

Piloting Community Approaches in Conflict Situation in Three Southernmost Provinces in Thailand

March 2009

Objective: The overall objective of the project is to assist the Royal Thai Government to create opportunities for increased interaction in the effort to promote trust within and among civil society, local communities, and between the state apparatus in the conflict affected southern provinces.

The project is divided into two phases. Phase 1: 1) Conflict study; and 2) Capacity building. Phase 2: Implementation of pilot activities.

Phase 1

(October 2007-April 2009)

Conflict Study Objectives:

- To inform the design of pilot approaches for conflict mitigating interventions to promote trust in the three Southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat.
- To inform the RTG and the interested public on community approaches and good practices in conflict mitigation in the three southernmost provinces.

Research sites: The selected research sites are listed in the following table:

Province	Location	Geographic Character(s)	Demographic Character(s)*
Yala	T. Huai Krating, A. Krong Penang	Countryside	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Muslim majority, Buddhist minority
Yala	T. Betong, A. Betong	Municipal, border commercial area	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Chinese-ethnic, Muslim, Buddhist
Yala	Baan Kameng, T. Are Song, A. Raman	Countryside	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Muslim majority, Buddhist minority
Pattani	T. Por-ming, A. Panarea	Countryside	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Muslim and Buddhist population proportionally
Pattani	T.Kuanoree, A. Kokpoe	Countryside	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Muslim and Buddhist population proportionally
Pattani	T.Paseyavor, A. Saiburi	Municipal	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Muslim and Buddhist population proportionally
Narathiwat	M.Kalae Ta Pae, T. Bangnark, A. Mung	Municipal	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Muslim majority, Buddhist minority
Narathiwat	T.Kokien, A. Mung	Municipal	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Buddhist majority, Muslim minority
Narathiwat	T.Korsatorn, A.Takbai	Countryside	Malay-ethnic, Thai-ethnic, Muslim and Buddhist population proportionally

Capacity Building Objectives:

- To provide international lessons learned on various aspects of conflict management to concerned government officials and stakeholders especially from the affected areas; and
- To build capacity for a local conflict management center and its network to provide long term technical support for government staff and practitioners through training, field experiences, and networking among local practitioners.

Executing Agency: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI).

Component I: CUSRI subcontracted Mahidol University to carry out research on conflict studies.

Component II: CUSRI collaborates with the Chulalongkorn Center for Peace and Conflict Studies to carry out the capacity building activities.

Key issues and recommendations emerging from the Phase 1 include the following:

1. Improve public knowledge and perception regarding the southern conflict

The research review of over 6,000 news clippings since 2004 and find that there are only 30 reporters who rely on the same 20 to 30 sources of information, most of whom are government officials. Media has played an important role in agenda setting by reproducing the same information over and over, and using specific terms repeatedly. There is a need for alternative media reporting to the general public about the three southernmost provinces to improve the understanding and knowledge with regard to their culture and way of life as well as issues of peaceful co-existence instead of just reporting on violence.

2. Link policies and development

Recommendations and reconciliation measures from the National Reconciliation Commission Report 2005 were sound; however, they have not been accepted and implemented by the government. Since policy formulation still relies on intelligence reports of different government agencies which are national security in orientation, the research finds that during Prime Minister Surayut's period policy formulation shifted from a national security paradigm toward a more people-security paradigm. However, Prime Minister Surayut was unable to convince security offices to adopt his proposed non-traditional security paradigm. As a result, the conventional national security paradigm remains the primary basis of the policy. Strong forceful measures are still apparent. There has been no holistic policy formulation of the system.

Policy dialogue on aspects of non-violence and the importance of development for the people needs to be encouraged.

3. Provide knowledge and learning support

The research finds that there is an overwhelming amount of research and documentation regarding the southern conflict, trends and recommendations (in Thai). However, policy makers and local communities do not have access to such knowledge.

Knowledge management and learning support on issues extracted from experiences as well as from these documents should be shared, especially at the local level.

4. Finance participatory development projects.

Development projects are one of the key tools/means to help build peace and reconciliation by creating communication space for all concerned parties to work together for the common good/benefit. There is room for government-funded development projects to improve in several areas. The findings indicate that: i) basic infrastructure projects seldom include community participation and thus do not respond to local needs; ii) where government agencies align with local politicians, the relationship and level of trust between community members and government officials

is declining; iii) access to information about projects in many communities is limited to village heads and other elites; and iv) government projects are not well documented and evaluated therefore seriously limiting the amount of learning.

New development approaches for community projects should be introduced which include:

- Effective and inclusive participation;
- Capacity-building for human capital;
- Appropriate and simplified project procedures;
- Targeted assistance for particularly vulnerable groups, including women, widows, children and youth;
- A phased approach in particularly difficult areas which starts with providing “space” to communicate and capacity building;
- Measures to enhance cooperation between government and communities; and
- A robust monitoring and evaluation system as the basis for action learning;

Phase 2

(April 2009 to June 2012)

The second phase design is developed from key findings and recommendations of the Phase 1 project as well as from a series of consultations between the World Bank team and representatives from government agencies, researchers, media, and civil society working in the affected areas.

Objective of Phase 2: The project aims to develop effective community approaches to local development which create “space” and opportunity for increased interaction within and among communities and between communities and the state apparatus in the effort to promote trust building in the conflict-affected areas in the provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani. This will be done through the piloting of culturally appropriate and socially inclusive local development approaches, one example being community-driven development (CDD). Local officials and NGOs will be important participants in the effort.

Components: Phase 2 of the project comprises the following four components:

1. **Block Grant** to villages and sub-districts for local development activities identified through CDD participatory process, such as community-based infrastructure, income-generating activities, peace fair, etc. There will be a negative list of items in the Operations Manual which will not be eligible for funding, such as items which will harm the environment, cause involuntary resettlement, involve child labor, create conflict, etc. The project estimates covering 60 to 80 conflict-affected communities.
2. **Peace-building Partnerships Fund** for civil society organizations and network of organizations working in the conflict-affected areas. It would support projects with innovative approaches and partnerships that promote trust, peace and development in southern Thailand. This window of Peace-building Partnerships Fund aims to: a) strengthen civil society and its network to promote peace and development activities; b) provide support to protect vulnerable groups such as widows and youth group; and c) improve communication and public information dissemination through various media.

A committee comprising of representatives from government, academia and civil society organizations would be set up to review and approve civil society proposals. The committee will review grant proposals on the basis of project relevance, feasibility, institutional capacity and track record of the organization and make final recommendations on awards.

Both Components 1 and 2 focus on providing space for interaction and learning among all stakeholders. The Project Advisory Committee is a primary forum for representatives from government agencies and civil society to discuss relevant policies, partnership, implementation, progress and lessons. At the local level, the CDD process would provide opportunities for all stakeholders at the community, *tambon* and provincial levels to discuss various aspects of the project and sub-projects, thus enabling the application of lessons learned from operations to improve provincial and local development planning.

3. **Training and Implementation Support.** This component aims to build capacity of local communities and civil society organizations to be able to undertake and properly manage the sub-projects on their own when the project is over and when they receive government funding. It will also provide operational support for the Project Implementing Partner to ensure that they can implement the program effectively.

4. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management.** As the second phase activities aim to pilot different approaches to create “space” and opportunities for constructive interaction among stakeholders at the community level, it is therefore crucial for the project to have a continuing process to document and analyze critical lessons from the project and share them with stakeholders both at the implementation and policy and levels.

Approach

Due to the complexity of the conflict in various areas of the three southern provinces, this project plans to learn and build knowledge through piloting multi-approaches to reach target areas, groups and themes as suggested by the recommendations from the first phase. Capacity building to enhance knowledge in conflict mitigation, peace building, and in aspects of community driven development operations will also help to enhance effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

The approaches include:

1. The ***Community Driven Development Approach (CDD)***. The achievement of this approach for trust building requires that inclusive participation is promoted among different sub-groups within villages, between different villages, and between these and the local government apparatus, that people are empowered to define their development priorities, that they develop the capacity to manage and monitor development activities which address these priorities, and that they have access to resources to implement these activities.
2. ***Community Action Research Approach***. In connection with the CDD approach, the Bank has discussed with various government agencies working to provide support on different aspects of community development the potential for collaboration. The pilot project could provide valued added to these projects supported by the government and other donors as well as taking lessons from the different types of support, especially in testing the hypothesis that using a full CDD approach will provide better results in peace promoting and conflict resolution within and between communities and between communities and local government officials. Local communities could take part in this learning process by monitoring the similarities/differences between development activities.

Timeframe: As recommended by the research studies, local communities and the research team felt strongly that in order to build trust there is a need to ensure sustained engagement among all key stakeholders. They have requested that the pilot project be implemented for a minimum of three years with provision for extension if it proves effective. In addition, as a pilot project which emphasizes action learning, the longer timeframe is essential to learn and adapt the project to find appropriate modules to allow space for constructive interactions, thus reducing conflict impact in the areas.

Implementing Partners: A national NGO in partnership with local organizations from the south.