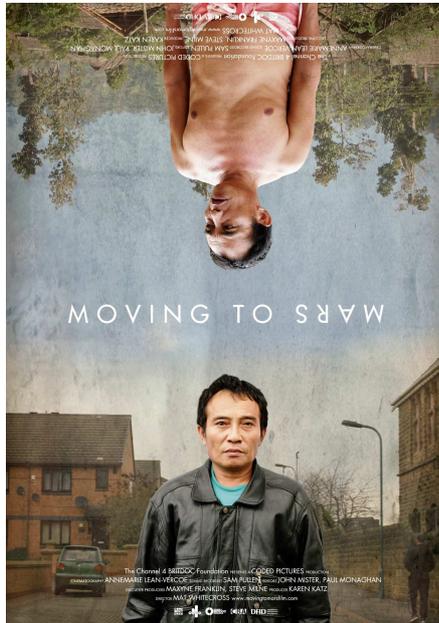




The United Nations in partnership with Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe invites you to the screening of

“MOVING TO MARS”

to commemorate World Refugee Day



Moving to Mars charts the epic journey made by two Burmese families from a vast refugee camp in the Thai/Burma border to their new homes in the UK. At times hilarious, at times emotional, their travels provide a fascinating and unique insight not only into the effects of migration, but also into one of the most important current political crises: Burma.

Volker Gerdesmeier- Director of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. He is the Director of Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe since 2008. He has a 10 year experience in humanitarian aid: 2, 5 years work in Chad as the head of liaison office, training and support of 20 partner organizations; 9 months in South Sudan as coordinator health care programme, together with a team building up a field hospital in a conflict zone; 5 months Ethiopia (intern, reintegration of ex-soldiers and forcibly displaced) and 1 month in Mauritania (camp Sadako Volunteer with UNHCR, working in a refugee camp with refugees from Mali). He has an M.A. in political science, studies of Political Science, History, social anthropology at the University of Freiburg, University of Hamburg, Institute d'Etudes Politiques de Paris and Universidad Complutense in Madrid. Postgraduate Diploma in Water & Sanitation, distance learning studies at University of Loughborough, UK.

Eleanor Dean- Production Assistant on the film, and now working for Refugee Action. Eleanor's work as Production Assistant on Moving to Mars helped inspire her to take up her current role as Communications Co-ordinator for Refugee Action, a UK based national charity delivering the Gateway Project and services for asylum seekers. Eleanor oversees the charity's publications, social media and website, with a brand new website in development for 2012. Eleanor is passionate about the use of the arts, film and social media to reach both existing supporters and new audiences to raise awareness about the needs and experiences of those who seek sanctuary in the UK.

Annabelle Roig- UNHCR Senior External Relations Officer. She studied law in Aix en Provence and Political Sciences and International / European relations at Mc Gill University of Montreal, Canada and the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. After having worked a couple of years for the French Red Cross, Ms Roig joined the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in Slovenia in 1991. In 1994, she joined UNHCR in the former Yugoslavia as a legal officer. Since 2001, Ms Roig works in Brussels as a Senior External Relations Officer in charge of liaising with the EU Institutions for UNHCR. Ms Roig speaks fluently French, English and Serbo-Croatian.

with Carlos Jimenez from UNRIC as Moderator



Join our new CINE-ONU facebook page and keep up to date on our latest events.

UNHCR makes dream of education come true for Myanmar refugee boy

Making a Difference, 22 June 2009

MAE LA REFUGEE CAMP, Thailand, June 22 (UNHCR) – Born without the use of his legs, 15-year-old Tway Tway has always had a passion for education.

"I can't use my physical energy," the refugee boy explains. "The only thing I can use is my brain."

In the Karen state of his native Myanmar, he was only able to complete one year of schooling. So when the teenager came to this refugee camp in northern Thailand two years ago and discovered that he could attend school with other children, "I was already happy on the first day," he says.

His mother and sister walked three days through the jungles of eastern Myanmar, taking turns carrying Tway Tway on their backs in a sling to get here after his village was attacked, his house burned, and his father killed.

"When he came to the camp he asked to go to school and he started going to class immediately," his older sister, Tin Tin Nwey, confirms.

Thanks to a UNHCR-funded programme implemented by Handicap International, disabled children like Tway Tway are able to study in regular camp classrooms with other refugee children. He's in Grade Two, studying his native Karen language, Burmese, English, maths, geography, social studies and health.

Handicap International has provided him a wheelchair, but on the hilly dirt trails of this camp – particularly now in the rainy season when they turn to mud – it is not always useful. When asked how he gets around the camp, Tway Tway just shrugs and replies with a grin: "Feet, hands and bottom." Friends also pitch in and carry him on their back.

"When he's in the class, he's the same as all the other students," says Naw Moe Moe Khing, the young principal of his school, who taught him last year. "He acts good, but when the teacher is outside the class, he teases his friends. He's just a normal child."

His older sister says studies hard, often going to friends' houses to cram in extra homework, but says he sometimes gets frustrated by his physical limitations. "He can cook for himself, but he can't cook for others because he can't carry big pots," she says.

Tway Tway says he's getting an opportunity in the refugee camp he would never have had if he had stayed in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, and only laments that his family can't afford enough candles for him to study longer at night. The bamboo huts in the refugee camp do not have electricity.

Although his principal confesses he's only an average student, he dreams of some day passing knowledge on to others in another country if his family can leave Thailand through UNHCR's successful third-country resettlement programme. "I would like to become a teacher," Tway Tway says. "I don't have any plan which country it would be, but for sure not Burma."

By Kitty McKinsey in Mae La Camp, Thailand

Source: UNHCR/The Human Story



“ I can't use my physical energy. The only thing I can use is my brain. ” – Tway Tway