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The World Bank: Partnering for Peace and Development in Thailand's Deep South (2007-2017)

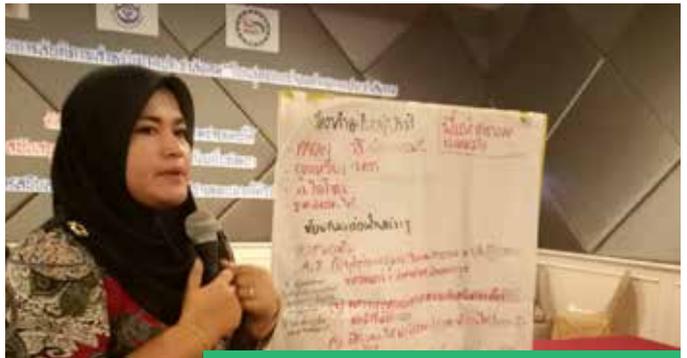
The World Bank's ambitious goals are to work with its member countries to end extreme poverty and promote shared prosperity. In upper-middle income countries, such as Thailand, the primary value of the Bank is in ensuring important knowledge gained from its own development experience is shared and applied, as well as providing financial support in times of crisis, such as in response to the economic crisis (1997), the tsunami (2004), flooding (2011) and the subnational conflict in the conflict-affected areas of Thailand's southernmost provinces (resurgence of violence in 2004).

World Bank Engagement in Thailand's Deep South

The World Bank has been engaged continually in supporting peace and development in Thailand's Deep South since 2007. Working in partnership with a wide range of actors, the objectives of the Bank's assistance have been to build confidence and trust as well as the capacities of local institutions through designing and implementing participatory local development approaches.

Phase I: The World Bank began its involvement in the Deep South in 2007 with an analysis of the conflict conducted by a consortium of peace centers from Chulalongkorn, Thammasat and Mahidol Pattani provinces.

Phase II: The pilot project demonstrated the value of community development as well as of civil society capacity-building investments as a means to foster understanding of local level issues and needs, and to improve the capacity of civil society to effectively engage with the state.



Phase III: For the current phase of the project (2013-2017), financed by grants from the State and Peace Building Fund and Korean Trust Fund, the Government and LDI requested further assistance to expand the scale of the community development approaches from 27 communities to 43 communities and six sub-districts in three provinces, integrate them into government's local development programs and processes, and also to build upon the encouraging capacity gains evident in local civil society organizations and networks that emerged during the pilot phase.

To this end, the Bank has been working closely with the Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior and the Southern Border Province Administrative Centre.



To increase interactions among local level actors, the project’s primary approach to building confidence, the ECACS project (as did the CACS pilot) finances grants through two ‘windows’. Block grants support activities identified and implemented by communities and sub-districts using a community-driven development approach. This area-based emphasis is complemented by grants through the issue-based Peace-building Partnership Fund (PPF) that support civil society organizations and their networks for innovative approaches and partnerships strategically aimed at trust and peace-building.

World Bank, Government and Civil Society Partnerships

In order to achieve its above-mentioned objectives, the project has built and continues to strengthen advisory and operational partnerships with government agencies, at both the national and local levels, and with civil society organizations (CSOs). The *Project Advisory Committee*, chaired by the Public Debt Management Office of the Ministry of Finance, and comprised of representatives from the Southern Border Province Administrative Centre (SBPAC), Department of Local Administration (DLA) and Community Development Department of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labor, Human Rights Commission, Prince of Songkhla University, National Economic and Social Development Board and Local Development Institute provides valuable guidance and strategic direction and monitoring of project progress.

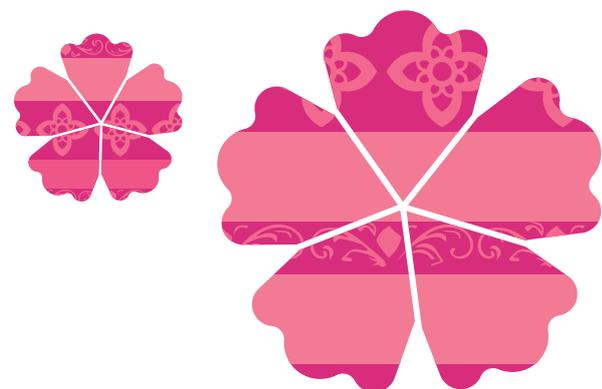
Project and *Department of Local Administration* staff together have developed guidelines and trained sub-district staff to enhance participation and inclusion in local government and village-level planning, prioritization and budgeting processes.

SBPAC is collaborating in the project’s 43 villages and 6 sub-districts to align the planning and budgeting processes of relevant local activities, including those financed by the project, with village and sub-district development plans thereby significantly increasing the reach and sustainability of project inputs.

Civil Society Organizations. Primarily through the Peace-building Partnership Fund (PPF), the project has gained significant knowledge of the strengths, reach and capacities of CSOs operating in the south. PPF grants have facilitated the development and networking of organizations focused on policy advocacy and peace-building, specifically those targeting particularly vulnerable groups, including the women, orphans and youth, and strengthening the Civil Society Council.

Emerging Findings and Lessons

The Bank’s sustained engagement in the Deep South is yielding positive results. The project’s participatory approach is adding value to government’s traditional policies and programs. While the ECACS project is still on-going, experience to date reveals key areas in which the project approaches and activities are providing important results:



1. The participatory development processes introduced by the project have helped create a platform for trust-building, based on inclusive dialogue around joint activities, between communities and local government in fragile areas.

2. The project has provided an alternative model for local development in conflict-affected areas that emphasizes local priorities and strengthens governance, accountability and transparency, enhancing the credibility and legitimacy of local level actors.

3. Engagement in the project has strengthened the capacities of local institutions, better positioning them for when peace negotiations gain traction.

Community and Sub-district Level Block Grants

- Second round activities in all 43 participating communities were completed in 2016. Third round block grants in communities and second round block grant in six sub-districts are being implemented.
- CDD processes have generated significant participation and interaction at the local level, including mobilizing substantial additional resources from communities, CSOs and local governments. Efforts continue to be made to engage diverse groups in these processes.
- Women's roles in community development works have expanded, creating recognition of their significant value to development processes.
- Through project involvement, including training opportunities, community leaders, village heads, sub-district staff are strengthening their leadership capacities.
- Partnerships, as described above, are helping ensure inclusive and participatory development methods are being integrated in local government planning, budgeting and monitoring processes.
- Alignment of block grants with government processes is expected to significantly increase the project's reach as well as enhance civic engagement in and sustainability of local development projects, contributing to improved trust and confidence between the state and local communities.

Peace-building Partnership Fund

- PPF grants have been awarded to 32 CSOs in the Deep South.
- In this current phase, grants are strengthening the capacities and knowledge of key organizations strategically focused on peace-building.
- A civil society road map for peace-building is developed with a wide range of stakeholders in the areas.
- Deep South Watch, a conflict monitoring center, has strengthened technically, and expanded regional ties with similar organizations in the Philippines and Indonesia. Quarterly conflict and development analytical reports are being produced.



- Psycho-social service curriculum is being developed and will be introduced to frontline NGOs working to provide support to victims of violence.
- The Women's network is expanding (23 organizations), and increasing the voice of women in policy dialogues on women, peace and development.
- Peace curriculums for youth and community leaders have been developed and are being implemented at the community level.
- A standardized curriculum with peace activities for the Tadika schools (religious schools for young children) was developed and endorsed by the Ministry of Education to be implemented in more than 2000 Tadika schools in the areas.
- Yawi script was created in partnership with the SBPAC.



Knowledge Sharing

Designed as a learning activity, the project has undertaken a series of studies, including on livelihood development, differentiated crisis impacts on women and men and male youth, facilitating in conflict affected areas, and shared experience and learning through training, forums and documentation and dissemination of knowledge management notes. An impact evaluation, based on pre and post surveys, will help isolate and attribute project impacts.



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