

Session 3 Transnational Class

Presentation 2

Access to rights of migrant children in Thailand:

The importance of social integration and roles of civil society

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Abstract

This paper aims to present current situations of access to birth registration, education and health care of cross-border migrant children in Thailand. The importance of social integration of migrant population in the Thai society and roles of local civil society (i.e. community-based organizations) in order to facilitate and enhance better access to these rights of migrant children are also highlighted. To achieve these, both quantitative and qualitative data from the fieldwork in 3 study sites – Mae Sot, Ranong and Chumporn are disseminated and analyzed. In sum, the quantitative survey found that about 73 percent of migrant children born in Thailand in the past 5 years was able to register their birth with the Thai registrar. School enrollment rate of migrant children aged 7 to 15 years old was 83 percent. Of this number, the majority was the enrollment at NGO-run learning centers and only one-fifth was at Thai regular school. Respecting access to health care and protection, about three-fourth of the children was not covered by health insurance scheme. From the qualitative study, though Thai laws and regulations allows registration of the birth (in Thailand), school enrollment and access to health insurance to all migrant children regardless of their parents' status in the country; in practice, there are still numerous obstacles that limit access to these rights. This paper tries to reflect some evidence supporting that social integration of migrants and movement of the local civil society can be one of the solutions to protect rights of migrant children and at the same time improve quality of living of migrants and local Thais in the community.