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LEADERSHIPS, CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING FOR TAMBON ADMINISTRATION AND VILLAGE LEADERS

by

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COASTAL RESOURCES CENTER
University of Rhode Island



**UNIVERSITY
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Post-Activity Narrative Report

on
***“Leaderships, Conflict and Conflict Resolution Training
for Tambon Administration and Village Leaders”***
organized by
***Post-tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Program and The Office of Peace and
Governance, King Prajadhipok’s Institute***
October, 31 – November 1, 2007
Ranong Province, Thailand

Overview

The tsunami of December 2004 devastated Thailand’s entire Andaman coast. A total of 392 villages and some 54,500 people were affected; with more than 5,000 deaths recorded and many others missing. The disaster devastated the local economy by crushing fishing boats, along with engines and gear. Homes, public buildings, and coastal infrastructure, including roads and bridges were also destroyed. The tsunami had its greatest impacts on rural coastal communities, many of which were already poor and economically vulnerable with few livelihood options. Recovery is especially difficult because many of those that survived lost the means to practice their livelihoods. The Andaman coastal area since has been the area of attention from all the donor agencies. The humanitarian supports for the well being of the villagers and the recovery of the local economy at some points created conflicts with potential violence. With the upcoming local government election and the general election of the Members of the Parliament, the emerging conflicts could turn into the serious disputes and violence.

As an academic institution committed to promoting democracy for sustainable peace, King Prajadhipok’s Institute (KPI), has realized the significance of peace-building as the path to solving problems. Therefore, a two-day workshop on ***“Leaderships, Conflict and Conflict Resolution training for Tambon Administration and Village Leaders”*** has been set up to serve as a forum to exchange knowledge and ideas in Leaderships, Conflict and Conflict Resolution, how to solve problems peacefully in to “Win-Win” outcome as well as to promote the ideas of meaningful public participation, public hearings, mediation etc.

Activity purpose

The workshop was an opportunity to introduce the conflict prevention, conflict resolution training and peace-building as well as to share with the participants some experiences, practices and recent trends in Thailand’s conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building. The workshop concentrated on 3 important themes in conflict prevention, conflict resolution; conflict management, mediation, communication, and facilitation, and a learning experience study of peace-building. Its objectives were:

1. To enhance knowledge and understanding of leadership, conflict and the factors associate with conflict such as Power, Trust, Risk, etc.
2. To learn how to resolve conflicts especially using the interest-based Negotiation and Mediation to be able to resolve conflicts peacefully in the society.
3. To develop skills for leaders especially in communication skills, the tools for Public Participation such as Dialogue, Facilitation, Consensus Building.

Summary of the Two-day Workshop

A. Agenda of the Two-day workshop

Day 1: Wednesday, October 31, 2007

- 08:30-09:00 Registration
- 09:00-9:30 OPENING SESSION
- Welcome address by **Dr. Bart from AIT**
- 9:30-10:30 *“Introduction and Overview of Leadership, Conflict and Conflict Management, Peace and Justice”* by **Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt**, Director, the Office of Peace and Governance,
King Prajadhipok’s Institute (KPI)
- 10:30-10:45 **Coffee Break**
- 10:45-12:00 *Participatory Leadership, Listening and Other Communication Skills”*
by **Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt**, Director, the Office of Peace and Governance, King Prajadhipok’s Institute (KPI), **and KPI team**
Games and Group Dynamics are used, to follow by Reflection from the Participants alternating with interactive lectures.
- 12:00-13:00 **Lunchon**
- 13:00-18.00 *“Conflict prevention and Conflict resolution”* by **Dr.Vanchai Vatanasapt.**
“Powder game” by KPI team.
- 18:00 Dinner

Day 2: Thursday, November 1, 2007

- 08:30-09:00 Registration
- 09:00-12:00 *“Review of Day I”*
“Mediation and Interest-Based Negotiation” by **Dr.Vanchai Vatanasapt**,
Interactive Lectures follow by Practices of Negotiation and Mediation
“Participatory Process in Public Participation” by **Dr.Vanchai Vatanasapt** and
Team, Games and Reflection from the Games alternate with Interactive Lectures.
“Tools for Conflict Prevention and Resolution” by
Dr.Vanchai Vatanasapt, Director, the Office of Peace and Governance.
- 12:00-13:00 **Lunchon**
- 13:00-15:00 *“Citizens Dialogue Process to reach Consensus”*, by **Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt**,
Interactive Lectures follow by Practices,
- 15:00-15:30 Wrap up and Closing

B. Participants

Participants consisted of *Tambon Administration and Village Leaders* in Kamphuan Sub-District and nearby local areas in Ranong Province approximately 35 peoples

C. Methodology

Methodologies included short participatory lectures, discussions, cases studies, and practice exercises and games. Written course materials (PowerPoint) were provided to supplement workshop lectures, discussions and other activities.

D. Expected Outcome

This workshop was seen as a starting point for future plans and collaborations between groups of leaderships in Kamphuan Community and Kamphuan Community Learning Center (KCLC) for acquiring a basic understanding of leaderships, conflicts, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace-building and public participation. The two-day workshop also expected participants to learn basic skills in listening, dialogue, facilitation and mediation.

E. Outputs

The topic “*Leaderships, Conflict and Conflict Resolution Training*” for this workshop was timely given the current political environment in Thailand and recent public conflicts. The conflicts that have occurred after the tsunami disaster in these particular areas and other parts of Thailand over the past several years have led to serious violence and destruction as well as widespread dissatisfaction among citizens. (i.e. land and resources management). Therefore, Kamphuan Community Learning Center (KCLC) hoped that collaboration with local leaders, communities, and other involved organizations in Kamphuan Village will enhance the understanding and development of conflict prevention, conflict management, and peace-building in these areas, particularly during this period of transition for Thai democracy under the New Constitution of Thailand.

It should be noted that approximately 35 participants improved their knowledge and awareness regarding conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution, peace-building, and public participation. Participants also enhanced the understanding methods of Citizens Dialogue and Consensus Building. They gained more skills and techniques in those contents. Following this workshop, participants reported that they had benefited from the level of expertise and experience of the speakers (Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt, Director of the Office of Peace and Governance) and had a greater opportunity in sharing experiences among participants in conflict prevention, conflict management, and peace-building both in theory and practice.

At the beginning of the workshop, Professor Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt, the speaker together with his team (Mr.Supanat Permpoonwiwat) introduced the program and asked participants to write down their Hope and Fear while they were attending the two-day workshop.

The participants hoped that they would gain and understand more about concepts, techniques, and tools of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building. The way of implementation those techniques and tools were what they really expected and hoped to learn. Many of them hoped that there would have peaceful life and harmony in their community.

On the other hand, most of the participants feared of conflict and controversy in their communities. They were also worried that what they have learnt from the workshop could not be applied, implemented, or solved problems in the community. Few of them expressed that they had no fear at all.

Following the Hope and Fear activity, Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt then gave presentations on *Introduction and Overview of Leadership, Conflict and Conflict Management, Peace and Justice* followed by theories and practices of Conflict Resolution. Topics also included:

- Definition of Conflict
- Causes of Conflict
- Systems of Conflict Management
- Traditional Approaches
- Concepts of Alternative Dispute Resolution: Basic Mediation concept and process.
- Application of Dispute Resolution Techniques where Success may be Problematic
- Power
- Trust
- Public participation
- Consensus process
- Solving the tough problem; ways to reach consensus

Dr. Vanchai highlighted several experiences on conflict prevention and conflict management including some environmental conflicts that resonated with the Thai experience. He also explained that many times parties have now adopted a mediation alternative within the existing legal structure to make the process simpler, more efficient and less costly. Mediation is an Alternative Dispute Resolution system which allows the public system to bring justice to every citizen's door. He also discussed recent public hearing process comparing with citizen dialogue which people's views and concerns were voiced and carefully heard by the government.

At the end, participants were also initiated to the Round Table as a method of both analyzing and formulating a consensual decision-making process. Dr. Vanchai Vatanasapt began by asking participants if there was a seriously controversial conflict in Kamphuan community. Many conflicts were brought and chosen by the group. The process of dialogue was used to reach the consensus which all participants have learnt how to use Dot Democracy. Dot Democracy is one of the techniques used in public participatory process.

With this citizens dialogue process and the consensus building process, the participants have experienced the better discussion process which is "dialogue" rather than "debate" and the decision made that would not split the community in to parts by having used consensus instead of voting. The peaceful and harmonized ways of the successful election campaigns in some other areas were mentioned and encouraged for the potential candidates and Kamphuan community.

Lessons Learned

As customary with the two-day workshop conducted at Kamphuan Community Learning Center (KCLC), Dr. Vanchai and his team presented and shared experiences about conflict resolution to the group. He also invited the participants to engage in discussion and share experiences from their work together.

As a result of a detailed presentation by Dr. Vanchai and his team, the workshop participants engaged in a lengthy discussion on conflict management and the similarities between the local area in Ranong Province and other Provinces experiences as a whole. As the Participants described current public conflicts in Ranong Province including problems related to natural resources, waste management and large industrial projects, it became increasingly apparent to everyone that Ranong Province shares common ground in other areas in Thailand. Despite Ranong Province is a tourist's area where there are not many of the conflicts have occurred, it should be noted that conflict

management and conflict resolution in other provinces are also leading Ranong Province to consider similar practices.

Participants in the workshop were interested to learn about Southern conflict in the three border provinces and conflicts over land titles especially after the tsunami disaster. They were told of the various examples of conflict management used by Malaysia and Philippine governments to end conflict and land disputes and enable local self-government for certain communities.

As the workshop discussion continued, participants made it clear they understood what Ranong Province requires from conflict management and dispute resolution because of their knowledge of learning processes and practices and how other provinces have resolved similar conflicts. Knowing and recognizing that Ranong problems are also the whole country problems; the workshop participants commented that the Local Government and authorities need to increase public consultation and dispute resolution to improve governance in the country.

Thai participants were interested in a variety of issues related to conflict management. One of the participants asked Dr. Vanchai to discuss theories and practices of Mediation process and Restorative Justice. Thai courts are increasingly studying and adopting alternative methods to enhance the efficiency of the judicial system and participants were eager to discuss the success of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Thailand.

Following the workshop, Dr.Vanchai and Mr.Supanat participated in a field trip while going back to the hotel in the evening. They made several site visits to tsunami areas where many public conflicts have occurred in the area. Dr.Vanchai observed similarities with the other situation. They also commented on the lack of community government and the problems of a centralized authority governing from Bangkok. He highlighted the need for decentralization and increased local decision-making.

Contribution to Desired Results

By ensuring that the workshop topics and materials were relevant to the participants, this two-day workshop and activities have contributed positively to the Participants collaboration and further increased mutual understanding on public participation and conflict resolution. The participants were introduced to theories and practices of conflict management and acquired knowledge on methods and case studies that can be applied to the local experience with public conflicts.

Some of the results of this two-day workshop included:

- 1) Increased understanding of conflict resolution and public participation.
- 2) Introduction to the roles of leadership and governance institutions in conflict management and public consultation
- 3) Established relationship among local leaders as well as Kamphuan Community Learning Center (KCLC) to further deepen exchanges and cooperation
- 4) With the upcoming local government election (Tambon Administration), several participants are the potential candidates have learnt the productive ways of running the election without too competitive campaigns.
- 5) Future Collaboration between the Kamphuan Community Learning Center (KCLC), the Office of Peace and Governance, and leaders to continue a relationship of exchanges and mutual understanding in the area of public participation, conflict resolution, and governance.