

## **Hope in the Golden Triangle: Culturally appropriate Treatment, Prevention and Aftercare on the frontline of Myanmar's Civil War**

### **Authors:**

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**Background:** DARE is the only organisation providing comprehensive addiction training, treatment, and prevention education in the Thailand refugee camps, the Migrant area of Pho Phra (Tak Province), and Karen State for 25 years.

**Description of Model of Care/Intervention:** DARE's recovery approach is humane, non-medical, culturally appropriate, and locally led. We provide food, treatment materials, sanctuary, and holistic addiction treatment. Additionally, our work is cross-cutting, addressing addiction's role in poverty reduction, improved education, decreased health problems, and violence prevention. It empowers individuals to transcend trauma caused by human rights abuses, trafficking, displacement, and conflict. We believe mental health is a fundamental human right, with our motto being "a free mind cannot be destroyed."

DARE operates through three primary modalities:

1. **Treatment:** Intensive, 3-month residential programs focused on detox, therapy, and relapse prevention.
2. **Prevention Education:** Community-wide workshops aimed at reducing stigma and preventing substance abuse.
3. **Home Visits:** Post-treatment support for clients and their families to ensure sustained recovery.

**Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:** DARE's approach blends Western and Eastern practices to provide excellence and ownership. DARE's non-medical, community-led approach delivers a 60% success rate—remarkable in a conflict zone. By employing local staff, including former clients, DARE also contributes to livelihoods and community resilience.

**Conclusion and Next Steps:** DARE has transformed lives at the Thai-Myanmar border, offering hope and healing to refugees battling addiction. DARE has been the only organisation consistently delivering services in Thai refugee camps for 25 years, a feat no international NGO has been able to do. This has been achieved by deconstructing traditional "top-down" approaches, and instead building the trust of local community and letting locals lead.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** As more conflict zones emerge, DARE's story is an example of Addiction reconceptualised, by mixing the best of East and West to effectively address issues on the ground.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** Alex Lee is employed as the CEO of The Glen Group of Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centres.