



Table Talk  
Forschungsforum LehrerInnenbildung



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## 19. Table Talk des Zentrums für LehrerInnenbildung

**Dienstag, 5. Dezember 2017, 12.00 – 14.00 Uhr**  
**mittendrin / Vinzi Rast (Dachgeschoß), Währingerstr. 19, 1090 Wien**

### Table Speaker

**Mag. Dr. Michelle Proyer (Institut für Bildungswissenschaft; Institut für  
LehrerInnenbildung) with Assist. Prof. Dr. Siriparn Sriwanyong  
(Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok)**

### **Lives on the Brink – Insights into (Inclusive) Educational Conditions of ‚Refugees‘ with and without Disabilities Along Borderlands**

Drawing from findings of ongoing data collection along the Thai – Myanmar border, this presentation explores the educational conditions of ‘refugees’ with and without disabilities. Due to the complex legal position of ‘refugees’ in Thailand (not a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention, UN 1951/1967) and current political developments in Myanmar, the situation presents itself patchy and intertwined. The definition of individuals having crossed borders depends on the perspective: While NGOs may apply the term ‘refugees’, national terminology of the Royal Thai Government often refers to this group as ‘People of Concern’ (e.g. Lang 2002). The vague status leads to specters of broad interpretation when it comes to eligibility to education in and out of (temporary) camps scattered along the border. Next to self-organized and NGO-funded provision within border zones; needs, availabilities, and levels of accessibility apart from camp-based facilities vary to a high degree. Even more so for ‘refugees’ with disabilities as they might be perceived as being subject to double or multiple discrimination (Harris 2003).

Insights into data collected (following a Grounded Theory regime) will be presented. It entails first-hand accounts of ‘refugee camp’-based experts in the area of rehabilitation, advocates for the rights of ‘refugees’, teachers in out of camp facilities catering for families of children with disabilities living outside or around borderlands.

Taking the numbers of people on the (forced) move and global tendencies to enforce or tighten restrictions in accessibility to social services for certain so-called vulnerable groups into account, the situation along Thai-Myanmar borderlands should not be presented as isolated case. The study of education along borderlands (which has so far only been a sidetrack of emergency education) can be applied to numerous other geographical and mental spaces: Border areas between neighboring countries such as Syria and the Lebanon or Turkey, Kenia and Somalia (1) or legally enforced regional borders such as Greece and countries in Northern Europe (2). (Palestine or Kurdistan

would serve as special cases in this category). In or around these areas makeshift facilitation for large numbers of 'refugees' have been provided. More often than not education is not on top of the agenda of provision where people are lacking basic facilities such as medical care and clean water. These conditions disenable access to education despite international treaties and efforts in the context of inclusive access to education for all (e.g. UN's Sustainable Development Goals). Additionally, the author aims to take the concept of 'educational borderlands' further and apply it to spaces of transition such as long periods of awaiting decisions on asylum applications in e.g. Austria and other Northern European countries or those with asylum being held from inclusion in the job market or specific education tracks due to policies or lacking provision (3).

The presentation elaborates the outlined problem using the localized case study along the Thai-Myanmar border in order to introduce the broader context. Thus, unfolding questions related to the danger of the denial or exclusion of selected groups in complex life situations. This will be framed against the background of countries' responsibilities to provide adequate and equal access to education as signatories to international and ratified national standards. Implications for the agenda of inclusive education especially in terms of teacher training will be elaborated as those educational contexts where access is being granted need to be prepared for the provision of high quality inclusive education.

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