Globalization and Social Development: 
Public-Private Collaboration for Public Service Delivery

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Abstract

In discussing social development in Thailand based on the 10 commitments made by the UN member countries, this paper examines the economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment enabling social development under three main issues. The first is poverty eradication and productive employment, commitments 2 and 3. The Second issue is social integration, gender equity, and access to social services, which are commitments 4, 5, and 6. Finally, the last issue is partnership of national, regional, and international agencies in social development programs which are commitments 8, 9, and 10.

At the same time, under the first two issues, the role of civil society organizations and government agencies are seen as very important partners in bringing about social development, economic recovery, and social protection programs in Thailand. Under the third heading, the case of HIV/AIDS and health security activities will be presented to provide the readers with concrete evident of partnership of national, regional, and international agencies in solving human development problem.
Globalization as Development Paradigms

The distinction between economic globalization and social globalization is one way to make distinction between the development paradigm which is growth-oriented and the human-centered development paradigm. The definition of globalization used in the UNDP Human Development Report 1999 also recognized the positive and negative aspects of globalization. According to UNDP:

Globalization, a dominant force in the 20th century’s last decade, is shaping a new era of interaction among nations, economies and people. It is increasing the contacts between people across national boundaries—in economy, in technology, in culture and in governance. But it is also fragmenting production processes, labor markets, political entities and societies. So, while globalization has positive innovative, dynamic aspects—it also has negative, disruptive, marginalizing aspects (UNDP, 1999:25).

In other words, economic globalization is seen in the expansion of capitalism globally in the forms of spread of multi-national corporations and financial institutions, information technology, and consumerism. Social Globalization, on the other hand, focuses on human development and people centered development, and related issues.

The needs for a new development paradigm have been recognized a few decades ago. Expansion of globalization and its negative impact has been observed with larger income distribution gap between the rich and the poor within the same country as well as between rich countries and poor countries. Exploitation of natural resources is another dimension of the negative impact of globalization.

Since after World War II and during the 1960s, most countries have incorporated the strategy of increase production, expansion of natural resource utilization, and infrastructure development, as important components to bring about economic growth which was the development goal. Globalization processes have been an outcome of some of the development strategies adopted. The processes have led to unwise use of natural resources, poorer quality of life of certain groups of people, and social inequity. Rejection of globalization is seen in the form of communism and socialism.

During the 1970s, the United Nations introduced the concept of self-reliance and people’s participation. It was hoped that the adoption of the concepts would bring about better social equity. The concept of self-reliance is similar to the USSR self-reliance closed door policy of the 1960s. Similarly, the concept of people’s participation is an alteration of the socialist/communist commune systems where members of the communes participated in all level of production and receive equal share of production in return.

Growing awareness of environmental problems led to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm (1972) which adopted the Action Plan for the Human Environment and initiated the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). This conference was significant for founding the concept of sustainable development and for the part played by NGOs in presenting the views of the people. It set a new pattern for the relationship between the UN and NGOs in dealing with global issues.
In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), under the chairmanship of Gro Harlem Brundtland, published its report, *Our Common Future*, which focuses on the concept of sustainable development. It defines sustainable development as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. The problem of the world’s poverty was addressed, without denouncing economic growth: ‘We see instead the possibility for a new era of economic growth, one that must be based on policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base. And we believe such growth to be absolutely essential to relieve the great poverty that is deepening in much of the developing world.’ (Rodda, 1991:2). In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro followed by another conference a decade later “World Summit on Sustainable Development”—WSSD held in 2002 in Johanesburg.

Since the turn of the past decade, shift in development paradigm has been most recognized. Human-centered development paradigm has been advocated by many international organizations as seen in the adoption of “Human Development” concept by the UNDP in the Human Development Reports published every year since 1990. There are other series of conferences on different human-related issues. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989 and the World Summit for Children took place in 1990. On the issue of women, the Convention on the Elimination of the Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1985 and World Conferences on Women took place in 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1995. Attention has been given to other vulnerable groups as well as issues to be given special treatment on certain years. Examples are the International Year of Indigenous People, International Year of the Family, the United Nations Year of Tolerance, and the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty.

The World Summit for Social Development, which took place in Copenhagen the same year as the Fourth World Conference on Women also advocated people-centered development with emphasis on the poor, the unemployed and the vulnerable groups. In June 2000, in Geneva, the United Nations Twenty-fourth Special Session of the General Assembly held a follow-up conference entitled “World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World” to evaluate the commitments made by the member countries. The latest is the announcement of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in September 2000, affirming that they would “spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty”. For this purpose, a set of clear time-bound objectives, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been established. (United Nations, 2003).

**Social Globalization Impacting on Social Development**

From 6-12 March 1995, the United Nations held the landmark World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark. This summit brought to the attention of the world the concern for people living in poverty, and focused global actions on increasing employment and promoting equitable social development for everyone. Five years later, on 26-30 June 2000, the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development was held in Geneva. One of the objectives was to review how the commitments made have been met by member states. The second objective was to renew and/or revise the commitments made in Copenhagen. At the end of the Special Session, the commitments were renewed with
revisions and the Geneva Declaration confirmed commitments made in Copenhagen five years earlier.

Social globalization is a social transformation or processes leading to the achievement of people-centered development. It has been recognized that development processes taking place in the Third World has led to larger income distribution gap with greater social inequality and social disintegration. Human-centered development concept is offered as an alternative strategy to bring about a more equity development outcome. In this process, 10 commitments were made in Copenhagen. They have overlapping messages and recommendations for activities to be carried out at the national, multi-national, and international levels.

The 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development indicated clearly the support for people-centered development. The ten commitments agreed upon by leaders of member countries of the UN General Assembly certainly reflected the support. At the global level, performance of efforts put into development activities during 1995-2000 has not been satisfactory. The report presented at the World Summit for Social Development can be consulted. However, leaders of member nations confirmed further support to continue working on the commitments. The question is whether one can be optimistic of the outcome. What kind of efforts is required to fulfill the commitments?

Impacts of the adoption of human centered strategies by different UN agencies have not been clearly observed. The 1997 economic crisis in Asia is a proven phenomenon showing some of the negative impacts of economic globalization. During the recovery attempts, in debates and press conferences, it appeared that most economists and policy makers had not been made aware of alternative development paradigm which is human centered. Main stream development theories had not given space to incorporate other non-economic variables in the equation.

Given more time, it is still possible to pursue the objectives of human-centered development. It is neither necessary nor possible to stop globalization completely. It is sufficient to try to slow down negative impacts of globalization by diverting economic globalization objectives from maximizing growth to less ambitious and fierceful objective. Many governments have declared the objectives of growth with social equity. But, again, this objective has not been proven successful in most of the cases.

The 1995 Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development indicated clearly the support for people-centered development. The ten commitments agreed upon by leaders of member countries of the UN General Assembly certainly reflected the support. The following table presents the 10 commitments of World Summit for Social Development.


- Create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment
- Eradicate poverty
- Promote full employment
- Promote social integration
• Promote full respect for human dignity, equality and equity between women and men
• Provide universal and equitable access to quality education and high standard of physical and mental health
• Accelerate economic, social and human resource development for African and LDCs
• Ensure social development in structural adjustment programs
• Increase social development commitments at national, regional, and international levels
• Improve international, regional, and sub-regional cooperation for social development

Based on the 10 commitments made by the UN member countries, to limit the scope of discussion on social development in Thailand, this paper will examine the economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment enabling social development in the discussion of three main issues:

• Poverty eradication and productive employment.
• Social integration, gender equity, and access to social services,
• Partnership of national, regional, and international agencies in social development programs.

At the same time, under the first two issues, the role of civil society organizations and government agencies will be seen as very important in bringing about social development and economic recovery and social protection programs in Thailand. Under the third heading, the case of HIV/AIDS and health security activities will be presented to provide the readers with concrete evident of partnership of national, regional, and international agencies in solving human development problem.

**Poverty Eradication and Productive Employment: the Case of Economic Recovery Programs/Projects**

The Thai economic environment was believed to be booming until it was disrupted by the economic crisis in 1997. While the incidence of poverty may have been dropping over time, at least until the year before the crisis, the characteristics of those under poverty remain relatively unchanged. The National Economic and Social Development Board identified poverty incidence in Thailand to have the following characteristics:

• As poverty increases monotonically with household size, there is strong evidence that large family size contributes to poverty.
• Male-headed households are more likely to be poorer than female-headed households, but that could be because female-headed households are disproportionately concentrated in and around Bangkok where earning opportunities are greater.
• Poverty among household heads who are agriculturists is highest, indicating that those who have chosen to become farmers are likely to be poor.
• Poverty decreases monotonically with the education of the household head. In other words, the poor have lower educational levels than the non-poor.
Poverty rises perceptibly with households headed by persons aged 70 and higher. This general trend is true for both rural and urban (RTG:2000).

When the crisis hit, both the Government and the people were at a loss of what to do. There were no government policies or mechanisms that could be diverted to help the poor in cases of emergency. Despite the high economic growth rates of the past decade, no social policy existed to effectively deal with the problems of the poor. Prior poverty alleviation programs were mainly developmental in nature. They helped improve living conditions and respond to people’s basic needs to a certain degree. Many of the poor benefited, but many public resources did not reach those who needed them most--the ultra-poor.

Many projects and programs have been introduced and implemented to bring the country into economic recovery. In the process, it is hoped that the Government can take the opportunity to introduce reform measures that would benefit the poor and bring about structural changes to combat the problem of income inequality as well. In this respect, and in relation to the loans, the Government views overall “social development programs” to include specifically three sectors: education, health as well as labor and social welfare.

Despite advanced studies on the poverty line and poverty incidence as well as income distribution, the problem of who are the poor still remains. When it is time to implement programs and projects, it is not easy to find the poor, especially the ultra-poor, a difficulty that has been faced by the scholarship and health care programs in particular. National surveys provide the numbers, but the proper identification of individuals must be carried out in the provinces, districts and subdistricts. To target the poor, the first recommendation has been to decentralize authority.

Ultra-poor people have been marginalized and have little, to no, access to available funds, partly through lack of information. Furthermore, most of the ultra-poor migrate to find work or other resources and are out of reach of the system. Extra care must therefore be provided in identifying those who actually need the resources the most.

In terms of better targeting of the poor, the Development Evaluation Division of the National Economic and Social Development Board recommends that children represent the most vulnerable group and should be targeted for special assistance. Therefore, larger families with many children should have high priority. Fortunately, studies on the effect of the crisis on children’s education and health services indicate little impact. Students continue to attend schools and most people continue to receive health care services. However, implementing agencies need to keep in mind that in 1998, the number of poor aged below 15 constituted 3.1 million, or 39.2 percent, of the total number of poor which stands at 7.9 million.

1.1 Government Responses to the Crisis on Employment

To revitalize the Thai economy, the Government has introduced two economic stimulus packages containing elements of social protection for fiscal year 1999, i.e., the Unemployment Mitigation Plan and the Miyazawa Plan. The former consists of seven measures aimed to generate 1.48 million jobs through a budget of 61.40 billion baht. The latter comprises six tasks aimed to create 486,000 jobs with a budget of 13 billion baht, out of the main budget of 53 billion baht (Vasuprasat, 1999:7).
While many programs implemented by the government are designed to mitigate the impact of the crisis by generating greater employment, they have not been subject to careful evaluation. Hence, it is not possible to assess their actual impact on employment. In the preliminary stage of implementation, several limitations were identified. Lack of coordination among various committee levels and lack of up-to-date and reliable data are examples of problems that reduce program effectiveness.

In terms of social protection, it is clear after the crisis that the social protection system in Thailand has been inadequate. During the crisis, the affected population had to fall back almost entirely on the traditional extended family and community support through family transfers or informal mechanisms developed by the community. Meanwhile, family support is declining as the traditional society rapidly assimilates the value of individualism in the modern sector.

According to one ILO report, the economic crisis has put the social protection systems in Thailand to the test (Vasuprasat, 1999). With widespread retrenchment and layoffs, many workers went without compensation, leaving their future and family at stake. Many of them had to accept wage cuts and/or to work with reduced welfare benefits. According to official figure, in 1998 the number of laid-off workers was 50,487 persons. This figure represented those who reported to authorities requesting for job placement. Under the Labor Protection Law, workers affected by lay-offs must be provided with severance payment, retraining and employment generation programs. But some workers were left without proper compensation from their employers. In 1998, affected workers lodged complaints with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, claiming an approximate 24 billion baht severance payment from the employers, an increase by 22 percent from 1997. This excludes other claims from employers such as wage arrears and other payable (Vasuprasat, 1999:2).

Several Government agencies have undertaken actions to improve employment as part of their regular responsibilities. But due to the economic crisis, these programs have had to be adjusted to deal with more urgent issues, and unemployment is one of the most urgent ones. Many projects and programs have been set up to create jobs for the unemployed, however they have been aimed mainly at solving short-term problems while leaving longer-term ones untouched.

1.2 The Government Social Policy on Social Safety Nets Programs for the Poor

In 1998, the Department of Public Welfare established 24-hour Emergency Assistance Centers in Bangkok and 38 provinces with a plan to expand to every province. In each village, there was a village welfare center where poor and disadvantaged individuals are identified and provided assistance. With the Asian Development Bank Social Sector Loan, 852 million baht was allocated to hire graduate volunteers to help strengthen the village welfare centers by coordinating with other government and non-government agencies when assistance was needed. This project is designed to tackle the problem of graduate unemployment as well as to provide assistance to poor and disadvantaged people.

The Revised Eighth Plan together with the new Constitution encompassed policy commitments to develop human resources, leadership and management capacity, as well as agricultural and industrial efficiency and labor productivity. Ministries concerned were urged
to improve coordination and flexibility to hasten responses to development needs, and focus budget provisions on employment generation and remedying income distribution problems. In July 1998, the Government established a new National Social Policy Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, in response to public demand for the increased coordination of social policy and provision of adequate attention to the social reform agenda. In 1999, the Government also established the Social Policy Coordination and Monitoring Committee, the key function of which is to coordinate and promote the cooperation of all social development activities under the same umbrella.

The 1997 economic crisis highlighted the necessity of having a comprehensive social safety net system, but the crisis also reduced the capacity of both government and private sectors to commence such a program. While it was desirable to expand social security coverage to the entire population, in reality the proportion of labor being covered by the Social Security System was reduced since the crisis.

Raising the average educational attainment of laborers was another long-term target that may have been affected by the crisis. Most programs or projects implemented so far aimed at mitigating the short-term effect of the crisis by keeping students from dropping out of school as much as possible. This included providing loans for the poor from the educational fund. At the same time, raising the minimum education level to 12 years as required by the Constitution has been realized only in 2003 after some delays due to the crisis.

After Thaksin Shinawatra became Prime Minister in early 2001, the universal health care policy has been pushed forward and fully implemented in 2002 with a great deal of criticism. The government is facing the dilemma of trying to achieve its campaign promise on universal health care with effective and efficient implementation mechanism and financial management. The dilemma has yet to be resolved with extra budgetary manipulation.

Other programs for the poor include credit for the poor in the forms of emergency bank loans for the poor, one million baht village revolving fund, 3-year debt suspension for the poor, housing for the poor, one tambon (subdistrict) one product—OTOP—community enterprise support. These programs/projects have been announced by the government one by one. However, the national poverty eradication strategy of the National Economic and Social Development published in 2002, identified 5 strategies to include:

i Macroeconomic policy should support poverty eradication programs
ii Improve potential and opportunities of the poor
iii Development social protection systems for the poor
iv Natural resource management, and
v Improve government administrative system for poverty eradication programs (NESDB: 2002).

1.3 Civil Society Organizations Working for the Poor, the Unemployed, and Vulnerable Groups

There is a long history of civil society organizations in Thailand. In 1997 there were over 8,000 civil society organizations working in areas of social welfare and development. Some are very small running micro-projects, while others are much larger, operating at the
national level in multi-sectoral programs. Over 100 registered organizations concentrate on programs to promote the development of children and youth. There have been increasing efforts to coordinate initiatives among organizations to build partnerships through networking. More recently, non-government and government organizations have been joining hands. The partnership has had a greater impact on community development and mobilization (UNICEF, 1997). The World Bank Thailand Social Monitor III reports on more positive trends that show an increasing rate of participation in a variety of community organizations (World Bank Bangkok Office et al., 1999).

Since the crisis, the government has been quite instrumental in establishing greater numbers of community level organizations. The Community Development Department of the Ministry of Interior has been supporting community organizations through the promotion of activities for different target groups. Specifically, more concerted support for women’s development groups, child development centers, and vocational groups have materialized at the village level since early 1970s. Since the crisis, many more community organizations have been promoted. But unfortunately, in the past, statistics were not collected systematically and reporting has been periodic with no definite trend. Recent statistics, however, indicate a rising number of different community organizations due to government promotion policies.

Since the crisis, the Ministry of Interior has adopted a strategy to promote the concept of a Self-Sufficiency Economy. The strategy was designed based on His Majesty the King’s New Theory on integrated agriculture introduced earlier in 1994 and once again in the speech His Majesty the King delivered on December 4, 1997 a few months after the crisis. The speech provided the Thai people with a vision and hope for an alternative means of livelihood that does not rely heavily on the world market and economic system. Since then, the concept self-sufficiency through integrated agriculture and community enterprises has received a great deal of interest from the public and many Government agencies working in the rural areas. In urban areas, statistics from the Urban Community Development Office have shown an impressive trend as well in terms of the growth of urban community networks and members.

Another area of government activity is the Social Investment Fund (SIF), which was launched in late 1998 with World Bank financing. Its objective was to both address the impacts of the crisis and to accelerate the empowerment of communities. The Social Investment Fund represented the first occasion when the Thai Government channeled funds directly to civil society organizations in large sums. This was a significant step forward. In addition to alleviating the social and economic problems of the vulnerable sectors of Thai society, the SIF attempts to transform the crisis into an opportunity. The ultimate aim is to build on the available social capital to support highly desirable reforms towards decentralization, better governance, community empowerment, and the forging of broad development partnerships involving civil society. In order to receive the grants, communities go through the sub-project proposal procedures, management and administration, and sub-project monitoring, thus resulting in a learning process that strengthens the community in the long-run.

The SIF menu of eligible investments covers five main categories: community economy, community welfare and safety, natural resource management and cultural
preservation, community capacity building and networking, and emergency community welfare for the vulnerable groups. In case of economic recovery, **Menu 1: Community enterprise**, is especially important. Community organizations were qualified to apply for the fund. Community enterprise projects with potential for job creation and income generation were supported. While revolving funds for individual loans may not be available, funds for infrastructure and group investments were available. Many community enterprises became very successful. This program has been picked up by the Thaksin Shinawatra government to be promoted as “One Tambon (subdistrict) One Product (OTOP)” project. Many have potential for export and are being supported by the Department of Export Promotion of the Ministry of Industry.

Specifically relevant to vulnerable groups are: **Menu 2: Community Welfare and Safety** where local organizations drafted proposals to support different target groups and submitted for funding, and **Menu 5: Emergency Community Welfare for the Vulnerable Groups** where network of community organizations submit proposals for vulnerable groups when emergency needs arise. Menu 5 was included as another window of support in March 1999 to be terminated at the end of 1999. It was designed to respond to the urgent needs of poor communities and the increasing demands on organizations struggling to assist them. The new window finances social assistance transfers through community organization networks to those most vulnerable, thereby strengthening the coping capacities of groups most severely affected by the crisis. While maintaining the fundamental objectives and principles of the SIF, this initiative expands the ability of the Fund to respond to immediate priority needs.

**Menu 3: Natural Resources and Cultural Conservation** and **Menu 4: Community Empowerment and Network Building** were not very popular during implementation stage. It is not very relevant to our discussion here.

When Thaksin Shinawatra came to power in 2001, this menu was modified to become a One Million Baht Village Fund. The government provided one million baht as a revolving fund for every village. A village committee is responsible to manage this revolving fund to fulfill the needs of the poor, the unemployed, and the vulnerable groups. The amount of funds to be allocated per person as well as the objectives of the funds is to be worked out by the community committee. This fund proves to be very popular among villagers. Hence, the government is now called a populist government.

2. **Social Integration, Gender Equity, and Access to Social Services**

The globalization process, both economic and social, have led to concrete activities leading to the creation of enabling social-political environment. Two aspects are discussed here, i.e., legislative measures as part of the political-social reform activities leading to social integration and growth of civil society in political and social reform movements.

2.1 Social Integration and Legislative Measures

At the national and local level, attempts to bring about social transformations can be seen by creating enabling environment through legislative, economic and social measures.

1994 **Decentralization Act**
The Decentralization and the Subdistrict Council and Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) Act aims at promoting autonomous, self-managed, and self-regulated body. Before the Act came to effect, there were long debates on the readiness of local organizations to take on the responsibility of financial management. There were 4,201 subdistrict councils and 2,780 SAOs when the Act came to operation. All subdistrict councils are to be upgraded to become SAOs and all SAOs will have budget allocation. However, in the year 2003, the decentralization activities have not been fully in operation. The Prime Minister’s Office has established a network of 9 universities located in the different regions of the country to help promoting and strengthening the capacities of the subdistrict administrative offices. The outcome has yet to be realized.

1996 Anti-Prostitution Act

The promulgation of the new Anti-Prostitution Act has been the result of hard working women’s groups in trying to bring about more equity between men and women. Earlier Act, punished individual women as service providers without given penalty to service seekers, agents, nor enterprise owners. In the new Act, all concerned partners must be equally punished in case of arrest. If child prostitution is involved, suppliers receive harsher penalty than normal cases.

1997 Constitution

The Constitution is one of most important legislative instrument to help bring about a new environment for social development. It stipulated in many clauses that an enabling environment is to be created to ensure equality and equity between women and men as well as all disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Furthermore, it encourages transparent and accountable governance and administration in partnership with free and representative organizations of civil society. The Constitution thus serves as the foundation for bringing about further initiatives.

1998 Labor Protection Act

The Labor Protection Act is an addition to the Labor Relations Act promulgated earlier. The Labor Protection Act 1998 included protection for unemployment in at least four forms. They are workmen compensation fund established according to Workmen Compensation Act 1994, severance pay according to Section of the Labor Protection Act 1998, provident fund according to the Provident Fund Act 1987, and employee welfare fund established according to Section 126 of the Labor Protection Act by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. However, degree of enforcement varies and since labor unions in Thailand are weak, the issue of labor protection needs to be reviewed. It should be mentioned here that sexual harassment at work place is included in the Act as one of the new initiatives supporting gender equality.

1999 National Education Act

The National Education Act (NEA) is an indication of the effort to bring about social reform. Both the Constitution and the NEA guarantee the rights of every citizen to 12 years of free basic education. In addition, the NEA mandates a shift from the centralized system of administration and management to decentralization whereby the powers and duties for basic
education as well as those at lower-than-degree level, are vested in local entities and schools. Full implementation of the education decentralization schemes has yet to be observed. Debates and discussion are still going on as the government is trying to complete the final stage.

2000  National Health Insurance Act

After long negotiations, the National Health Insurance Act was passed. It represents a form of universal health care coverage. All people are entitled to health care services at health care centers near home or near place of work where individuals registered. Under this Act, for health care services, people are charged 30 baht per visit. This scheme is provided for people who are not covered under any other scheme. People who are covered under other health care schemes such as the social security or government schemes should use other schemes which provide better services.

2001  Social Security (Addendum)

In 2003, the government expanded labor protection schemes by expanding coverage of the social security scheme to include unemployment protection. This means that those who would like to have unemployment benefit will have to give contribution 6 months before the benefit can be made. In addition social security schemes are now available for enterprises of all size, including enterprises with less than 10 employees.

Overall Social Integration

The 1997 Constitution and its subsidiary laws together with the National Education Act 1999 and the Labor Protection Act 1998 have established grounds to bring about equal opportunities, increasing respect for diversity and promoting the participation of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

The Constitutional drafting process took place two years before the final draft was approved. It involved the participation of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in making sure that certain clauses were included in the Constitution. After the Constitution was promulgated, different vulnerable groups have come out to demand for their basic rights and accessibility to social services. The Declaration of the Elderly was announced in March 1999. The disabled are demanding equal access to the use of the sky train and other public facilities. The Forum of the Poor, consisting of rural and urban poor groups, is demanding their rights to land and improved living conditions. A Human Rights Bill is being drafted and negotiated between the concerned parties. Thai society is now open to tolerate and respond to the needs to different groups leading to social integration.

However, social unrest and public protests are still very much problems facing the Thai government. In practice social integration has not been achieved and the poor and disadvantaged groups feel that they have been excluded from mainstream Thai society.

The crisis has placed significant pressures on poor families, driving some of them below the poverty line. In terms of vulnerable groups, there are a growing number of reports documenting increased conflicts between family members, a growing number of children under pressure, an increasing divorce rate, and of elderly people being compelled to work so as to earn their keep. Concrete reports on the impact of the crisis on specific vulnerable
groups are not readily available, however. As a result, anecdotal accounts of different incidents are often cited, but these are insufficient to lead to a conclusive analysis. Furthermore, it is not yet clear whether the stress on families caused by the crisis was any greater or more severe than the stress that was occasioned during Thailand’s economic boom years, which were characterized by migration-induced separations. Nevertheless, from available statistics, the following conclusions can be made about family cohesion, societal crime as well as community/civil society responses to crisis.

Changes in family patterns are noticeable. During the economic boom period, the majority of potential rural wage earners migrated to industrialized areas and cities, leaving the old and the young in villages. In addition, though the extended family was the traditional norm, 80 percent of children now come from nuclear households. Sixty-five percent of the families include both the father and mother, while in 24 percent the father and mother live apart. Eleven percent are headed by a single parent, and of these, 8.8 percent are headed by women (UNICEF, 1997:26). However, the migration trend is now being reversed. With the economic crisis many migrants have returned to their villages, and it is possible that the extended family pattern may return.

2.2 Social Integration, Societal Crimes, Social Justice, and Social Development: the Case of Narcotic Suppression Activities

Another dimension of the impact of the crisis on families may be viewed in terms of social ills, most notably, crime statistics. There has been a dramatic increase in arrests for drug related crimes. Available data from the Narcotics Suppression Bureau, the Royal Thai Police indicate a general upward trend since 1992. But from 1997 to 1998, there was a considerably large increase, 27 percent more arrests in 1998 than in 1997. Figures for 1999 up to August were also high. One can therefore hypothesize that people turned to criminal behavior to replace lost wages. But such hypothesis may be over-simplistic. It was clear that the Chuan Leekpai Government at the time showed its political will to tackle drug trafficking and use among younger people. More raids and arrests took place during 1998 and 1999, and there were many school programs to deal with drug problems.

One cannot view drug-related crimes as having been caused by the economic crisis. Evidence from industrializing countries also indicates that there is a strong correlation between economic growth and social ills. Political and economic conditions in neighboring countries also attribute to the high growth of metamphetamine production, distribution and consumption, with Thailand serving as an excellent outlet.

However, evidence exists which suggests that the crisis has had impact on the incidence of crime. The World Bank Thailand Social Monitor III (1999) stated that the level of overall crimes seemed to be on a generally increasing trend, with no noticeable deviation during the crisis years. The level of violent crimes remained at pre-crisis levels in 1998. However, arrests for property crimes, and specifically theft, dramatically increased above trend in 1998. This coincidence of events suggests that economic pressure on household and individuals has led to the upsurge in property crimes. But other factors could be involved, including more effective police work, changes in the law, and evolving norms and values not linked to the crisis (World Bank Bangkok Office et al., 1999).

After Thaksin Shinawatra came to power in early 2001, he declared drug eradication as a national agenda. During 2002, drug addicts, pushers, and dealers have been arrested in
large number. When the government wanted to publicize its success in drug eradication activities, statistics climbed up drastically. At the same time, the police have been accused of extra-judicial killings and human rights violations. At the end of 2002 and early 2003, the government has been strongly criticized. Since then no statistics are reported.

Social integration is a philosophical concept that must be embraced by society. It must serve as a guideline for social policy and the public consciousness at large, apart from making sure that changes at the policy level are translated into concrete and tangible plans to enhance better quality of lives of marginalized people. What remains a challenge for Thai society is the development of awareness and consciousness on the rights and dignity of all peoples. Prior to the large crack-down, almost everyone, slum dwellers as well as hill people in the north, was involved in drug business in one form or another. During the crack-down, those involved were alienated. Parents were arrested, leaving children with no one to look after. Governmental, non-governmental and advocacy organizations must work in partnership to ensure the continuation of sound structural and legal frameworks to enhance the social integration of peoples of diverse backgrounds and cultural identities. At the same time, it is important that all efforts be harnessed to facilitate the empowerment of marginalized population socially, politically and economically so that they are equipped with confidence and therefore are able to take an active part in the nation’s development process. For now, Thai society must begin to examine what “social integration” really means from the point of view of those who remain “strangers within our own society” if we are to take social integration to heart.

2.3 Government and Civil Society Networks in Social Protection

The 1997 Constitution is considered the historical foundation for future political and social reform in Thailand, and it provides the base for other building blocks. The Constitution also recognized shifts in development paradigms from growth-centered to people-centered. Social reform will have to take place. Recognition of social integration of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups into mainstream society is on the way. Equal access to social services and sensitivity in treating people of diverse origins need to be encouraged. Concern for humanity and not economic or political gain is the social value to be promulgated. Education and health reforms to provide universal coverage must be considered. Concepts of social services, social welfare, social protection, and social development are all encompassing issues to sort out in the social reform process.

The establishment of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security by the Thaksin Shinawatra government in 2002 indicates the government commitment in promoting social development activities in Thailand. However, government personnel in the Ministry are still confused and unclear of their duty and responsibility as well insecure of their positions. To help in capacity building of the Ministry, the UNICEF supported the drafting of the Guideline for the coordination of social protection networks for the vulnerable and the poor (NESDB, 2003). The Guideline identifies 4 strategies as follows:

- Protection of rights of individuals, groups, and communities
- Legal System for social protection
- Participation of civil society
- Administration and management
The Guideline was distributed in June 2003 in workshop sessions where government agencies and civil society organizations came together to draw up action plans to bring the guidelines to reality. It is too early to assess the outcome.


3.1 Role of International Institutions in Creating Enabling Environment for Human Security in Coping with HIV/AIDS

During the sessions of the preparatory committees and the World Summit on Social Development, debates and discussions on the role of international organizations in the development process on issues of human-centered development and the role of developed countries took many periods. In concrete terms the roles of international organizations are spelled out in detail in Commitments 8, 9 and 10. Commitment 8 identifies roles of international financial institutions in working with national governments to adopt the principle of integration of social as well as economic aspects in the design of structural adjustments as well as reform programs. Commitment 9 recommend the High-Level Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development to be held in 2001. Finally, in Commitment 10, international institutions are to play coordinating roles in strengthening cooperation at regional and global levels.

On the issue of HIV/AIDS, it is clear that many United Nations organizations are supporting activities related to the issue. These include UNAIDS, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UNIFEM, to name the most obvious ones. In addition, international non-government organizations are also supporting the activities. Financial assistance are being put forward from different organizations on research and community-based activities which include both preventive measures as well as curative measures, even when the situation is not very optimistic.

3.2 Role of the Governments in Creating Enabling Environment for Human Security in Coping with HIV/AIDS

Based on the World Summit on Social Development, in terms of Human Security and HIV/AIDS, the role of the governments is to fulfil commitment 4, 5, and 6. Commitment 4 asks for “social integration” of vulnerable groups, HIV/AIDS victims included, while Commitment 5 focuses on gender equality, and Commitment 6 concentrates on access to quality education and high standard of physical and mental health care.

Since Thailand’s response to HIV/AIDS is considered one of the most successful cases, in this section, Thailand is used as case study on government responses. The World Bank Thailand Social Monitor Report (November, 2000) states that AIDS arrived in Thailand in the mid-1980s but the response was mute. Prior to 1989, government policy on HIV/AIDS control followed a standard public health approach. It was not until 1991 that HIV/AIDS prevention and control became a national priority at the highest level, emphasizing progressive policies to encourage safer behavior, and encapsulating the efforts of many sectors as well as civil society groups. Four important initiatives are:
1. AIDS policy was brought under the coordination of the Office of the Prime Minister with an officially multi-sectoral National AIDS Prevention and Control Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister.

2. A massive public information campaign on AIDS was launched under the leadership of cabinet member Mechai Viravaidya, a well known national figure with deep roots in past family planning campaigns and strong ties to non-governmental and community groups.

3. The 100% condom program was adopted nationwide to promote universal use of condoms in commercial sex all of the time.

4. A number of repressive policies were repealed and those that were under discussion gradually faded from the policy dialogue.

In addition,

5. Between 1987 and 1997, public spending on AIDS prevention and control in Thailand expanded dramatically indicating increased commitment of the government. Total AIDS spending by donors and government rose from $684,000 in 1988, most of which was financed by WHO, to $10.1 million in 1991, more than 72% of which was financed by the Thai Government. By 1997, total spending from the government AIDS control budget had reached $82 million annually—more than $1 per capita—of which 96% was financed by the Thai government (World Bank, 2000:10).

The World Bank report states that the political will adopted by the Thai government resulted in behavior change in Thailand which has prevented an estimated 200,000 HIV infections that would have otherwise occurred. Lessons learned indicated that effective action requires national leadership and political commitment at the highest levels. Effective actions include, for example:

1. Epidemiological surveillance is a critical tool for generating public awareness, political commitment and action.
2. Civil society groups can play a key role in ensuring non-discrimination and respect for human rights and in sustaining progressive policies in behavior change.
3. A nationwide program that reduces transmission via commercial sex can have a potentially great impact on the course of the epidemic.
4. The main contribution of the multi-sectoral approach at the national level has been to raise the profile of the AIDS problem across society, to engage new participants in policy dialogue, and to set national priorities.

Thailand has been used as an example to demonstrate the role which national governments can play in collaborating with international goals on social development.

3.3 Role of Civil Society in Creating Enabling Environment in Coping with HIV/AIDS

Again, in this section, Thailand case demonstrates the role of civil society organizations in coping with HIV/AIDS problem. There are at least 3 networks of civil society organizations working on HIV/AIDS. Civil society organizations here include nongovernment organizations, nonprofit organizations, people’s organizations, and community-based organizations. The different types of civil society organization networks are discussed below.
Network of Civil Society Organizations Working on Issues Related to HIV/AIDS (NGO Coalition on AIDS)

Civil society organizations started to work on issues related to HIV/AIDS since 1984 when the first case of HIV/AIDS infection was detected. Because of the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on people, families, and communities, many people were concerned and felt that the HIV/AIDS problem required more concerted efforts. Most of the activities carried out during the initial period is advocacy work providing information and raising awareness as well as disseminating ideas on protective measures. In Thailand, the first group of civil society organizations who became active in HIV/AIDS related issues were those working on family planning and community development. They include the Red Cross, Population and Development Association (PDA), Family Planning Association of Thailand, Fraternity for AIDS Cessation in Thailand (FACT) Program for Appropriate Technology on Health (PATH). In addition, anonymous clinic has been established by the Red Cross since 1979/80 and is still very active.

In 1989, the Thai NGO Coalition on AIDS was formed consisting of 18 founding members:
- Thai Volunteer Service Foundation (later registered ACCESS as an organization working on AIDS related activities)
- Empower
- Population and Development Association (PDA)
- Rural Doctors Society
- Rural Reconstruction Foundation
- Duang Prateep Foundation
- Foundation for Women
- Fraternity for AIDS Cessation in Thailand (FACT)
- Foundation for Children with Disability
- Independent Social Workers Group
- National Health Foundation
- Hill Area Development Foundation
- Pearl S. Buck Foundation
- Program for Appropriate Technology on Health (PATH)
- Thai Development Support Committee (TDSC)
- Friends of Women Foundation
- Coordinating Committee on Primary Health Care (CCPHC)
- NGO-Coordinating Committee on (Rural) Development (NGO-COD)

Two years after the establishment of the consortium, the government announced National Policy on AIDS and Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun was the first chair person of the National AIDS Protection and Control Committee. Committee members include members of the consortium as well as representative from other government agencies working on issues related to AIDS. In 1994, the consortium changed its name to Committee on NGOs against AIDS and expanded the coverage to regional areas. Since the northern region group had been involved in AIDS related activities since 1992 and was the most advanced region, it was the first region to start. The Northeast branch became active in 1993 and the Central region in 1996. Members of the AIDS network include registered organizations, registered both in Thailand and internationally, as well as non-registered
organizations. The ratio of registered and non-registered is approximately 60:40 (Thai NGO Coalition on AIDS, 1998).

Many development-oriented organizations shifted to AIDS related activities. There are members of AIDS network whose main activities are exclusively HIV/AIDS related. At the same time, there are organizations that join the network but usually work on other issues (such as development) as well. A survey carried out in 1999-2000 on 126 organizations working on AIDS related issues showed 32.5 percent of the organizations working on AIDS issue only and the rest work on multiple issues including AIDS. Activities of AIDS related issues include:

- Campaign on HIV/AIDS prevention
- Assistance to people with AIDS
- Counseling services and training in counseling
- Capacity building for organizations working on AIDS related issues.

**People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) Network**

In addition there are also People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) Network consisting of People Living with HIV/AIDS Groups formed by patients and health personnel working in hospitals in Bangkok and the North. Due to the policy for hospitals to support the establishment of self-help groups, there were 53 PLWHA groups in 1995 who submitted a set of proposals on the rights of PLWHA to the Government. In 2001, there were a total of 495 PLWHA organizations forming a national network and six regional networks. The PLWHA networks have been strongly involved in advocacy issues relating to standards of care and access to anti-retroviral therapy (Ungphakorn, 2002).

The two networks, i.e., Network of NGOs Against AIDS and PLWHA Network, work in parallel of each other. Issues advocated are:

- Basic rights of people with AIDS
- Access to health care
- Reduction of impact on children
- Health insurance for all
- Financial support

**Foundation against AIDS**

In 1999, the Thai NGOs Against AIDS, together with the Ministry of Public Health has formed AIDS Foundation as a channel for fund raising. The Department of Communicable Disease, Ministry of Public Health is now supporting the Foundation. The sustainability of the Foundation is not yet confirmed.

3.4 Role of Civil Society in Tobacco Control Movement

The Thailand case is applicable here again. It is not clear the extent to which the Thailand model (or something similar) is seen in other countries. In 1986, the People’s Doctor Foundation and 12 health related organizations set up the Thai Anti-Smoking Campaign Project (TASCP) to deal exclusively with tobacco control. In 1997 TASCP changed its name to Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) and became a foundation in its
own right. ASH aims to promote positive non-smoking values and work toward effective tobacco control legislation. Public education and health promotion, public advocacy and coalition building are some of the strategies employed by ASH. Particular attention has been paid to building up networks between schools, hospitals, temples, workplaces, the media, and government. The objectives of ASH includes:

- To promote non-smoking values
- To protect children and youth from the dangers of tobacco consumption
- To encourage, motivate and help smokers quit
- To campaign for legislative and social measures to protect the health of non-smokers
- To build coalitions and establish networks to campaign against tobacco.

Founding members who joined together to establish TASCP which later became ASH are no longer functioning as a group. Instead ASH works with other organizations to carry out many different projects to advocate different issues and therefore ASH networks are not rigid. At present there are different types of organizations working on smoking campaign which coordinate their activities with ASH. The main ones are:

1. Private agencies and companies who are actively involved in “Smoke Free Workplace Project”. There are about 800 firms located in Bangkok Metropolitan Area and Vicinity.
2. Government units within the Ministry of Public Health who are working on smoking-related aspects. They form a network and coordinate their activities for effective implementation.
3. Nongovernment organizations whose regular activities are on other issues but join with ASH on smoking related activities.
4. Entertainment and mass media groups who support campaign activities by organizing promotion of “Smoke Free Environment” from different angles using different media. Columnists and so-called “Tobacco Control Activists” provide positive contribution to tobacco control movement.
5. A few Buddhist temples are starting to support non-smoking campaign using the temples as entry points. This network is new but has potential for expansion with high impact on the general public.
6. Academics and researchers who carry out smoking-related research and disseminate information on negative effects of smoking on individuals, society, and environment. At the same time it should be noted that many of the academic reports are very technical and appear as medical reports with very small impact on society.

Other activities of ASH together with its network are mostly media advocacy and community based programs. They include, for example:

- Newsletters and journal publications.
- Quitline—a telephone counseling service for smokers.
- Smokebuster club launched in 1998 with 332 clubs dispersed over the whole country..
- Care for Kids Project to provide training seminars for teachers..
- Women and Smoking Project to foster the traditional non-smoking values of Thai women, and
- Smokefree Areas Project.
ASH together with its network members succeeded in the objectives identified above. In the year 2000 “Sin Tax” was launched and two percent of taxes on liquor and cigarette are to be collected and set up as a fund. An Office of Health Promotion was established to operate the fund and the Thai Health Promotion Foundation was registered in 2001. It is now known as “Thailand Health Promotion Fund” functioning as a public agency with the objectives to support proactive health promotion activities as well as establish mechanism leading to capacity building for sustainable operation.

Conclusion: Partnership in Social Development Activities

At the moment, social globalization has brought about social transformation, which is an on-going process to be further developed. Government political will to deal with social development activities is very essential in the case of Thailand. While civil society movement is going on, civil society groups have been very active in social development activities, both as service providers and as advocacy groups. Division of labor between different civil society groups has been observed. The role of civil society organizations has been more and more recognized globally as well as in Thailand. However, in Thailand, the struggle during the past few years have shown that despite the enabling environment for social transformation, the crisis has brought about a new challenge for Thai civil society groups. The crisis has certainly shed some light on development paradigms adopted by the international bodies working on development as well as the government of Thailand.

The shift from growth-centered to people-centered development is being recognized in the 8th and 9th National Development Plans. The crisis also provided good reasons for allowing for alternative means of livelihood to be adopted as the people’s choice. The role of civil society groups at the national and local level has been quite active during the past decade. The demand for civil society to continue taking on active roles is still there. At the same time, because of social globalization, demand for local civil society groups to join hands with transnational groups is being recognized more and more as well. Most organizations are not ready to move at the transnational level. They have not been empowered sufficiently to tackle the battle at two fronts. Transnational civil society organizations will have to work harder to attract local groups to join them. At the moment local groups are not capable to fulfill the demands to work at the local and transnational levels at the same time.
References


