EDUCATING THE REFUGEE CHILD

A Resource Guide for Elementary School Teachers
Working with Refugee Students from Burma

A project of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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In recent years, the United States has welcomed increasing numbers of refugees into our country. About half of these arrivals are children who are joining our public schools. Despite their overwhelming educational needs, few resources exist for refugee students or the teachers who work with them.

In North Carolina, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) district is home to a large number of Karen refugee students from Burma (also known as Myanmar). Through a series of focus groups over the past year, I learned a great deal about how school personnel in the CHCCS district have come to work with these children, and was inspired by their tremendous efforts with regard to helping refugee students succeed. I also learned that much more support is needed to help these children reach their academic potential. This project was developed in direct response to what many teachers told me would be helpful—a place where useful resources could be gathered together. This web and print-based resource guide is a first attempt at providing some support to the local school personnel who work with refugee children. While it is geared toward aiding local teachers who work specifically with Karen refugees from Burma, I hope that school personnel from other locations (who may be working with refugee students from varying backgrounds), may also find it useful.

Amy B. Lerner is a PhD student in education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Before coming to UNC Amy earned her masters in developmental psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, and spent two-years conducting research at the New York University Child Study Center. Since coming to UNC Amy has been the recipient of a Research Triangle Schools Partnership doctoral seed grant, a Community Engagement Fellowship from the Carolina Center for Public Service, and a Ruth Landes Memorial Research Fund grant from The Reed Foundation. As part of these projects, Amy is conducting research aimed at understanding the challenges and opportunities for successfully integrating refugee children into school communities, and increasing their academic potential. Amy first became familiar with the experiences of refugee children while interning with an art therapy group that works with refugee children from Burma in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School (CHCCS) district in North Carolina. Amy found these students to be a unique group, coming from extraordinarily different circumstances than their peers, and largely ignored from a policy and research standpoint. Amy, a grand-child of Holocaust survivors, also related to their special situations on a personal level. Her current work often reminds her of her grandparents’ struggles in coming to this country as refugees. Amy’s research interests include refugee populations, socio-emotional development, and early intervention programs.
The purpose of this resource guide is to provide elementary school personnel (and other interested educators and parties) with an overview of the following:

- Background information about refugees:
  - Who are they?
  - Where do they come from?
  - Why do they leave their native countries?
  - The process of resettlement

- Some strategies and suggestions for working with refugee students

- A collection of resources for working with refugee students
  - Books
  - Lesson Plans
  - Web resources
  - Local resources

Acknowledgements

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Section 1: Background: The Quickie Version

Who Are Refugees?

- According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):
  - A refugee is “a person who has fled his/her country of nationality (or habitual residence) and who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a “well-founded” fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group”
  - Excludes those who leave their homes in search of a more prosperous life

Refugees in the United States

- Since 1975, over 3 million refugees have been resettled in the US
- Nearly half are children
- Approximately 50,000-80,000 arrive each year
- Refugees flee their native countries due to:
  - civil war
  - repression wrought by military regimes
  - human rights violations
  - ethnic cleansing

Refugees in North Carolina and Orange County

- North Carolina is home to an estimated 9,000 refugees
- According to North Carolina’s Division of Social Services Refugee Assistance Program, refugees have settled in approximately 26 counties
- The influx of refugees was the primary reason Carrboro’s Asian population increased by 84.7% between 2000 and 2010
The majority of Orange County refugees come from Burma and/or refugee camps in neighboring countries (i.e., Thailand)

Why Orange County?
- 4 local resettlement agencies
- More ethnically diverse population in Chapel Hill and Carrboro than in other NC areas
- Free public bus services
- Work available at the university

Refugees in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools
- Many refugee families have school-aged children
- Chapel Hill and Carrboro schools serve an estimated 200 refugee students
  - Approximately 100 in elementary school
- Local refugee population is expected to grow, which means more refugee students in local schools

Refugee Children in School
- Refugee children have often experienced:
  - Trauma
  - War
  - Persecution
  - Oppression
  - Loss
  - Interrupted/No previous formal schooling

- Refugee Children are at risk for:
  - Academic failure
  - Psychological distress
  - Behavioral problems
  - Depression
  - PTSD
Oppression, displacement, and migration can be traced back to the Israelites’ flight from slavery in Egypt around 1300-1440 B.C.

Human beings from many parts of the world have fled persecution and sought asylum for centuries:

- In 1980, the U.S. finally established the Refugee Act.

- Article 22 of this human rights treaty states that refugee children should receive "appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments."

- Articles 27, 28, and 29 are also particularly relevant for refugee children, who are not only entitled to the same rights as any other child, but should additionally be given assistance in the enjoyments of these rights. These rights cover a standard of living adequate for child development and the right to an education.

- In 1995, the United Nations issued the Revised Guidelines for Education Assistance to Refugees which stresses that the education of refugee children be a priority, and stipulates that schooling be provided for all refugee children, including those in refugee camps.

**Further Context: Refugees in the United States**

- In 1951 there were approximately 2 million refugees worldwide.
- In 2009 that number rose to 13,599,900.
  - Nearly half of these are children.
- The U.S. accepts far more refugees for permanent resettlement than any other country in the world and, since 1975, has resettled over 3 million refugees.
- Over the past four years ceiling limits on refugees have remained steady at 80,000 admissions per year—the highest allotted amount in the past decade.
- Refugee arrivals in the U.S have steadily increased in recent years with approximately 60,000 refugees resettled in 2008, approximately 75,000 in 2009, approximately 73,000 in 2010, and up to 80,000 refugees in 2011.
Worldwide there are approximately 43.7 million people forcibly displaced (i.e., refugees and internationally displaced persons) and awaiting resettlement.

These numbers combined with U.S. resettlement trends indicate that refugee children are increasingly likely to end up in the U.S. public school system.

The majority of U.S. refugees come from Cuba, China, Myanmar (Burma), Iraq, Haiti and Iran.

The U.S. refugee population also represents children and adults from Somalia, Bhutan, Columbia, Ethiopia, Russia, Indonesia, and a variety of other countries.

The increasing number of refugee children in the U.S. has many implications for education. The nature of diversity in classrooms has changed.

Historically, the first refugee legislation enacted by the U.S. Congress was the Displaced Persons Act of 1948.

This legislation was evoked after World War II when over 250,000 displaced Europeans were admitted into the U.S.

The legislation allowed for an additional admission of 400,000 displaced Europeans.

Later on, additional laws were enacted to allow admission of people fleeing communist regimes (for example, those in Poland, Yugoslavia, Korea, China, and Cuba).

The majority of these refugees were assisted by private religious organizations, forming the basis for the public/private role of U.S. refugee resettlement.

In 1975, the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Indochinese refugees through a temporarily funded Refugee Task Force led to Congress’s passing of the Refugee Act of 1980.

This act incorporated the United Nations definition of ‘refugee’ and
The Special Needs of Refugee Children

- Often refugee families are not directly resettled in a developed country; first, many flee to refugee camps in countries neighboring their own
  - Conditions in these camps, which receive limited funding from aid agencies, are harsh—hunger and hardship are prevalent
  - While camps vary in size and resources available to them differ, all refugee camps share a lack of educational opportunities
  - Many refugee families who do make it out of camps experience culture shock and trauma upon resettlement
Occasionally refugee children are able to flee their home countries before they are targeted for persecution, but more often than not they have witnessed or been the victim of horrendous acts.

- Many refugee children have been separated from immediate family members, and many have witnessed torture, rape, and the murder of family and friends.

- Refugee children have often experienced violence, instability and loss. Sometimes, they themselves have endured rape and torture.

- One study of Cambodian refugee children revealed that approximately half have encountered combat situations or suffered extreme shortages of food, water and shelter.

- As a result of their experiences, refugee children have often been exposed to risk factors for emotional and behavioral problems.

- Hoarding behaviors (such as gathering and hiding food and clothing) are common.

- Unsurprisingly, prevalence rates of psychological problems have been found to be as high as 40-50% in refugee children resettled in the U.S.

- A common concern with refugee children is the psychological disorder known as PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

- Research suggests that a large percentage of children who experience traumatic incidents will go on to develop PTSD.

- Depression and anxiety are also common amongst refugee children.

- Exposure to trauma can affect a child’s ability to function effectively at school. For example, concentration and memory are often negatively impacted by such experiences.
A serious concern with regard to integrating refugee children successfully into schools is their becoming prey to bullying

Research has shown that many refugee children report being bullied at school, and that they perceive their schools as not taking action against bullying

Refugee children’s unique circumstances often preclude making generalizations

Their broad range of experiences can present a challenge to teachers who cannot fathom the trauma certain refugee children have faced

However, there are certain similarities that characterize the lives and experiences of those who have fled their homes seeking peace and safety. For example, all refugee children have experienced a loss of their native culture, and all face the challenging process of acculturation upon resettlement

It is important to remember that refugee children may experience difficulties in a variety of domains (including social, educational, mental health) and that notwithstanding some similarities among refugee students, there will also be differences that can only be addressed by finding out more about each individual child’s background and needs

Photo Source: Google Images
Section Two: All About Burma (also known as Myanmar)

Introduction

Among the refugees being resettled in the U.S., over 70,000 are those who have escaped Burma’s military regime. Burma, in a state of civil strife for nearly 60 years, is undergoing one of the longest civil wars in history. Its Karen people—an ethnic minority of over 7 million—have suffered human rights violations, including ethnic cleansing. Survivors of the scourge comprise the majority of those from Burma being resettled in the United States.
Various Burmese ethnicities, as well as other ethnic minorities, have occupied kingdoms (or states) within Burma’s present borders since the 19th century.

In the mid-1800’s, Britain conquered Burma and incorporated it into its Indian Empire; it was administered as a province of India.

In 1937 Burma became a separate self-governing colony.

In 1948 Burma obtained independence from the British commonwealth and came under military rule.

In 1990 multiparty legislative elections were won by the National League for Democracy (NLD).

Instead of handing over power to the NLD, the ruling military junta arrested the NLD leader (Aung San Suu Kyi) and remained in control of the country.

The next elections, held in 2010, were considered flawed by the international community.

In 2011 Parliament intervened and selected former Prime Minister Thein Sein as president.

Although the majority of Thein Sein’s appointees remain military officers, the government has initiated a series of political and economic reforms including re-registering the NLD as a political party (which allowed Aung San Suu Kyi to win a Parliament seat) and releasing some political prisoners.
### Basic Facts

- Burma is located in Southeast Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Bangladesh and Thailand. (The country is slightly smaller than the state of Texas)

- **Name:** In 1989, the military government officially changed the name of the country to "Myanmar." The renaming remains a contested issue. Many political and ethnic opposition groups, and countries, continue to use "Burma" because they do not recognize the legitimacy of the ruling military government or its authority to rename the country.

- **Climate:** tropical monsoons, cloudy, rainy, hot, humid; southwest monsoon season is June to September, northeast monsoon season is December to April

- **Terrain:** central lowlands surrounded by steep, rugged highlands and jungles

- **Natural resources:** petroleum, timber, tin, copper, zinc, lead, coral, marble, limestone, natural gas, hydropower

- **Natural hazards:** earthquakes, cyclones, flooding and landslides during the rainy season, periodic droughts

- **Current environment issues:** deforestation, industrial pollution, inadequate sanitation and water treatment contribute to disease

- **Ethnic Groups:** Burman (68%), Shan (9%), Karen (7%), Rakhine (4%), Chinese (3%), Indian (2%), Mon (2%), and several others (Kachin, Chin) (5%)

- **Language:** Burmese is the official language but minority ethnic groups have their own languages

- **Religions:** Buddhist (89%), Christian (4%), Muslim (4%), Animist (1%), Other (2%)

- **Population:** 54,584,650 (July 2012 est.)

- **Major cities:** Rangoon (capital), Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw
- Life expectancy at birth: 65.24 years
- HIV/AIDS prevalence: 0.6% (considered high)
- Major diseases: Very high degree of risk for hepatitis A, typhoid fever, malaria, and rabies among others
- Literacy: 89.9%
- Typical amount of time spent in school: nine years primary to tertiary education
- Administrative States: Chin, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon, Rakhine, Shan
- Economy: Burma is a resource-rich country that suffers from stifling government controls, inefficient economic policies, corruption, and rural poverty. Despite Burma's emergence as a natural gas exporter, socio-economic conditions have deteriorated under the mismanagement of the previous military regime.
  - About 33% of the country lives in poverty
  - Burma is the poorest country in Southeast Asia
  - Weak rule of law has led to a poor investment climate, preventing the inflow of foreign investment
  - Due to the political situation, issues with economic governance, and the overall business climate, the U.S., the European Union, and Canada have imposed financial and economic sanctions on Burma
  - Industries: agricultural processing, wood and wood products, copper, tin, iron, cement, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, fertilizer, oil and natural gas, garments, jade and gems
- Communications
  - Telephone System: barely meets minimum requirements for business and government; mobile-cellular system is grossly underdeveloped
  - Broadcast media: government controls all domestic media
Refugees and Internally-Displaced Persons (IDP’s):

- 503,000 (mostly Karen, Karenni, Shan, Tavoyan, and Mon)
- Burma is a source country for human trafficking, forced labor, and sexual exploitation
- Burma has the largest number of child soldiers of any country
- Human rights abuses are a common and significant problem for the country
- Burma is the world’s third largest producer of illicit opium, and it is also a major source of methamphetamine and heroin
  - Consequently, drug trafficking and money laundering also plague the country

The Karen People

Quick Facts:

- The Karen are a Southeast Asian ethnic minority group, primarily from Burma
- The Karen have their own distinct languages and culture
- The Karen people are diverse; within this ethnic minority there exist various different ethnic sub-groups and languages
Karen people typically practice either Buddhism, Animism (spiritual worship), or Christianity.

There are approximately 4-6 million Karen living in Burma, and about 300,000 “Thai-Karen” living in Thailand (including those who have fled from Burma).

In Burma, the Karen are one of the largest indigenous populations—other indigenous populations include the Shans, Chins, Mon, and Rakhine. Burmans are not commonly considered to be indigenous.

The Karen live in eastern parts of Burma, near the Thai border.

Nearly 150,000 Burmese Karen have fled to Thailand on account of civil war and human rights abuses.

The Karen people in Burma have been fighting a 60 year civil war against the Burmese military regime for autonomy and cultural rights.

Since 2005, over 65,000 Karen refugees from Thailand have been resettled in third countries, including the U.S., Australia, and Canada.

**Tips for Interacting with Karen Children and Families**

- **DO** smile a lot.
- **DO** speak slowly and clearly when speaking to a Karen who might not understand English very well—even if they are nodding and smiling they may not understand but may be too polite to tell you that.
- **DO** shake hands, **DON’T** hug or kiss.
- **DO** learn to speak a few basic words and phrases in Karen (for example, “hgaw ler ah hgay” means “good morning,” see page 26 for links to websites with dictionaries and pronunciation information).
- **DON’T** refer to the Karen as Burmese—they are an entirely different ethnic group who have been exiled from the country of Burma, do not identify with the Burmese in a positive way, and often don’t speak Burmese.
DON’T lose your temper

DON’T enter the bedroom or kitchen of a Karen home unless specifically invited to do so

DON’T treat them like children—even though they may need basic instructions in adjusting to American life, they are strong, resilient individuals who have survived war and refugee camps

Other cultural norms to keep in mind:

It can be considered impolite to look a Karen in the eyes when speaking to him/her

Younger Karen people normally don’t not say much in the presence of elderly people as a sign of respect—this does not mean that they are not paying attention or are not interested

Karen people do not typically express their ideas openly, especially in public or at a meeting—it is important for them to develop a relationship and build trust before they will express personal thoughts or ask for help

Education is highly respected in Karen culture

There are no ceremonies to mark birthdays or rights of passage into adulthood—which is believed to begin at age 20, when Karen people typically marry

In Karen culture there are many food taboos; especially related to illness (for example, papaya is thought to trigger malaria)

Asking a student to come to you by moving your finger (palm up) or rolling your hand in a “come here” fashion like typically done in the U.S. but is not recognized in Karen culture. Instead, to call a Karen student over to you, you would put your hand palm down and wave to the ground

Folding or crossing one’s arms in front of the chest when talking to another is a sign of respect, contrary to American mores

One first refuses invitations to eat as a matter of respect, and then eventually accepts modestly—saying “no” the first time is often a way of being modest
For more information on the Karen, please see the web-resources section for links to several documents on Karen culture.
Karen State, Myanmar

Map of Karen State
Photo Source: Google Images

Karen Traditional Dress
Photo Source: Google Images
Section Three: Selected Strategies for Consideration

Strategies for School Personnel:

♦ Teach emotions
♦ Utilize basic sign language
♦ Display positive body language
♦ Engage in social games
♦ Use art and dance activities
♦ Learn a few basic words in child’s native language
♦ Use children’s literature to help all students learn about the refugee experience
♦ Use lots of social skills activities
♦ Label classroom objects
♦ Assign peer buddies
♦ Give child supplies and school pictures to take home
♦ Use interpreters (including international students at local colleges), especially for parent events and conferences
♦ Don’t assume anything about child’s past
♦ Use a lot of group work activities
♦ Find out about local tutoring programs
♦ Work with other teachers and school administrators to establish meaningful policies for grading and testing
♦ Conduct home visits
♦ Give refugee child special tasks to elevate them amongst peers
♦ Use modeling and role-playing techniques
♦ Take the time to get to know each individual child’s background and culture
♦ Send materials (such as permission slips) home in family’s native language
♦ Allow children to use their native language in school
♦ Contact your school’s ESL teacher
♦ SMILE LOTS! (Smiling is universal)
What refugee children experience when they start school:

- When a new refugee child starts school in their resettled country, they experience many emotions. They may feel:
  - Confused
  - Sad
  - Lonely
  - Upset/angry

They may experience many firsts, including:

- Being in a structured school setting/environments (they may never have seen an American style classroom before; they may not know how to hold a pencil or handle a book)
- Taking the bus
- Using Western toilets/bathroom
- The lunch time experience (including foods that are foreign to them; they may also not be familiar with utensils)
- Classroom behaviors (they may not be familiar with raising hands, using a cubby/locker, sitting in chairs, etc.)
What do I do?

- First off, don’t panic!
- Contact your school’s ESL teacher and seek out other potential resources in your school and district (for example, the school librarian may be able to help you research the child’s native culture). Remember, you are not alone—it’s O.K. to ask for help.
- Try to keep an open mind about where this child might be coming from.
- Don’t make assumptions (remember that even among refugee children there are many differences—get to know each child individually).
- Be observant.
- Don’t worry about getting the child up to speed immediately. Realize that adjustment takes time; there may be many gaps to fill and you will learn about those needs over time—be patient (with yourself too!).
- Utilize strategies such as assigning a peer buddy and using modeling/role-play techniques (see section 3 for more ideas).
- See if you can find help for the first couple of days (e.g., a teachers assistant) so that someone can spend some time working one on one with the new student. (This might involve showing them how to use the restroom, how to handle a book or pencil, etc.)
- See if interpreters or any other students speaking the child’s native language are available to help out.
- Spend a few minutes researching the child’s native culture. This will help you gain insight into the child’s behaviors—for example, you might learn that in the child’s native culture, children do not look adults in the eye because it is a sign of disrespect (see section 6 for some helpful web-links).
- Utilize children’s books about refugees (this can also help other students in the class understand the refugee experience) (see section 5 for some ideas).
Section Five: Children’s Books About
The Refugee Experience

**Grades K-2:**

- **The Color of Home** by Mary Hoffman, ill. by Karin Littlewood. Published by Frances Lincoln Ltd. The story of Hassan’s first day at an English school, after his family flees the war in Somalia. It describes his sadness, and how the school helps him to feel welcome and settled.

- **Petar’s Song** by Pratima Mitchell, ill. by Caroline Binch. Published by Frances Lincoln Ltd. Beautifully illustrated story of family separation caused by war.

- **The Librarian of Basra** by Jeanette Winter. Published by Harcourt Inc. The true story of a librarian’s struggle to save her community’s priceless collection of books during the war in Iraq.

- **Alfredito Flies Home** by Jorge Argueta, ill. By Luis Garay. Published by Groundwood books. Alfredito and his family are refugees from El Salvador, living in California. This extraordinary book celebrates an experience familiar to the many who have left their original country to find a new life.

**Grades 3-5:**

- **Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan** by Mary Williams, ill. By Gregory Christie. Published by Lee and Low Books. A young boy unites with thousands of other orphaned boys to walk to safety in a refugee camp in another country, after war destroys their villages in southern Sudan.

- **Playing War** by Kathy Beckwith, ill. by Lea Lyon. Published by Tilbury House. Illustrated story about understanding what war can be like for families, and that war is not a game. This is also a sensitive story about the power of friendship and how children can learn from one another.

- **My Name was Hussein** by Hristo Kyuchukov, ill. by Allan Eitzen. Published by Boyds Mills Press. Illustrated story about the life of a young Roma boy in Bulgaria, who is forced to give up his identity and his name as a result of government oppression.

- **My Name is Bilal** by Asma Mobin-Uddin, ill. by Barbara Kiwak. Published by Boyds Mills Press. The story of a boy who is able to come to terms with his heritage in a seemingly hostile environment.
Section Six:

Free Web Resources

Please note that the references listed below are hyperlinks taking you directly to a third party website. If you are viewing the paper version of this document, please refer to the online version (contact the author to request link) to utilize the hyperlinks.

Karen-English Dictionaries:

- Karen-English Online Dictionary and Database from Drum Publications
- Other Karen-English Resources:
  - Karen-English Picture Dictionary
  - Karen-English Picture Dictionary Part II
  - Karen-English Language Lessons

Karen Culture-Specific Resources

(Free PDF Downloads):

- Karen Children’s Stories and Readers
- Cultural Profile on Refugees from Burma (their background and experiences)
- Karen Language Classroom Activities (audio also available):
  - Colors
  - Greetings
  - Numbers
  - Phrases and Song
  - Nouns, Verbs, and Rhyme
  - Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
  - Thank You Song
General Resources for Teachers of Refugee Children:

- IRC (International Rescue Committee) booklet for teachers of refugees
- New York State Education Department Resource Guide for Educating Refugee Youth
- Guide on Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in Their Children’s Schools: Barriers, Challenges and Successful Strategies
- Denver Public Schools videos on refugee family-school engagement (available in English and in Karen to show to parents)

This is a set of two DVDs. The first, professional development DVD for educators, administrators, and staff, provides background information on the U.S. refugee resettlement program. Denver Public Schools staff describe their best practices and communication strategies to inform and engage refugee families, and identify resources for schools and families. The second DVD is for newcomer families. It invites families to participate in school activities and informs refugees about American school culture. It covers attendance policies, health policies, after-school programs, parent-teacher conferences, and adult education opportunities.
Starting Again: Stories of Refugee Youth video

Jill Freidberg of Corrugated Films produced this film chronicling the lives of refugee youth in Washington State. The film highlights four youth from Burma, Nepal/Bhutan, Russia, and Somalia. In his/her own voice, each youth shares stories, experiences, struggles and successes about life before and after resettling in the United States. The youth speak candidly about the situations that brought their families here, their initial resettlement experience, and ongoing challenges as their families adjust to life in the United States. They also discuss their hopes and their excitement about opportunities that have been presented to them. The youth were filmed at school, home, afterschool activities and community events. They also contributed footage that they filmed themselves.

BRYCS (Bridging Youth and Refugee Children’s Services) Resources Created by Refugee School Impact Grantees

BRYCS (Bridging Youth and Refugee Children’s Services) Immigrant/Refugee Awareness Instructional Materials

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) Lesson Plans

Additional Recommended Readings on Burma:

History/Background:

- Burma: The Struggle for Democracy and Freedom: A Resource for Teachers, American Federation of Teachers
- Burmese family, Mi Mi Khaing
- Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Burma, Edited by Mikael Gravers
- Living silence: Burma under military rule, Christina Fink
- No way in, no way out: internal displacement in Burma, Jana Mason
- Burmah: a photographic journey, 1855-1925, Noel F. Singer

Memoirs, Novels, and Biographies:

- Burmese looking glass: a human rights adventure and a jungle revolution, Edith T. Mirante
- Finding George Orwell in Burma/Secret histories: a journey through Burma today in the company of George Orwell (book published under two titles), Emma Larkin
- The river of lost footsteps: histories of Burma, Thant Myint-U
- The Trouser People: a story of Burma-in the shadow of the Empire, Andrew Marshall
Section Seven: Local Resources

What Might Be Helpful in Chapel Hill and Carrboro?

- Local libraries (check out the Carrboro branch for a small collection of Karen materials—also seek out books on refugees and/or Burma and don’t forget to put in requests for the library to order any books they don’t have but that might be relevant!)
  - Click here for the Chapel Hill Public Library
  - Click here for the Carrboro branch Library
- The Orange County Health Department’s Refugee Health Coalition
  - Click here for their website
  - Click here for their resource list
- Or, contact Susan Clifford, Susan Clifford, MSW, MPH, Immigrant and Refugee Health Program Manager at 919-245-2387 or sclif-ford@co.orange.nc.us
The North Carolina Art Therapy Institute’s Refugee Project
   • Click here to learn more

The Karen School at Carrboro elementary
   • Contact Ferral at 919-932-8746 or Carrboro elementary for more information

CHICLE Language Institute (Language classes, Translation and Interpreting Services)
   • Click here for more information

UNC Carolina Refugee Assistance and Mentoring Program (RAMP)
   • Click here for more information

PORCH (provides food for families in need)
   • Click here for more information

Chapel Hill & Carrboro Human Rights Center (tutoring programs and more)
   • Click here for more information

The Orange County Literacy Council (free tutoring for English-learner adults)
   • Click here for more information

The Carolina Center for Public Service (has extensive list of service organizations for which UNC students volunteer through)
   • Click here for more information

LEARN NC (provides a wide range of lesson plans, curriculum materials, and best practices... including those targeting at-risk populations)
   • Click here for more information

Blue Ribbon Mentor-Advocate (a comprehensive support program)
   • Click here for more information

Works Cited


Additionally, should you have any questions, concerns, or comments about this document and/or its contents, please contact Amy Lerner at ablerner@email.unc.edu.

Thank you and happy teaching!