

The Study of Thai Public Perception towards Migrants and Refugees

June 2023

The Human-Centred Approach to Public Communications







Acknowledgements

This publication is a joint effort between [Sidekick](#) and [International Detention Coalition \(IDC\)](#) to seek a new path forward for how different stakeholders working in the area of migration in Thailand can better engage and communicate with the Thai public on refugee and migrant issues.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all individuals and organisations that have contributed to the publication including Dr. Ari Margiono from Binus University, the Coalition for the Rights of Refugees and

Stateless Persons (CRSP) and other stakeholders who have shared their insights, data and perspectives. Their contributions were instrumental in shaping the direction of our study and strengthening the quality of our findings.

Additionally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the informants, field researchers as well as journalists and news editors for their active participation and contributions to the project. Without their cooperation and assistance, this study would not have been possible.



A Note on Terminology

In this report, we refer to refugees and migrants interchangeably. While there are differences in legal status between refugees, asylum-seekers and other migrant groups, these differences are not widely understood by the Thai public. As such, we refer to the groups collectively in both our research and reporting.



Executive Summary

The proximity principle suggests that physical proximity can influence the way people interact and form relationships with each other, as well as the way they perceive and understand the world around them.

If a diverse group of people from various backgrounds, genders, races and classes are represented in various social settings in close proximity to one another, there will be an increase in tolerance towards diversity among individuals. On the other hand, forming friendships with those similar only to you can instead result in stereotyping and intolerance of those who may be different.

The Study of Thai Public Perception towards Migrants and Refugees seeks to understand if one's acceptance of migrants and refugees is influenced by their proximity to people, surroundings and beliefs; and if so, what forms of communications could mobilise empathetic groups into action.

We categorised informants based on four distinct media consumer groups: consumers of traditional mass media outlets, consumers of new mass media outlets, quality news media consumers and online news magazine consumers.

By immersing ourselves within the community and utilising a user-centred methodology, we found that the majority of the Thai public are not aware of refugee and migrant issues. However, many find comfort in shared experiences, especially shared hardship.

The stories of courage in the face of unimaginable obstacles struck a chord with the majority of Thai mass media consumers. When we see others face an obstacle with strength, it inspires us—gives us a new perspective. Despite not knowing much about the issues, the stories of individual refugees and migrants inspired these consumer groups to not just learn more but to also want to share and engage others with the cause.

Meanwhile, for those representing middle class and urban consumers (quality news media and online news magazine consumers), knowing more about the issue provokes even greater resentment. Negativity surrounds the topic and the existence of any form of migration worries them personally, physically and financially. However, the condition of the urban middle class matters more than its size. Their proximity to decision-making and decision-makers, think tanks and thought leaders forces us to continue to find ways to engage and communicate with them.

Existing communication and engagement methods used by advocacy groups, institutions and organisations have only managed to reach a handful of individuals thus far throughout the years, and do not resonate with either the mass public or the urban middle class audience. Therefore, if a shift in perception and attitude towards migrants and refugees is to be achieved, new and creative approaches need to be developed to bring all groups and demographics closer to the plight of refugees and migrants.

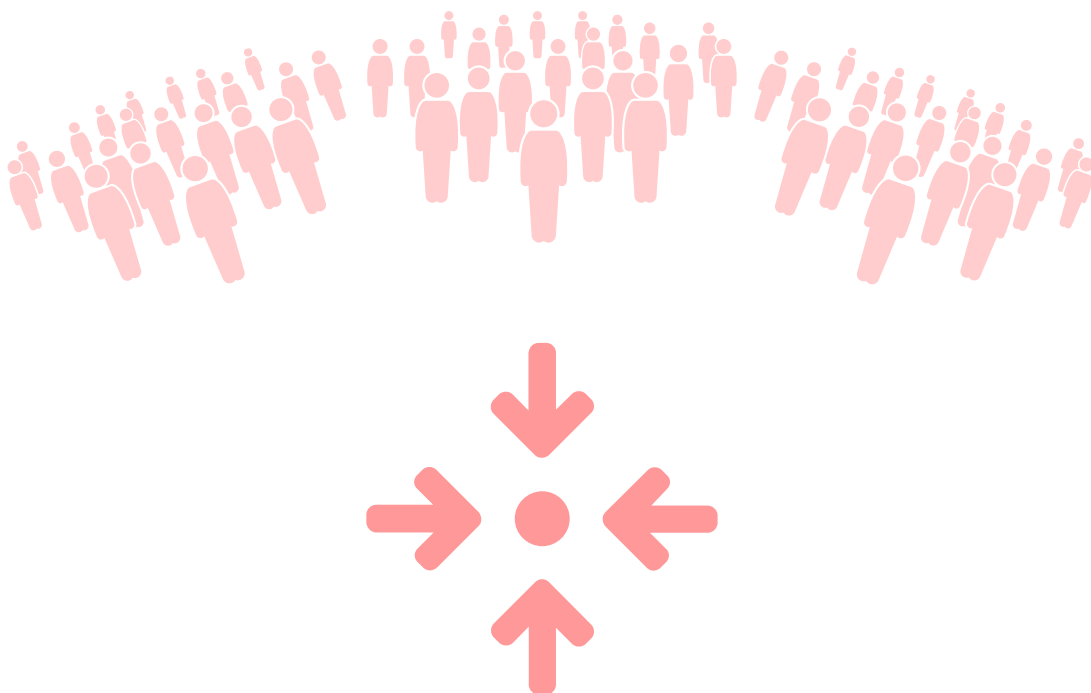
Suggested Approach: Outside-in; Provincial First Marketing Approach

From the study, many urban dwellers are already either actively engaging or interested in social causes that matter to them most and have no time for or interest in being involved in other social issues, especially one that many feel does not support their needs or interest.

The centralised nature of Thailand, where many are occupied by what's happening only in urban hubs like Bangkok, can sometimes make us forget that the majority of the population lives outside the major cities. Provincial dwellers are larger in numbers and are growing in influence as they become more affluent and many more continue to become middle class citizens.

By establishing brand recognition, migrant and refugee organisations can then start to gain trust and recognition within society, opening opportunities for partnerships with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) that have crossover provincial/urban appeal.

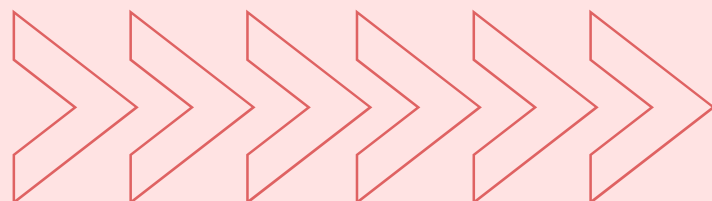
The rural first approach, especially in the case of Thailand, can provide an opportunity for brands or social causes to engage a much larger population, and establish recognition and trust before re-entering the urban market.





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Introduction

Thailand is one of the largest host countries for refugees and migrants in Southeast Asia. Over the past four decades, it has welcomed more than 3 million migrants and continues to be home to about 91,000 Myanmar refugees living in nine refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border. Since the 2021 coup d'état in Myanmar, more than 10,000 refugees have fled the country and sought international protection in Thailand, residing in major cities along the Thai-Myanmar border.

Thailand is also home to over 5,000 urban refugees who reside in Bangkok and other major cities, coming from a variety of countries including Pakistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Palestine, Syria, Somalia, Iraq, China, Iran and Afghanistan.

Despite the country's long history of hosting millions of migrant workers, while providing shelter and humanitarian assistance to people driven forcibly from their homes,

studies over the years from think tanks and non-profit organisations have consistently found the Thai public to be among the least accepting of migrants and refugees in the world. Very often, refugees are grouped together with migrant workers and branded as 'threats,' 'carriers of diseases' or an economic 'burden'.

However, 2012 research by Mahidol University that looked at the public perception of refugees and migrants from Myanmar in the main provinces along the Thai-Myanmar border¹ found that rural residents living close to refugee camps generally had a more positive view of refugees and migrants than those living in provincial urban centres. A sizable percentage of people who have visited refugee camps also tend to have a better understanding of refugees and migrants, which can lead to a more favourable view compared to city dwellers.



Rural Dwellers

(living in closer proximity to refugees and migrants)

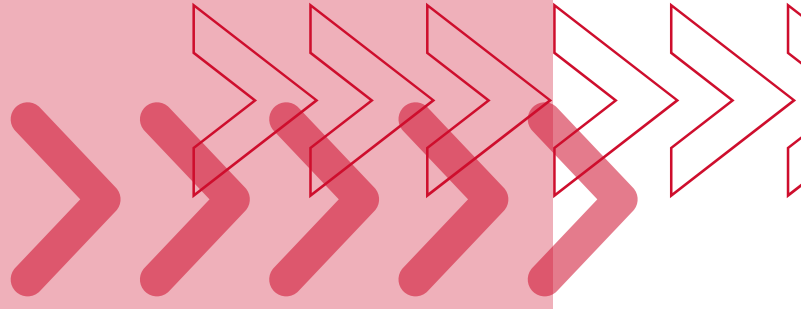
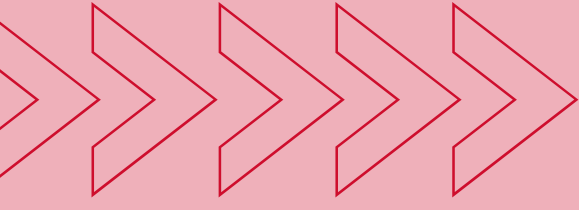
- Grow up with a diverse upbringing, culturally or ethnically
- Meet and interact with migrants on a regular basis
- Live close to a refugee camp
- **Have more positive opinions towards refugees and migrants than those who live further away in the city**



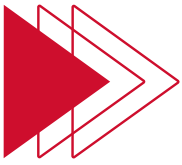
Urban City Dwellers

- Information related to refugees and migrants is obtained through indirect sources such as the media
- Grow up and live in a homogeneous environment, surrounded by friends and people with similar backgrounds
- **Have more negative attitudes and feelings towards refugees and migrants than their rural peers**

¹ Malee Sunpuwan, Sakkarin Niyomsilpa, *The Survey of Thai Public Opinion toward Myanmar Refugees and Migrant Workers: An Overview*, (Nakhon Pathom: Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, 2014)



Principles



Principles

Proximity Principle

The above-mentioned groundbreaking 2012 study by the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University,² was one of the first systematic investigations of the perceptions and prejudices of Thais towards refugees.

The findings bring into consideration the 'Proximity Principle,'³ a theory first developed by psychologist Theodore Newcomb **which accounts for a tendency for individuals who interact and live close to one another to develop stronger relationships.** Desirability among individuals could occur depending on shared traits or experiences.

1. **By ensuring a diverse group of people** from various backgrounds, genders, races and classes are represented in various social settings in close proximity to one another; **the principle suggests there will be an increase in tolerance towards diversity among individuals.**
2. On the other hand, **forming friendships with those similar only to you can instead result in stereotyping and intolerance** of those who may be different.

² Malee Sunpuwan, Sakkarin Niyomsilpa, *The Survey of Thai Public Opinion toward Myanmar Refugees and Migrant Workers: An Overview*, (Nakhon Pathom: Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, 2014)

³ Kevin Paul Scott, "The Proximity Principle", Kevin Paul Scott, September 12, 2017, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://kevinpaulscott.com/the-proximity-principle/>

Cynthia Vinney, "What Is the Proximity Principle in Psychology?", Verywell Mind, Updated August 04, 2022, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-proximity-principle-in-psychology-5195099>

Andrew K Jorgenson et al., "Power, proximity, and physiology: does income inequality and racial composition amplify the impacts of air pollution on life expectancy in the United States?", IOP Science, February 7, 2020, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ab6789>

Proximity and Social Inequality⁴

Proximity to ethnic and socioeconomic diversity also exposes individuals to social inequality that exists within a group or society.⁵

There are two main ways to measure social inequality:

- **Inequality of conditions**⁶ refers to the **unequal distribution of income, wealth and material goods.**
- **Inequality of opportunities**⁷ refers to the unequal distribution of chances to succeed in life. This is reflected in measures such as level of education, health status and treatment by the criminal justice system.

According to a recent World Bank report,⁸ Thailand has the highest income inequality rate in the East Asia and Pacific region. Dr Somchai Jitsuchon, research director of Inclusive Development at the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI), wrote in an article for the Bangkok Post⁹ that gaps between the very wealthy and the middle class and lower class in society are growing ever wider.

Improvement Principle¹⁰

The Improvement Principle, promoted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, talks about being “proximate” to those suffering; to “be user-centred and problem-specific.” You cannot be an effective problem-solver from a distance. There are details and nuances to problems that you will miss unless you are close enough to observe those details.

⁴ Ashley Crossman, "The Sociology of Social Inequality", ThoughtCo., Updated January 28, 2020, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.thoughtco.com/sociology-of-social-inequality-3026287>

⁵ "Divided Societies More Likely to Accept Inequality", London School of Economics and Political Science, January 23, 2019, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2019/01-Jan-19/Divided-societies-more-likely-to-accept-inequality>

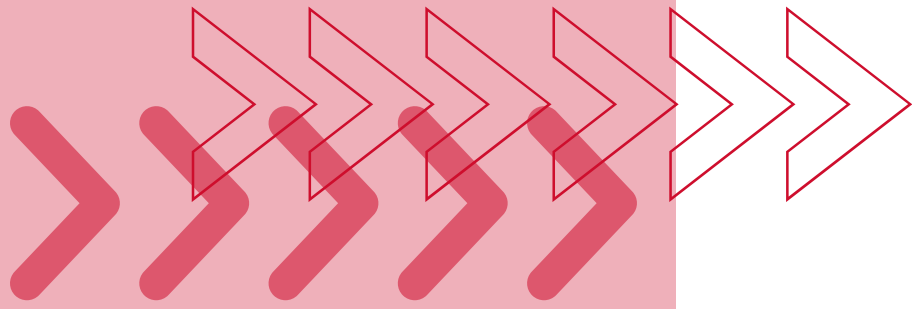
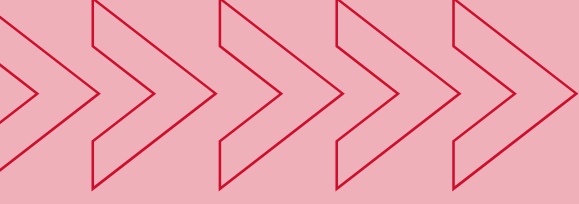
⁶ Deborah Boucoyannis, "Contrary to popular and academic belief, Adam Smith did not accept inequality as a necessary trade-off for a more prosperous economy", London School of Economics and Political Science Blog, February 18, 2014, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/adam-smith-and-inequality/>

⁷ Tariq Khokhar, "The Data Minute: What is Inequality of Opportunity?", World Bank Blogs, August 27, 2014, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/data-minute-what-inequality-opportunity>

⁸ World Bank Group. "Thailand Rural Income Diagnostic: Challenges and opportunities for Rural farmers". World Bank, Bangkok. October 20, 2022, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/thailand/publication/thailand-rural-income-diagnostic-challenges-and-opportunities-for-rural-farmers>

⁹ Somchai Jitsuchon, "Thai inequality: What we should know", Bangkok Post, January 22, 2020, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/1840739/thai-inequality-what-we-should-know>

¹⁰ "The Six Core Principles of Improvement", Carnegie Foundation, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/our-ideas/six-core-principles-improvement/>



Design Goals and Objectives



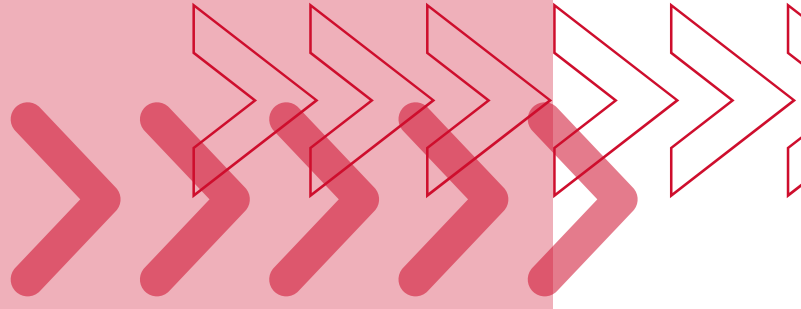
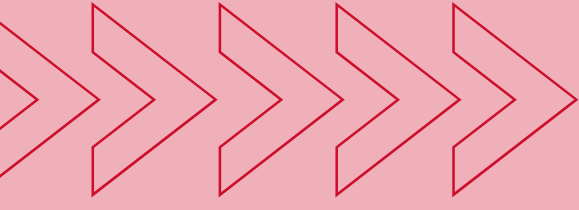
Design Goals and Objectives

A shift in public view and perception towards refugees was observed through proximity developed from face-to-face interaction with those living in refugee camps, as demonstrated through the breakthrough 2012 research by the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University.

International Detention Coalition (IDC) and Sidekick's study look to assess the perception of the Thai public as a whole towards migrants and refugees, **with the goal to design and develop communication tools, products and identify channels that could replicate proximity and thus generate increased public interest and/or support for these communities.**

Working Objectives

- The proximity principle mentions two groups - **Diverse vs Homogeneous**. How do these groups **manifest within the Thai social context**? Would either one or the other be willing to “proximate” - i.e. develop empathy or understanding - towards refugees and migrants?
- If emphatic groups exist, what kind of stories do we need to tell? Through which digital tools, channels or platforms? **In order to bring the issue closer to home?**
- Beyond listening, would individuals within these groups be willing to take any **action in support of refugees and migrants?**
- **What are the narratives developed by mass media** and how does it influence both the diverse and homogeneous groups in relation to the issue at hand?



Methods



Methods

Design Thinking



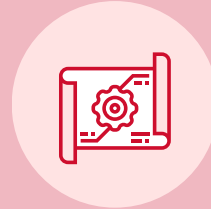
Empathise



Define



Ideate



Prototype



Test

Design Thinking Approach to Identifying and Solving the Design Challenge¹¹

Design Thinking is a problem-solving method that requires a company/organisation to put consumer/audience needs first when developing a product.

We must know our consumer deeply, by empathising with a real problem they face

and coming up with solutions they would embrace.

The product created, therefore, solves their struggles and helps them live better, easier and/or more fulfilling lives.

There are five key phases that involve the end-user from the very beginning and places them at the centre of the digital design process.



1. Empathise—Research Users' Needs

The human-centred design process allows us to first set aside our own assumptions and biases in order to gain real insights into users and their needs.

The foundational principle of human-centred design is to truly understand the people who experience the problem we are trying to solve before designing a solution to serve them by

immersion within the community that will be affected by your design.

Designers spend time talking directly with those who experience a problem, observing how their environments work and consulting experts on the issue to fully grasp all the challenges that need to be overcome in order to create a solution.

¹¹ "Design Thinking", Interaction Design Foundation, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-thinking>

Methods of Acquiring Data for this particular study include:

- **Fly on the wall observation** is an observational technique that allows the designer to collect data by seeing and listening. Usually, designers employ this method to gain insight into people, environment, interactions and objects in a space. **It is the primary responsibility of the designer to stay completely unnoticed during the observation so as to not bias the participants in any way.**
- **Daily diaries** involve participants (users, customers or target audiences) journaling and self-reporting their activities, thoughts and feelings, and general experiences over a specified period of time.

The participants are in charge of what they log, but this mode of research gives them many opportunities over the course of several days to add and jot down details they may not remember to mention during an in-person interview or observation session.

While in the past they have mostly been analogue in nature, during this study we involved users through an online diary process using instant messaging apps (like Line and Messenger), emails and mobile SMS.



2. Define— State Your Users' Needs and Problems

The goal is to develop an actionable problem statement which is commonly known as the “Point of View” (POV) in Design Thinking. The point of view is based on a deeper understanding of specific users, their needs and the most essential insights about them gained from the empathise stage/process. There are three stages to developing a POV:

» Developing the characteristics of the user

- **Persona design** - fictional characters developed to help designers understand users' needs, experiences, behaviours and goals.
- **Empathy Maps** - 360 perspective of the users' motivations, fears, worries, desires and aspirations.

» Develop a Point of View template for each individual/user group identified

Point of View Template

User	Need	Insight

» Articulate the POV as an actionable problem statement that will drive the rest of the design work.



3. Ideate—Challenge Assumptions and Create Ideas

Now you're ready to generate ideas. The solid background of knowledge from the first two phases allows us to "think outside the box", look for alternative ways to view the problem and identify innovative solutions to the problem statement created.



4. Prototype—Start to Create Solutions

This is an experimental phase. The aim is to identify the best possible solution for each problem found. Produce some inexpensive, scaled-down versions of the product (or specific features found within the product) to investigate the ideas generated.



5. Test—Try Solutions

This process will be conducted separately by IDC and partner organisations.

User Sampling



Uses and Gratifications Theory¹² (UGT) & Public Culture¹³

Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) proposes that people choose to consume certain kinds of media because they expect to obtain specific gratifications as a result of those selections.

In contrast to other theories about media, UGT focuses on the media consumer rather

than the media itself or the messages the media conveys.

While other theories see people as passive recipients of media messages, UGT sees people as active consumers of media who are aware of the reasons they choose to consume media.

¹² ELIHU KATZ, JAY G. BLUMLER, MICHAEL GUREVITCH, USES AND GRATIFICATIONS RESEARCH, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 37, Issue 4, WINTER 1973, Pages 509-523, <https://doi.org/10.1086/268109>; Cynthia Vinney, "Uses and Gratifications Theory in Media Psychology?" Verywell Mind, Published February 07, 2022, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-uses-and-gratifications-theory-in-media-psychology-5217572>

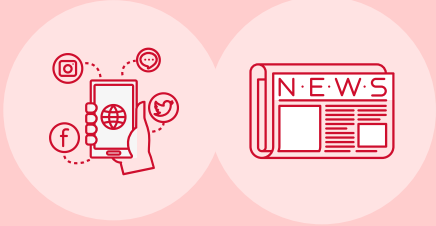
¹³ Hariman, RD 2017, Public Culture. in J Nussbaum (ed.), Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.32>

Communication scholar Ruggiero pointed out that the rise of new media makes uses and gratifications theory even more important than ever as this perspective is especially useful for explaining why people adopt new mediums.

Therefore, by observing media consumers based on their voluntary choice of medium, according to the UGT theory and the concept of Public Culture we are able to assess the consumer's beliefs, values and

attitudes towards modern societies, public opinion in current affairs, entertainment, the arts, advertising, social media and others.

Based on the Thailand Media Landscape overview 2021 - 2022,¹⁴ an annual report developed by InfoQuest, Thailand's leading media intelligence company and news agency, as well as monthly web traffic from data analysis site - similarweb - we can categorise the Thai mass media outlets into four distinct groups:

 Group 1. Mass Divergent Media Outlet Existing on both new media and traditional platforms	
Outlets	Web Views per month
Thairath	33.9M
Khaosod	19.5M
Manager	13.7M
Kom Chad Luek	3.6M
Dailynews	3.2M
Spring News	2.2M
Amarin TV	1.7M
TV pool	899.3K

¹⁴ Thailand Media Landscape overview 2021 - 2022, Infoquest, November 25, 2021, Accessed April 19, 2023. <https://www.infoquest.co.th/thailand-media-landscape-2022/overview-en>



Group 2 Online Only Mass Media Outlets

Outlets	Web Views per month
Sanook	37M
Kapook	21M
MThai	4.3M
Cat Dumb	1.8M
E-Jan	1.2M



Group 3 Quality News Media

Essential reading for the educated and middle-income group exists in both new and traditional media forms

Outlets	Web Views per month
Khungthep Turakij	13.9M
Bangkok Post	8.1M
Matichon	5.6M
Prachachat Turakij	5.2M



Group 4 Online News Magazine

Soft News, lifestyle - moderate political views most popular with the middle class 'digital-first' community. Founded in the mid 2010s, these outlets have come to replace traditional magazines after the subsequent decline of print media after 2012.

According to Founders of both 'The Standard' and 'The Matter', their target audiences are 'urban young adults' and 'first jobbers'

Outlets	Web Views per month
The Standard	1.5M
The Matter	1M
The Momentum	498K
The Cloud	334K
ThairathPlus	179K

The purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for the observation. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy widely used in qualitative research that enables researchers to collect information-rich cases, which can yield insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations.

Instead of randomly selecting units from a population to create a sample with the intention of making generalisations, purposive sampling focuses on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable us to answer our goals and objectives.

» Selection

Loyal consumption (consumed content from the specified outlets at least three times a day) of at least two media outlets from one of the four categories were selected

based on the pre-established criteria below and a total of 40 informants - 10 from each group - were recruited.

Selection criteria

	Group 1 Mass Divergent Media Outlet	Group 2 Online Only Mass Media Outlets	Group 3 Quality News Media	Group 4 Online News Magazine
Loyal Consumers	X	X	X	X
Gender (M/F)	X	X	X	X
Population (urban/provincial/ rural)	X	X	X	X
Age 20s 30s 40s 50s +	X	X	X	X
Education (with/out college education)	X	X	X	X
Socioeconomic Background Below 15,000 15,000 - 30,000 above 30,000	X	X	X	X

Timing

To ensure such important issues as human migration and public participation are included throughout the observation, the study was specifically conducted during the period of May 2022 where there would be more news coverage around:

- People, power and politics because of the Bangkok governor election
- Migration and human trafficking as the Thai police were making frequent press announcements in the lead up to the annual release of the U.S. State Department 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report (2022 TIP Report).

Limitations

Based on the media outlet's specific target demographic, the overwhelming majority of group 4 informants were limited to those in their 20s and 30s and based in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities - urban hubs such as Bangkok, Chon Buri or Khon Kaen.

Tier 1 cities have a developed and established real estate market and tend to be highly developed, with desirable schools, facilities and businesses with the most expensive real estate.

Tier 2 cities are in the process of developing their real estate markets. These cities tend to be up-and-coming with a population that has grown more affluent and accustomed to better living standards.



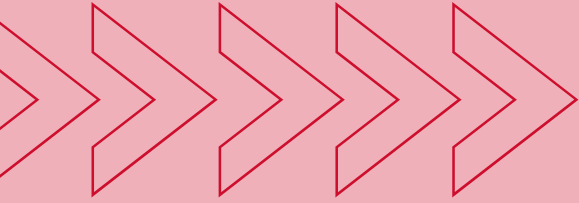
Additional interviews with campaigning organisations and media practitioners

• Civil Society Interviews

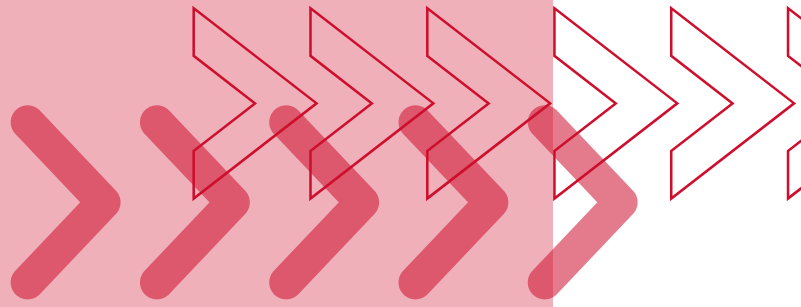
Focus Group discussions were also conducted with IDC's partner, the Coalition for the Rights of Refugees and Stateless Persons (CRSP), which serves as the main vehicle driving the campaign initiatives. The Coalition is made up of civil society organisations, particularly local NGOs, academics and lawyers whose work focuses primarily on protecting and promoting the rights of refugees in Thailand.

• Media Outlet Editor Interviews

Sidekick also conducted interviews with editors of four media outlets, popular among selected informants, to study the language they employ, as well as the organisational and personal values and belief systems around refugee and migrant issues.



Implementation





Implementation



Stage 1

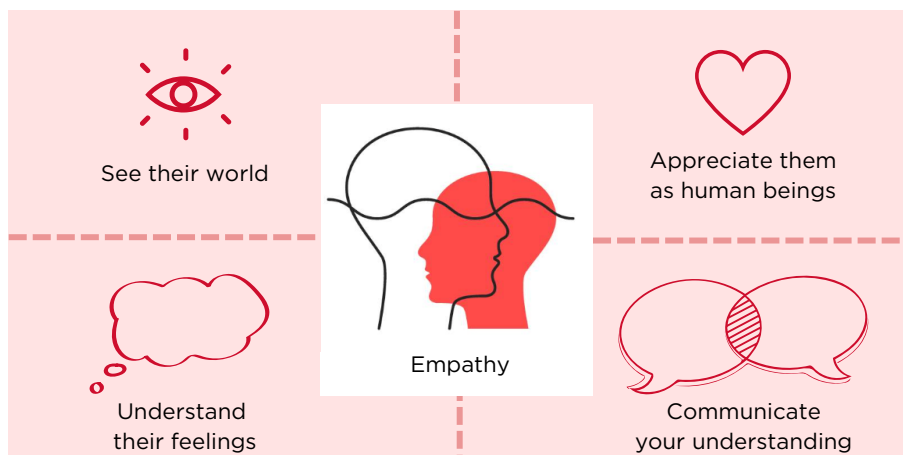
Empathise

Research Users' Needs

Method used:

Experience Sampling Method (ESM) through daily diaries

- Through online journals and messaging apps, each of the 40 participants provided an hour by hour digital/social and traditional media consumption report documented through text, audio and images.
- The process was conducted over two weeks.
- For each media content consumed, we ask the participants to answer 4 questions:
- The goal is to develop a 360-degree perspective of each individual to understand their beliefs and motivations that influence their actions.
- The key rule is 'question but not judge'.



In-Depth Focus Group Interviews

The purpose of the focus group interviews was to provide additional information to informants specifically on:

- The definition of migrant and refugee status, background stories and situations;
- The number of refugees and migrants residing in Thailand;
- Existing communications and activities around this issue produced by IDC partners within a group setting to see if information provided during the observation ‘sticks’ or drastically changes due to social desirability tendencies (the pressure to present oneself in a way that is perceived to be socially acceptable).

Group 1 and 2 Summary of Results

GROUP
1

**Consumers of Mass
Divergent
Media Outlets**

GROUP
2

**Consumers of Online Only
Mass Media Outlets**

Because of the similarities and commonalities between both sets of consumers in how they see and interact with the world around them, our observers grouped the observation findings into one thematically similar set of beliefs and practices.

Who They Are

- Consumers are from non-urban communities or live in urban surroundings but have a rural background or upbringing.
- Levels of education and income vary ranging from Grade 9 to Master’s Degrees and wage workers to small business owners.
- They have seen or experienced hardship and/or inequalities first-hand and this proximity has contributed to a deeper understanding of social inequality—how it manifests and affects people’s lives and society at large.
- Through proximity and life experiences, when hearing about refugees and migrants in the media they, therefore, immediately recognise the universal struggles we all share and see beyond the differences among peoples.

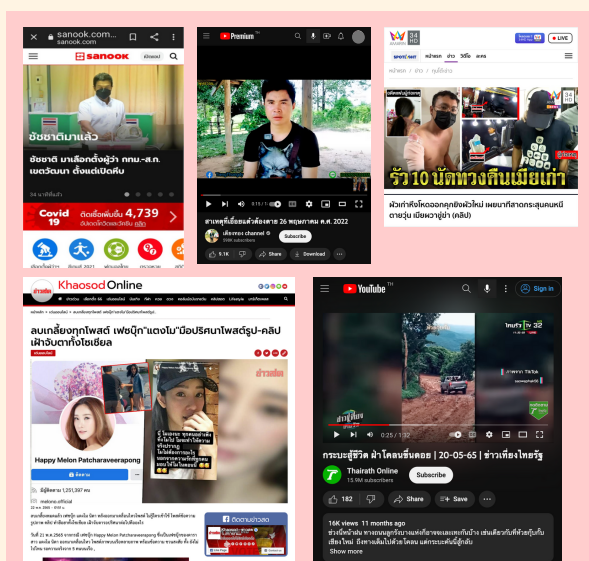
Perceptions of Refugees and Migrants

- Despite lacking prior knowledge, participants, after learning more through the focus group, felt even more compelled and empathetic towards refugees and migrants. They related the news events and stories to their own struggles, such as getting laid off, especially during COVID, but instead of anger or resentment, found a renewed sense of hope and motivation to overcome the challenges that life throws at them.
- In addition to wanting to learn more and sharing content with friends, they also felt issues such as this should be taught early to create 'proximity' and bring the problem closer to the public.

Media Habits and Preferences

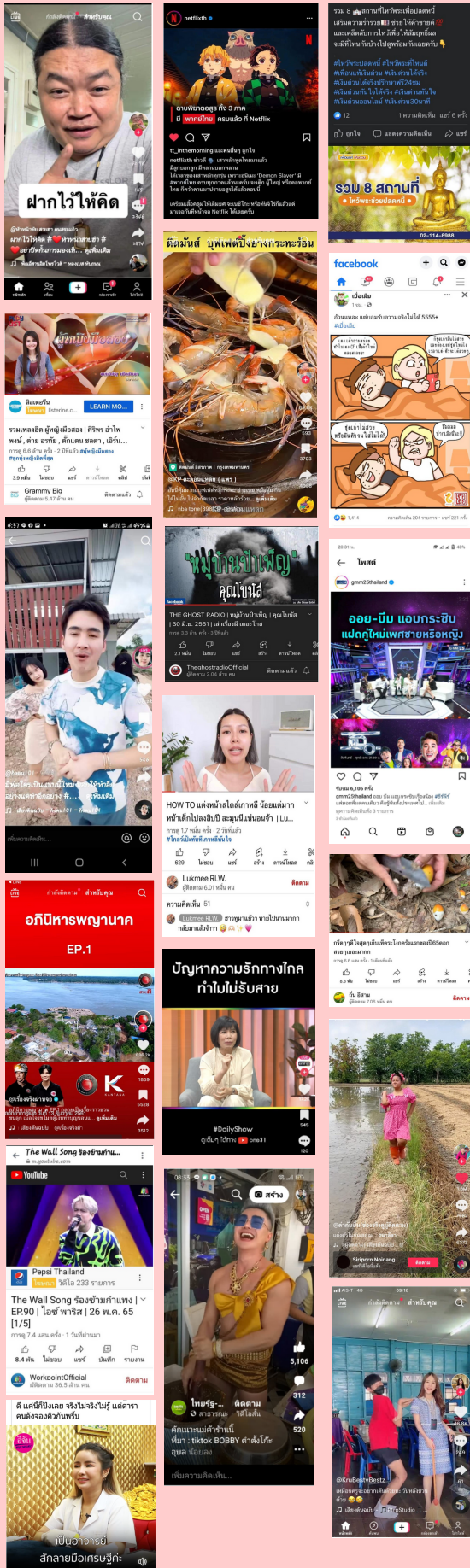
- Social media, particularly Facebook, is the primary platform for both news and entertainment consumption with a clear preference for stories, especially those about real-life struggles, hardship and endurance that remind and inspire them to stay motivated and persist when times are tough.
- Entertainment media preference: Slapstick | Celebs with Traditional Values | Religion and Superstition | Local Food and Travel | Rural and Local Traditions | Country and Rock Music | Soaps | Sports.

Entertainment Preferences snapshot. Popular Platforms:



For News Consumption

Group 1	
80.6%	Via Facebook
10.2%	Direct Website
7.1%	Via YouTube



Group 2	
82.8%	Via Facebook
8.6%	Via YouTube
5.7%	Direct Website

For Entertainment Consumption
Informants ranked their most favourite platforms

Group 1	
Rank	Platform
1	Facebook
2	YouTube
3	TikTok
4	Instagram

Group 2	
Rank	Platform
1	Facebook
2	YouTube
3	TikTok

Group 1 and 2 Key Observations

Total of 20 Individual Daily Diaries

วันที่ 1
วันอาทิตย์
22 พ.ค. 65



วันที่ 2
วันจันทร์
23 พ.ค. 65



They have experienced hardship and/or inequality first-hand, and they are able to relate news events to their own personal experiences or those close to them.

“I was once threatened by government officials because I tried to make a complaint about subpar service they provided”

“I’m not surprised to see the headmaster used school funds for her personal gains, I’ve seen many corrupt officials in my life time”

“Workers here in Thailand are paid unlivable wages, I sometimes envy the life of our neighbouring countries”

“When I was a kid, we used to have buffaloes just like this. I even got to ride on their back. If only we still had them now, we would be rich”

“How can we expect other aspects of our lives to be safe when the most basic thing like public transport is not up to standards?”

“I finish work very late at night every day, I wish for better quality buses that are safe and bus stops that are well lit”



News of the suffering and the downtrodden helps give voice to issues and brings people together

“Whenever there's any news about anything unfair within society, we want to discuss it, talk about it, find a way to be part of it. How social media came together to try to solve the mysterious drowning of Thai actress - Tangmo - was such an inspiration to me. I was also trying to do my bit, as much as possible.”

“We have to help ourselves, we have to help each other.”

“I love Khaosod Daily because they are fast and they are not afraid to report on controversial issues of life and death, it gives me hope and I want to support that.”



Traditional Values

Strong traditional values such as the young taking care of the old, helping the less fortunate, and making offerings and donations to temples are still vital to their belief systems, with some developing strong affiliation to celebrities that are able to demonstrate or showcase these values.

Informants also express pride and joy when they read news about people helping others—“that’s true Thai.”



Stories and Social Media ‘Connects Us’

Stories over statistics. Informants see everything in the news as a human interest story (and talk about it as if they know that person) - remember people’s names and try to relate the issue back

to someone they know in their own lives. Always moved or shocked to see/hear anything tragic in the news.

"I can't believe it! A teacher caught on camera kicking a student. We have to share the video and help spread the word to prevent something like this from happening again."

"I was drawn to this story because I also drive a pickup truck. I'm shocked and felt for this woman. We must be careful when driving. Death can come for us at any time."

"The news just made me sad and angry. What if this had been my kid? And all they did was transfer the police officers responsible for the beating somewhere else. Once again, it's not the police but people themselves who can help one another."



Television programs - such as *Young Self Made Millionaire* (อายุน้อยร้อยล้าน) that document small business owners across the country who, against all odds, have become successful entrepreneurs - are popular.

Despite representing the majority of the population, many in the past felt left out by mainstream popular culture.

Therefore, not only has social media provided an inexpensive means of access to both entertainment and news content, social media has also connected like-minded individuals with similar interests and beliefs.

"Other people from other parts of the country can also learn more about our way of life and our culture and heritage, through social media."

"There's more content now about provincial life such as Isan (Northeast Thailand) lifestyle content that we might not/could not access before and that has helped us to join the conversation and be more connected to society."



Reflection on news related to migrant workers and human trafficking

Many have seen, have worked with or know of migrant workers and their stories through friends and family.



<https://www.thaipost.net/criminality-news/147046/>

"They should be treated better, it's not fair"

"They just want a better life for themselves and their families - no different to us, I also want to work abroad"

"Trafficking can only happen if officials are in on it"

"Poverty has brought them here, life must be really difficult back home"

Group 1 and 2 Key Insights from Focus Groups

- Participants have seen or experienced hardship and/or discrimination in their lives with the COVID-19 Pandemic exacerbating the problem.
- Despite lacking prior knowledge, after learning through the focus group about refugees and migrants, participants felt even more compelled and empathetic towards the situation – "It's about basic human decency".

Information was consistent with the observation:

- Many participants felt a renewed sense of hope and optimism in their own lives:

"There are people who have it much harder than me. I still have a roof over my head, food to eat and live in a peaceful country."

"I look back at my own life, and understand how lucky I am...I have greater appreciation for my own country and situation."



Action

- To learn more about the situation through short-form video human interest stories of people (especially care givers) and how they overcame adversity to provide an opportunity for their loved ones.
- Would share content with friends if message could be conveyed through desirable style, design, mood and tone.



Reflection on existing IDC partner activities and content

- Foreign - “Only for people in the know” “very specific group of people”.
- Long form video content is too cumbersome to consume, get excited about or share.
- The food and culture and element of some CRSP activities has potential but need to be more localised similar to SME, OTOP food shows and fairs (provincial food events).

Group 3 and 4 Summary of Results

GROUP
3

**Quality News Media
Consumers**

GROUP
4

**Online News Magazine
Consumers**

Who They Are

- While income levels and demographic are not vastly different from those in Group 1 and 2, where the majority of the Group 3 participants studied - public universities in Bangkok, top tier cities or private colleges and universities - reveals more advantaged family backgrounds.
- Those over 30 also have higher incomes than other groups.
- With no direct proximity to diversity and social inequality, they are more focused on how social, economic and environmental factors could affect their lives and those around them.
- Urban dwellers, born and live in Bangkok or top tier cities.
- Aged 20-30 (students - first jobbers).
- Have at least a bachelor's degree from public or private universities located in Bangkok or urban hubs.
- As first jobbers/entry-level staff or students living at home, income levels are lower than Group 3.
- Come from relatively financially secure families with no direct proximity to diversity or social inequality.
- Have strong resentment towards the government. Feel that rights have been taken away from them, negative feelings towards the country and fear for their future.

Perceptions of Refugees and Migrants

- Both sets of participants knew of the issue beforehand - through news/media coverage of Rohingya and Ukrainian refugees' situation, for example, and despite receiving more information on the topic, they still maintain the same position insisting that:
 - It's not a priority issue.
 - Shouldn't Thai people be taken care of first?
 - Budgets and taxes should be used accordingly.
 - If more refugees are allowed to reside in the country, there should be a process of health screenings and background checks.
 - The refugee issue is also connected to national security.

Perceptions of Migrants and Refugees (continued)

- Both groups are not interested in taking action to support the cause. They are more likely to get involved in climate change and animal-related issues than topics involving people that they cannot relate to.
- There are some who deviate from the norm and show positive interest towards migrant and refugee issues. These tend to be people who have either had direct engagement with migrant workers or have had exposure to social issues through school clubs, but these people are few and far between.

Media Habits and Preferences Group 3 Quality News Media Consumers

- Social media, particularly Facebook, is the primary platform for both news and entertainment consumption.
- Facts not stories. Only read op-eds, analysis and hard news - no human interest stories and prefer to hear different views and opinions and compare information from multiple sources to arrive at their own conclusions.
- Headlines and visuals that tell a story at a glance such as infographics and data visualisation.
- Entertainment media preference: Knowledge | Deals | Movies | Family.

Entertainment Preferences Snapshot Popular Platforms

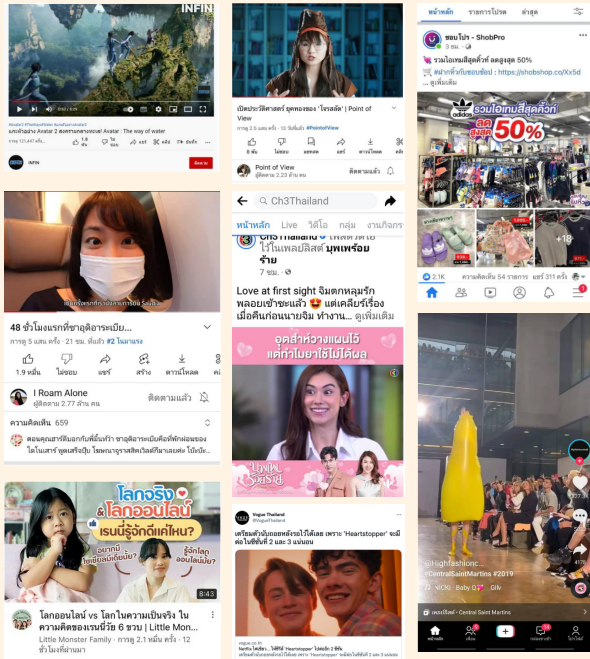


For News Consumption

Group 3	
41.2%	Via Facebook
36.3%	Direct Website
14.6%	Via Twitter

Entertainment Preferences Snapshot

Popular Platforms



For Entertainment Consumption
Informants ranked their most favourite platforms

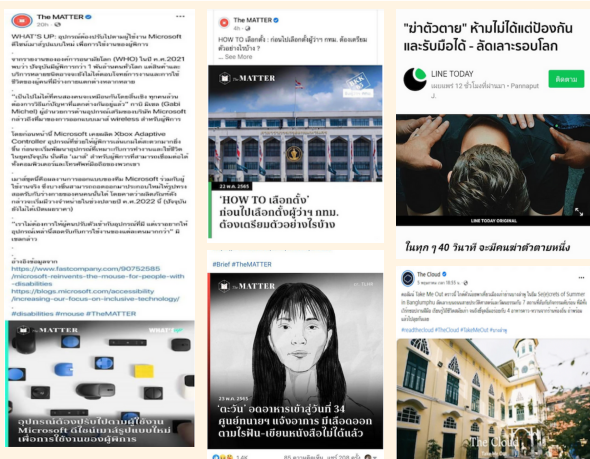
Group 3	
Rank	Platform
1	Facebook
2	YouTube
3	TikTok

Media Habits and Preferences Group 4 Online News Magazine Consumers

- Social media, particularly Facebook, is the primary platform for both news and entertainment consumption.
- Most homogeneous in interests, tastes and preferences, preferring international media and international Thais.
- Headlines and visuals that tell a story at a glance such as infographics and data visualisation.
- Entertainment media preference: Netflix | Slapstick (urban setting) | Pop Culture and Celebrity Gossip | Off the Beaten Path Eats/Travel/Experiences | Language and Knowledge.

Entertainment Preferences Snapshot

Popular Platforms:

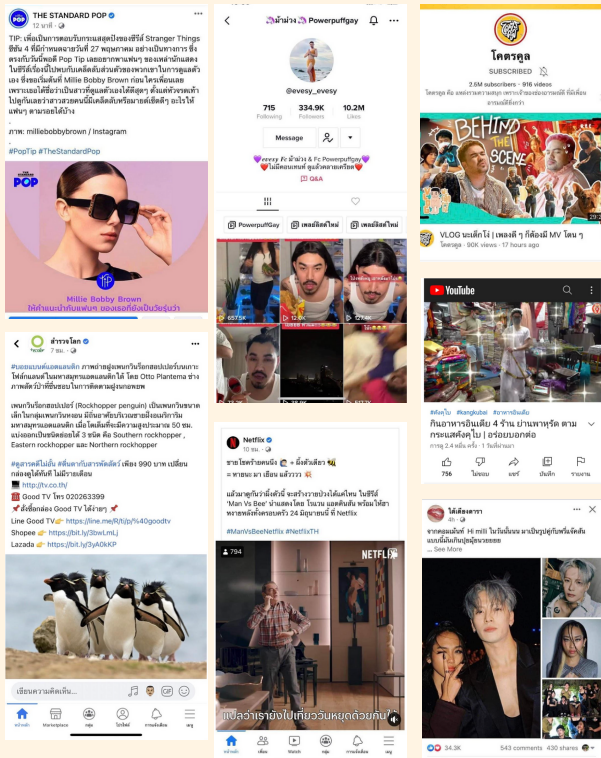


For News Consumption

Group 4	
66.7%	Via Facebook
25%	Direct Website
6.7%	Via Twitter

Entertainment Preferences Snapshot

Popular Platforms



For Entertainment Consumption Informants ranked their most favourite platforms

Group 4	
Rank	Platform
1	Facebook
2	YouTube
3	Instagram

Group 3 Key Observations

(Quality News Media Consumers)

Total of 10 Individual Daily Diaries





Proximity to Diversity and Social Inequality

- Did not express any direct experience of hardship, income disparities or social inequality.
- Did not express any strong sentiments towards the government or the ruling party.
- Reflected mostly on how social, economic and environmental factors could affect an individual's way of life in a post-pandemic world.

"The war in Ukraine worries me because it has a domino effect on the global economy, including ours."

"I have to be more careful with household finance, worried about inflation... the government needs to provide us citizens with tax exemptions and tax breaks."

"I try to follow any new policies related to the economic direction of the country as it will have a direct effect on our income and livelihoods."

"I follow all news stories related to the environment. I believe environmental degradation has a direct impact on our health and wellbeing."

"We need to know what's happening in the world and how it is going to affect us, our families and those close to us."

"The stock markets have been in a losing streak lately. It is a good time for investors to buy quality stocks at a great discount."

"With their knowledge of the land tax law, large corporations and rich people can make sure they are not being taken advantage of by the state."



Facts not Stories

Only read op-eds, analyses and hard news - no human interest stories. Prefer to hear different views and opinions and compare information from multiple sources to arrive at their own conclusions.

Headlines and visuals that tell a story at a glance such as infographics and data visualisation.



Deals, Movies, Family and Holidays

Price conscious; follow official brand accounts and deal-aggregators, also like to collect coupons and discount codes to use later on e-marketplaces.

With limited free time, prefer to use recap/summary channels on YouTube to help decide what to watch. Strong preference towards Western movies and series.

Offline leisure spent with family and travelling both locally and abroad.



Reflection on news related to migrant workers and human trafficking

‘บ๊วกโจ๊ก’ โชว์ผลคุยสหรัฐแก้ปัญหาค้ามนุษย์ ยืนยันไม่มีใครขงใจปม ‘ปวีณ’

23 พฤษภาคม 2565 เวลา 12:16 น.



<https://www.thaipost.net/criminality-news/147046/>

A Pragmatic View of the Situation

“Unclear on how the government plans to solve this problem. We don’t know the true story behind this.”

“An unsolvable issue, only the little fish are caught, never the mastermind behind it all.”

“I have worked with ‘Pee’ [A migrant worker] (an affectionate term in Thai referring to someone who is older), I feel for them. We are all humans, but not all humans are equal. Those affected are the ones who suffer most. Policies should be implemented strictly and fairly without bias.”

“I don’t have any knowledge on the issue but I believe that all migrant workers before coming to Thailand should obtain the correct documents so they don’t fall into any traps or scams.”

“Have not had any direct interaction with migrant workers but I know they are important to the economy and rights should be respected.”



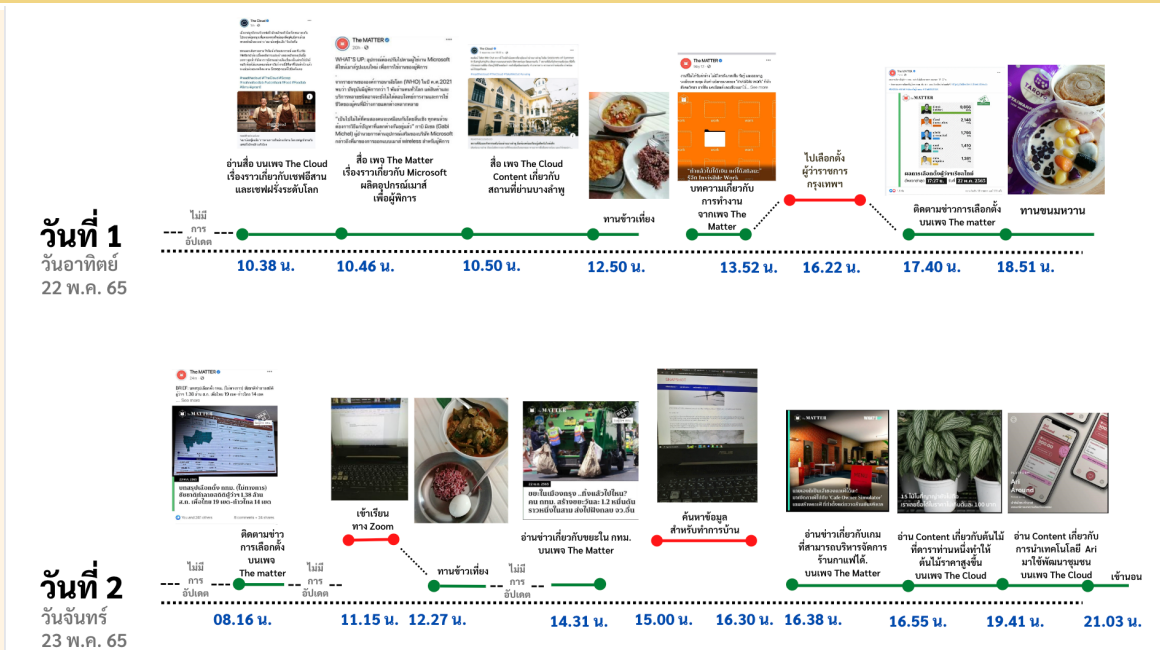
Deviant:

One informant’s response deviated from the rest because she had close proximity to migrant workers.

Group 4 Key Observations

(Online News Magazine Consumers)

Total of 10 Individual Daily Diaries



Proximity to Diversity and Social Inequality

- Comfortable lifestyle with no direct proximity to diversity or social inequality.
- Exists in a homogeneous group.
- Social concerns: more interested in environmental and animal issues than topics involving people that they cannot relate to.
- Compare their life to those living in other countries. Developed strong resentment since high school towards the government. Feel that rights have been taken away from them, negative feelings towards the country and fear for their future.
- Ageist statements.

"The country has gone backwards since the coup. They have taken away our rights and stolen our future."

"Senior leadership in the country are so full of themselves and willing to do whatever it takes to stay in power."

"I love going overseas so I can wear what I want, not like when I'm here in Thailand."

"The PM is so immature. He's a joke."

"He (Bangkok governor-elect Chadchart Sittipunt) is US-educated with a degree from MIT and has spent two years building his policy platform to address the problems he observed on the ground."

He represents modesty, humility, capability and authenticity - a contrast to the PM and his government."

"I've been reading about the rule of law and legal state and thinking that Thai people know very little about their rights. I bet people living overseas with just a high school diploma know more about this than we do in this country."

"Sorry, if I sound selfish, but I'm more interested in the environment than people related issues because it has a direct impact on my wellbeing."

"Wondering what changes we can make to reduce our impact living in an increasingly dangerous world. Be a mindful consumer, improve waste management, and get an air monitoring device."



Follow International Media and Admire International Thais

- Admire those living on their own terms, both real and fictional, like 'Anne,' the protagonist from Netflix's adaptation of Anne of the Green Gables, and Stranger Things star Millie Bobby Brown.
- Admire Thai travel vloggers that are not afraid to venture off the beaten path.
- Young, urban and successful entrepreneurs e.g. chefs, health food retailers.
- Anti-establishment voices or people who stand up to power.
- Support international brands that are socially responsible on issues they care about.
- Know about the latest trends and follow the latest gossip about international artists they look up to.



Reflection on news related to migrant workers and human trafficking

'บึกโจ๊ก' โชว์ผลคุยสหรัฐแก้ปัญหาค้ามนุษย์ ยืนยันไม่มีใครขงใจปม 'ปวีณ'

23 พฤษภาคม 2565 เวลา 12:16 น.



<https://www.thaipost.net/criminality-news/147046/>

However, interested in the wellbeing of Pol Maj-General Paween Pongsirin

[who was forced to leave the country and live in exile in Australia for his investigation into mass graves of Rohingya refugees, which led to the arrests of

Tired of this issue

- Generally tired of this issue in the news.
- Feel sorry for migrants but don't want to see too many of them. There are too many already.
- Afraid of them. Health risk and they're coming to take Thai people's jobs.

high-ranking police officers, local politicians, business people and military officers for alleged involvement in human trafficking.]

Group 3 and 4

Key Insights from Focus Groups

- Knew of the issue beforehand – through news/media coverage of Rohingya and Ukrainian refugees' situation, for example.
- It's not a priority issue. Sympathetic but shouldn't Thais be taken care of first?

Information was consistent with the observation:

- Budgets and taxes should be used accordingly.
- It's a much smaller issue compared to climate change.
- If more migrants and refugees are allowed to reside in the country, there should be a process of health screenings and background checks.
- The refugee issue is also connected to national security.

"It's normal that people would be more concerned about everyday issues like rising food prices, flooding, education or COVID. When we see something about the refugee crisis on the news, we may feel terrible about it for a minute and we go back to living our lives."

"It's a divisive issue that can trigger strong feelings. There are many people who see asylum seekers as a problem. Without effective public communication, it can result in a great deal of public confusion and misunderstanding or even backlash."

A: "MIGRANT WORKERS AND REFUGEES, IF TOO MANY ARE ALLOWED IN, THEY WILL TAKE THAI PEOPLE'S JOBS."

B: "WHAT KIND OF JOBS? ARE THERE JOBS YOU KNOW OF?"

A: "I DON'T KNOW WHAT JOB EXACTLY BUT THEY WILL TAKE THAI PEOPLE'S JOBS."



Action

Not interested in taking action to support the cause.



Reflection on existing IDC partner activities and content

"I'm interested in non-human related stories. I'm not sure if it will make me sound selfish or not but human-related stories, like those affected by natural disasters, make me feel like the impact has not reached me yet."

"Why don't you partner with others to get the message out there, such as influencers that people look up to who are already involved in social topics/travel/exploration."

"Sure, there are some people who directly got affected but when I see news about them, I feel like it is less about me. If it's more generic environmental news then I would feel like it's more about me."

"You can't force people to care, but if something can be fun, that might help with engagement."



Stage 2

Define

Users' Needs and Problems

*There are three main types of customer needs:
functional, social and emotional.*



1. Functional Needs

Functional needs are the most tangible and obvious of the three main types of customer needs. Customers typically evaluate potential solutions based on whether they'll help them achieve a particular task or function. The product or service that best addresses their functional need is likely to be the one they purchase or hire.



2. Social Needs

A social need is a customer need that relates to how a person wants to be perceived by others when using a product or service. While social needs aren't typically a customer's primary concern when considering a purchase, they can influence their final decision.

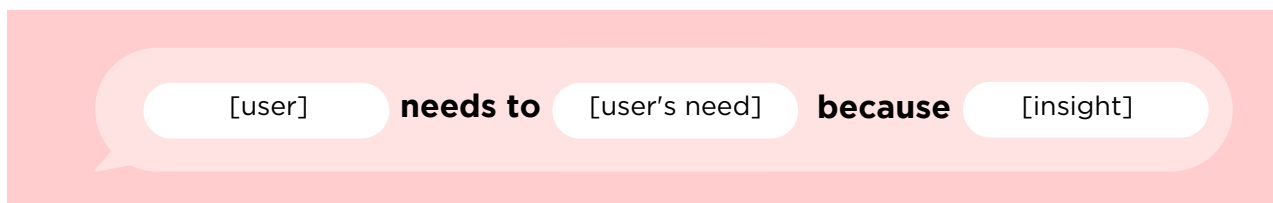


3. Emotional Needs

Emotional needs are similar to social needs in that they're typically secondary to functional needs. Whereas social needs refer to how a customer wants to be perceived by others when using a product, emotional needs refer to how a customer wants to feel.

User	Needs that are met	Insight
Group 1 and 2 Mass Media Consumers	Social and Emotional Needs	<p>The stories of courage in the face of unimaginable obstacles struck a chord with the majority of group 1 and group 2 consumers.</p> <p>When we see others face an obstacle with strength, it inspires us - gives us a new perspective.</p> <p>Determination, compassion, joy; they are all contagious.</p> <p>Despite not knowing much about refugee and migrant issues before, the bravery shown by individuals has inspired these groups of consumers to not just learn more but to also want to share and engage others with the cause.</p>
Group 3 and 4 Business and Lifestyle Consumers	No needs are met	<p>Despite knowing more about the issue, negativity still surrounds the topic.</p> <p>However, the status of the middle class matters more than its size. Their proximity to decision-making and decision-makers, think tanks and thought leaders forces us to continue to find ways to engage and communicate with them.</p> <p>Existing methods have not been successful, therefore, new and creative ways need to be developed to bring middle class consumers closer to the problem.</p>

POV (Problem Statement)

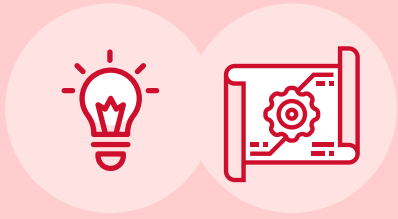


Group 1 and 2

Mass Media Consumers are motivated to face their own adversities through the stories of perseverance from migrants.

Group 3 and 4

Meanwhile, innovative new communication approaches to engage urban middle class consumers must be developed to bring consumers closer to the problem in a way they feel comfortable with, in an effort to reduce stigma and negativity.



Stage 3 and 4

Ideate and Prototype

Group 1 and 2

Consumers of Mass Divergent Media Outlets | Consumers of Online Only Mass Media Outlets

Working in collaboration between Sidekick's design team and Mass Media informants, two brainstorming sessions were developed to co-create low-tech communication prototypes that could inspire and motivate mass media consumer interest and action.

Summary of Results



Empathy not sympathy

- Admiring someone for trying. Stories of people overcoming adversity, not just waiting for luck or handouts.



Bold and straight to the point

- Bold colours - the use of prime colours like red and yellow (urban audience prefer more muted tones).
- Prefer reading captions than long sentences. Limit text to just one or two fonts. A caption must be able to explain the context using as little text as possible - simple language to avoid confusion.



Short-form over long videos

- More likely to consume and share something that is less than 1 minute.
- Images and videos should show not just hardship but also determination and relationship especially between families.



Localised not foreign

- Important to feel comfortable in setting and surroundings especially when attending social events and activities - should have a market or fair atmosphere. Learn through engaging and fun activities, not through long speeches and panel discussions.

Moodboard

Fonts

Bold, eye-catching,
country music



Graphics

Country, temple fair



Bold and straight to the point

- Photos that tell a story
- Copywriting - bold, straight to the point



Video Style

อายุน้อยร้อยล้าน -
The Young Millionaire -
Popular TV show

Entrepreneurs from
across the country
overcoming obstacles
to start their own
business



Human interest stories

in short form video
format, such as TikTok
and YouTube shorts.
Stories of individuals,
especially parents,
showing resilience by
overcoming adversity.
Showing real faces and
voices creates even
greater authenticity.



Final Prototype

Prototype Image Banners:

“The mother is holding her child’s hand. It shows how, despite everything, they are together in search of survival. It is positive, it shows the bond between mother and child. The text is easy to read. The message and the picture go together.”

“The barbed wires signify restriction, they are trapped, can't move forward, if they want to move forward they need help and support. Who will remove the barbed wires and clear the path for them?”

“Copywriting, font colour and image complement each other.”



Prototype Short-form Video

Adapted from a 10 minute video - edited down to a 1 minute short-form story of 'Eva' and her children | Professional voiceover by Channel 3 news presenter.



“Concise and easy to understand, makes me want to know more, prefer this to the 10-minute original.”

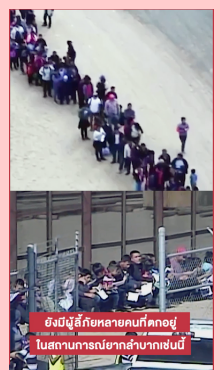
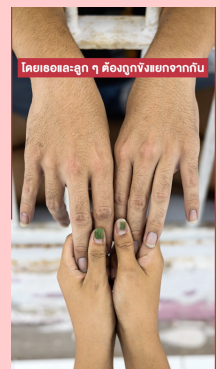
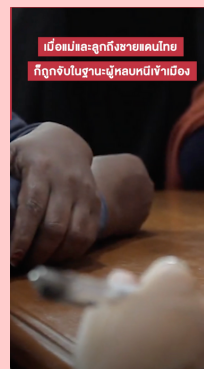
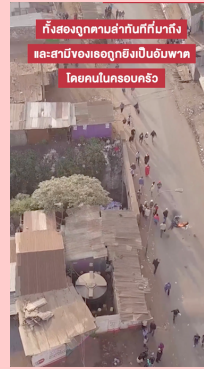
“The footage goes well with the narration. Can understand everything in a short amount of time. Love the narrator's voice.”

“The clip makes me want to find out more about their journey so far and what's next in their lives and how I can be involved in the process.”

“I want to share this video, to also help others understand, learn about their struggles so more can be done about the situation.”

“Want to watch more. I would be genuinely interested in adding something like this to my playlist and sharing it with friends on TikTok and other social media platforms.”

“What they have had to endure is traumatic enough and it's that the video focuses on telling it like it is.”



Prototype Short-form Video

1 minute event promo video - images taken from IDC partner events and activities but rebranded and reorganised to fit audience needs | Professional voiceover by VO artist

“This video makes me want to go to this event. It’s clear and easy to understand. I love the enthusiastic narration, you can even include more information about asylum seekers and migration, I wouldn’t mind.”

“After seeing this, I would probably do more research on the event. The food and activities look new and refreshing.”

“It has the right balance between information and entertainment. I would be interested in participating in an event like this.”



Event Prototype

Concept based on an open market or local fair with various goods | food | music | local products on display including information zones and panel discussions about migration.

“I like this format, not focused solely on the issue of migration which can be off-putting. I have the freedom to learn as well as explore other activities at my own pace.”

“Many activities to choose from, we can learn as well as feel entertained.”

“The focus is on getting people to know about migration, therefore, I think throughout the course of the event, there should be activities to re-engage people with the issue through games, art and family-fun activities.”



Group 3 and 4

Quality News Media Consumers | Online News Magazine Consumers

Activities focused on brainstorming entry points that could break stereotypical barriers around migrants and refugees. The discussions piqued the interest of some urban consumers but discussions did not go beyond exchange of ideas, as the majority continued to show reluctance towards engagement with the topic.



Culture

Provide an avenue for urban consumers to learn about similarities between themselves and those from different backgrounds.

“I think it would be great if we target those who are interested in different cultures. Through maybe shared commonalities, culture can help us see people differently, help us to see people as equals.”

“Sharing of food, music and songs can also increase dialogue.”



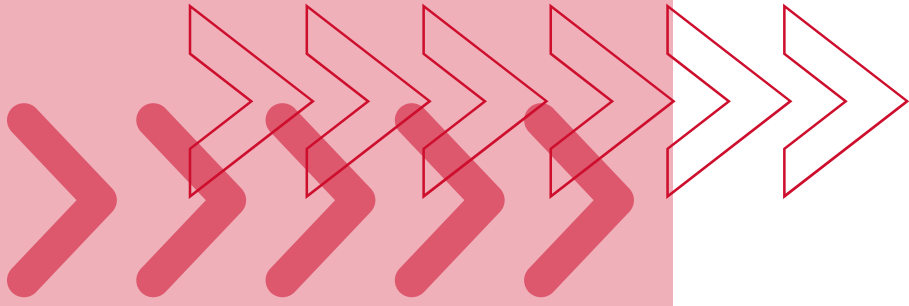
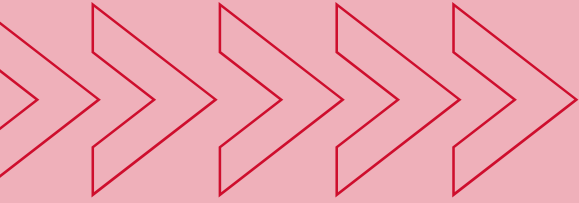
Starling Statistics

Numbers and statistics stimulated some interest especially around the extent of the issue as many thought migration and refugee issues only affected a small section of the global population.



What's beyond the edges?

Growing up in gated communities with protected families, many of the informants want to experience life on their own terms. Therefore influencers like Mint (I Roam Alone) or Wannasingh (writer and documentary producer) or other travel vloggers exploring all corners of the world are held in high regard and could bridge the gap between culture, knowledge and acceptance.



News Editors' Reflection



News Editors

A reflection of their own audience

One-on-one interviews were also conducted with four news editors representing the mass media outlets, business outlets and urban lifestyle channels.

The purpose of the interviews was to further validate connections between the consumer and the media itself.



Editor from
Mass Divergent
Media Outlet

Deputy news director of a Nationwide primetime news programme.

- Middle/working class audience who are interested in everyday social issues and concerns, crime, corruption and scandal. Competition for ratings is high among competitors.
- Admits he does not know much about refugees and migrants, but as fellow human beings, *“I would like the government to help them, more than to just simply seek deportation.”* *“Sending anyone back is equal to sending them to suffer.”*

- Would like to report more on the issue but information is hard to come by. He does not know who these people are, where they come from or how their stories would relate to the channel’s target audience, therefore, it’s difficult for him to highlight the issue. *“Organisations and civil society working on this issue should have better communications with news editorials to increase the chance of coverage.”*
- He thinks the Thai government themselves are also in a precarious situation, having to manage expectations from multiple stakeholders.

The news section has more than 3 million views per day. Apart from entertainment, which is the bread and butter of her department, the team has started to invest more in investigative journalism with stories such as 'Scammed to the UAE' hitting 4 million views.

In previous roles, she has personally reported on stories related to refugees and has travelled with the Human Rights Commissioner to immigration detention centres. *"The conditions people have to put up with are unbearable, I can still remember the smell, it stuck with me until now."* *"People were asking for my help but there was not much I could do. It's heart-wrenching."*

Editor from the country's top online media outlet

"We all seek a better life, better opportunity for ourselves and/or our children. I can understand that."

"Our audience represents the general Thai population, therefore, when we report on migrants or refugees, we look at how we can bring the human element into the story. Are there interesting back stories we can tell? Can we tell a story that will help Thai people open up and recognise these individuals as human beings like any one of us?"

Editor of Leading Business News Portal

"Some of our readers see migrants and refugees as a burden to society, troublemakers or lawbreakers but it's not what we at the editorial believe."

"People are interested in politics and economics because it directly impacts them. Their perception towards migration is that it doesn't concern them but in fact, it affects them more than they understand."

"We mostly hear about migrants and refugees when they have done something wrong in some crime report."

What must change?

"It starts with our own reporters who must develop more empathy and compassion towards these people and recognise the importance of people on the move. At the same time, organisations such as UN agencies and civil society organisations must work better with the press to provide information."

Editor of
Top Online
News Magazine

"I believe, for our audience, this is an issue that's difficult to relate to, with only a handful of followers interested."

"For many, people on the move is not considered a big issue, while for others they see migrants and refugees as problematic and criticise news agencies for sympathising with them."

"We might need a presenter or an influencer/YouTuber to help generate interest and dialogue around this topic instead of relying on media agencies."

"Personally, I still see refugees as a group of people who entered a country illegally, especially for Myanmar refugees, due to our historical wars in the past. I feel some resentment in regards to their existence within Thailand."

Kultida Samabuddhi, representing the media at the Seminar on Promoting the Right Perception of Migrants, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with International Detention Coalition (IDC), in December 2022

Echoing some of the points raised by the news editors interviewed by Sidekick, from the 'marginal' position of refugees in the newsrooms and public interest to the complexity and sensitivity of the issue itself and lack of access to information, Kultida also pointed out the disappearing beat reporting in the industry as another key limitation.

Kultida Samabuddhi -
Independent journalist and
former editor of the Bangkok Post,
Thai PBS and BBC Thai

"Journalists nowadays are expected to be able to cover any topic of interest and produce content for multiple platforms. Without the time and resources to develop expertise on a particular issue, both journalists and news editors may not recognise the significance of certain topics and stories or can only provide superficial accounts or choose not to report them at all."

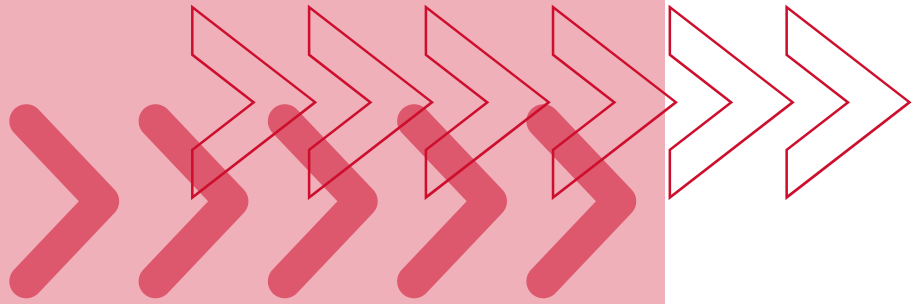
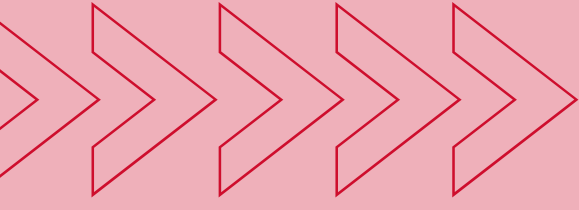
What kind of support does the press need?

“Training and capacity building for journalists, like a workshop recently conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with International Organization for Migration (IOM); story angles and key points explaining why this issue is important and its impact on society and Thai people, e.g. migrants and refugees as neighbours and fellow community members or one day you too could become a refugee; data and stories, especially those that highlight the positive contributions of migrants and refugees to Thailand’s economic and social prosperity; and timely access to information and responding to media inquiries.”



However, Kultida also wonders if the media still has the power to influence individual beliefs, attitudes and behaviours in a world where social media has given everyone a platform to broadcast and shape opinions.

“Personally, I would argue that the government and state agencies play a more significant role than the media in shaping and informing the Thai public’s opinions about migrants and refugees. The appalling conditions in the detention centres, ill-treatment and deportations as well as their silence or indifference in response to human rights violations and abuse of refugees, sends a message to the public that refugees are dangerous, disruptive and a risk to national security and therefore do not deserve to be treated with dignity and consideration.”



Conclusion and Recommendations



Conclusion and Recommendations

For the majority of the Thai public, forced migration is not an issue people are aware of. However, through the user-centred approach and the Proximity Principle, we are able to learn that while for some the mention of migrants and refugees brings about negative connotations, for those representing the majority of the population, many find comfort in shared experiences, especially shared hardship.

The stories of courage in the face of unimaginable obstacles struck a chord with the majority of Thai mass media consumers. When we see others face an obstacle with strength, it inspires us - gives us a new perspective. Despite not knowing much about refugee and migrant issues before, the bravery shown by individuals has inspired these groups of consumers to not just learn more but to also want to share and engage others with the cause.

Meanwhile, for those representing middle class urban consumers, knowing more about the issue provokes even greater resentment. Negativity surrounds the topic and the existence of any forms of migration worries them. However, the condition of the urban middle class matters more than its size. Their proximity to decision-making and decision-makers, think tanks and thought leaders forces us to continue to find ways to engage and communicate with them.

The study shows us that personal experiences can be strongly influenced by proximity, as people's daily lives and interactions are often shaped by their surroundings. We have the opportunity to engage a large virtually untapped demographic whose life experiences make them more likely to see the value of refugees and migrants. However, new and creative approaches are needed to be able to mobilise these individuals.



Suggested Approach: Outside-in; Provincial First Marketing Approach

Provincial First/or sometimes called Small Town Marketing is a well-established approach used to launch products and services in less crowded markets. Urban hubs are where both brands as well as social causes are vying for people's attention.

The rural first approach, especially in the case of Thailand, can also provide an opportunity for brands or social causes to engage a much larger population, establish recognition and trust before re-entering the urban market.



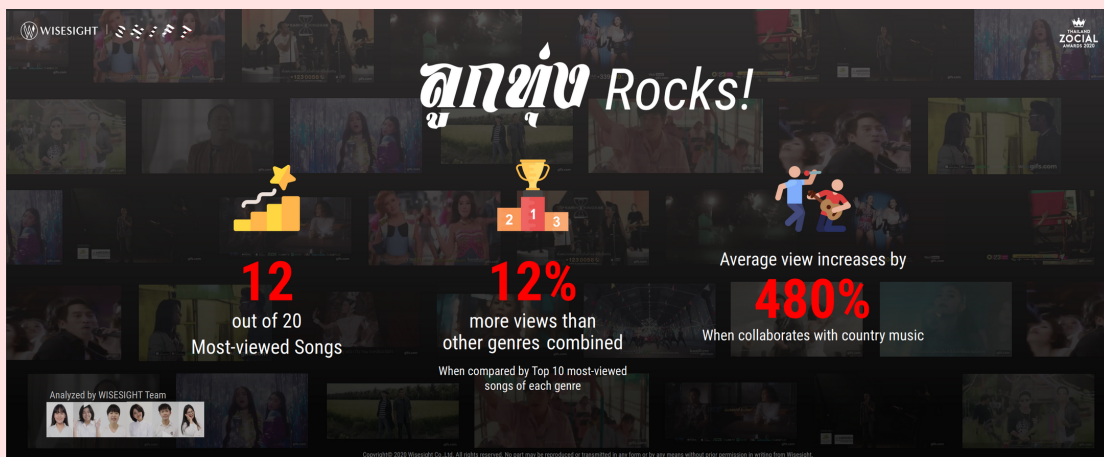
Refugee and Migrant Issues/Cause

- **Crowded Urban Market - only a handful interested**

- From the study, many urban dwellers are already either actively engaging or interested in social causes that matter to them most and have no time for or interest in being involved in other social issues especially one that many feel does not support their needs or interest.
- **Provincial audiences show strong interest in the shared struggles with migrants and refugees and their stories. However, the majority are not engaged in social campaigns apart from ad-hoc religious activities (volunteering time or donating to local temples).**

- **Opportunity to engage a larger demographic**

- The centralised nature of Thailand, where many are occupied by what's happening only in urban hubs like Bangkok, can sometimes make us forget that the majority of the population live outside the major cities. **Provincial dwellers are larger in numbers and are growing in influence as they become more affluent as many more continue to become middle class citizens.**
- A shift in focus since 2019 is reflected in the approach from mass media towards provincial audience:



Wisesight Social Listening Agency *The Rise of Country Music - 2020 (increased viewership when collaborating with country music)* ¹⁵

¹⁵ Thailand Social Awards, 2020, Accessed April 19, 2023. https://thailand.zocialawards.com/2020/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Final-TZA2020-SHIFT-Keynote_270220_Final_embedfont.pdf

- **Establish brand recognition from outside-in**

- By establishing brand recognition in a market that's attainable, refugee and migrant organisations and causes can then start to gain trust and recognition within society, opening opportunities for partnerships with Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) that have crossover provincial/urban appeal.

- **Less funding reaching larger demographic**

- Reaching a larger demographic with less funding.



ASEAN Campaign in support of ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 2016-2025 and the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Phase 1



<https://www.sidekick.asia/migrantsmusic> using country music to reach migrant population in Thailand - Pilot Project by Sidekick

Proposed creative brief for a 6 month - 1 year pilot

Creative Brief Component	Contents
<p>Audience</p>	<p>Provincial First Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 - 35 young adults/first jobbers. • Open and most receptive to migrant and refugee causes and context. • Share a common heritage, language, culture, preferences, tastes (music, pop culture) and even similar beliefs and norms. <p>**Suggestion from Sidekick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch both a mass campaign as well as screenings and targeted (weekend market-like) activities in specific geographical areas, such as key transit and destination provinces. • Measure progress and success periodically from start to finish.
<p>Changes, barriers, opportunities and communication objectives</p>	<p>Desired Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become aware of the issue. • Decide to act in support of the cause: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Via social sharing through social media ◦ Via social support through participation in activities <p>Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational barriers - inability or reluctance to engage with provincial audiences in an interesting or meaningful way. • Organisational barriers - staff capacity to manage new and unique communications, need networking experience. <p>Overall Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes towards migrants and refugees. • Share positive attitudes with others.

Creative Brief Component	Contents
<p>Campaign Approach and Partners</p>	<p>Humanise the issue through storytelling - creating empathy not sympathy.</p> <p><i>Empathy and sympathy are both ways we respond to the suffering of people around us. But there's a crucial difference: sympathy is acknowledging someone else's pain, but empathy is choosing to feel the pain with them. Sympathy says, "I care about you," and empathy says, "I'm hurting with you."</i></p> <p>**Suggestion from Sidekick</p> <p>Influencer engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with content creators popular with the provincial audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Viral content (short-form videos) together with a strong call to action ◦ Talking heads video featuring artists and comedians ◦ Community level roadshows/screenings with content creator/s
<p>Message brief</p>	<p>No matter who we are or where we come from, we all deserve to have a decent life. We deserve to feel strength and stability day after day. We deserve to know we have the power to take care of ourselves and build our own futures.</p> <p>We are all humans. And every single one of us deserves the opportunity for a better future.</p>
<p>Key content and tone</p>	<p>Key Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos and Images <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Key messages delivered through short-form videos accompanied by music (mass content) • On ground events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Markets/fairs/video screenings in local communities

Creative Brief Component	Contents
<p>Key content and tone <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase success in Bangkok <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Proof of concept by showcasing success during International Migrants Day/World Refugee Day - towards the end of the year. <p>Tone Approachable, encouraging, relatable, caring, understanding.</p> <p>Never condescending, never self-righteous or didactic.</p>
<p>Media channels and other considerations</p>	<p>Distribution strategy</p> <p>**Suggestion from Sidekick</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Forge partnership with key influencers to distribute content through their social media channels - expand reach by targeting local media outlets. • Use the showcase event in Bangkok as an opportunity to engage Bangkok-based media - establish wider recognition.
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>To find answers to following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened as a result of the communication activities? • What change(s) have taken place? • What portion of the target audience adopted the new behaviour or dis/continued and/or expanded a currently practised one? • Why did they adopt it or continue/expand it; and did they influence others to practise it? • What was the impact on the target audience? • Results and reaction from the showcase activity in Bangkok.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a key partner to take this forward

Thailand is a 'champion country' for the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which provides the first international and non-legally binding cooperative framework on migration, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) as the lead implementing/coordinating agency.



At the [Seminar on Promoting the Right Perception of Migrants](#), hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with International Detention Coalition (IDC), in December 2022, Sidekick was invited to present the results of this study to relevant government agencies, international and civil society organisations and the media. The proposed concept for public communications campaigns on migrants was endorsed by the MOFA, which agreed to provide support in securing buy-in from its partner organisations for public communication campaigns and activities under Objectives 16 and 17 of the GCM.

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is committed to advancing Thailand’s commitment to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, including awareness raising and shifting public perceptions about migration under Objectives 16 and 17. At the International Migration Review Forum, Thailand shared our progress and best practices to counter discrimination and xenophobia and today’s learnings will further support our ongoing efforts,” said Mrs. Eksiri Pintaruchi, Director-General of the Department of International Organizations.





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Rights and dignity for all who migrate

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