

Philippine Refugee Processing Center

The Philippine Refugee Processing Center (PRPC) was a large facility near Morong, Bataan, Philippines, which was used as the final stop for Indochinese refugees making their way to permanent resettlement in other nations.

Opened in 1980, PRPC was located to the south of Subic Bay and north of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. The camp prepared Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees, including ethnic minorities (such as Chinese) from those three nations, for immigration to a variety of resettlement nations such as Canada, Norway, Denmark, Australia, France, and primarily the United States.

PRPC was funded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and was capable of holding up to 18,000 refugees at any one time. Coupled with a large population of Filipino and third-country employees, PRPC operated like a small city with schools, hospitals, libraries, restaurants, sports facilities, fire brigades, sewage treatment facilities, power generation facilities, water treatment centers, markets, and houses of worship for four religions.

The main functions of the camp were to hold the refugee population long enough to complete tuberculosis testing, wrap up bureaucratic requirements before departure, and—assuming the refugee was heading to an English speaking nation—give them an opportunity for English as a second language training. Virtually all refugees had confirmation before arrival at PRPC that they had been accepted to resettle in the West and therefore the mood among the refugee population was frequently upbeat and positive.

The ESL program was operated by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and was funded by the U.S. Department of State. ICMC provided training to adult refugees aged 17 to 55. Aside from ESL classes, it offered Cultural Orientation (CO) and Work Orientation (WO). A similar ESL program was offered to children by World Relief through an extensive primary education program that took place within classrooms throughout the site.

PRPC funding came to an end in the late 1980s as the wave of Indochinese refugees went from a flood to a trickle. The site was permanently closed and fell to looters and squatters, and eventually into disrepair by the early 1990s. By the mid-1990s, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines saw the error in allowing the site to be reclaimed by the jungle, and turned it into the Bataan Technology Park, loosely associated with the new complex which had been built on the nearby site of the former Subic Bay Naval Base.

Ref.: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine_Refugee_Processing_Center

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