



**Good Practices
on Community-Based
Inclusive Development**
in Kanchanaburi,
Nakhon Si Thammarat
Phayao, and Sisaket Provinces

CIAI - Centro Italiano Aiuti all' Infanzia

APCD - Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability Community for All project

Disclaimer

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Good practices on Community-Based Inclusive Development

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APCD - Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability

CBID - Community-Based Inclusive development

CRPD - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CIAI - Centro Italiano Aiuti all'Infanzia

DPO - Disabled People's Organization

EU - European Union

HPH - Health Promotion Hospital

ICF - International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

LAO - Local Administrative Office

PAO - Provincial Administration Organization

SAO - Sub-district Administration Organization

I. Introduction

CIAI – Italian Association for Aid to Children – is a civil society organization that, since 1968, has worked to promote and protect the rights of children in Italy and in the rest of the world. The rights and wellbeing of children and young people are the heart of CIAI’s work, developed by them, with them and for them. CIAI’s purpose is to guarantee to its beneficiaries protection, health and education and to promote their inclusion in collaboration with the institutions through a systemic approach, that considers children in their family and in the community. Indeed the elements of CIAI’s actions are: active participation and involvement of children and young people, and the deep knowledge of the context that ensures the implementation of sustainable initiatives.

To achieve its mission “To promote recognition of a child as an individual person and defend its fundamental rights, wherever it may be”, CIAI follows the four fundamental principles stated in the CRC – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: no-discrimination; the best interests of the child; the responsibility of States in the international cooperation safeguarding childhood; and the participation of children and young people in the decision-making processes that concern them. The guiding values of CIAI are the following:

- being always on the child’s side;
- be secular and pluralist, and consider difference a value;
- believe that people have equal dignity and rights;
- be against war and any type of violence;
- aim at excellence in the accomplishment of its mission.

The strategy to achieve the mission assumes that to ensure the protection of children, assure access to health/nutrition, education and participation, we need to work on the dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental. The actions are conceived and implemented taking into account the aspects of sustainable human development that play a fundamental role on the effective enjoyment of rights by children through:

- Resilience of families and communities;
- Social inclusion and the fight against marginalization;
- Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls;
- Climate change adaptation that has a direct impact on the wellbeing of children.

The APCD -Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability- is a regional center on disability and development established in Bangkok, Thailand as a legacy of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, with the joint collaboration of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Royal Thai Government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Government of Japan.

APCD was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as a regional cooperative base for its Biwako Millennium Framework for an inclusive society in the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, and as the regional center on disability for the Incheon Strategy to Make the Right Real, 2013-2022.

In cooperation with more than 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, APCD promotes a barrier-free, inclusive and rights-based society for all through the empowerment of persons with disabilities and organizations of persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. APCD is currently managed by the Foundation of Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD Foundation) under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

CIAI and APCD joined their forces to design and implement the “Community for All” project. The project was prepared basing on the experience of both organizations in implementing actions aimed at promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and at promoting a sound dialogue between vulnerable and marginalized groups of the society and relevant local authorities, as a strategy to achieve sustainable development in Thailand and many other countries.

The present document “Good Practices on Community-Based Inclusive Development” stems from the Community for All project’s achievements, experiences and lessons learnt.

Definition

What is disability?

The Preamble to the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities, acknowledges that disability is “an evolving concept”, but also stresses that “disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. Defining disability as an interaction means that “disability” is not an attribute of the person.

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) advanced the understanding and measurement of disability. It was developed through a long process involving academics, clinicians, and – importantly – persons with disabilities. The ICF emphasizes environmental factors in creating disability, which is the main difference between this new classification and the previous International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH). In the ICF, problems with human functioning are categorized in three interconnected areas:

- impairments are problems in body function or alterations in body structure – for example, paralysis or blindness;
- activity limitations are difficulties in executing activities – for example, walking or eating;
- participation restrictions are problems with involvement in any area of life – for example, facing discrimination in employment or transportation.



Disability refers to difficulties encountered in any or all three areas of functioning. Disability arises from the interaction of health conditions with contextual factors – environmental and personal factors.

The Community for All project aims at promoting an inclusive community for persons with disabilities in Thailand, through the implementation of a twin track approach to disability. The project focused both on the need to reinforce the capacities of competent local authorities and service providers (namely in the field of education, health, employment and transportation) to eliminate barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities and on the need to strengthen persons with disabilities capacities to demand inclusion and participate in developing inclusive strategies. Specifically the project aims at *enabling local authorities and representatives of civil society to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in the social and economic life of their communities* through the application of the Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) over a four-year period (2013-2017).

The project achievements were divided into three key results:

Result 1 : Effective coordination and collaboration are set up among local authorities and service providers in the target regions:

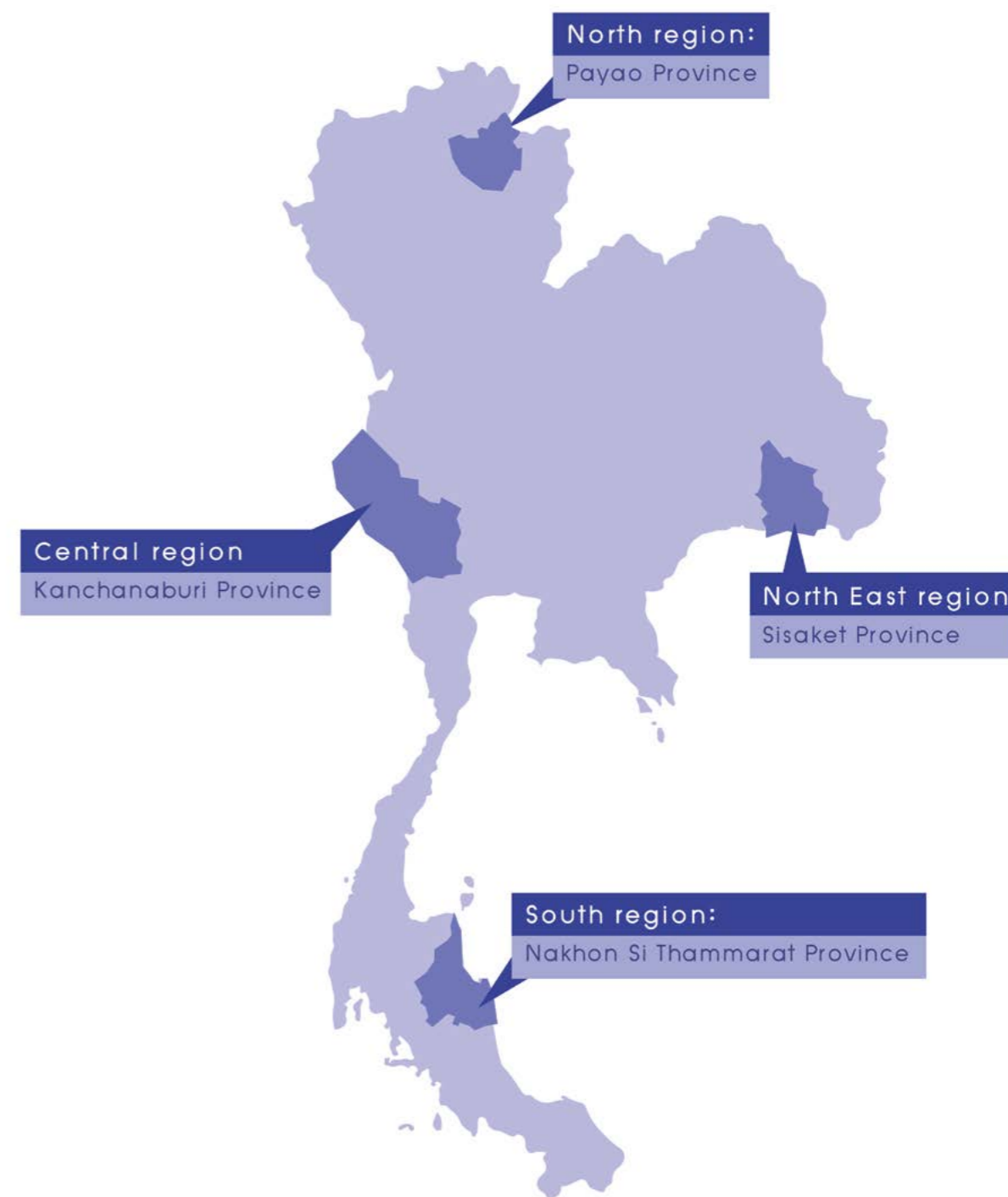
Result 2 : persons with disabilities are enabled to demand effective services in a structured dialogue with relevant local authorities and service providers.

Result 3 : Local communities collaborate with local authorities and persons with disabilities in implementing a rights-based approach in the service provision system.

The key indicators used by the project to assess and measure its achievement and results include:

1. A local committee on CBID composed of local authorities, service providers, non-government organizations, the business sector, and persons with disabilities is established in each target Sub-district Administration Organization (SAO).
2. At least 30% of the budget needed for the implementation of the CBID Plan comes from the public budget of the competent SAO. At least 3% of the consultative meetings' participants are persons with disabilities.
3. The annual development plan in all target SAO includes at least one initiative included in the disability agenda.
4. At least 10 service providers in the sectors of education, health, transportation and employment in the target Sub-districts are classified as accessible.
5. The SAO development plan of at least 12 target SAOs, foresees the participation of local communities in the implementation of the plan itself by the fourth year of the project.
6. A document on good practices is available for any SAO to be consulted.
7. At least 4 initiatives with the participation of local communities are implemented using SAO public budget in target areas during the fourth year of the project.

The area covered by the present document includes Phayao Province in the North, Sisaket Province in the Northeast, Kanchanaburi Province in the Central region, and Nakhon Si Thammarat Province in the South of the Kingdom of Thailand.



II. Objective of the Good Practice Document

This documentation of good practices covers the period from February 2013 to December 2016 which is the project implementation period. Key informants for the preparation of the documentation through interviews and focus groups discussions were: 1) 14 Community for All project staff -; 2) Direct beneficiaries at the target locations – 24 SAOs in 4 Provinces; 3) a sample of 50 people (29 females and 21 males: 10 SAO members and 20 Service providers) have been met during the activities implementation which were engaged by the project at various levels such as the Sub-district Administrative level, Disabled People Organizations, the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Officer and persons with disabilities.

The main objective of this good practices document is to highlight and disseminate evidence and experience from the target communities that demonstrate the relevance of practical strategies and approaches developed during the implementation of the Community for All project. This document is also intended to serve decision makers at the sub-administrative level, service providers and or other agencies who are seeking to scale up innovations that have been tested and proven successful by end users, specifically persons with disabilities in the project experience.

III. Process and Methodology

Process

Step 1. Identifying effective practices for inclusion of persons with disabilities

Step 2. Development of standards of Good Practices for inclusion of persons with disabilities

Step 3. Development and publication of the Good Practices

Methodology

In implementing the steps above we applied a participatory methodology making it possible for all involved target groups' members to voice their opinion, and this opinion is being taken into account to determine what works and what doesn't. In addition the project team members (both persons with and without disabilities) were asked to perform a self-assessment and to provide their views. Special attention was paid during the implementation of the activities such as disabled people's organizations (DPO), group discussions, discussions with members of service providers, SAO members, employees, etc., in order to map the experience of persons with disabilities, within the inclusive actions developed and promoted by the project.

It is important here to consider that the project was focusing on empowering people with disabilities to speak for themselves and to raise awareness among duty bearers and community members on the importance of inclusion, without providing any direct service to anyone. Consequently the experiences developed by the project are related to better communication among persons with disabilities and duty bearers, including better and inclusive provision of existing services.

The practices that were identified

(Step1) are those contained in the project document in terms of key outputs, in particular, establishment of disabled people's organizations –DPOs or Disability Clubs, establishment of permanent collaboration mechanisms among persons with disabilities, community members without disability, members of local authorities, and members of service providers (teachers, nurses or their management staff). One example established by the project is the CBID committee in each target SAO but this is not the only or exclusive way to establish permanent collaboration.

(Step 2) implementation first included the literature review as well as the review of all project documents' - project proposal, logical framework, work plans, project agreement, project progress reports, project annual reports.

While the monitoring of the project itself relates to the degree of achievement of the outcomes and outputs, this documents intends to highlight how the project outputs (intended as what the project has established as inclusive practices for persons with disabilities) have positively changed the life of people with disabilities in the target areas. We have chosen, to give voice through this document, to real life inspiring stories of persons with disabilities who engage, work and contribute to the advancement of their communities, and who are an inspiration for their communities and for other people with disabilities who need to find the strength and trust in themselves.

The selection of the good practices and inspiring stories have been chosen following the criteria below:

1 Relevance

- Include persons with disabilities
- Raise the quality of life for persons with disabilities and accomplish their rights.

2 Effectiveness

- There is strong collaboration among different and relevant stakeholders (local authorities, persons with disabilities, members of DPOs, representatives of service providers and of the business sector
- There is a correspondence between inclusive initiatives at the local level and at national level.

3 Efficiency

- Local resources are effectively used

4 Impact

- persons with disabilities have better access to services in terms of health, transportation, employment and education
- There are more opportunities for persons with disabilities to engage in community activities and contribute in their respective communities

5 Sustainability

- The best practices will continue through the commitment of the people, community and stakeholders

Good practice definition

A “good practice” can be defined as follows:

A good practice is not only a practice that is good, but a practice that has been proven to work well and produced good results, and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful experience, which has been tested and validated, in the broader sense, which has been repeated and deserves to be shared so that a greater number of people can adopt it.

IV. Inspiring Stories

“ Work is a right for all ”

Mr. Pairatch is inspiring us because he is passionate and his disability does not prevent him from working. He works as an SAO officer in Pak Mai Sub-district, Sisaket Province. His assignment is to build and maintain collaboration with other local authorities, and coordinate with persons with disabilities. His task is to refer them for jobs and vocational training opportunities and he works passionately! After he started working at the SAO, persons with disabilities increasingly participated in the community development activities since they trusted him. He also encourages them to access public services and uses them himself, because they have the right to do it! Because of his commitment, he has been appointed as trainer in a vocational training program on frog farming (frog raising, breeding, sale & marketing) for persons with disabilities created by the local authorities. In addition, he voluntarily engages as a trainer in a vocational training program for persons with disabilities in the sub-district as well. Mr. Pairatch is involved in empowering persons with disabilities who are beneficiaries of the Community for All project.

Although the project will end soon, the vocational training and employment orientation for persons with disabilities can continue with the support of Mr. Pairatch and local authorities. A three-to five-year work plan has been developed to find sustainable funding for initiatives such as the vocational training program on frog farming, broom production and vegetable farming. The support of the SAO can be channeled through one- and three-year activity planning and budget allocation for people with disabilities to start an occupation.

Mr. Pairatch is proud to depend on himself. He is not only supporting his family but also helping others.

Working at the SAO is a strong starting point to encourage Mr. Pairatch to engage in being a trainer.

“Section 33 is wonderful regulation directing persons with disabilities to recognize their ability,” stated Mr. Pairatch.

Mrs. Chandra Harnsutthichai – Chief Executive, at Pakmai SAO said that “before, Mr. Pairatch was suffering from financial shortage due to his disability. He faced difficulties not only to find a job, but in being with his family”. Mrs. Chandra persuaded Mr. Pairat to work at Pakmai SAO despite the disagreement of many people due to perceptions that “persons with disabilities cannot do anything and that her attempt was useless.”

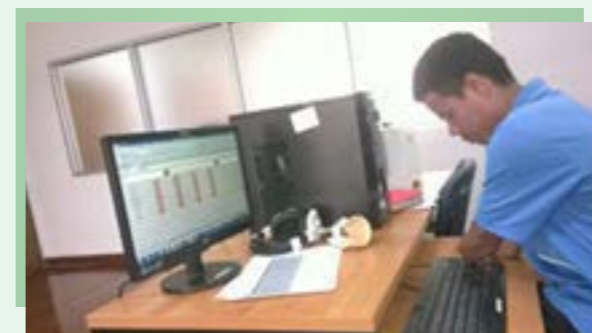
Mrs. Chandra kept that in mind, and continued to employ Mr. Pairatch. She assigned Mr. Pairatch to join the training on life-skills development and computer literacy held at Khon Kaen Province. Mr. Pairat took a year to study there before working at Pakmai SAO. Currently, Mr. Pairat is a skillful assistant to

Mrs. Chandra. He uses his IT skills to support development programs for persons with disabilities in Pakmai SAO. Mr. Pairatch’s achievement is also confirmed by Mrs. Napapatch or Pui – Policy and Planning Analyst of Pakmai SAO. “He (Mr. Pairatch) rides a bicycle to work here every morning and he helps everyone at the office. He can do everything like any other staff person. He is independent. He is curious, an active learner and always wants to learn new things,” stated Pui.

Mr. Pairatch’s responsibility is to take the lead in running development programs for persons with disabilities. He can handle his assigned work very well. In addition, Mr. Pairatch dedicates himself to support different community activities related to persons with disabilities. What Mr. Pairatch, Mrs. Chandra and Pui shared is that, today, persons with disabilities are encouraged to join social events conducted by the SAO and they do not feel excluded and discriminated against as before. persons with disabilities living in Pakmai Sub-district can develop their potential and enhance their quality of life.

persons with disabilities who can be employed under Section 33 must pass the general conditions as follows;

- persons with disabilities must be able to work and handle work as assigned
- persons with disabilities must hold a valid disability ID card
- persons with disabilities must retained on at least a yearly contract
- persons with disabilities must contribute to the social security fund



Mr. Pairatch works as a SAO officer in Pak Mai Sub-district, Sisaket Province and joins a Sports Day event in Pak Mai Sub-district, Sisaket Province



Mr. Pairatch as trainer in a vocational training program on frog farming

Photo: operations specialist shared with the interviewer about "Work is a right for all"

Local communities, local authorities and persons with disabilities collaborate with each other for the establishment of chicken farms

If you ask persons with disabilities in Thawangthong Sub-district, what they do for a living, one of the answers would be "raising chickens". But if you ask where and how this occupation for persons with disabilities in this area originated from, you would be directed to find the answer at the Thawangthong Sub-district Club for persons with disabilities established by the Community for All project. After you enter the club's premises and walk around, you would see a chicken house in the backyard, where chicken breeders and chickens are being fed and persons with disabilities taking turns in feeding chickens. This experience later inspired many persons with disabilities in this Sub-district to try chicken farming. It was not an easy dream to make come true, and there were many problems and obstacles that persons with disabilities went through.

Back in 2014, at the time when persons with disabilities in Thawangthong Sub-district came up with the idea of working together and raising chickens for a living, they faced many doubts and concerns such as "Where can we get funding?" "We are persons with disabilities. Who will help us build a chicken house?"

To overcome these concerns, they were helped by three men from the Payao Persons with Disability Club (called in Thai "P' Muang Mon, Uncle Tweep and Ken) who rigorously brainstormed to find answers to solve these problems. Ken volunteered to write a proposal on behalf of the Thawangthong Sub-district Club for persons with disabilities in order to request financial support from the Payao Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO). With the great help of the PAO, the proposal was funded with materials, equipment, chicken feed and chicken breeders.

The group was still missing budget for labor costs and for building a chicken coop. The PAO, therefore, coordinated with the 34th Military Circle to help build the chicken coop.

After the chicken coop was built and chicken breeders and their feed arrived, all actors were well aware of the importance of integrated collaboration. Seeing the importance of promoting chicken raising to other persons with disabilities in this area, the club invited other persons with disabilities to raise chickens at the club's chicken coop. The club's president also developed a chicken raising manual in collaboration with other DPOs' leaders, in order to strengthen their capacity to scale up the pilot model.

After the farm was set and operational, the club had to learn how to sell its products in local markets. The club learned by its errors, and no longer raised mixed breed chickens (known in Thai as 'Kai Sam Sai Phan') because these chickens were not favored by customers and, thereby, did not yield much profit. Subsequently, the club now raises only domestic fowl (known in Thai as 'Kai Baan').

persons with disabilities working in the farms are generating work and income for themselves and their families in a sustainable way. They just needed more help at the start and now they work by themselves and could also employ other community members.

"Big thanks to local agencies who never forget nor leave out persons with disabilities, and truly include them in the society!"



The chicken coop was built by the military. The chicken farming received financial support from the Payao Provincial Administrative Organization (PAO)



operations specialist shared with the interviewer about "Collaboration on chicken farming between persons with disabilities and local authorities";

“A frog farm started through synergies between persons with disabilities, local government agencies, and local companies”

Pakmai Sub-district Club for persons with disabilities is a group established by Community for All project, whose members actively participate in common activities, especially livelihood activities. In the words of the group leader:

“There are 26 persons with disabilities in our group, and this number includes 20 persons with disabilities and another 6 persons without disability who are looking after bed ridden patients, who can’t work outside. Then, they formed a group and started this frog farm.” He proudly adds, “Other persons without disabilities in our Sub-district also believe that raising frogs can generate income, so they joined us. Apart from our initial members, we got another 38 members, so we now have 64 people engaged in the frog farm. We currently have 64 frog-ponds and a central frog-pond that we use to breed frogs. After our 64 members receive income from selling frogs, they will give back the same number of frogs to our central frog-pond. This was agreed upon by all members as it will benefit our group as a whole.”

A frog raising group for persons with disabilities was set up in 2015 by the Pakmai Club of persons with disabilities. They received both financial and/or technical support from local government agencies such as the SAO as well as local companies who have been trained and sensitized by the Community for All project. The support of the SAO is channeled yearly through the three-year activity plan and budget allocation for persons with disabilities. Moreover, the SAO technical support and community development officers were deployed to coach leaders of farmers on how to do frog farming (e.g., frog raising, breeding, and sales & marketing), creation of a frog-farming model, and how to enhance sustainability of the frog farming initiative. The SAO, in collaboration with the project, con-

ducted monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the participating farmers can run their farms successfully and cope with challenges faced. The local business sector such as frog food-producing companies also conducted training on frog food and farm environment for frog farmers.

The leader of the persons with disabilities group continuously keeps us updated of their frog farm business in Pakmai Sub-district, “Our frog farm started from the meeting with the Chief Executive of the Pakmai SAO, community developers and their team organized by the project. The meeting was about how to support persons with disabilities by finding them a job to generate income. Therefore, the SAO team invited all persons with disabilities who reside in Pakmai Sub-district to the meeting in order to assess their needs, and the project team found that they wanted to do frog farming. Next, they wrote a proposal to the Provincial Office of Social Development and Human Security asking for a 50,000 THB budget. After the budget was granted, the group used it for training and study visits, construction of the frog-ponds and purchase of relevant equipment and materials. The leftover amount was used for procuring other equipment for frog farming for all 26 households in the group.

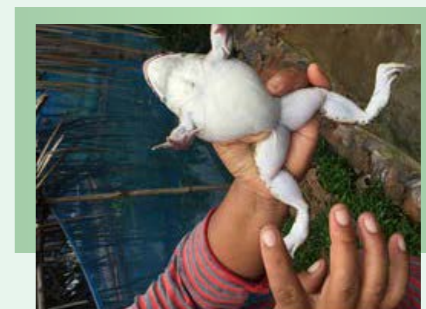
It was agreed among all members that, during the initial stage, each member will receive 500 tadpoles (each tadpole costs 2 THB). They were given a 2-kilogram supply of concentrated frog food. After all equipment and materials were allocated, the group leader went to visit each member to check whether there was any problem and how to cope with those problems (e.g., health problems of frogs).

The leader kept telling us with a happy face about the moment the frogs were sold and all members received their income, “After the first two months of our frog farm, our members sold their frogs and earned some money. These frogs were sold at 100 THB per kilogram and 3% of the amount was paid to the group. Each member divides their income into 2 parts: the first part will be kept for their frog farm household and the second part will be used to buy tadpoles from the group’s central frog-pond. The pond continues to breed frogs in order to continue a cycle of frog farming.” The leader added the following: “We plan to expand our group of frog farms, we will increase the number of our group member from 26 to 40 people in the beginning of 2017. Initially, we will extend the central frog-pond from 40 to 50 and 60 respectively. We will do it according to the requests and needs of members”.

In addition, the frog raising group welcomed the study visits of clubs of persons with disabilities from other Sub-districts such as Ku and Toom Sub-districts. They shared their stories and experiences with each other. Successes of the income-generating frog raising initiative in Pakmai Sub-district are made possible through the holistic approach of management, ranging from conducting training on frog raising, providing advice on selling and marketing, and setting up a group of frog raisers.

There are 203 persons with disabilities in Pakmai Sub-district and each of them has a variety of needs for their career paths. Pakmai Sub-district started a pilot project on running a frog farm business and is extending it to other possibilities following the needs and possibilities of the persons with disabilities living there, including fish raising and duck raising or other jobs. The inclusion of persons with disabilities, their success stories and their capacities of standing up for themselves are the key factors that truly empower persons with disabilities to be part of their society.

The frog farm case study is practical evidence of integrated cooperation among relevant parties that brings together locally available resources for persons with disabilities. This wonderful farm from Pakmai Sub-district stresses the fact that physical impairments do not prevent persons with disabilities from taking initiatives for improving the quality of their lives and becoming economically self-reliant with their own capacities.



operations specialist shared with the interviewer about “A frog farm for persons with disabilities successfully done”;

Thawangthong Rehabilitation Center and Home Visits for persons with disabilities

The nurse at Thawangthong Health Center whom many call “Moh Ying” has started the development program for persons with disabilities through collaboration with Uncle Taweep and Ken (Operations Specialist of the Community for All project).

Uncle Taweep’s disability was caused by an accident he had while working as a soldier which forced him to quit his beloved job. He works today for the Community for All project with Ken, a young man whose disability put him in a wheelchair six years ago. Both met Moh Ying one day to tell her about the “Community for All” project because Moh Ying is an influential person among persons with disabilities and can encourage them to participate in the project.

Moh Ying found the project useful for persons with disabilities, and saw how it can be scaled-up through other similar projects. She submitted a proposal, applying for financial aid for persons with disabilities from the National Health Security Office (NHSO). The project focuses on doing home visits to bedridden persons with disabilities who cannot access healthcare services themselves. To conduct the home-visit program, Moh Ying collaborates with various stakeholders, such as community leaders, community development officers, health professionals at the provincial level, and public health volunteers. Moh Ying and her team project is called “Health at Home”.

Moh Ying told us about how she started the project with Uncle Taweep and Ken: “In fact, to be able to apply for the financial aid, the proposal must be submitted by the community of persons with disabilities. However, since they lack the knowledge about the financial support application and none of them had applied for financial aid before, I decided to help them write the proposal and invited them to join my project.” With the financial support from the NHSO, Moh Ying, along with her team, Uncle

Taweep, and Ken, were able to visit homes of persons with disabilities who are bedridden, for two consecutive years.

After having used all the subsidies provided by NHSO, Moh Ying continued to help persons with disabilities in the community by establishing the Home Hug Center, with financial support from local public health centers. The Home Hug Center is now providing comprehensive services, specifically for persons with disabilities. The home-visit program and the Center enhance the quality of life and health of persons with disabilities because the given services really meet the needs of persons with disabilities. In the words of Moh Ying:

“This project started from the Provincial Administration Organization (PAO) announcement that they will provide funding for the Home Hug Center establishment. The PAO had invited the public hospital in Thawangthong to join the meeting in order to evaluate the readiness in establishing a new center.” Trusting her own judgment, along with the realization that the Thawangthong community has a solid foundation, she decided to open the Home Hug Center in Thawangthong. After the PAO’s selection for the most qualified areas in Payao Province, Thawangthong and Mae Ka were selected to conduct the pilot project.



Moh Ying further elaborated her decision for opening the Home Hug Center:

“I wished to open the Home Hug Center and to devote my work for the patients. I wanted to focus on the rehabilitation treatment by using the Home Hug Center as a rehabilitation center. Also, since the Thawangthong community is aging, the main effort will be reducing the number of bedridden patients. Currently, there are approximately 27 bedridden patients and over 200 patients at home. As a result, our objectives are to lower the number of bedridden patients, make the patients less home-dependent, increase the amount of home visits, and encourage patients to visit the rehabilitation center to prevent disability.” In terms of operations, Moh Ying said that “over the two months of operations, all patients are happy and the responses are positive. I am really passionate about this work. If it can continue, the help for persons with disabilities will also continue because of the cooperation of the community in Thawangthong. It was not a smooth ride to get here. I am playing the role of a connector, linking the integration within the community to promote the healthcare of the district. Even though there were many obstacles I viewed it as an opportunity to improve myself. I think that I will continue working on the issues with potential funding from the Ministry of Health in the future

The support from the community is greatly integrated with the operations of the center. Moh Ying said that “patients do not have to pay anything because the center received THB 30,000 of financial support from the PAO to acquire rehabilitation machines and equipment. Moreover, Thawangthong Municipality also cooperated in finding the location and improving the building with facilities for persons with disabilities. The community of persons with disabilities, led by Uncle Taweep, also provides financial support to improve accessibility, such as Accessible toilets. The Home Hug Center operates every Monday and Wednesday and there are always patients there. The specialist doctors in the province volunteer to help check the patients once month. The public health volunteers are on duty and receive physical therapy and rehabilitation training for three days under the budget of PAO.”

With the collaboration of the Community for All project, Moh Ying wants to connect all parties together to ensure that even after the project ends, there will always be support from the community. Uncle Taweep and Ken were selected as the president and vice president of the Home Hug Center, respectively. Joining the board is an indication of their commitment to help persons with disabilities in the community in a sustainable way.

The dedication of Moh Ying, Uncle Taweep, and Ken is inspiring many people in their communities. They all have been successful in providing better health care for persons with disabilities in Payao.





operations specialist shared with the interviewer about "Thawangthong rehabilitation center and home visit for persons with disabilities"

Persons with disabilities come together for income generating activities

The happiness shown by the faces of persons with disabilities while talking about the Community for All project is really moving. In Kanchanaburi Province, the Community for All project implements activities in Huaykayeng and Linthin Sub-districts. The representatives of the DPOs say that the project allows them to build connections with other persons with disabilities living in the same community. P Duang encourages them to participate in the development program for persons with disabilities conducted by the project. Once persons with disabilities know each other, they actively and creatively explore how to increase their income. In Huaykayeng Sub-district the group agreed to produce detergent made by papaya, which is easily found in the community. Linthin Sub-district decided to produce grass-made brooms. The Linthin SAO decided, --thanks to the project capacity building program and advocacy-- to offer financial support to run the vocational training on grass-made broom production. After attending the training, persons with disabilities were able to make these products independently at home. By doing so, they have become more confident since they can be independent and generate income for themselves.

Another project area that is as successful as Kanchaburi Province is Sisaket Province. P Buatee, operations specialist of the Community for All project, is a very hard working person who provides assistance and support to persons with disabilities. P Buatee collaborates with different stakeholders such as community development officers and local officials. He schedules home-visits to persons with disabilities and encourages them to join the activities. With his support the "Frog-Feeding Vocational Training" training was conducted for persons with disabilities. Participants were trained until they had comprehensive knowledge on frog feeding from tadpole nursing to marketing and sales. There are 26 persons with disabilities in the Frog Feeding group. After the first two months of frog farming, members sold their first frogs at 100 THB per kilogram and generated a profit.

The collaboration between Community for All project, community leaders, persons with disabilities and their families, DPOs' leaders, local authorities and local business encourages and supports persons with disabilities to set up their own groups and organizations. They share experiences, problems and success, knowledge and information, to develop their human potential and enhance their job opportunities.

The project implementation in the two provinces enhances the quality of life of persons with disabilities as it meets their needs, wishes, aspirations and potential. The staff has played an important role to relate with all stakeholders, especially local authorities, in order to provide either financial aid or technical assistance such as meeting venue, and training materials for persons with disabilities. In addition, the project staff encourages and supports persons with disabilities to prepare and submit project proposals to access financial resources granted by local authorities, a support that will continue even after the project ends, thanks to the personal engagement and dedication of field staff (all persons with disabilities) to the project activities. Overall, the successful outcome of the Community for All project in Sisaket and Kanchanaburi demonstrates that building an inclusive community for persons with disabilities is doable through the active collaboration of all stakeholders at the community level.



Photo: operations specialist shared with the interviewer about "Groups of people with disabilities";

Inclusive education system at the community level

If one wants to send children with a disability to school together with other children, a lot of coordination between schools and local agencies is needed. To guarantee equality in terms of access to the learning process in school, it is necessary to assure facilitation for children with disability as much as necessary, so that they can truly participate in the learning process together with other children.

Parents who bring their children to the child development center at Moo 8, Pakpoon Municipality, Nakornsritammarat Province, are familiar with the little girl aged around five years old who has a vivacious face with features that indicate Down Syndrome. She studies with the others as if there was no difference. Teachers and fellow students call her by the nickname "Nong Mey". Her mother says Nong Mey has Down Syndrome combined with autism and that the doctor at the hospital diagnosed thalassemia as well. She told us the following story:

"It is hard to explain how I felt when my child could finally attend school for the first time. I only know that I was happy for Nong Mey to have friends and study like others. I felt glad to see her come and go with the school bus in the mornings and evenings. It made her equal to others without any difference. She was able to help herself. The burden of caring for her was lifted a little. I can only say how happy I am. I would like to thank Pee Eew (Khrun Pornthip), the operations specialist of the 'Community for All project' who brought Nong Mey to the group for children with disabilities from age eight months until she was four years old. Then Pee Eew contacted the child development group asking for the opportunity for Nong Mey to join. On the first day she was received very well by the teachers. I felt comforted and had the feeling that Nong Mey was at a safe place where she could be happy during daytime."

The mother speaks with a voice laced with happiness:

"I can clearly see the difference in the development of Nong Mey. She is now able to be more independent in every aspect after she started with the school. As a mother I am proud to see that my child is independent. She will grow up not being a burden to anyone. Nong Mey can rely on herself. For me that is all I wished for." The mother continues with a lively voice: "The operations specialists (Khrun Pornthip or Pee Eew) did not simply bring Nong Mey to the school. Pee Eew helped her with everything and has shown genuine good intentions. She constantly checks on Nong Mey asking about her relationship to her fellow students and teachers. If the teacher needs anything, Pee Eew would always try to facilitate that as much as possible."

Pee Eew, the operations specialist of the Community for All project pointed out that the child development center at Moo 8, Pakpoon Municipality is able to accept both children with and without disabilities for further studies, providing participatory learning as a focus, fostering an environment where children can play and learn together just like in real society. In addition the child development center at Moo 8, Pakpoon Municipality has made structural changes to cater to physical needs of children with disabilities and to ensure sufficient accessibility. The school has a comforting and warm atmosphere. All students are welcome. The school curriculum is flexible for children, and teachers are trained on inclusive learning. The teachers have been trained about integrated education and have received various forms of support to ensure smooth school operations.

The teacher who teaches Nong Mey's class and who everyone calls "Kru Pung" told us: "Nong Mey uses short expressions like, mother, friend, school and eating. And she smiles all the time. Nong Mey came to stand beside me when I was interviewed on the phone. She smiled when she learned that I was speaking about her. Anyone who was at the school during the interview could see her trusting smile. If she could use long sentences, she might have said: 'This school is truly my second home'."

The teacher tells us that there are 70 children at the school, which opened ten years ago. The Pakpoon Municipality provided the land where the school was built. It consists of seven different centers and one kindergarten school. The funds for the child development center project were provided by a donor, who paid for the building. In the past the child development center of Wat Sri Mongkon was situated inside the same building as the basic education commission school. The teachers were either civil servants or normal employees. Nong Mey was the only child with disability there. The school taught Nong Mey how to be together with friends and to be outgoing in front of many people. The child development center received the Disability-inclusive Care Provider Award by the Community for All project this past November. It was the first award received by the school. The school is proud to support children with disabilities in the Pakpoon Sub-district to be able to participate in the learning process together with other children. At the same time, the community developed the understanding that children with disabilities are able to learn and that all community members have the duty to support and encourage children with disabilities. In addition other service providers in Pakpoon Sub-district developed good collaboration in supporting children with disabilities. The way this education system is managed allows her parents to imagine the future of Nong Mey. She will be able to look after herself without having to

rely on anyone. After graduation from this pre-primary school, Nong May can also continue her studies in primary school and study side by side with other children.

The teacher on the phone says:

"The first day Nong Mey came to school she was hiding under the school table and would not come out. From there she observed all the activities of the others. She watched the teacher teaching and the other students. Several days later Nong Mey started to join activities but would remain under the table. Several days after that she left her spot under the table and came out to join the activities with the others. Nong Mey is a lovely child and very well behaved. The more often she comes, the better she develops. Nong Mey is happy and I am happy too to see her spend her time together with the other children. All the children are friends with each other. Nong Mey's disability does not present an obstacle for her in joining the group. Nong Mey has been coming here for a long time, since she was three years old and now she is five years old. If she feels happy here she should continue to come. The child development center is happy to receive and provide care to Nong Mey. I am happy to see her steadily improving her development."

At the center, children with disabilities can practice physical and social skills as well as language skills. Intellectual abilities are encouraged according to the capability of the children and to the highest level possible. The school emphasizes the importance of joint education of children with and without disabilities for the primary school level covering both the formal and informal system. The school in Moo 8, Pakpoon Sub-district caters to both children with and without disabilities. Children with disabilities also have the opportunity to move on to study at higher primary school levels with other children.

The Pakpoon Municipality and supporters view children with disabilities as being part of the family and of the community. If they receive the needed support they will learn to play with other children. This fosters tolerance and a mutually supportive attitude.

A key success of the school in Pak Phun Municipality is the empowerment of children with disability, to believe in themselves, to be self-reliant and able to learn, play and get along with other children or persons with or without disabilities, which leads to mutual acceptance and help.



Nong Mey with mother in campaign activities.

Photo: operations specialist shared the interviewers about their "Inclusive education system for Children with Disabilities";



Nong Mey with teachers.



Nong Mey and friend



Nong Mey with teachers.

A leader who inspires others!

By saying the name "Khru (Teacher) Chamras of Mae Puem Sub-district", everyone would say, "Ah...I knew him." Khru Chamras is a retired teacher. After he retired he had an accident which hurt his leg. Without taking a closer look, people would not notice. Local people usually see him sitting on a wooden chair in his house surrounded by persons with disabilities from Mae Puem Sub-district who carefully listen to his stories and discuss about problems and solutions.

He decided that he would like to help other persons with disabilities, and so he did. At the beginning, just a few people came to his house. But, as time passed, more people were arriving until they decided to set up a self-help group to rely on themselves. Drawing from his experience as a teacher working with local government, Khru Chamras understands well about what persons with disabilities need and what the government can do to help them, thus leading to efficient collaboration between both parties.

Khru Chamras has brightly shined as a leader for persons with disabilities. He usually coordinates the meetings of persons with disabilities in the area. Whenever he summons meetings, all persons with disabilities in the area will cooperate as he is well respected. He is able to remember all the names and recognize the faces he meets in the meetings. His nature of caring for other people is overwhelming for many people who ever worked with him and can bring people to join activities whenever he asks. Paying attention to all persons with and without disability, without discrimination makes him a beloved, trustworthy and respected leader in the community.

On the day of payment of the 800-baht allowance, he visits the surrounding villages with a list of persons with disabilities as he is one of the coordinators organizing the allowance distribution. He simply said:

“Although I have a disability I have an artificial leg so that I can walk, unlike many other persons with disabilities who are bed-bound. They don’t have anybody who takes care of them, so I go there to meet them.” He does not think that he is a person with disability or even a retired professional. He poses questions to other persons with disabilities such as ‘What topics of occupational trainings do you want? Who is interested in the training? When? I will coordinate with local agencies to organize the training. But you have to promise that if you enroll, you will come for sure. What I want is that you have a career, you stand on your own feet and you are not a burden to anybody’”.

Soon after that day, training on Thai massage, mat production and chicken farming were organized with positive feedback from participants.

Khru Chamras is a teacher, trainer and a leader who brings out his heartfelt will, his inner strength and leadership skills to help persons with disabilities by giving them the hope of living with dignity and independently. He and persons with disabilities in Mae-Puem Subdistrict intend to go for study visits to other areas to learn what others do to help persons with disabilities and tell the stories of good practices of others, to persons with disabilities in his Sub-district. The story of Khru Chamras does not end here but it continues as the story can inspire other persons with disabilities to make their own stories of success. He can show persons with disabilities how they can participate and create an inclusive community.

To empower persons with disabilities we need to strengthen the capacity of leaders of DPOs, communities or any person who is or has the potential to become leaders in advocating for persons with disabilities rights. Leaders create bridges among different persons with disabilities, local authorities and communities, and leadership is the skill needed to fill gaps that exist today for fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities.



Photo: Operations specialist shared the interviewers about their “Leader for persons with disabilities”;

Promoting physical accessibility for persons with disabilities

At the beginning of the Community for All project, persons with disabilities faced difficulties in attending when invited to join meetings organized at the SAO venue: some could not use the available toilets and those who came by car found a lack of parking around the meeting venue.

The operations specialists of the Community for All project brought the issue of physical accessibility of public spaces to the attention of local authorities and service providers, including health center staff and teachers. They proposed building accessible facilities such as ramps to access and move around public buildings, and provide accessible toilets and dedicated and free parking lots next to public buildings.

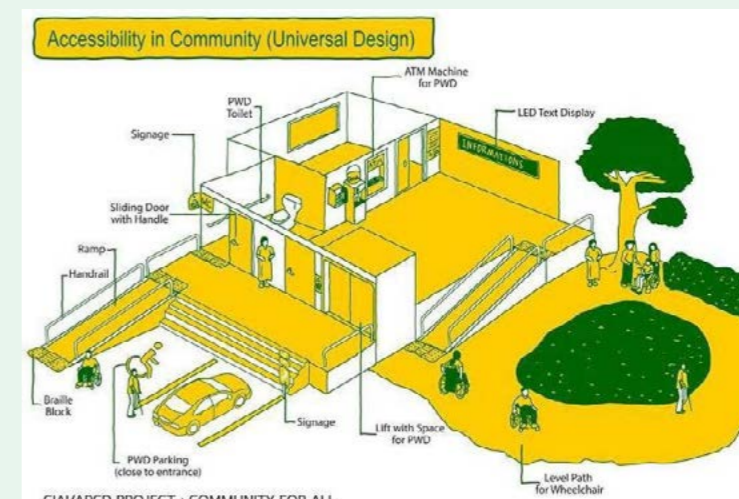
The operations specialists worked hard to have stakeholders recognize the importance of equal access to public areas, regardless of physical disability. Consequently, SAO officials, community leaders, health professionals and teachers worked together to increase the level of physical accessibility

for persons with disabilities and dedicated public budget to achieving accessibility.

Advocacy for greater accessibility has been conducted in four provinces, Kanchanaburi, Sisaket, Payao and Nakhon Si Thammarat. The project emphasizes how physical accessibility helps persons with disabilities.

In Kanchanaburi, community leaders and community members decided to renovate the ramp and toilet at the community hall and create specific parking lots. Concepts of universal design were used to achieve these renovations and upgrades.

These achievements represent the engagement of local authorities and other stakeholders in promoting the fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities, and all of them were realized through local public budget.



Community for All Universal design



Car parking in Payao Province



Parking, toilet and sloping path in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province



Toilet and sloping path in Payao Province



Toilet and sloping path in Kanchanaburi Province

Photo: Operations specialists shared the interviewers about their "Promoting for physical accessibility";



Toilet and sloping path in Si Ssa Ket Province

All these stories have been selected because they inspire community members, persons with disabilities and local authorities to work for a more inclusive society. The attitude of the people who we have interviewed was positive and committed, and this is the first step to make the society inclusive for all.

Some lessons learnt:

- There cannot be any effective inclusive action if persons with disabilities are not empowered. To empower them is one of the strongest actions to be taken.
- Persons with disabilities who become leaders in their communities, have more strength than any other person to encourage other persons with disabilities to stand for themselves
- Any action that employs collaboration of different stakeholders, service providers, community members, and local authorities, is more likely to be sustainable and successful.
- If people are not committed the actions will not survive.
- Persons with disabilities can contribute to their own communities with the same strength as any other person in the community.
- Local authorities play a very important role in making societies inclusive for persons with disabilities. Ensuring their strong commitment for the implementation of disability-inclusive actions is vital for the effective and full participation of persons with disabilities.

Some recommendations:

- Any actor who wishes a more inclusive society needs to raise awareness at any level, advocating for the engagement of everyone.
- More real opportunities in terms of access to health, transportation, employment and education for persons with disabilities need to take place at the community level.
- Authorities need to implement public policies aimed at empowering persons with disabilities to foster good relationships with their family and community members.
- Coordination and information exchange at the local level need to be enhanced. Experience and information sharing is needed to integrate disability groups with other groups, e.g., unions, political parties, etc.
- Persons with disabilities should believe in their capacity to replicate their positive experiences in one specific field to other areas. This could be addressed by integrating further existing initiatives. Persons with disabilities should be able to depend on themselves in terms of occupation, physical training, etc.
- Local authorities need to integrate the disability agenda into their annual development plans and allocate corresponding budgets for its implementation.
- Accessibility to the physical environment as well as access to information and communications need to be considered to ensure the participation of persons with diverse disabilities.

Scaling up initiatives as a strategy for sustainability to achieve durable benefits for the inclusion of persons with disabilities is needed:

- a. The integration of disability-inclusive policies and community action plans at the local level.
- b. The full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all community activities.
- c. The non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in their home communities.
- d. The accessibility of services for persons with and without disabilities.

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