PROVISION FOR POST-PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10

EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-THA-07-185 Cultivating democratic l eaders from marginalized groups

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Acknowle dgements
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Disclaimer
The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF nor of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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I. Executive Summary

(i) The project

The Asia Foundation's project, *Cultivating Democratic Leadership among Marginalized Groups*, which ran from 1 September 2008 to 31 December 2010, was designed to engage young people (15 to 25 year-olds) from the marginalized populations in four regions of Thailand to empower them to participate in and promote democratic practices and processes. The project's overall goal was to create new leaders among young people to lead actions in the disenfranchised communities, particularly because increasingly young people are leaving these communities and becoming disengaged with the problems threatening the families they leave behind.

The project began with four implementing partners: the Inter-Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in Thailand Association (IMPECT) working in the north, the Student Federation of Thailand (in the southern provinces); T-LAC Youth Club (south Andaman coast) and Seeds of Right Net (in the north-east). After the project began, 13 more organizations joined the project.

This project had three principal objectives:

- Enhanced understanding of the political, civil and social needs of marginalized youth,
- Improved advocacy, programming, and positive action by and for marginalized youth,
- Increased understanding and capacity among marginalized youth of human rights, gender equality and democratic and peace building processes.

It aimed to achieve these through four principal clusters of activity:

- Training of Trainer (ToT) workshops to prepare 40 young people (10 from each of the four regions) to work in their communities leading civic education sessions to improve the skills of other young people, help them to understand how to access democratic avenues for discussion and redress, and mobilize communities around priority issues;
- Perception surveys of young people, with 35 of the youth leaders receiving research training in order to conduct these, with a view to identifying issues of concern to young people in the four regions, and providing data to underpin discussions with the authorities;
- A national youth conference at which the youth participants in the project would come together to discuss and explore difference and 3aa3t 5350.33 Te4(pro)47Dr gscussions witvl0(3am

economic rights etc.) and, to this extent, do raise awareness and develop the capacity of the young people engaged in project activities to claim their rights and lead their communities in doing so.

There is cause to question, therefore, whether this project was relevant. While it

Additionally, ***the project needed an advocacy component*** to it to begin addressing the overriding problem that ***local issues in the four marginalized regions*** where the project was implemented are ***not on the national political agenda, and are ignored by the public at large.*** This might have been a good use for the perception survey undertaken as part of the project, however there was a mismatch between the findings of the survey and the grassroots actions initiated, and the survey was consequently not widely used.

The budget over-run resulted from what might be seen as a flawed project implementation structure. ***It would have been advisable to set up a more robust project structure at the outset***, with ***The Asia Foundation taking primary responsibility for the project but delegating coordination*** and a negotiated degree of decision-making to an identified implementing partner in each of the four regions. Apart from some initial help in identifying candidates for the ToT, the four nominated partners do not seem to have had pivotal roles in the coordination of the project, in following up the youth trainees nor in monitoring the small-grants projects.

2YHUDOO WKH SURMHFW ZDV D XVHIXO µPDLQWHQDQ ***much-needed funds to small organizations already engaged*** in community activism and who depend on this type of funding to keep going, but did not achieve its aim of creating a band of new democratic leaders. ***The project provided dedicated capacity building*** in the area of democratic process (at a grassroots level) and human rights but for the grassroots organizations involved this seems to have been secondary to the injection of funds they received for their ongoing work.

Those young people who remain active will have to start again looking to participate in projects that bring them the funds they need. These may or may not arrive in a project or programme focusing on democratic dialogue/process; they may just as easily arrive linked to health, human trafficking, conflict prevention or some other thematic of the project-implementing agency. To be able to access such funds, in any case, ***they need skills*** that the project should have provided: ***programme design and evaluation, fundraising above all, as well as project management, basic financial accounting and reporting.***

Training and projects in the specific area of democratic process, democratic dialogue, governance and leadership are needed in Thailand, not only in the marginalized regions in the north and south but nationally in light of ongoing political unrest. UNDEF WKHUHIRUH KDV D UROH WR SOD\ LQ WKLV DUHD +RZHYHU W content of projects and the development activities ² which are effectively demonstration actions on what democracy means in practice ² is complex. Understanding this relationship and managing it to ensure value- DGGHG LQ UHODWLRQ WR 81'() LQYHVWPHQWV LV RI S is not easy. It is moreover easily compromised in a context like the one in Thailand, where a

For UNDEF:

There is a space for governance and leadership projects in Thailand, and UNDEF is well placed to deliver these, ***however doing this through projects which have an overwhelming social development/poverty reduction focus is risky***, since the grassroots partners that must be involved are driven by this imperative and concentrate efforts on securing funding and resources for their ongoing work rather than promoting learning.

II.

Thaksin Shinawatra whose *Puea Thai* µ) R U 7 K D L V ¶ S D U W \ F R Q W L Q X H V W R F R absence (and in July 2011 won power), and the Democrat Party which depends on covert military support and coalition partners for survival. Above the vagaries of Thai politics, the king reigns with the universal devotion and loyalty of his subjects and has at times intervened to broker peaceful working relations among political opponents.

While most Thai voters and indeed the rest of the world follow the twists and turns of national politics in Thailand, a number of grave social issues continue unaddressed in political debate and mostly forgotten in public debate, because they affect the most marginalized and disenfranchised sections of Thai society:

The minority hill tribes in the north of the country remain stateless and, as non-citizens, cannot own the land on which they live and from which they make their living;v niAboich t-h9.98 633.2

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III. Project objectives, strategy and implementation

(i) Logical framework

ToT TRAINING AND REGIONAL WORKSHOPS			
xOne 7-day training of 40 young people from four identified regions in human rights, civics and democratic processes	x40 youth leaders equipped with knowledge to return to their communities and mobilize more young people and community members around priority issues	Increased understanding and capacity among marginalized youth of human rights, gender equality, and democratic and peace-building processes	
xSix 3-day workshops on civil education for approximately 1,000 participants, led by the 40 trained young people	x1,000 young people equipped to mobilize in order to support their communities in accessing their rights	Communities engaged in democratic processes, led by young people, around issues of priority concern to the communities	
YOUTH PERCEPTION SURVEY			
xOne 3-day training for young people selected from the 40 ToT participants in how to F R Q G X F W D µF\HRSXWl survey to identify priority issues for community action	xSelected young people trained in survey techniques	Capacity of young people to gather data to support their activism enhanced	Political attention is paid to priority issues identified, through informed, democratic processes led by young people from the four marginalized groups. Local and national authorities accept young peo ple as informed interlocutors.
xConducting of survey among young people with approximately 800 samples, 200 from each target group	xCompleted youth perception survey identifying areas for priority action in each of the four regions	Enhanced understanding of political, civil and social needs of marginalized youth.	
xPress conference/briefing to release results of survey	xMedia support for advocacy efforts; engagement of local and national authorities	Priority issues put on the political agenda locally and nationally	

(ii) Project approach

The project strategy was developed with lessons learned from a previous participatory training model entitled

IV. Evaluation Findings

(i) Relevance

The design of this project followed on from earlier work by The Asia Foundation in the area of civic participation, and capacity building of local government agencies and communities. However, it is clear that the relevance of the project would have benefited from a broader review of activities that had already been implemented in the specific area of youth mobilization/participation and training. Youth participation/mobilization has a long history in Thailand, and specifically in some of the marginalized areas targeted by this project. A 2004 project by UNICEF and the Asian Muslim Action Network, for example, shared many H O H P H Q W V R I 7 K H $ V L D) R X Q G D W L R Q ¶V \outh survey (problem and needs analysis), training of youth leaders, community penetration through seed grants for small projects. Key to identifying any value- D G G H G L Q 7 K H $ V L D) R X Q G D W L R Q ¶V added in this project would have been an assessment of whether the content of the training, survey, workshop, conference and small-grant projects focused clearly on democratic processes and responded to the needs of the target beneficiaries; and (ii) ascertaining whether the project succeeded in mobilizing young people who would not otherwise have been mobilized, this depending to a large degree on the positioning and influence of the young people trained in the ToT sessions.

In relation to (i), the thematic of democratic process was clear to some participants interviewed but not all. A number of grassroots participants said that they had learned how to approach local authorities with more confidence. Others, however, said that they were already working along these lines. In a self-administered pre-activity survey, more than 50 per cent of the young people indicated that they had previous experience in human rights and democracy. For the regional workshops, young people were selected, *inter alia*, according to whether they already we U H ³ Z R U N L Q J R U K D Y L Q J

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activities was because the project provided funding to the NGOs to which they belonged (either as implementing partners or through the small-grant projects).

As noted above, the perception survey was carried out but was not used to underpin project development or to guide the selection of the 21 community-based projects. In addition to the weak link between the survey outcomes and the actions at grassroots level already outlined, there was a lost opportunity to use the survey as a tool for advocacy at national level

Case study 2: Struggle for control in Chiang Rai province

Before participating in The Asia Foundation project, Joey (26), Yod (24) and Daojai (20), three young Karen people from Huay Hin Lad community in Chiang Rai province in the north o

V. Conclusions

(i) The project would have benefited at design stage if it had better taken into account the local participation component and incorporated some important lessons learned from similar projects. In particular, based largely on Finding (i) above, :

The sustainability of the project would have been enhanced if more account had been taken, at design stage, of c

robust project structure at the outset, with The Asia Foundation taking primary responsibility for the project but delegating coordination and a negotiated (and contracted) degree of decision-making to an identified implementing partner in each of the four regions. In fact, the original Project Document could be read to suggest that this was going to happen, since The Asia F R X Q G D W L R Q G L G Q R P L Q D W H I R X U ³L P S O H P H Q W L Q J S D U W Q 5 H S R U W W K H V: @ p

the expectation of young people and then leaving them unmet because there is no follow-up is a major concern. Building sustainability into actions that depend on a group that is by nature evolving and likely to move on is also difficult. ***Consulting young people and involving them in project design, monitoring and evaluation may help***. Setting up

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number of agencies work in these marginalized areas. Both UNICEF and ILO-IPEC have implemented various protection and prevention programmes in these areas over a number of years, both of which have included youth participation/mobilization components and, in the case of ILO in particular, community demonstration projects. Save the Children and World Vision are also active in these areas.

All of these agencies have struggled with the challenges of youth participation and mobilization, in particular in relation to unmet expectations of young people, the fact that young people leave for education, move for work or just become adults and are no longer included in youth activities. There are no easy solutions to these inevitabilities, however they must be acknowledged in project design and some attempt be made to mitigate them, for example by setting up mentoring hierarchies among the young people (which would allow for VRPH \RXQJHU SHRSOH WR EH LQYROYHG DQG VR µJURZ LQWR¶
It is difficult not to conclude that, in the areas of youth participation, partnership development, synergy among the various project components and sustainability of outcomes, the project was weak. For these reasons, the project did not achieve its overall aim of empowering young people ³WR YRLFH WKHLU needs, access their rights, participate in political processes, and improve their lives and communities.´

VIII. Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub -questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	7 R Z K D W H [W H Q W K D Y H W K H S U R M H F To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If no02 92.1 404.47 640.66 TmnBT/I

Annex 2 : Documents reviewed

Project document (UDF-THA-07-185), signed 28 July 2008

Additional note (by email) from Ishaani Sen, 4 May 2011

Milestone verification mission report, 21 July 2009

Mid-term progress report, 1 October 2009

Final project narrative report (copy supplied undated)

Thailand Fact Sheet, The Asia Foundation (undated)

In Asia: Weekly insight and features from Asia, The Asia Foundation, 27 October 2010

Thailand: Cultivating youth leaders, The Asia Foundation (undated)

Report*: Lessons learned and evaluation workshop on the ToT and regional civic education training*, July/August 2009

Evaluation report of US State Department-supported project *Empowering Thai communities and minorities to participate in democratic processes*, December 2009

Media clippings and analysis, The Asia Foundation, Oct ±Dec 2010

Newsletter: *Amana*, Vol.5:1, April 2011, The Asian Muslim Action Network

Annex 3: People interviewed

Project personnel	
Ms Pauline Tweedie	Deputy Country Representative, The Asia Foundation (overall supervisory responsibility)
Ms Yupa Phusahas	Senior Programme Officer, The Asia Foundation (overall programme coordination)
Mr Santi Nindang	Programme Officer, The Asia Foundation

Annex 4: Acronyms

FAN	Friend of Activist Network