



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ASIA

CASE STUDY

Volunteerism for the Greater Good

Gender balanced village extension teams establish trust, ensure equity, and convey a vision for the future.



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Despite being victims of the tsunami, there are a lot of people out there, fisherman, farmers, entrepreneurs, cooks, engineers, mechanics, scientists, builders, civil servants, health care providers, clergy, grandparents, mothers, fathers, and neighbors who add value to our culture. USAID is working with tsunami affected communities in Thailand through a sustainable coastal livelihoods project.

This project aims to strengthen local capacities for self management and self government through participatory processes that catalyze environmental and economic recovery. From the onset of the project, village members, local Administration authorities and NGO's were collectively involved in identifying priority concerns and developing a vision for the future by mapping action timelines. Cash for work projects mobilized villagers to implement action to rebuild environmental infrastructure, to restart and diversify livelihoods.

Gender balanced village extension teams were elected in five tsunami struck villages that are working together to model long term sustainable development practices. They liaison between Thai government, USAID implementing partners, NGO's and their community in order to coordinate activities in a manner that ensures equity among all village members and mitigates conflict while activities are underway.

Village extension teams represent promising youth taking a more active role in decision making processes that affects their lives and the lives of those in their communities. In this process they develop considerable leadership and communication skills interfacing with National Park and Tambon Administration authorities, to construct decision making instruments and accountability measures that aim to foster sustainability of natural resources. They are unique voices working to strengthen linkages with local Park Authorities, establish trust and assert influence on quality of life decisions that are universal.