

Burma Border Projects (BBP)
Volunteer/Job Opportunity

POSITION TITLE:

Burma Border Projects Director of Counseling Training

DESCRIPTION:

Psychological trauma expert to provide clinical training, clinical supervision, needs assessments, and program evaluation and development in Mae Sot and at the Mae Tao Clinic Counseling Center.

BACKGROUND:

Brutality inside Burma has forced hundreds of thousands of Burmese people to flee their homes and take cover in the country's dense jungles or escape to neighboring countries. Currently in Eastern Burma alone there are more than 450,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), many living in forests close to the Thai-Burma border who remain vulnerable to forced labor, army-imposed relocation and forced recruitment, and more recently, what many international human rights organizations are calling genocide. Of those fleeing Burma, approximately 150,000 now live in refugee camps along the Thai border, where life offers little stability, hope or self-determination, further proliferating the suffering brought on by the human rights abuses they have endured.

Additionally, over 2 million undocumented Burmese live in Thailand as externally displaced individuals or as migrant workers, surviving without the basic services provided in the refugee camps. Many seek jobs in factories, commercial farms, the food industry and the domestic sector to support their families. They have little legal protection and redress under Thai law and remain vulnerable to human rights violations, sexual violence, physical violence and exploitation. Female adolescents are particularly vulnerable to rape, trafficking, and unwanted pregnancy. Many of these refugees, IDPs and migrants have suffered psychological trauma.

Since 1999, Burma Border Projects, a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation, has provided an increasing number of vital humanitarian services to these Burmese individuals and families forced to live in or seek services in Thailand. One of Burma Border Projects' primary goals is to address the mental health and psychosocial consequences of trauma resulting from displacement and other human rights abuses.

BBP works collaboratively with local organizations that support and provide assistance to Burmese refugees, migrants and internally and externally displaced individuals and families. Through providing culturally responsive education and training, BBP instructs indigenous trainers, medics, community and religious leaders and teachers how to provide counseling services, conduct mental health assessments and manage crises. Since 2008, BBP has had a full-time Director of Counseling Training position at the Mae Tao Clinic, in Mae Sot, Thailand.

THE WORK SITE:

Mae Tao Clinic (MTC), founded and directed by Dr. Cynthia Maung and located along the Thai-Burma border in Mae Sot, Thailand, has been providing free health care to Burmese individuals and families, primarily ethnic minorities, since 1989. With an initial emphasis on providing emergency medical care to individuals crossing the border following the 1988 pro-democracy protests, MTC has grown to provide comprehensive health care services, including some of the first mental health counseling services for Burmese in the region. In 1999, Burma Border Projects, was founded to begin addressing mental health needs at Mae Tao Clinic, and in 2006, the MTC Counseling Center (CC) was established as a clinic department to address the broad psychosocial needs of both MTC staff and patients.

Nearly half of the patients seen at the Counseling Center are diagnosed with psychological stress and nearly half present with either family problems or loss. The needs of the Counseling Center patients are broad, ranging from financial stress to severe PTSD and psychosis, and the challenges of the Counseling Center staff are great, ranging from severely limited resources to vicarious trauma. All of Counseling Center staff are from Burma, and they receive their mental health and counseling training at Mae Tao Clinic.

TIME-FRAME:

This is a 12-month (minimum) position beginning in early-mid April 2010. There may be some flexibility in the start-date and a longer-term commitment is preferred.

COMPENSATION:

Airfare, Thai visa, a living stipend, and reimbursement for work-related materials and travel will be provided. The individual will be responsible for room/board, in-country transportation, immunizations, and health/travel insurance.

RESPONSIBILITIES include, but are not limited to:

- Working closely with and providing psychological and supervisory support to the MTC Counseling Center and Child Psychosocial Rehabilitation Center staff
- Collaborating with Dr. Cynthia Maung, founder of Mae Tao Clinic
- Collaborating with MTC staff and other volunteers in culturally competent ways
- Collaborating with other agencies and programs doing mental health work along the Thai-Burma border in order to enhance and standardize mental health services both at MTC and in the larger Burmese community
- Providing training, supervision and capacity-building in ways that respond to the current needs of the staff and community
- Conducting needs assessments and program evaluation and development
- Collecting, collating, and reporting data
- Submitting monthly reports to the BBP executive director

DESIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS:

- Alliance with the mission and goals of Burma Border Projects
- Professional experience in the fields of social work, psychology or psychiatry

- Knowledge of and experience in training on prevention and treatment of psychological trauma and other mental illnesses
- Experience in conducting needs assessments, program evaluation and program development
- Experience in working with refugees or other displaced individuals, families and communities
- Knowledge about human rights issues in Burma preferred
- Knowledge about prescribing and managing psychotropic medication preferred
- Language: English required, Burmese or Karen preferred

If you are interested, please visit www.burmaborderprojects.org and submit your resume and a statement of interest to Michael Forhan, Burma Border Projects Executive Director, at Michael@burma-projects.org. Please write MTC Director of Counseling Training Position in the subject line.