



Life Without Rights  
By Say Kabla Mwee

There are many illegal people in Thailand. They don't have the right to anything. For instance, many children don't have the opportunity to learn or go to school because of their family problems. Children don't have the opportunity to access their basic rights, such as going to school because their parents cannot afford to send them. Some children have to work very hard for their everyday life. Some have lost their parents and are forced to pick up rubbish which they will then sell to recycle so that they have enough money to buy food. Others become beggars and sit at the side of the road and ask people for money or food. Some strangers are kind to them, others are not. For instance, some shop keepers who do not appreciate having the children sitting in front of their store shout at them and tell them to leave. But these children do not have anywhere to go; they live on the side of the road, under bridges or in bushes. Some are caught by child traffickers and are forced to work without payment.

Many women also don't have the opportunity to access basic rights. They have to work in factories. But due to the fact they are women they are badly paid. These women can't say anything to protest against this discrimination as they may be treated brutally. Many are forced to work in the sex trade as prostitutes because they have no other chances of work. They do not have any other options as they are often working to keep their families alive.

Many men also don't have the opportunity to work. Some do, in arduous jobs with long hours. They get lower salaries than legal workers. If they are building a house and an accident occurs they have no insurance to pay for their injuries. Others may not even be paid for the work they have done.

A good healthcare system is very important for illegal people. We need places where we can go for healthcare, but migrants cannot buy land or build a healthcare center without the Thai government's permission. Some patients have to go to a Thai hospital, but they have to pay a lot of money if they are illegal immigrants. If they had an identity card they would only have to pay 50 baht (70p). This shows us the importance of having a good healthcare center for our people. Many illegal immigrants do not have the right to do anything. Living a life without rights is very difficult so we have to organize our people. We have to fight for our lives and our rights. We must always keep in mind the fact that we do have these rights and that we are free to do anything. If we lose our history and our rights, it is like killing our people.

*This was written by Say Kabla Mwee. She is 18 and is just finishing her last year of school. Her parents live in Burma, Karen state and are farmers. She wants people to know about the situation of her people.*