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Kamphuan Community Learning Center

Where Traditional Culture Meets the Global Community

Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Project

Theme Paper



Every community needs a meeting place where people can come together to meet, talk, learn, share experiences and stage social and sporting events. Such a venue, particularly in the post-disaster context, helps a society to restore a sense of solidarity, rebuilds social relationships and enhances confidence in the community's strength and culture.

The Kamphuan Community Learning Center, inaugurated on December 18 2006 was designed to provide a setting for such activities...and more.

A private-public partnership between USAID, AIT, the University of Rhode Island, the

University of Hawaii-Hilo and The Coca-Cola Company, the Center provides Kamphuan with a venue for community learning and training, seminars, meetings and various outdoor social events. Housed within the Center are a conference room, meeting areas, computer lab and the Kamphuan Tsunami Museum. The Museum serves to commemorate the tragic victims of the catastrophe and raise awareness on disaster preparedness. Video kiosks in the Museum recount local survivor stories and provide practical advice on what to do in the event of another such event.

Moreover, the Center provides training and educational materials

focused on such vital post-disaster issues as community based disaster management, livelihoods development, microfinance and environmental stewardship.

The Kamphuan Community Learning Center and Tsunami Museum have become examples for other tsunami affected communities and the model is currently being replicated in both Indonesia and India.





Giving Back to the Community

In November of 2007 legal ownership of the Learning Center was officially transferred back to the community of Kamphuan. Managed by a Local Governing Board and a Bangkok based Advisory Committee, the Learning Center is working to become financially self-sustaining by marketing its services to individuals and organizations. In addition to selling training services for such disparate activities as computer/ internet skills building, English language classes and aerobic dance, various NGO's, educational groups and governmental organizations rent out the conference room and meeting areas for their events.

On any given day, a visit to the Learning Center illustrates how well the community has assumed ownership of the facility. Children play football on the manicured grounds by the riverside while inside the computer lab a local



entrepreneur works next to a young student. With assistance from the Center staff, the entrepreneur is painstakingly, slowly researching e-commerce on the internet for the first time while the student's fingers fly over the keyboard in electronic

chat. This demographic diversity in users confirms that the Center reaches across sectors to become a vital resource for the community.

National Hub for Information Technology

The Learning Center, with its state of the art computer facilities, serves as a bridge that connects the local population with the global community and the digital age.

In October of 2007 the Kamphuan Community Center was proud to be selected by the Royal Thai Government as one of the National Information Communication Technology (ICT) centers for Thailand. Initiated by the Ministry of Information Communication Technology (MICT) this project is known as the *Thailand Knowledge Center*. The Kamphuan Community Computer Facility is one of only 21 centers, and the only one in the southern region, to be selected to participate in the project.

The goal of the Thailand Knowledge Center Project is to provide linkage between the various centers and to improve



understanding of computers and internet technologies for the rural communities of Thailand. The MICT and USAID sponsors week long training courses at the Learning Center for community members on internet usage and Microsoft modules Word, Excel, Publisher and PowerPoint. Participants include local entrepreneurs, government officers, teachers, students and

members of the microfinance group. Additionally, MICT is supporting training of trainer courses for Learning Center staff so that in the future they can provide the training courses.

For more information on the Thailand Knowledge Center project please go to <http://www.tkc.go.th>.



Facilities- “Green and Clean” Construction



Energy efficient rooftop solar panels



Constructed wetland for wastewater management

The Kamphuan Community Learning Center is a 500 square meter, two-story building located adjacent to the central market of Suk Samran Sub-district, on scenic riverfront property.

The building and surrounding landscape is a model of green design utilizing low cost interlocking brick technology and landscaping appropriate for local culture and environment. Recycling, energy conservation, appropriate sewage technology and water use practices are displayed with informational brochures and posters. The North-South orientation of the building allows the air to pass through the building, minimizing the use of fans or air conditioning. Roof orientation is such that the installed solar panels permit optimal solar energy capture for power generation. Green landscape surrounding the building takes advantage of the natural flora

of the local area. Displays provide interpretative educational information of the green technology while the Tsunami Memorial room offers educational materials and survivor testimonials on the impacts of the December 2004 tsunami.

The Center's indoor and outdoor areas are designed for multiple uses. The large outdoor meeting area can host multi-village

meetings and workshops. The conference room and classroom can be used for trainings or meetings. The computer room has satellite internet connection and is used for computer training, school education programs and by business owners for their communications, sales and marketing. The landscaped grounds of the Center are used for public and sporting events.



Overarching objectives of the Center

The KCLC serves to catalyze community stewardship—where local business, social entrepreneurs and community leaders are the drivers of social progress.

● **Microfinance.** The Center helps strengthen village microfinance groups through continuing education, training materials, and public celebrations of progress and by facilitating cooperation and linkages between businesses, families and financial institutions.



Integrated organic duck/fish/vegetable farming

● **Enterprise Development.** The Center’s vocational training builds technical skills and provides practical “how to” materials for the micro-entrepreneur. Training courses or *Training-of-Trainers* workshops enable business managers and local groups to enhance existing or develop new small businesses. Workshop topics include business planning, financial accounting, production, marketing, sales and entrepreneurship skills.



Muslim headscarf production

● **Skills Development.** The Center offers a variety of educational classes such as English and computer skills training, both critical to enhancing business and individual leadership opportunities. Training is targeted at different levels and sectors. Local demand and input drives decisions to provide training in other skill sets.



Bead jewelry production by local women’s group

● **Environmental Stewardship.**

The Center serves as a model and training facility for environmental awareness and sustainable building practices. Its structure and surrounding landscape demonstrate low-cost interlocking brick technology, environmentally-friendly design and landscaping appropriate to the surrounding environment. Recycling, energy conservation, waste management, appropriate sewage technology and wise water-use practices in the Center afford an opportunity for training and outreach.



● **Community Resilience.**

The 2004 tsunami was a reminder that a community's actions affect its resilience and vulnerability to natural hazards. The Center's activities focus on strengthening this resilience and the community's ability to rebound more effectively when future hazards strike.



● **Community Stewardship.**

Building leadership among members of the community-young and old, women and men-is key to building and sustaining a vibrant, healthy, and resilient community for future generations. Leadership training activities and environmental stewardship programs are held at the Center and target both individuals and groups.



● **Enabling Business environment.** The Center and its governing board are advocates for a supportive enabling business environment. Discussions at

the Center address issues such as secure land and property tenure or streamlining the business registration process. Moreover, the Center helps the business

community work through independent business associations to advocate policy reforms.

USAID's Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Program

Overview of Project

When the tsunami of December 2004 struck Thailand's Andaman coast it carried away not only the lives of over 5000 people but it also washed away the livelihoods for tens of thousands left behind. The disaster devastated the local economy by destroying fishing boats, engines and gear. The huge wave also took in its wake, homes, public buildings, and coastal infrastructure, including roads and bridges. The tsunami had its greatest impacts on rural coastal communities, many of which were already poor and economically vulnerable with limited livelihood options. Recovery is especially difficult in these poor communities because many of those that survived lost the capacity to practice their livelihoods.

The USAID Regional Development Mission/Asia responded with the Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods (SCL) demonstration project that helps coastal communities of Southern Thailand rehabilitate livelihoods, become more resilient to future natural disasters, and adopt livelihood practices that use natural resources more sustainably. Instead of just building back the way it was, this project strives to build it back better.

The project has a 30 month time horizon, with an end date of September 30, 2007. It is implemented in a partnership with the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island, the Asia Institute for Technology (AIT), University of Hawaii, Coca-Cola Thailand, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, and other local partners.

It is a model project, meaning that knowledge and lessons learned from what is developed and put in practice can be used in other at-risk coastal communities in Thailand or other countries in the Asia region.

Five tsunami-affected villages in Ranong Province were selected for the demonstration initiative. Located within Laem Son National Park, these villages have a population of 5,000 and are dependent on fishing and agriculture for their livelihoods. The relatively small, compact area makes it suitable for modeling an integrated approach to coastal disaster rehabilitation.

The SCL project seeks to build coastal community resilience with a focus on rebuilding the economic basis of livelihoods rather than on physical reconstruction, and on giving coastal people the skills and resources for self-recovery. Key elements of resilience include building livelihood opportunities that do not degrade the natural environment, protecting ecosystems, reducing vulnerability to natural hazards, and strengthening local governance. Project interventions combine ICM and hazard management frameworks.

USAID Post-Tsunami Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Project

Theme Papers

This paper is one of a series of elemental theme papers from USAID's (SCL) Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods Project. USAID SCL Theme Papers are intended to provide an overview of our experiences, lessons learned and approach to rebuilding and rehabilitating communities in a post-disaster context. Each paper will address an issue that has been undertaken in the course of our efforts to assist in the rehabilitation process and the building of Coastal Community Resilience.

The papers will be based loosely upon the five main elements of the SCL Project:

1. Build a common vision for action.

The project works closely with local government authorities and community leaders to build local ownership and establish a common vision for rehabilitation. The project's activities are accomplished by community efforts and collaboration.

2. Reestablish and diversify environmentally sustainable livelihoods.

Microfinance, livelihood training, demonstration of new livelihood practices, small grants, and cash-for-work are strategies to reestablish and diversify livelihoods.

3. Natural Resources Management and Environmental Stewardship

Trainings and extension activities are focused on enhancing the capacity of local communities to better manage their ecological environment. Specific activities include training modules on solid waste management, monitoring and rehabilitation of coastal habitats such as coral reefs, beaches, mangroves and sea grass beds, and the development of marine park co-management plans.

4. Enhance community readiness and resilience to hazards.(CBDM)

The project builds readiness and resilience to natural hazards in communities through mapping of areas at risk to inundation, delineation of evacuation routes, training, village disaster management planning, evacuation drills, and First Aid training.

5. Share experience and best practices.

Regional learning workshops and study tours are convened to share lessons learned with others in tsunami rehabilitation, disaster preparedness and issues associated with community resilience.

Each paper provides a summary description of the Project's approach to particular issues or the above referenced cross cutting elements. The description represents a summary of the lessons learned by the Project and illustrates the approaches utilized to overcome specific obstacles encountered throughout the maturation cycle of the program.

While providing a useful overview of Project activities to our regional partner institutions, SCL theme papers are primarily intended for our Global partners in development, disaster preparedness and community resilience. The Papers aim to raise awareness of the Project's activities, accomplishments and lessons learned and to pique the interest of individuals and organizations to seek more information so as to contribute towards the ongoing discussion about strategic direction in disaster preparedness and community resilience.

