employer readiness	What: Develop modular training; define inclusion criteria; establish employer engagement platform and sector guidance. When: Upgrade existing efforts → scale nationally. How: Co-develop curricula with CSOs; integrate inclusion criteria in OSS/SOP; convene employer dialogues	Lead: MOL Co-lead: MOE and MOPH Support: CSOs/INGOs, vocational institutes, employer associations, and camp committees	Short term: Training upgrades + good-practice documentation Mid-term: Inclusion criteria embedded Long term: National platform institutionalized

Recommendation 9: Establish a Central Program Management & Coordination Mechanism

Rollout requires active steering, sequencing, troubleshooting, and learning across agencies and provinces — functions not achievable through informal coordination alone.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Create a permanent Program Management & Coordination Mechanism for Model implementation	Ensures policy coherence, monitoring of rollout progress, and learning-based adaptation	<p>What: Establish Program Management Office (PMO); maintain dashboard; coordinate pilots; convene problem-solving forums; synthesize lessons for SOP updates.</p> <p>When: Early rollout through scale-up.</p> <p>How: Locate in NSC or MOL; second staff from key ministries; adopt TOR and quarterly review cycle</p>	<p>Lead: NSC</p> <p>Co-lead: MOL and MOI</p> <p>Support: relevant government agencies, UN agencies, and CSOs</p>	<p>Short term: Interim coordination cell</p> <p>Mid-term: Formal PMO + dashboard</p> <p>Long term: Permanent mechanism</p>

Recommendation 10: Develop a Refugee Employment Data & Information System

Paper-based and fragmented records prevent continuity, monitoring, grievance resolution, and labor-mobility management. A lightweight interoperable dataset is essential.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Design and deploy a basic interoperable data system linked to the five stages	Shared, privacy-safe dataset enables case continuity, reduces re-documentation, and strengthens Stage-5 monitoring	<p>What: Define minimum core dataset; align forms and OSS processes; enable export to NSC/PMO; apply role-based access and data-protection rules.</p> <p>When: Pilot → refine → scale.</p> <p>How: Start with selected shelters/provinces; integrate indicators for inspections and re-matching</p>	<p>Lead: MOI and MOL</p> <p>Co-lead: MOPH</p> <p>Support: NSC/PMO, CSOs, BOT, and NBTC (digital-ID alignment)</p>	<p>Short term: Define dataset + align forms</p> <p>Mid-term: Pilot in 2–3 provinces</p> <p>Long term: Progressive national roll-out</p>

Recommendation 11: Establish a Sustainable Financing & Cost-Sharing Framework

Unclear and ad-hoc cost arrangements create inequity, financial risk, and inconsistent employer participation.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Create a transparent cost-sharing and financing framework across stages	Predictability and fairness improve retention, employer participation, and sustainability	<p>What: Map cost items; define standard cost-sharing models and safeguards; issue guidance in SOP annexes.</p> <p>When: Early rollout to stabilize expectations.</p> <p>How: Consult employers, CSOs, provinces; consider onboarding packages and targeted support options within decent-work safeguards</p>	<p>Lead: MOL</p> <p>Co-lead: MOI and MOPH</p> <p>Support: Employer associations and CSOs</p>	<p>Short term: Cost-mapping + interim guidance</p> <p>Mid-term: Adopt standard rules</p> <p>Long term: Integrate into national labor policy instruments</p>

Recommendation 12: Establish a Strategic Communication and Public Information Framework

The study finds that refugees often make decisions with incomplete or late information, leading to misunderstanding, financial risk, confusion across steps, and avoidable drop-out during early stages of the employment pathway. These information gaps undermine informed choice, participation, and household-level risk management, particularly during Stage 1. A coordinated, multi-audience strategic communication framework is therefore required to ensure that information across agencies is accurate, consistent, accessible, and aligned with the Employment Management Cycle and the “One SOP”.

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
Develop and institutionalize a Strategic Communication and Public Information Framework aligned with the five stages of the Employment Management Cycle and integrated into the “One SOP”.	Clear, timely, and multilingual communication reduces misunderstanding and misinformation, improves informed decision-making and participation, supports employer readiness, and strengthens coordination and learning across	<p>What (Three-pillar strategic communication approach):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication with refugees (decision-support in Stage 1 and onboarding in Stages 2–3): Standardize core messages on rights, steps, costs, timelines, documentation, 	<p>Lead: NSC / PMO</p> <p>Co-lead: MOI and MOL</p> <p>Support: Provincial authorities, Public Relations offices of government offices, CSOs, UN agencies, and employer associations</p>	<p>Short term: Develop framework, core messages, pilot packages</p> <p>Mid-term: Integrate into “One SOP” and rollout to all shelters/provinces</p> <p>Long term: Institutionalize as a permanent</p>

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
	agencies throughout Stages 1–5.	<p>mobility rules, complaint channels, and monitoring; provide multilingual and accessible formats (print, audio-visual, digital); embed delivery in Stage-1 orientation and OSS / job-fair events.</p> <p>2. Employer-facing communication (participation, expectations, and compliance clarity): Develop sector-specific guidance and FAQs on procedures, documentation, cost-sharing rules, grievance pathways, and worker-protection safeguards; use employer networks and provincial platforms as dissemination channels.</p> <p>3. Public and inter-agency communication (coherence and policy learning): Align messages across MOI–MOL–MOPH–provinces; establish shared communication toolkits and update cycles linked to monitoring and PMO learning dashboards.</p> <p>When: Design framework → pilot in priority shelters/provinces → refine → national rollout.</p>		communication and policy-learning function

Recommendation	Justification	Actionable Recommendation	Responsible Agency	Timeframe
		<p>How: Create an inter-agency communication working group under NSC/PMO; co-develop content with MOI/MOL/CSOs and employer associations; deploy multi-channel dissemination (information points, digital platforms, OSS/Stage-events); institute periodic review and evidence-feedback cycle using Stage-5 monitoring data.</p>		

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Annexes

Annex 1: Deliverable, Activities and Timeline

The consultant team will be conducted according to the following timeline:

Activities	2025								Deliverables
	Nov				Dec				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
3. Start-up meeting with IRC team and relevant stakeholders									
4. Desk review, methodology and tools designs, implementation workplan, stakeholder mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct desk review Design research methodology, data collection tools, workplan and stakeholder mapping Submit a report on desk review, research methodology and tools, implementation workplan, stakeholder mapping and list of key informants 									Deliverable 1: Inception report in English
5. Conduct data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct in-depth interviews with key informants and focus group discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth Interview (3 November – 19 December 2025) FGDs in Tham Hin Camp (25 – 27 November 2025) FGDs in Mae La Camp (8 – 12 December 2025) In-depth Interview refugees outside Camp (20 – 22 December 2025) 									Deliverable 2: Interview notes, FGD Notes and list of key informants
4. Draft Report and presentation to the research committee, the IRC and key stakeholders (25 – 29 December 2025) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis, write report and submit draft report to the research committee Present preliminary findings, recommendations and the proposed employment model to the research committee, the IRC and key stakeholders and incorporate the feedback to the report 									Deliverable 3: Draft research report in English (preliminary findings, recommendations and the proposed employment model)
5. Final report and meeting with the research committee, the IRC and key stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise report and submit final report in English Organize one online meeting with the research committee and the key stakeholders 									Deliverable 4: Final research report in English including the main report and proposed employment model in English, executive summary in English and Thai, and the slide presentation in Thai
Regular check-ins between the research consultant team and the IRC team will be conducted on a biweekly basis		x		x		x		x	

Annex 2: Research Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for In-depth Interview (Stakeholders Group)

My name is Suthep Janamporn, a Research Consultant with the International Rescue Committee (IRC)—an international non-governmental organization providing humanitarian and development assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Thailand. I am conducting a research study entitled “*Developing a Sustainable Refugee Employment Model in Thailand: Evidence-Based Policy Pathways for Camp-Based Refugees’ Transition to Self-Reliance.*”

The objectives of this research are:

1. To generate evidence and policy recommendations that support the effective, sustainable, and scalable implementation of refugee employment in Thailand, ensuring benefits for both refugee employees and employers; and
2. To identify and propose collaborative mechanisms among government agencies, private sector actors, and humanitarian partners to strengthen coordination and promote refugees’ transition to self-reliance through employment.

The purpose of this interview is to collect information, opinions, and recommendations from key stakeholders—including government officials, civil society organizations (CSOs), and employers—to help develop an employment management model to support refugees’ transition to work outside the camps. The research results will be used to support policy recommendations and practical guidance for policymakers and service providers, aiming to promote self-reliance through employment.

- The interview will take approximately **1 hour**.
- Participation in this research is **entirely voluntary**. You may choose to participate or decline without any consequences.
- You may **withdraw** from the interview at any time or decline to answer any question without giving a reason.
- All information shared during the interview will be treated as **confidential** and used only for research purposes. Your name and personal details will not appear in any reports or publications resulting from this research.
- There are **no anticipated risks** associated with participation. While you may not receive direct benefits, your insights will contribute to improving policies and programs that support refugee employment and economic inclusion.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Ms. Preeyalak Sataranon
Partnership Coordinator, International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Mobile: 084-261-0521 Email: preeyalak.sataranon@rescue.org

Please read the following statements and indicate your consent by signing below.

- I have read and understood the information provided above.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and received satisfactory answers.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research interview.
- I understand that I may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Participant’s Name: _____

Position/Organization: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer’s Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annex 3: Research Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for Focus Group Discussion (Refugee and Camp Committee Group)

My name is Suthep Janamporn, a Research Consultant with the International Rescue Committee (IRC)—an international non-governmental organization providing humanitarian and development assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Thailand. I am conducting a research study entitled:

“Developing a Sustainable Refugee Employment Model in Thailand: Evidence-Based Policy Pathways for Camp-Based Refugees’ Transition to Self-Reliance.”

The objectives of this research are:

1. To generate evidence and policy recommendations that support the effective, sustainable, and scalable implementation of refugee employment in Thailand, ensuring benefits for both refugee employees and employers; and
2. To identify and propose collaborative mechanisms among government agencies, private sector actors, and humanitarian partners to strengthen coordination and promote refugees’ transition into self-reliance through employment.

The purpose of this Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is to collect information, opinions, and experiences from refugees living in camps—regarding their employment experiences, needs, expectations, motivations, and challenges related to working outside the camps. The information gathered will help identify practical and policy recommendations for improving refugee employment and promoting self-reliance through safe and decent work.

Participation Details

- The discussion will take approximately **3 hours** and will be conducted in a group setting with **15 participants** from the same camp community.
- Participation is entirely **voluntary**. You may choose to participate or decline without any consequences.
- You may withdraw from the discussion at any time or decline to answer any question without giving a reason.
- All information shared during the discussion will be treated as **confidential** and used only for research purposes.
- No participant’s name will appear in any report or publication resulting from this study. Responses will be summarized without identifying individuals.
- An interpreter will be available during the session to ensure clear communication in your preferred language.
- The session may be audio-recorded (with your consent) to ensure accuracy of notes. These recordings will be securely stored and deleted after the analysis is completed.
- There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this discussion. While you may not receive direct benefits, your views will contribute to improving policies and programs that support refugee employment and self-reliance.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact:

Ms. Preeyalak Sataranon
Partnership Coordinator, International Rescue Committee (IRC)
Mobile: 084-261-0521 Email: preeyalak.sataranon@rescue.org

Participant Consent

Please read the following statements and indicate your consent by signing below:

- I have read and understood the information provided above.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and received satisfactory answers.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research focus group discussion.
- I understand that I may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- I consent to the discussion being audio-recorded (if applicable).

Camp: _____ Date: _____

Number of Participants: _____ persons

No.	Participant's Name	Zone/Section	Signature / Thumbprint

Facilitator's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Facilitator's Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Interpreter's Name (if applicable): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annex 4: In-depth Interview Guideline and Questions

In-depth Interview Guideline and Questions for Government Agencies

This Field Data Collection Guideline provides instructions, interview questions, ethical procedures, and protocols for conducting in-depth interviews (IDIs) with government agencies. The goal is to gather evidence on their roles, experiences, and perspectives related to implementing the Cabinet Resolution on refugee employment (26 August 2025) and the overall refugee employment management cycle.

A. Interview Information

Interviewee Name	
Position	
Organization	
Province	
Interview Date	
Interviewer(s)	
Mode	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Phone
Duration (Mins)	

B. Introduction Script

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. This interview is part of a research study conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to support the development of a sustainable refugee employment model in Thailand.

Interview Objectives:

- To understand government roles, mandates, and responsibilities in implementing the Cabinet Resolution on refugee employment (26 August 2025).
- To assess the operational processes, coordination mechanisms, and challenges across the five stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle.
- To identify gaps, bottlenecks, and opportunities to strengthen the refugee employment system.
- To gather recommendations for designing a feasible, safe, and sustainable refugee employment model.

This interview will take approximately 60–90 minutes. Your participation is voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

With your consent, may we audio-record the interview for accuracy?

Yes No

C. Interview Questions (Aligned with 5 Stages of Refugee Employment Management & KRQs)

Section 1 Mandate, Roles & Experience

1. Could you briefly introduce your role and your agency’s responsibilities related to refugee administration, foreign worker regulation, or employment authorization?
2. Since the Cabinet Resolution on 26 August 2025, what additional roles or tasks has your agency taken on (e.g., issuing Form 1–2, OrNor 1–2, work-permit procedures, health screening coordination)?
3. What internal guidelines, instructions, or SOPs has your agency received regarding the implementation of refugee employment?

Section 2: Refugee Employment Management Cycle

Stage 1 Preparation & Coordination

4. How prepared do you think relevant government agencies (MOI, MOL, DOE, DLPW, District Offices, Provincial Public Health) are in executing the refugee employment process?

5. What coordination mechanisms currently exist between your agency and others (e.g., MOI–MOL coordination, provincial taskforces, working groups)?
6. What challenges or inconsistencies have you observed in coordination at the national, provincial, and district levels?

Stage 2 Recruitment & Selection

7. How are job openings communicated to refugees in the camp? Which agencies are responsible for announcements, screening, and interview arrangements?
8. How do district authorities and camp committees participate in the recruitment process?
9. What challenges arise during employer interviews or selection inside or outside the camp?

Stage 3 Contracting & Legal Authorization

10. How does your agency manage documentation steps such as Form 1, Form 2, OrNor 2 (exit for health check), OrNor 1 (exit for employment), and work-permit procedures?
11. What common errors, delays, or bottlenecks occur (e.g., data verification, ID card issues, sector restrictions, health exam scheduling)?
12. How well do employers and refugees understand these legal requirements? What support do they need?

Stage 4 Deployment & Orientation

13. How are movement and relocation managed—from the camp to the workplace? Which agencies are responsible for verification and reporting at the destination province?
14. Are there any safety, accommodation, or transport issues observed during deployment?
15. What guidelines or supports exist for refugee onboarding and workplace orientation?

Stage 5 Monitoring & Post-Employment Support

16. What systems are used to monitor refugee workers after deployment (e.g., 4-month reporting, employer reporting, inspections)?
17. What kinds of complaints or protection cases have been reported, and through which channels (DLPW hotline, district office, MOL complaint system)?
18. What improvements are needed to strengthen monitoring, compliance checks, and grievance mechanisms?

Section 3: Cross-Cutting Issues

19. What are the main systemic barriers affecting refugee employment (documentation, quotas, agency capacity, labor market dynamics)?
20. Which specific groups of refugees may need additional support (e.g., women, elderly, persons with disabilities, youth)?
21. What challenges or misconceptions do employers commonly have when hiring refugees?
22. What are your perceptions about Thai host communities' attitudes toward refugees living in the Thai host communities?

Section 4: Model Development & Policy Recommendations

23. From your agency's experience, what should be the key components of an effective refugee employment model for Thailand?
24. What policy or regulatory adjustments should be considered (sector eligibility, movement rules, permit validity, cost-sharing)?
25. How can coordination between central and provincial authorities be strengthened?
26. What recommendations would you propose for improving the overall system, including monitoring, data management, and compliance?

Section 5: Closing

27. Is there anything important about implementing refugee employment that we have not asked but should be included in the study?

In-depth Interview Guideline and Questions for IGOs, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs

This Field Data Collection Guideline provides instructions, interview questions, ethical procedures, and protocols for conducting in-depth interviews (IDIs) with international organizations, international NGOs, and civil society organizations. The goal is to gather evidence on their roles, experiences, and perspectives related to implementing the Cabinet Resolution on refugee employment (26 August 2025) and the overall refugee employment management cycle.

B. Interview Information

Interviewee Name	
Position	
Organization	
Province	
Interview Date	
Interviewer(s)	
Mode	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Phone
Duration (Mins)	

B. Introduction Script

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. This interview is part of a research study conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to support the development of a sustainable refugee employment model in Thailand.

Interview Objectives:

- To understand the mandate and role of service providers in refugee protection, livelihoods, and employment support.
- To assess coordination, operational processes, and challenges across the 5 stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle.
- To identify systemic gaps, opportunities, and recommendations for designing a sustainable refugee employment model for Thailand.

The interview will take approximately 60–90 minutes. All information will remain confidential and will be used for research purposes only. You may choose not to answer any question or stop the interview at any time.

With your consent, may we record this interview for accuracy of transcription?

Yes No (If yes, obtain verbal consent before starting.)

C. Interview Questions *(Aligned with 5 Stages of Refugee Employment Management & KRQs)*

Section 1: Mandate, Roles & Experience

1. Could you briefly introduce your position, responsibilities, and your organization's current mandate related to refugee protection, livelihoods, or employment in Thailand?
2. Since the Cabinet Resolution on 26 August 2025, what additional responsibilities or coordination tasks has your organization undertaken?

Section 2: Refugee Employment Management Cycle

Stage 1: Preparation & Coordination

3. How would you assess the readiness of government agencies (MOI, MOL, DOE, District Offices) in implementing refugee employment outside the camps?

4. What role has your organization played during the preparation phase?
5. What coordination challenges have you observed among government agencies, employers, and humanitarian actors?

Stage 2: Recruitment & Selection

6. How do refugees currently receive information about job opportunities? How effective are these communication channels?
7. What support does your organization provide in recruitment or job matching?
8. What challenges do refugees commonly face during recruitment and employer interviews?

Stage 3: Contracting & Legal Authorization

9. In your view, how well do refugees and employers understand the required legal steps (Form 1, Form 2, Or.Nor.1, Or.Nor.2, health examination, insurance, work permit application)?
10. What assistance does your organization provide during contracting or documentation procedures?
11. What bottlenecks or risks have you observed in this stage?

Stage 4: Deployment & Orientation

12. What types of support do refugees receive when relocating from the camp to the workplace? Who is responsible for transportation, accommodation, and first-day orientation?
13. What challenges do refugees encounter during relocation and the early employment period?
14. In your opinion, how should NGOs/IGOs strengthen the onboarding process?

Stage 5: Monitoring & Post-Employment Support

15. How is worker well-being monitored after deployment? What systems or mechanisms are currently being used?
16. What protection concerns or workplace issues have been reported so far?
17. How can government agencies and NGOs improve grievance handling, monitoring, and worker retention?

Section 3: Cross-Cutting Issues

18. What are the main systemic barriers refugees face in accessing and sustaining employment?
19. Which groups of refugees require additional support (e.g., women, elderly, youth, persons with disabilities)? Why?
20. What concerns or misconceptions from employers has your organization observed?
21. What are your perceptions about Thai host communities' attitudes toward refugees living in the Thai host communities?

Section 4: Model Development & Policy Recommendations

22. From your experience, what should be the essential components of a sustainable refugee employment model for Thailand?
23. What policy or regulatory adjustments are needed to improve the refugee employment system?
24. What formal roles should service providers (IGO/INGO/NGO/CSO) play in the future employment model?
25. What practical recommendations would you offer to Thai policymakers and service providers?

Section 5: Closing

26. Is there anything important about refugee employment that we have not asked but should be included in this research?

In-depth Interview Guideline and Questions for Private Sector

This Field Data Collection Guideline provides instructions, interview questions, ethical procedures, and protocols for conducting in-depth interviews (IDIs) with private sector. The goal is to gather evidence on their roles, experiences, and perspectives related to implementing the Cabinet Resolution on refugee employment (26 August 2025) and the overall refugee employment management cycle.

C. Interview Information

Interviewee Name	
Position	
Company	
Sector	
Province	
Interview Date	
Interviewer(s)	
Mode	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Phone
Duration (Mins)	

B. Introduction Script

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. This interview is part of a research study conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to support the development of a sustainable refugee employment model in Thailand.

Interview Objectives:

- To understand employers' expectations, motivations, concerns, and readiness in hiring camp-based refugees.
- To assess recruitment practices, legal processes, onboarding, and workplace support for refugee workers.
- To identify gaps, challenges, and support needs across the 5 stages of the Refugee Employment Management Cycle.
- To gather recommendations for designing a practical and sustainable refugee employment model that supports both employers and refugee workers.

This interview will take approximately 60–90 minutes. Your participation is voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

With your consent, may we audio-record the interview for accuracy?

Yes No

C. Interview Questions (Aligned with 5 Stages of Refugee Employment Management & KRQs)

Section 1 Company Profile, Motivation & Experience

4. Could you briefly introduce your company (sector, size, number of workers, locations)?
5. What is your company's current experience hiring migrant workers or refugees?
6. How did your company first learn about the new Cabinet Resolution (26 August 2025) allowing refugee employment?
7. What motivated your company to consider hiring refugees (e.g., labor shortages, skills required, CSR concerns)?
8. What concerns or risks do employers typically have about hiring camp-based refugees?

Section 2: Refugee Employment Management Cycle

Stage 1 Preparation & Coordination

9. How well prepared do you think government agencies (DOE, DLPW, District Offices, MOI, MOPH) are in facilitating refugee employment?
10. What information did you receive before deciding to hire refugees (process, rules, costs, required documents)?
11. What additional information or support would help employers better understand the procedures?
12. Were there any unclear regulations or inconsistencies between central, provincial, and district authorities?
13. What kind of support from NGOs/INGOs (IRC, ILO, UNHCR) would be helpful during the preparation stage?

Stage 2 Recruitment & Selection

14. How did your company announce job openings to refugees in the camp? (Through DOE, District Office, Camp Committee)
15. How effective was the recruitment and job-matching process?
16. Did your company conduct interviews inside the camp? How was the experience?
17. What challenges occurred during recruitment (communication, language, availability, documentation)?
18. What skills or attributes do you expect from refugee workers? Are these expectations met?
19. Would sector-specific pre-employment training improve the recruitment process?

Stage 3 Contracting & Legal Authorization

20. From the employer's perspective, how difficult or easy was it to complete the legal steps?
21. Were there any bottlenecks such as delays in document verification, unclear instructions, limited hospital capacity for health checks?
22. What would make this process more efficient for employers?
23. Would a single-window system (online or offline) help reduce complexity?

Stage 4 Deployment & Orientation

24. How did the movement of refugee workers from the camp to your workplace occur?
25. Did you face challenges related to transportation, arrival timing, reporting requirements (48-hour rule), or accommodation?
26. Did the workers receive any pre-employment orientation (rights, responsibilities, safety, job expectations)?
27. What difficulties did refugee workers face during their first weeks of work? (Language barriers, Productivity or skill gaps, Workplace rules, Cultural adaptation)
28. What orientation, training, or employer support would improve worker retention and performance?
29. Would you consider participating in an employer-led work-readiness program?

Stage 5 Monitoring & Post-Employment Support

30. Have you received guidance from DOE/DLPW on monitoring refugee workers (4-month reporting, payroll, contract compliance)?
31. Have there been any workplace issues involving refugee workers such as absenteeism, payment misunderstandings, conflict with supervisors or colleagues, gender- or safety-related concerns?
32. Do you know how to report grievances or seek support (DLPW hotline, district office, NGO partners)?
33. Would structure check-ins (NGO + employer + worker) be useful?

Section 3: Cross-Cutting Issues

34. What are the biggest systemic barriers employers face when hiring refugees? (administrative complexity, costs (transport, insurance, documents), Limited worker readiness, time-consuming procedures, security or compliance concerns)

35. Which groups of refugees may need special support to succeed (women, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities)?
36. What are your perceptions about 'Thai host communities' attitudes toward refugees living in the Thai host communities?

Section 4: Model Development & Policy Recommendations

37. From an employer standpoint, what should a **sustainable refugee employment model** include?
38. Which types of support would make hiring refugees easier for employers? (Transportation, Pre-departure training, Language skills, Incentives, On-site job coaching)
39. What policy adjustments would you recommend to the Thai government? (Permit duration, Insurance options, Sector eligibility, Mobility between provinces)
40. How can coordination between employers, government, and NGOs be improved?
41. Would your company be open to joining a provincial or sectoral Employer Network for Refugee Employment?

Section 5: Closing

42. Is there anything important we did not ask but should include in the study?
43. Do you have recommendations for policymakers, service providers, or provincial authorities?

Annex 5: FGD Guideline and Questions

FGD Interview Guideline and Questions for Camp-based refugee

This Field Data Collection Guideline provides instructions, discussion questions, ethical procedures, and operational protocols for conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with camp-based refugees. The purpose of these FGDs is to collect comprehensive evidence on refugees' capacities, needs, expectations, motivations and concerns, as well as their experiences and challenges related to accessing employment outside the camps. The information gathered will contribute to the analysis of Thailand's emerging refugee employment framework following the Cabinet Resolution on 26 August 2025 and will inform the assessment of gaps, barriers, and opportunities across the refugee employment management cycle to support the development of a sustainable employment model.

A. FGD Information

Information	Details
Camp	
Zone / Section	
FGD Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Working-age refugees <input type="checkbox"/> Camp leader and camp committee <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees with prior external work <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees currently working outside
Date	
Facilitator(s)	
Note-taker(s)	
Interpreter(s)	
Mode	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person <input type="checkbox"/> In-person <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Phone
Duration (Mins)	
Number of Participants	_____ persons (_____ Female _____ Male)

B. Introduction Script

Thank you for joining this discussion today. We are conducting this Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as part of a research study led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to understand refugees' experiences, capacities, needs, expectations, motivations, and challenges related to employment outside the camp, following the Cabinet Resolution on 26 August 2025.

Objectives of the Discussion

- To explore your experiences and views on accessing employment information and opportunities
- To understand your needs, skills, expectations, motivations, and concerns regarding work outside the camp
- To identify challenges, risks, and support needed before, during, and after employment
- To gather suggestions for improving refugee employment policies and practices

Important Notes

- The discussion will take about 2–3 hours.
- Your participation is voluntary. You may stop or skip any question at any time.
- There is no right or wrong answer—only your experience matters.
- Everything you share will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.
- No real names will be included in the report.
- With your consent, the session may be audio-recorded to ensure accurate note-taking.

May we record the session?

Yes No

C. FGD Questions (Aligned with Research Framework and KRQs)

Total 38 guiding questions for camp-based refugees will be adapted as appropriate to each FGD target group, which includes working-age refugees, camp leaders, refugees with prior external work experience, and those who are currently working outside the camp.

Section 1: Background, Work Experience & Awareness (KRQ1: existing employment practices)

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself (zone/section, age group, main activities in the camp)?
2. Have you ever worked inside the camp (e.g., incentive work, volunteer work, vocational training)?
3. Have you ever worked outside the camp? If yes, please describe the type of job, location, duration, and your overall experience.
4. What do you know about the new refugee employment policy after the Cabinet Resolution on 26 August 2025?
5. What types of jobs are refugees able to access outside camps based on your understanding or experience?

Section 2 Refugee Employment Management Cycle

Stage 1: Preparation & Coordination (KRQ2: capacities, needs, motivations/demotivations)

6. How do you usually receive information about employment opportunities outside the camp? Which sources are most reliable?
7. What information or support do you need before deciding to work outside the camp?
8. What skills or training do you think refugees need before applying for jobs outside the camp?
9. What motivates you (or other refugees) to want to work outside the camp?
10. What worries or discourages you from working outside the camp (safety, distance, rules, cost, family responsibilities)?
11. For women, youth, elders, or persons with disabilities: what additional support would help you participate in employment outside the camp?

Stage 2: Recruitment & Selection (KRQ2 & KRQ3)

12. How do employers communicate job announcements or recruitment activities inside the camp?
13. Have you attended employer interviews? What was the experience like?
14. What challenges did you face during the recruitment or interview process (documents, language, confidence)?
15. From your perspective, what do employers expect from refugee workers?
16. What would help you perform better during interviews or recruitment processes?

Stage 3: Contracting & Legal Authorization (KRQ2: needs; KRQ5: gaps & barriers)

17. What do you understand about the steps required to work outside the camp (Form 1, Form 2, Or.Nor.1, Or.Nor.2, health check, insurance, work permit)?
18. Which parts of these procedures were difficult, confusing, or costly?
19. Did anyone (NGOs, camp committee, employer, government officials) support you through these steps? Was the support sufficient?
20. What problems or barriers did you face in preparing the documents?

Stage 4: Deployment & Orientation (KRQ2 & KRQ3)

21. For those who have worked outside: How was the process of moving from the camp to the workplace?
22. Did you receive orientation or information about job duties, workplace rules, safety, or rights before starting work?
23. What challenges did you face during the first week at work (transportation, accommodation, language, employer supervision)?
24. What support from NGOs, employers, or government would have helped make this transition easier?

Stage 5: Monitoring & Post-Employment Support (KRQ2, KRQ5)

25. When working outside, did you know where to report problems or ask for help?
26. What problems have you or others experienced at work (working hours, payment, safety concerns, harassment, discrimination)?
27. Do you know what happens if the employer does not follow the contract?
28. What support do you need after starting work (health, childcare, conflict resolution, financial support)?
29. For those who stopped working: What made you decide to leave the job?

Section 3: Cross-Cutting Issues (KRQ5: systemic gaps & barriers)

30. What prevents refugees from accessing or maintaining jobs outside the camp?
31. Which groups face more difficulty in accessing employment (women, youth, elderly, persons with disabilities)? Why?
32. What risks or safety concerns do refugee workers commonly face?

Section 4: Model Development & Policy Recommendations (KRQ4 & KRQ6)

33. What type of support system or model would help refugees work safely and successfully outside the camp?
34. How should the government or NGOs improve the current employment system for refugees?
35. What advice would you give employers to help them better support refugee workers?
36. If you could design your “ideal refugee employment model,” what would it include?

Section 5: Closing (KRQ6)

37. Is there anything important about refugee employment we have not asked?
38. Do you have any suggestions for decision-makers who want to support refugee employment?

Annex 6: List of key informants interviewed

Interview Date	Agency Name	Type of Stakeholder
4-Nov-25	Migrant Working Group (MWG)	CSO/INGO/IO
4-Nov-25	International Detention Coalition	CSO/INGO/IO
5-Nov-25	Group of Entrepreneurs with Foreign Workers	Private Sector
10-Nov-25	Foreign Affairs Division, Ministry of Interior	Government
12-Nov-25	The Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPI)	CSO/INGO/IO
14-Nov-25	International Rescue Committee (IRC) Staff	CSO/INGO/IO
17-Nov-25	The Border Consortium (TBC)	CSO/INGO/IO
18-Nov-25	The Committee for Coordination of Services to Displaced Persons in Thailand (CCSDPI)	CSO/INGO/IO
21-Nov-25	Suan Phueng District Office	Government
24-Nov-25	Suan Phueng Hospital	Government
2-Dec-25	Tha Song Yang District Office	Government
2-Dec-25	Tha Song Yang Hospital	Government
3-Dec-25	Tak Provincial Employment Office	Government
3-Dec-25	The Federation of Thai Industries, Tak Chapter	Private Sector
15-Dec-25	Internal Security Affairs Bureau, Department of Provincial Administration, Ministry of Interior	Government
15-Dec-25	Office of the National Security Council	Government
15-Dec-25	Social Security Office	Government
16-Dec-25	Mae Sot Hospital	Government
16-Dec-25	International Rescue Committee (IRC) Country Director	CSO/INGO/IO
17-Dec-25	UNHCR (Thailand Office)	CSO/INGO/IO
17-Dec-25	Department of Labor Protection and Welfare	Government
17-Dec-25	Tak Provincial Labor Protection and Welfare Office	Government
17-Dec-25	Ratchaburi Provincial Labor Protection and Welfare Office	Government
18-Dec-25	The Tak Chamber of Commerce	Private Sector
18-Dec-25	Ratchaburi Provincial Employment Office	Government
18-Dec-25	Division of Health Economics and Health Security, Ministry of Public Health	Government
22-Dec-25	Thailand Migration Reform	CSO/INGO/IO
22-Dec-25	Office of Foreign Workers Administration, DOE	Government
23-Dec-25	Gas Station Company	Private Sector
24-Dec-25	Construction Company	Private Sector