

C.17 Thailand - 1979 - Political conflict

Case study: Camp planning manual

Case study credit: CUNY Center
See Shelter Projects 2008 for more

Project type:

Construction of two refugee camps
Development of a manual of standards

Disaster:

Invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam, December 1978

Population displaced:

One million crossed the border into Thailand at the height of the displacement.

Project target population:

Khao-I-Dang refugee camp population increased from 29,000 shortly after opening in December 1979, to 130,000 -160,000 in March 1980, to 42,000 by 1982.

Sakeo camp had 28,000 shortly after opening, then 17,000 when it closed in July 1980 (the remaining 17,000 were transferred to other camps).

Occupancy rate on handover:

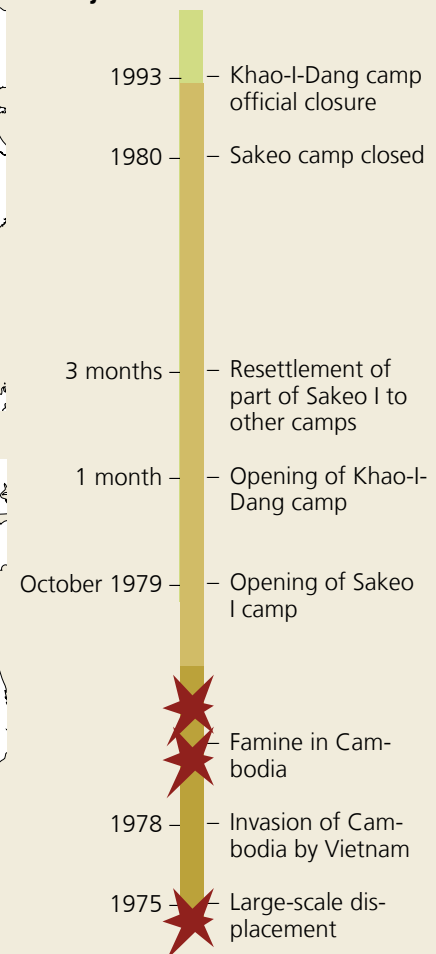
100%

Shelter size:

16m² (but in multi-family units)



Project timeline



Summary

For the first time, clear numeric standards were introduced via the distribution, to each camp, of an operations policy and standards manual. This was to ensure equitable minimum services based primarily on public health and water and sanitation concerns. Two camps were planned according to these standards, using a decentralisation of services, and in later cases a checkerboard layout which provided internal space for some expansion.

Strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ Creating a written manual provided a clear checklist for the many organisations with limited prior shelter experience.
- ✓ Spaces for expansion within the present camp permitted some release of pressure from an increasing population.
- ✓ Advocacy of an incremental approach to shelter provision allowed for a response to continued influxes, and increasing camp populations.
- ✓ Innovations in water and sanitation latrine

technology ('aquaprivies') permitted more flexibility in shelter layout design.

- ✗ Although multi-unit longhouses freed up more external space in extremely cramped sites, their use postponed rather than solved the problem of overcrowding, and at the expense of privacy and security.
- ✗ Lack of space and poor drainage contributed to health problems.