



Save the Children

# THAILAND COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2024

A summary of Save the Children Thailand's  
Country Strategic Plan 2022-2024

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To READ more on the rights situation of children in Thailand, please see our published Child Rights Situation Analysis that underpins the focus of our 2022-24 Country Strategy [[Link](#)]

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Photo: Credit/Save the Children

**“I want to see the world that gives all children equal opportunity no matter who they are, where they are from, what sex/gender or nationality they hold. I want to see the world where adults listen hard to children and the problems that are facing the children are taken seriously and solved. I want to see children getting support they need to grow and reach their full potentials. I want to see children learn and develop as much as they want to without any barriers”**

*Consultations with children organized by SCI Thailand during the Country Strategic Planning process in 2021*

## CHILD RIGHTS SITUATION IN THAILAND

While the Royal Thai Government has taken a number of steps towards improving child rights in Thailand, there remains a considerable number of child rights issues plaguing the country, particularly for the most marginalized and discriminated against children. **Children continue to lack access to quality basic services in parts of the country, including education, health and protection services**, and child protection risks include some of the gravest: high rates of child exploitation and trafficking, abuse and neglect, and institutional care. **Youth lack opportunities for advancement** and face higher rates of unemployment, especially youth from marginalized communities. **Children’s abilities to speak out, advocate for their rights and freely associate are not fully realized.** Children and families living in unstable situations due to discrimination, poverty, and lack of education and opportunity, are more **vulnerable to the impacts of both natural and human-made disasters.** COVID-19 has pushed families without adequate safety nets, access to paid work, and infrastructure (sufficient and safe living space/ internet) into crisis, with dire consequences for child wellbeing.

# OUR AMBITION AND WORK

**Our Vision:** is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation

**Our Mission:** To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives

## Our Five Strategic Goals for 2022-24



**Education:** Migrant, refugee and conflict-affected children are school ready and have equitable access to quality learning in safe, positive and violence-free environments.



**Child Protection:** Children facing the greatest inequalities and discrimination receive appropriate protection support through improved knowledge, skills & attitudes of Child Protection actors, parents & teachers.



**Child Poverty:** Youth facing the greatest inequalities and discrimination have accessible and flexible pathways to decent work.



**Child Rights Governance:** All children are empowered and able to exercise their civil rights and freedoms safely, without discrimination and fear of reprisals.



**Emergency Preparedness & Response:** Children and their communities receive immediate assistance & are more resilient to immediate and long-term natural, climate induced and human-made disaster.

## Our Operational Priorities

- Transition from an International NGO to a **Thai Foundation in 2022**, and increase our national fundraising efforts to support our work for children through new income segments (corporate, private foundation, individual).
- **Renew our focus on supporting children's voices** by empowering children and youth to advocate and campaign on issues that matter to them.
- Embed **digital programming** in our core areas of work in collaboration with **tech companies and innovators**.
- **Build out our partnerships with youth activists**, child rights groups & networks, local CSOs, & private sector to reach results at scale.
- Use **quality evidence** and best practice, including Save the Children program Common Approaches, to influence policy and procedures of government & relevant stakeholders.
- Build a **sophisticated advocacy** presence in Thailand, with the right staff and strategy.
- Source sufficient **nationally-based technical expertise** to drive program design, influence and lead on strategic partnership engagement.

# CHILD PROTECTION

## Snapshot of key child protection issues

- 1. Physical and Humiliating (PHP) punishment** of children is proven to negatively impact children's wellbeing, development and future, and is widespread in Thailand. In the 2019 MICS, 60.5% boys and 54.6% girls aged 1-14 reported they had experienced violent discipline during the last month, with the biggest difference observed among the poorest (69.6% vs. 42.1% for the richest)<sup>1</sup>. According to a baseline assessment on PHP carried out by Save the Children in 2017 in eight communities, only 4.2% of parents did not use physical punishment or humiliating methods toward their children
- 2. Alternative care** is prevalent in Thailand as **23.5% of children do not live with their parents** due to a range of reasons including poverty, neglect, parent's migration for work, violence, special needs or inability of parents to care for their children (UNICEF, 2015). In some instances, children do not receive the care they need or can be at risk of abuse and exploitation.
- 3. Sexual and gender based (SGBV) violence** is deemed to be pervasive in Thailand. The Thai Civil Rights and Investigative Journalism reviewed records of 662 hospitals in 2017 and found that almost 9,000 children had been admitted to hospital in that time period due to physical or sexual abuse<sup>2</sup>. The UNICEF Situation Analysis of Adolescents 2015-2016 noted that 88% of sexual violence victims are adolescent girls aged 10 - 18 years that usually know the aggressor (family member, friend or boyfriend), and that violence commonly happens at home. Although deemed less prevalent amongst boys, sexual violence remains a taboo and a social stigma. Various reports point to the prevalence of sexual exploitation of young ethnic minority boys.<sup>3</sup>
- 4. Thai youth's internet use** is on the rise, and a result their exposure to **Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC)** or online bullying are also emerging trends (UNICEF, ECPAT, Plan, Thai Health and DTAC). Data shows that deregulated and excessive use can lead to abuse, exploitation and risky behavior.
- 5. Violence amongst peers** remains a concern – Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reports that 27% of students in Thailand reported having been **bullied** every month (4% above the OECD average) – while a landmark Mahidol University study reported in 2015 that over 50% of students aged 13-20 who identified as LGBT faced bullying in the past month<sup>4</sup>.

**Our Goal: Children facing the greatest inequalities and discrimination receive appropriate protection support through improved knowledge, skills & attitudes of CP actors, parents & teachers**

### Key Aims by 2024:



- To train refugee teachers and student leaders from a mix of refugee and migrant communities on key MHPSS messages, sexual and gender-based violence (including SOGIESC-based violence), child safeguarding reporting procedure, and referral pathway.



- Provide children and youth from refugee and migrant communities with the skills, knowledge and support to develop solutions and campaigns to protect themselves and other at-risk children from all forms of online abuse.



- Provide government social workers and CSO para-social workers and volunteers with capacity building on case management, PFA, MHPSS, and CPiE standards, inclusive of practicums to apply and adapt these approaches to best protect children impacted by violence, including within the context of irregular migration and refugee influx.



- Run a 3-year Flagship Country Campaign that will serve to bring in change in behaviors, policy/law changes, increased brand awareness, and having engaged new supporters to support child rights in Thailand.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/thailand/media/5146/file/Multiple%20Indicator%20Cluster%20Survey%202019.pdf> Table PR2.1. p.193

<sup>2</sup> พบเด็กไทยถูกรับผิดชอบโดยทางร่างกายรุนแรงปีละ 4.7 แสนคน - ศูนย์ข้อมูลข่าวสารสืบสวนเพื่อสิทธิพลเมือง (TCIJ) ([tcijthai.com](http://tcijthai.com))

<sup>3</sup> ECPAT Thailand, Thailand Institute of Justice, The sexual exploitation of boys in Thailand, 2021

<sup>4</sup> Sample of 2000 students across Provinces in Thailand. Bangkok: Mahidol University, Plan International Thailand; UNESCO Bangkok, [Bullying targeting secondary school students who are or are perceived to be transgender or same-sex attracted: Types, prevalence, impact, motivation and preventive measures in 5 provinces of Thailand](#), 2014, 91 p.

# EDUCATION

## Snapshot of key education issues

1. Despite the progress made against Thailand's landmark Education for All Policy, in 2020, there were still **250,000 Out of School Children (OOSC) aged 3 to 6 years, and 592,396 OOSC aged 3 to 17 years (underestimated)**. Poverty, social factors, and systemic issues, are the main reasons behind exclusion of children from education.<sup>5</sup>
2. A high % of out of school children are from **migrant communities, as they face several barriers** to accessing formal or non-formal education, often relying on community-based migrant schools. The main barriers are school fees, language difficulties, and fear of discrimination. **Children with disabilities** also experience challenges accessing schools that provide specialized education, especially in remote areas. **Ethnic minorities and indigenous children struggle to study in a language that is not their own**, and mother tongue-based learning and second language support is not consistently provided.
3. A safe learning environment is essential for quality education, unfortunately in Thailand **violence in schools remains widespread**, through negative disciplining methods used by teachers, but also bullying from peers. LGBTQI+ students are particularly at risk.
4. Early Childhood Education in Thailand varies greatly, with lower enrolment in certain parts of the country, and demonstrated delays in early development indicators of children. In the Deep South, for instance, the province of Narathiwat reports 46% attendance rate compared to 85%, the national average. A report by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) in 2015<sup>6</sup> showed that out of 548 ECD centers in the Southern Border Provinces that were assessed on educational quality, around **18% were deemed to be of very poor quality and 61% passed minimum standards. Only 23% of the centers were assessed as having good-quality standards.**
5. **COVID-19 has exacerbated weaknesses in the education system in Thailand**, both formal and non-formal. While children have transitioned from home-based learning to online throughout 2020-21, tens of thousands of migrant children learning in Migrant Learning Centres have not been permitted to return to school since March of 2020.

**Our Goal:** Migrant, refugee and conflict-affected children are school ready and have equitable access to quality learning in safe, positive and violence free environments

## Key Aims by 2024:



- In collaboration with key stakeholders, expand the **Ready to Learn "ELM in Centers" component in Narathiwat, Yala and Pattani** provinces to ensure that ECCD facilitators, working with vulnerable children, have the skills and knowledge to support the early learning and development of children ages 4-6.



- Ensure that **all refugee boys and girls, including children with disabilities living in the 9 refugee camps (approx. 18,000)** along the Myanmar border **have access to continued learning despite** pressure to cut funding, and periodic restrictions in camps due to COVID-19.



- Ensure **all refugee education teachers (1,200)** are equipped with the knowledge and skills to **promote learning in safe, inclusive and protected environments.**

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- In collaboration with migrant stakeholders - including children and youth –**contribute to a 20% increase in enrollment rate for willing migrant children to Thai schools, as well as a 50% increased satisfaction rate by migrant caregivers and children themselves on the registration and integration process** (baseline year, late 2022).



- Support **Thai schools so that they are compliant with the EFA policy, and 95% of targeted communities demonstrate improved awareness of the EFA policy and enrollment procedures.**

<sup>5</sup> SC Thailand, Child Rights Situation Analysis, 2021

<sup>6</sup> External Quality Assessment 3rd round




# CHILD RIGHTS GOVERNANCE

## Snapshot of key child rights governance issues

1. Over the last 2 years, the political context in Thailand has been changing in an unprecedented fashion. **Children and youth have been openly and en-masse engaging in forums and online and public arenas, including pro-democracy street protests, and demanding their rights.**
2. In response to the crack-down on child and youth protests and rights movements, international and national organizations called for **the government to respect children's rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression**, including in peaceful protest, that is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), (ratified by Thailand in 1992).
3. Thailand is home to an estimated 4.9 million migrants<sup>7</sup> (around 10% of its total population), approx. 97,000 refugees and approx. 480,000 stateless persons (UNHCR, 2021). Based on domestic legislation, Thailand does not have any law explicitly prohibiting the detention of children on the move; **undocumented children rights are not fully protected, as they face discrimination, obstacles to access basic service and risk of detention.**

**Our Goal: All children are empowered and able to exercise their civil rights and freedoms safely, without discrimination and fear of reprisals**

### Key Aims by 2024:



- Work with civil society partners to **produce an analysis/mapping of current policies and practices to identify issues, obstacles and gaps preventing children from fully realizing their political and civil rights.**
- Provide **CSOs with the skills and resources to advocate for healthy civic/political spaces, the removal of barriers to children's freedom of expression, and the ability to monitor the government.**
- Support children (at least 45% cis and transgender girls, at least 45% cis and transgender boys/men, at least 10% non-binary and other identities) and CSOs/youth groups to **use national and international accountability monitoring processes** to advocate on child rights issues that matter most to them.
- Equip (at least 45% girls/women and 45% boys/men) **marginalized youth with the skills and support to campaign and advocate for themselves, enabling them to use safer platforms to exercise their rights to expression, assembly and to obtain access to information.**

<sup>7</sup> IOM, Thailand migrant report, 2019

# CHILD POVERTY

## Snapshot of key child poverty issues

1. Thailand is unequal, as “the *Global Wealth Report and Databook*, published in December 2018 by Credit Suisse revealed that Thailand has the **largest wealth gap in the world**”.<sup>8</sup> In 2019, 1% of the population held 50.4% of the wealth, and 10% held three quarters of the wealth (76.6%).<sup>9</sup> **Inequality undermines the future of the next generation, severely limiting opportunities for children.**<sup>10</sup>
2. Youth unemployment in Thailand is of grave concern - according to the 2018 Labour Force Survey, “**young people have nearly seven times the adult unemployment rate** [...] High youth unemployment (4.87 per cent) suggests a rather painful transition for young people as they attempt to enter the labour force.”
3. Thailand has made a significant effort to improve its vocational training program to respond to youth unemployment, through offering formal and informal opportunities and linking to the private and industrial sectors, however, a mismatch between learned skills and market demands prevails. **Youth, including those facing the greatest inequality and discrimination, may also lack life-skills and access to tailored opportunities to transition to decent work.**

**Our Goal: Youth facing the greatest inequalities and discrimination have accessible and flexible pathways to decent work**

### Key Aims by 2024:



- Improve the **employability of vulnerable youths (with focus on female participation) in the Deep South of Thailand** by building transferable life skills and providing direct exposure to job opportunities (apprentices, industry job placement, self-employment).



- Reduce **the existing gap between the vocational training offered** in the Deep South of Thailand and labor market skill demands by establishing a collaboration platform for employers, vocational training (VT) providers and youth, focused on industry demands from VT training and work-entry pathways for VT participants.



- Provide training and capacity building to staff of local CSOs and **VT institutions to ensure more inclusive practices for vulnerable youth** (incl. gender, disability).



- Explore **opportunities that lead to the expansion of our current VT activities to 'greener investments' and/or wider geographic reach.**

<sup>8</sup> UN National Economic and Social Development Council, October 2020, *Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Thailand*, page 24.

<sup>9</sup> Credit Suisse, *Global Wealth Data Book 2019*, October 2019, p. 168.

<sup>10</sup> Opportunities for children are defined as access to basic goods and services in education, health, and infrastructure, which are deemed necessary for an individual to realize his/her full potential in society”



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

## Snapshot of key emergency preparedness and response issues

1. Despite Thailand not being signatory to the Refugee Convention, it remains a **corridor for those fleeing violence and political persecution**. Over the past decade, more than 200,000 Myanmar nationals sought refuge in Thailand, fleeing conflict and ongoing violence in South-East Myanmar. Presently, 91,818 (45,449m, 46369f) verified Myanmar refugees reside in 9 camps alongside the Thai/Myanmar border, which includes 37,711 children aged 0 to 17 (UNHCR, March 2021).
2. **Thailand is particularly vulnerable to extreme weather** events such as flash flooding, droughts, a rise in sea-levels, storm surges and landslides, with direct consequences on the health, well-being, and food security of vulnerable communities. The International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)'s Global International Displacement database has recorded 95 disaster events forcing 3.2m persons to be displaced (temporarily and permanently) from 2008 to 2020 in Thailand<sup>11</sup>.
3. **Air quality** across the Asia region is also a growing environmental issue with serious health impacts for children. Exposure to air pollution is believed to impact children's neuro and cognitive development and can trigger asthma, cancer and cardiovascular diseases<sup>12</sup>. Across the Southeast Asia region, Thailand is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of PM2.5 annual mean at 24.3 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, far exceeding the maximum WHO recommendation of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.<sup>13</sup> Agricultural fires, vehicle and industrial emissions, and waste burning are among the leading causes for high PM2.5 levels and ambient air pollution.<sup>14</sup>

**Our Goal: Children and their communities receive immediate assistance & are more resilient to immediate and long-term natural, climate induced and human-made disaster**

### Key Aims by 2024:



- Develop and test a **rapid response model** - aligned with public fundraising trends – to provide a response within days of rapid onset emergencies.



- With the support of our local partners, provide between **25%-50% of all crisis-affected children from Myanmar fleeing into Thailand, or along the border with SE MMR, with continued opportunities to learn** through home-based learning and temporary learning spaces, and have led the UN Education Cluster to ensure EiE technical quality.



- Support between **25%-50% of all crisis-affected children fleeing into Thailand from Myanmar, or along the border in SE MMR, with life-saving protection support** (e.g. FTR, CM services), and access to temporary care facilities, in coordination with local actors and authorities.



- Provide **Education in Emergencies preparedness and response training to Ethnic Education and Migrant Education providers** in the camps and Tak Province, and ensure Emergency Preparedness Plans are in place by these actors for common disaster risk (e.g., fires, flooding, disease outbreak, influx population fleeing conflict/violence).



- Respond to all rapid and slow onset emergencies in areas of our operation (and non-operational areas, as required) with lifesaving support that address gaps in relief efforts, including a critical focus on child protection.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data>

<sup>12</sup> WHO, More than 90% of the world's children breathe toxic air every day, 2018, <https://www.who.int/news/item/29-10-2018-more-than-90-of-the-worlds-children-breathe-toxic-air-every-day>

<sup>13</sup> IQAir, World Air Quality Report (2019). Available at: <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-thailand-stateless/2020/02/91ab34b8-2019-world-air-report.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> UNESCAP, Deciphering Black Box Air Pollution Data (2021), IQAir, World Air Quality Report (2019); WHO, Myanmar Newsletter special (2019). Available at: [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/searo/myanmar/air-pollution-\(9-may-2019\).pdf?sfvrsn=d43c20b4\\_0](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/searo/myanmar/air-pollution-(9-may-2019).pdf?sfvrsn=d43c20b4_0)





# ABOUT US

## Our Work and History in Thailand Overview

Save the Children (SC) was established in 1919 and soon became the first global movement for children. In Thailand, SC has been active since 1979, striving to achieve long term breakthroughs in the way the world treats children with a specific focus on Education, Child Protection, Child Rights, Safety, Health and Nutrition. Whenever a disaster strikes, SC is ready to respond immediately to the children most in need. Since 2020, we have responded to the COVID19 pandemic with a focus on the Southernmost Provinces (Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat) and the border with Myanmar (Tak, Ranong and 9 refugee camps at the Thai-Myanmar border). In 2021, we also assisted families and children at the Thai-Myanmar border displaced by the Myanmar crisis, and provided support to communities affected by flooding in Yala. **In 2020, the organization directly reached 102,240 persons – including 57,559 children** (29,327 girls, 28,032 boys) and 44,881 adults (24,048 women, 20,833 men)

## Our Operations and Partner Collaboration

Save the Children currently works in 14 Provinces and has offices in Bangkok, Pattani (South) and Mae Sot (North-West). **We believe that working in partnership with a diverse set of child-focused and child-rights agencies, we can deliver more lasting change for more children in Thailand.** Our partner networks include over 25 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and International Non-Government Organizations; youth groups and networks; the Royal Thai Government; research institutions and universities as well as UN agencies. We strive to promote a relationship with our institutional and private donors that goes beyond financial investment in the projects they fund through engagement, technical coordination, joint advocacy and awareness initiatives on children's rights.



### Active Implementing Partners in 2021

- ACTED
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency Foundation (ADRA Thailand)
- Association of Children and Youth for Peace in the Southernmost Provinces of Thailand
- BEAM Education Foundation
- Deep South Coordination Centre Princess of Naradhiwas University
- Deep South Journalism School Foundation for Child Development
- Help Without Frontiers
- Human Rights and Development Foundation Organization
- Jesuit Refugee Service
- Karen Refugee Committee Education Entity
- Karen Thai Group
- Karen Woman's Organization
- Mahidol University
- Narathiwat Civil Society Association
- Network of Women Against Violence in Southern Thailand
- Nusantara Foundation for Human Rights and Development
- Prince of Songkla University
- Prince of Songkla University Alumni Association Volunteer
- Teacher Focus
- The Foundation of Coordinate Center of Tadika in Southern Border provinces of Thailand
- THE LOOKER
- The Office of Camp Education Entity
- Yala Rajabhat University