

SOUTHERN THAILAND EMPOWERMENT & PARTICIPATION PROJECT

REVIEW & FOLLOW-UP FORMULATION REPORT



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Resilient nations.*

SEPTEMBER 2013

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Executive Summary

In September 2013, UNDP Thailand undertook a review of the Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation project and an analysis of entry points for future peace building and development programming which can be built on the foundation of the STEP project.¹

Context

The major development in the programming context is the change in the government's strategy following the adoption of the new National Security Council policy and the establishment of an official dialogue process with the BRN, a militant group openly challenging the authority of the Thai state in the southern provinces. The initial stages of the dialogue process have been slow as the BRN seeks to assert its positions on key issues and the government tries to formulate a response that keeps the BRN at the table while not leaving itself vulnerable to accusations of weakness from conservative elements opposed to the process. There are good reasons to be cautious, not least continued political polarization at national level, but if the government can contain political opposition, overcome bureaucratic rivalries and push forward the implementation of the new NSC policy to consolidate the tentative dialogue process, it may produce a major shift in the dynamics of the conflict. This is a critical juncture in the conflict and an important opportunity for UNDP to build on the STEP project's valuable experience to reorient and intensify its programming activities in support of the government's objective of promoting the broadest possible participation of civil society in the peace process.

Development and Peacebuilding Response

So far the response to the new NSC policy from the various government departments engaged in the south has been tepid, a desire for progress undermined by uncertainty about concrete new measures to support the process, and a lack of conviction that the dialogue process will lead anywhere without the full backing of the Thai army. The main SBPAC response has been to provide funding directly to Islamic and educational institutions while the central government's strategy has been to provide compensation to the families of those killed by the security forces and the insurgents. In the past efforts to address economic underdevelopment have been central to the government's strategy to reduce the conflict. A \$2.4 billion special development program approved by the government in March 2009 is drawing to a close but its impact has been limited by security, capacity constraints, and allegations of corruption. Many local people saw the project primarily as an attempt to undercut the insurgents' *casus belli* and reinforce a governance system that is centralized, predatory, and exclusive.

Civil society has grown considerably in the Deep South in recent years and has become a major driver of the peace process. The "Pat(t)ani Peace Process" was launched in September 2012 as an initiative to create space for all interested stakeholders to come together to analyze the conflict and propose a roadmap to peace. The process is supported by the Insider Peace Platform (IPP) an inclusive civil society-centred peace-building platform composed of a core group of respected Thais who are also representatives of broader constituencies including community-based networks, religious organizations, government staff, student associations, or NGOs. The development of the civil society sector has been accelerated by a high level of women's participation in CSOs across a range of areas from promoting the rights of women and children to providing peacebuilding, environmental awareness raising, community development, public information and media production, and skills training services.

This growth in civil society seems to have occurred partly because of increased space as a result of changing government policy but also thanks to the capacity development support initiatives by a number of international actors including the World Bank, USAID, the European Union, and UNDP. Donors have commonly encountered major absorptive capacity and monitoring constraints that have only been overcome with significant funding for management capacity development and implementation support, and the articulation of rigorous monitoring frameworks.

¹ The review was conducted by Sean Deely, an independent peacebuilding and transition programming advisor, and Rungrawee Chalermripinyorat an independent researcher and conflict analyst.

Review of the STEP Project

The review of the STEP project confirmed significant progress towards the achievement of the outputs set out in the project document. Of particular note was the significant contribution to the expansion of civil society and the empowerment of community based organizations, human rights defenders, women's groups, youth networks, and peacebuilding platforms.

Achievements

- Capacities of civil society networks and community based organizations with whom it worked have been strengthened and project activities have made a visible contribution to the growth of civil society in the Deep South.
- Critical crosscutting cleavages that link communities across differences of language, identity, religion, and culture, and help them transcend tension and divisions related to the conflict have been Identified and explored, and project activities developed to strengthen these links.
- The project has developed and piloted relevant and effective capacity-building strategies under a number of key areas including women's empowerment, youth development, and community-based networks for disaster management and response.
- Valuable capacity development products have been created including training manuals,
- The project has also contributed to development of alternative media and reporting outlets and products that help increase access to information about events in the Deep South, and ensure their availability in Yawi.
- The project also supported mapping and research activities that highlighted how the erosion of traditional livelihoods is exacerbating poverty and exclusion, fuelling a growing sense of alienation that feeds into the conflict.
- The project's catalytic effect has helped build relationships, understanding and acceptance on behalf of PSU and UNDP, and develop a human resource and knowledge base on which future activities in the Deep South can be built.

Shortcomings

- Probably the single biggest shortcoming in the STEP project design is the lack of any overarching focus that would contribute to an outcome level impact. It seems that the project was conceptualized using UNDP's 7-pillar Community Security and Social Cohesion Policy, which may not have been appropriate given the likely role of UNDP, the fact that Thailand is a middle-income country, and the high level of government sensitivity to the potential "internationalization" of the crisis.
- The strategy that was contained in the project document did not provide adequate guidance on implementation and did not seem to be a product of detailed joint planning. Project implementation strategy should be derived from an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of the conflict *at the level of the intervention* and based on joint planning with key stakeholders from government and civil society.
- The review noted an imbalance in some outputs between the investments needed to diagnose the problem and the implementation of the proposed solution. It is recommended that any successor project ensure that the ratio of research to implementation is driven by the achievement of the output and overall outcome.
- The targets and indicators in the project document RRF were not adequately formulated and do not constitute an adequate basis for monitoring progress. This shortcoming was exacerbated by changes to some of the activities and problems with access to some project sites as a result of security threats. It is recommended that the project review its monitoring plan to establish realistic end-of-project targets that reflect changes to outputs and related activities, and obtain and report against baseline data for all indicators.

Potential Strategic Intervention Points

The assessment analyzed six potential strategic intervention points. Empowerment remains the central focus: if the peace process is to contribute to a sustainable outcome to the conflict it is essential that it be structured in a way that offers local people an opportunity for inclusion as invested parties to the process rather than disempowered citizens. Moreover, peace processes do not gain traction or advance in a vacuum: the need for a broader public engagement in the process has been recognized in the new NSC policy, but of itself this acknowledgement will have only a symbolic value unless people are empowered through access information and education about the process, and systems to facilitate their involvement are strengthened and expanded.

Sustaining the Peace Dialogue and Broadening Participation in the Process

Only by increasing knowledge and understanding of the peace process and related developments, and by broadening the engagement of people from all over the southernmost provinces, will it be possible to empower meaningful participation and build a critical mass of support for a sustainable resolution of the conflict. Promoting increased participation requires a significant investment to build the capacities of civil society organizations, and to put in place and maintain the networks, systems, and platforms that will inform and sustain participation. This is a government priority and it should also be a UN priority.

Access to Information

A related priority intervention point is civic awareness to promote understanding of the Malay Muslim population, and knowledge of the problems caused by the conflict, and an informed public discussion about what would constitute an appropriate solution. A television drama in mixed Patani-Malay and Thai languages using satellite television would be a powerful channel for civic awareness raising among ethnic groups seeking self-expression in their own cultural and linguistic terms and represents an important strategic entry point for increased knowledge of and engagement in the peace dialogue process and the wider transformation of the conflict.

Access to Justice

Continued support for access to legal services should be a critical priority for UNDP in the next phase of its engagement in the Deep South. It is clear however that the Adilan Centre does not provide an environment where vulnerable people can have confidence that their case will be handled confidentially or with the authority that is required to ensure their protection, or secure a fair hearing. As suggested by the SBPAC Justice Administration Affairs Director UNDP should support MAC to train religious leaders and other appropriate volunteers from villages as trusted focal points for legal assistance.

Participatory Planning and Sustainable Livelihoods

The experience of Output 2 of the STEP project demonstrated how a small grant fund could have a disproportional impact of economic wellbeing among vulnerable women's groups. UNDP could consider including a "Participatory Planning, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Women's Empowerment" component in the new programme that would use participatory planning and sustainable livelihood activities as a means to build participatory governance capacity, maintain the relationship between Buddhist and Muslim families, and to promote social cohesion to overcome economic marginalization.

Local Governance Reform

Although there appears to be growing recognition of the need for major governance reform in the Deep South to allow for some form of local self-government, the extent, nature, and form remains controversial, and opposition among a conservative elite is deeply entrenched. In examining options for UNDP support, it may be worth considering that there isn't always a technical, administrative, or capacity-strengthening solution to governance problems. Given the deep polarization that characterizes national politics, and anxieties around the future royal transition it seems unlikely that any changes to the structure of the state will be agreed in the near future.

Women's Empowerment

Women in the Southern Border Provinces have to contend with insecurity, disrupted education, fears generated by the activities of insurgents and security forces, and constraints on the freedom of movement of male household members in conflict-affected districts. Although surveys indicate that women's participation in civil society organizations in the south is three times higher than the national average, they face a range of cultural and religious constraints that restrict women to domestic functions. As part of a Participatory Planning and Sustainable Livelihoods activity it would be worthwhile to include sustainable livelihood options for women heads of households affected by the conflict. Working outside the home also provides space for Muslim women to interact with Buddhist women. As part of its support to the peace dialogue process, UNDP could consider including a capacity development component for women activists and CSOs to strengthen their potential role as peace-builders.

Proposed Program Outline

Support to peace dialogue and the IPP initiative should form the core of an interlinked series of outputs that places strengthening civil society capacity to promote public participation in the peace process at the centre of the UNDP's strategy. Key elements include: making available conflict transformation and peacebuilding advisors to provide expert analytical input to the IPP process, enhancing access to information to increase knowledge and understanding of political developments; improving access to independent legal services to increase protection for conflict-vulnerable families; and strengthening participatory planning and sustainable livelihoods to improve economic security and empower women as peacemakers and entrepreneurs. These outputs should be elaborated during consultations and participatory planning sessions with relevant stakeholders on location in the south.

Priority Area 1A: Strengthened Capacity to Facilitate Participation in the Peace Process

Contracting an international peace and development consultant and a national expert on the south to provide expert analytical input to the IPP process; establishing a schedule of peacebuilding resources to contribute to the IPP process; working with IPP and other stakeholders to develop a support strategy for an inter-connected series of peace networks; developing a sub-strategy to strengthen women's potential role as peace-builders.

Priority Area 1B: Access to Information

Contracting an international media production agency with experience in the design, scripting and production of documentary-drama products for television to work with a local Patani-based media NGO (e.g. FT) to produce a television drama in mixed Patani-Malay and Thai languages that will channel information about developments in the conflict – including the peace process and the impact of the conflict on the lives of ordinary people in the Southern Border Provinces.

Priority Area 2: Access to Justice

Working with MAC to train a network of civic and religious leaders and other appropriate volunteers from villages as trusted focal points for legal assistance to ensure that local people have a trusted focal point where they can seek support in the event of rights violations, intimidation, torture or other mistreatment; exploring opportunities to strengthen the role of the NHRC in national level advocacy and capacity development support to NHRC provincial offices.

Priority Area 3: Participatory Planning, Livelihoods, and Women's Empowerment

Building on the experience gained implementing output 2 of the STEP project identify a small number of sub-districts in close coordination with the World Bank/LDI for product development, adaptation, processing and marketing initiatives; identify and foster cross-cutting cleavages and priorities based on common interests, including in mixed Buddhist-Muslim communities to work together; build participatory planning capacities through a carefully developed series of community consultation and capacity development activities; ensure the inclusion of women in community planning and decision-making by identifying and dealing with the social and occupational obstacles that may reduce their opportunities for active participation.

The Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation (STEP) Project was formulated in 2009 and started its implementation in 2010. The ultimate aim of the project is to ensure human security and social cohesion in local communities. The project is based on a two-pronged strategy, i.e. empowering communities and civil society networks through participatory approaches on one hand, and strengthening the capacities of the relevant government agencies. The project is implemented through the Prince of Songkla University in Hat Yai in collaboration with other responsible partners from the government as well as local community based organizations. The project covers 5 target provinces along the Southern borders of Thailand and addresses a wide range of challenges in the South that are best described through the seven project outputs which are: (1) strengthening community-based organizations; (2) income generation; (3) access to justice; (4) local governance planning and budgeting; (5) natural disaster management; (6) peace dialogues; and (7) dispute resolution mechanisms.

In September 2013, UNDP Thailand undertook a review the results achieved by the project so far and an analysis of entry points for future peace building and development programming which can be built on the foundation of the STEP project.²

1. The Context

The context in Southern Thailand has evolved significantly since the STEP project was originally formulated. Although there has as yet been no major shift in the trajectory of the crisis, the new National Security Council policy for the Southern Border Provinces and the subsequent establishment of a peace dialogue process with BRN militants as official government policy are significant developments with potentially important implications for UNDP support to government agencies and the civil society sector.

SBPAC – Towards a Civilian Policy Framework

Following the 2006 coup, the military-installed government led by Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont dissolved the administrative system in the South that had been set up under the government of Thaksin Shinawatra and put in place a new structure. Chulanont strengthened the role of the military-controlled Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) by enacting the 2007 Internal Security Act (ISA). He also revived the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC), originally established in 1984 and dissolved by Thaksin in 2002. Under the 2007 ISA, SBPAC functioned under the ISOC's supervision preventing it from developing policy responses to the situation in the south. In December 2010, the 2010 Southern Border Provinces Administration Act was passed enabling the agency to operate independently from ISOC. Article Four of the SBPAC Act gives the NSC authority to draft security and development policy for the Deep South. The Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy (2012-14) was developed through a one-year process of research and consultation involving local people in the south, administration and security officials, academics and the SBPAC Advisory Council. It was approved by the Cabinet on 22 February 2012 and underwent a no-vote parliamentary deliberation a month later.³ It contains a highly progressive conflict resolution strategy, which, if adopted and implemented by line agencies and SBPAC, would undoubtedly go a long way towards the transformation of the conflict.

Its progressive character stems mainly from its formal acknowledgement of the need to find a political solution to the conflict. One of the nine objectives set out in the policy is

² The review was conducted by Sean Deely, an independent peacebuilding and transition programming advisor, and Rungrawee Chalernsripinyorat an independent researcher and conflict analyst.

³ Personal communication, NSC officer, August 2012.

“To create an environment suitable for constructive dialogue on peaceful solution to the conflict, and for establishing an assurance that all stakeholders participate in the peace-building process.”⁴

The Dialogue Process

Dialogue is not new – there have been a number of attempts since the conflict broke out in 2004. The head of the National Security Council Vinai Paktiyakul attended meetings convened by former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in Langkawi in 2005. This effort was overshadowed by the domestic political crisis and the subsequent 2006 military coup. Other attempts to stand up a dialogue process include the 2008 Bogor meetings facilitated by the Indonesian government, and an initiative by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

What is new is that the NSC policy provides a legal basis for the establishment of a formal peace dialogue. In the past, efforts to promote peace-talks were hampered because some officials expressed concern about the legality of talking to “criminals”, which, they argued, could be deemed as unconstitutional.

This formal peace dialogue therefore represents a major shift in the Thai state policy and seems to have a much greater level of executive commitment than previous efforts, as evidenced by the direct involvement of serving prime ministers from both Thailand and Malaysia.

Another potentially constructive sign is the public engagement by the BRN. After nearly a decade of fighting as a highly secretive, underground organization, the dialogue process has pushed the BRN into the open. Although the process is still in its infancy, it may yet provide a platform for the Thai government and the BRN to seriously explore potential solutions to different aspects of the conflict. There are indications that suggest the BRN may be inclined to consider a negotiated compromise short of independence, although some analysts believe that this is more as a consequence of the facilitator role being played by Malaysia than the direct expression of a BRN position. The participation of the BRN in the peace dialogue has the potential to introduce a degree of pragmatism to its radical tendency as engagement in the dialogue exposes it to public opinion and outside influences. In September two other factions of the Patani United Liberation Organization (PULO) and the Islamic Liberation Front of Pattani (BIPP) reportedly requested to join the dialogue process, and there are indications that BRN is moving to expand its talks team to involve representatives from these groups.

Having said that, there is a long way to go. It will take time to build confidence, find common ground, and explore options for a durable solution to the conflict. Expectations should be tempered by three considerations:

- First, there has not yet been any attempt to reach agreement on a set of basic confidence building measures. This is a normal prerequisite for moving from “talks-about-talks” to actual talks. Until the current discussions yield some low-level commitments that demonstrate goodwill there is little chance of the dialogue developing into something more substantive.
- Second, there has been nothing to suggest a change in the military’s opposition to the dialogue process. Although there have been signs of increased sensitivity towards human rights and better relations with the general public, and these have been formalized in the 2012 – 2016 ISOC policy, the absence of any endorsement by the military only strengthens opposition among BRN hardliners to the process

⁴ For the full text of the Policy on the Administration and Development of the Southern Border Provinces, 2012-14, see <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3019>

- Third, the polarized nature of national politics does not allow the government sufficient political space to commit to any of the major changes that will be required to negotiate an end to the BRN's campaign. Any move towards a substantive discussion of autonomy would leave the government vulnerable to accusations of undermining the territorial integrity of the state, and disloyalty to the monarchy.

Conclusion

While the most likely scenario is a continuation of the present situation, linked to the government's current term, and assuming no major national-level crisis, the dialogue process and the NSC policy are very positive developments that present an important opportunity for UNDP to reorient and intensify its programming activities in support of the peace-dialogue and related objectives.

2. Current Development Responses

The Government⁵

Thailand is a middle-income country and the Thai government has sufficient resources and capacity to support traditional development activities. The main government vehicles for community-based development in the south are the Self-Sufficient-based Community Development for Peace project (PANOP) that provides grants of \$170 to households that are identified as particularly vulnerable (e.g. widows, orphans, the disabled and poor villagers), and the Village-Based Quality of Life Improvement Project (PHANOM) that provides a one-off grant of \$7,800 to undertake collective development projects. PHANOM grants are provided to all 2,248 villages in the Deep South, from a budget of 523,769,500 baht or approximately \$17.5 million.

According to SBPAC officials, the PANOP and PHANOM projects have achieved their objectives in reaching out to villagers. PANOP has been discontinued, while PHANOM will continue until the end of the 2014 fiscal year.⁶ SBPAC described a major new development project to be implemented in the coming year that will provide one million baht per sub-district to increase safety of villagers in the area. Although SBPAC officials described the objective of this project as nurturing good relationship between Muslims and Buddhists⁷, one district official indicated that funds would be used to install closed circuit television cameras to improve surveillance and local security⁸.

Lessons from the PANOP and PHANOM projects highlight important ways in which the implementation of government-led development projects in areas affected by conflict can reinforce structures and behaviors that have contributed to the conflict in the first place, and fuel tension and conflict at different levels. These lessons range from insufficient consultation with villagers leading to projects that do not suit people's needs, to government officials accused of corruption during selection and procurement processes related to project activities⁹.

As part of an effort to address past abuse and alleviate the sense of injustice among Malay-Muslims, SBPAC, under the leadership of Tawee Sodsong, has provided substantial compensation

⁵ The assessment focused on the role of the SBPAC as the vehicle for coordinating the government civilian activities. While the seventeen ministries and sixty-six agencies with responsibilities in the southern border provinces remain under the direct control of their respective line ministries in Bangkok through the provincial authorities, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) is mandated with leading the civilian development in the area, and can supersede parts of the administrative process.

⁶ Interviews with SBPAC officials, Yala, 18 September 2013

⁷ Interviews with SBPAC officials, Yala, 18 September 2013

⁸ Interviews with District Administration Officials, Yaring, 19 September 2013

⁹ Asia Foundation (2013) Contested Corners of South

for victims of state mistreatment, including those killed in the notorious Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents in 2004, and those wrongly detained by security forces under the special laws.¹⁰

Formal efforts to improve access to justice appear to have deteriorated following the changes in SBPAC policy and the replacement of the Secretary General Phanu Uthairat with Tawee in October 2011. Support for the Adilan Centre initiative - an SBPAC-created legal aid mechanism promoted by Mr. Sodsong's predecessor Phanu Uthairat - has been discontinued. It is unclear why the new Secretary General did not see the Adilan Centres as a priority given the direction and objectives adopted in the new policy. It may also be the case that Mr. Sodsong - a former deputy permanent secretary at the Ministry of Justice - has understood that Malay-Muslims are unlikely to report cases of mistreatment by state officials to a government agency. Malay Muslims look for assistance from civil society organization like the Muslim Attorney Centre (MAC) and its network of legal aid volunteers in the first instance rather than going directly to the SBPAC.¹¹

International Donors

In addition to UNICEF¹² and UNDP, the main donors providing assistance in the Deep South are the World Bank, the European Union, and USAID.

The World Bank

The Bank's engagement in the Deep South was built on the experience generated by its 2004 Tsunami response programme in Satun province and its national level Community Development Fund that was launched following the 1997 financial crisis. The Bank's national counterpart is the Ministry of Finance with whom it enjoys a collaborative relationship that helped overcome concerns about the sensitivity of international engagement in the south.

"Piloting Community Approaches in Southern Thailand"

The first phase of the project "Piloting Community Approaches in Southern Thailand" was implemented in 2007-2008 using grant financing through the Bank's State and Peace-Building Fund to first study and then pilot approaches to local development to help mitigate the conflict in the provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. The second phase was implemented from 2009 to 2013 and had two main components: a Community and Tambon Block Grant facility, and a Civil Society Peacebuilding fund.

\$1.7 million was provided for Community and Tambon Block Grants to twenty seven communities in seven sub-districts: Village Development Grants valued at US\$8,000 - 10,000 per year were provided to fund projects identified through participatory planning processes at the community-level. Trained village facilitators worked closely with villagers to help them develop proposals for consideration at a village meeting for sub-project selection.

The second component of the project the "Peacebuilding Partnership Fund" aimed at strengthening civil society to promote peace and development activities, provide assistance for vulnerable groups, and improve communication and public information dissemination. The fund provided grants of between \$5,000 and \$10,000 to twenty-five community-based organizations, NGOs, and civil society networks.

¹⁰ In the 28 April incident, popularly known as "Krue Se", 106 Malay Muslims died in clashes with security forces in eleven locations. Of these, 31 were killed when security forces stormed the Krue Se mosque in Pattani and nineteen were killed at Saba Yoi district in Songkhla. Many appeared to have been executed. During the Tak Bai incident on 25 October, 78 Muslims died from suffocation and injuries after the authorities rounded up some 1,300 protesters and packed them into military trucks. Seven others died of gunshot wounds at the protest site - in front of a police station in Narathiwat Tak Bai district.

¹¹ Interviews with MAC staff and SBPAC officials, Pattani and Yala, 18 - 19 September 2013.

¹² See annex 2 for details of UNICEF's new project Schools as Zones of Peace

The next phase “Expanding Community Approaches”

During the next phase of the project the Bank plans to disburse \$4.6 million over a four-year period. This includes \$2,290,000 to provide three cycles of grants for forty-three villages in six sub-districts and three rounds of grants at the sub-district level (\$30,000 per grant) in the six target tambons. Funding for peacebuilding civil society networks will be increased to \$800,000. Four networks (the Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand, the Women Network of the Three Southern Provinces, the Youth Network, and the Natural Resource Management Network) will each receive \$40,000 per year, and a further ten civil society organizations will each receive grants of approximately \$10,000.

Civil Society Capacity & Monitoring Constraints

The absorptive capacity and monitoring constraints encountered by other donors have been overcome by contracting the execution through a national NGO “Local Development Institute. LDI has a head office in Bangkok but maintains a project office in Pattani, with a dedicated team of twenty experienced staff working full time on project activities, including a project manager, coordinators for each of the components, provincial coordinators, village facilitators, M&E personnel and administrative staff.

The project seems to have been designed to address many of the shortcomings identified in the government’s PHANOM project – for example the block grant cycle runs through six different implementation steps involving ten separate consultations with local people (compared with PHANOM’s one consultation), a specific information dissemination and institutional preparation stage, community capacity building for engagement in the process, and extensive monitoring.

The European Union

EU funding for Southern Thailand has been provided through the civil society thematic fund for a range of projects in health, environment, higher education, capacity building of civil society organizations and actors, trade and investment.

From 2008 funds of up to €3 million were made available for civil society development in the Deep South, with an additional €1 million fund for local authorities at sub-district level in the south to improve accountability.

The civil society program encountered similar absorption capacity problems as other donors. Following the very poor response to the first year call for proposals the EU realized that civil society capacity was very weak and southern NGOs did not have the organizational capacity or experience needed to manage the EU’s complex and intensive application process. From year two the approach was adapted to a sub-grants strategy through international NGOs and universities and funding has been provided to a range of European-based INGOs, (Oxfam GB, Action Aid, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Save the Children – Sweden, Internews Europe) and the Asia Foundation who then partner with national and southern NGOs (e.g. – MAC, Cross Cultural Foundation) media organizations and universities (e.g. - PSU, Mahidol) in Bangkok and the south to implement projects.

Problems were also encountered with the grant fund for local authorities. The aim of the scheme was to strengthen democracy by improving local authorities’ accountability to citizens and develop their capacities to respond better to communities’ needs. The EU reported however that TAOs submitted poor quality proposals for infrastructure and other procurement-intensive projects that were not deemed suitable for the fund. Criteria were interpreted to allow for proposals from religious leaders and other institutions that could also be defined as “local

authorities” but with little success, the LA grant scheme was cancelled completely and the funds returned to Brussels.

As with other donors, monitoring is also a source of major concern. The EU does not have an office in the south and does not travel there frequently due to extensive security restrictions on EU staff.

Strategy for 2014-2020

As Thailand is a middle-income country, the EU is moving away from service provision in its forthcoming national programme (2014-2020) and will focus on advocacy. However funding for peacebuilding activities in the Deep South is expected to continue along the same lines, but only supporting civil society, no funds will be provided for local authorities.

USAID

SAPAN is a 5-year (2010 to 2015), \$30.4 million project implemented by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) throughout Thailand. Its main objective is to foster constructive civil society engagement with the Royal Thai Government in building transparent and accountable democratic processes and to mitigate extremism. The program seeks to draw on the expertise of leaders in civil society, media, and independent agencies to achieve this goal through activities in three thematic areas:

- Enhancing the capacity of key independent agencies (such as the Office of Auditor General and the National Counter-Corruption Commission) to provide effective government oversight
- Strengthening the capacity of Thai CSOs and the media to serve as checks and balances for political processes and public policy
- Supporting civil peace-building efforts that will diminish the potential for radicalization and escalation of violent conflict in Southern Thailand.

DAI also encountered major capacity constraints. DAI’s initial strategy was to work with a core group of CSOs in different regions that would then reach out to a larger pool of organizations. But the attempt to engage this core group of CSOs did not attract the level of participation anticipated. The civil society sector was much less developed than originally anticipated and this significantly limited progress towards achieving its goals. The strategy was revised but by the end of its second year, the programme had still only managed to provide technical training to thirty-eight individuals, against a cumulative target of nine hundred and seventy two. DAI also had to navigate a series of obstacles related to US funding including initial public misgivings about USAID and a lack of confidence in its intentions.

Monitoring was also a problem for the USAID project. As other donors have noted, minimal impact data exists and monitoring tends to focus on output and activity level to measure programmatic success. DAI encountered a range sub-grant level problems with controls over expenditure and adherence to procedures including attendance at funded training workshops and seminars, and payments of per diems and expenses to participants who had registered but not attended part or all of the events.

To overcome the CSO capacity constraint DAI expanded its focus to include developing partnerships with Thailand’s universities, generally perceived to be a neutral third party networking between independent government agencies and CSOs. DAI reported that this modified approach resulted in a greater level of collaboration and accessibility with the CSOs through the intermediary universities.

Civil Society

While civil society has evolved since the STEP project began, capacity remains low and there is a strong sense that Southern Thailand is suffering from “CSO inflation” – i.e. too many international donors and NGOs chasing too few capable local NGOs and academic institutions.

Pat(t) ani Peace Process

The “Pat(t)ani Peace Process” was launched in September 2012 as an initiative to create space for all interested stakeholders - civil society groups, academics, local representatives, and religious leaders - to come together to analyze the conflict and propose a roadmap to peace. It has converged with the formal “Peace Dialogue” process between the BRN and the Thai government. The initiative is led by PSU Professor Srisompob Jitpiromsri and driven by the philosophy that it is not enough to only bring conflict parties to a dialogue table. The initiative aims to create space for ordinary people to voice their views on how to find a solution to the conflict.

The main vehicle for the Pat(t)ani Peace Process is the Insider Peace Platform (IPP)- an inclusive civil society-centred peace-building platform involving a group of fifty respected Thais from representatives from civil society, academia, the security forces, government, and religious leaders from the three southern border provinces. It has direct links to the Peace Dialogue process, and both informs and is informed by a parallel systematic assessment and reflection process driven by a group of scholar-practitioners who have been at the centre of efforts to develop a solution to the conflict for almost a decade. Participants in the IPP are required to be representatives of broader constituencies – whether community-based networks, religious organizations, government staff, student associations, or NGOs - representing the positions and opinions of all stakeholders and sides in the conflict.

Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand

In 2011 representatives from twenty civil society organizations formed the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand to transform the conflict in the Deep South through increased participation. A series of consultations, which the CSOs had undertaken with 1,500 villagers during 2009-2010, resulted in a decision to promote political decentralization. The Council identified six potential decentralization options, including administration of the three provinces by SBPAC, directly elected provincial governors, and the direct election of a single regional governor. The Council intends to submit a draft bill on decentralization once it has completed its program of local consultations.

Women’s Civil Society Organizations

Meetings during the assessment suggested a high level of women’s participation in civil society organizations across a range of areas from promoting the rights of women and children as well as providing peacebuilding, environmental awareness raising, community development, public information and media production, and skills training services.

- The Network of Civic Women for Peace in the Deep South is an important platform connecting women activists and CSOs in the region. It provides resources and activities to empower women to engage more effectively in peacebuilding, psychosocial rehabilitation, and is active in public outreach and advocacy using community radio, TV, and social media.

- Duayjai Group: This CSO provides an instructive example of how women can be more effective in supporting conflict-affected families where the men have been arrested or detained, promoting knowledge of their rights, facilitating access to legal services, and ensuring women can access moral and material support. Men are often monitored and may place themselves at risk if they try to provide support for the families of detainees or suspects. Women's CSOs like Duayjai play an essential role linking victims with services and support ensuring they do not become isolated and stigmatized.
- The CSO "Fine Tune" is another important resource. Run by former BBC Thai Service journalist Nualnoi Thammasathien¹³ FT has produced a 6-part documentary about the conflict that was broadcast on Thai PBS during primetime, depicting the challenges encountered by women in the conflict. One story focused on the life of a woman whose son and husband and son were prosecuted and acquitted, demonstrating what the prosecution process has done to her family. Another story featured a Buddhist woman trying to bridge the gap between Buddhist and Muslim communities.

Other women-headed CSOs are working to strengthen the role of communities in supporting children's education and there are initiatives by children's rights and women's rights NGOs to develop a community-level protection system through conflict-preparedness in schools and training volunteers.

¹³ See also "Documentary highlights miscarriage of justice in Thailand's Deep South"
<http://www.prachatai.com/english/node/3704>

3. Assessment of the STEP Project

3.1 Review of the Outputs and Activities

Output 1: Strengthened institutional capacity of community-based organizations and media in promoting social cohesion

This output contains a series of eight activities.

- Activity 1.1: A mapping of community-based organizations (CBOs) working in the south on existing community projects
- Activity 1.2: Capacity assessments and gender analysis of CBOs/village committees in the south
- Activity 1.3: Substantive and operational training for CBOs, local graduate volunteers and village committees on local community development projects
- Activity 1.4: A grants scheme for CBOs and village committees working on issues of development, legal justice, development, youth and women
- Activity 1.5: A database system for monitoring women situation and training curriculum on gender assessment and sensitivity for CBOs in the south
- Activity 1.6: A mapping of media initiatives
- Activity 1.7: Capacity development plan for constructive media / media for peace
- Activity 1.8: Training provided for media working in and on the south

It is not possible to cover the volume of work which has gone into developing, planning, managing, revising, and monitoring all of these sub-outputs, but the

Progress

During the assessment visit the team was able to meet with a number of CSOs all of whom showed impressive knowledge of the context and the challenges of empowerment and participation, and a selfless commitment to their work. The team was able to see some of the activities under this output including:

- “Deep South Young Journalism School” organized in cooperation with Deep South Watch under the Centre for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD). Thirty-seven female and male students, aged 15-18 have undergone a 10-day intensive training on basic journalism skills, fieldwork to research news articles, and how to produce news articles in Yawi. Articles are published in local newsletters distributed within the communities and on Deep South Watch Network website. A bi-lingual community newsletter (Sinaran) is published and distributed across the three provinces since December 2012.
- The project worked with the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) to undertake an assessment of capacities of the SBPAC Peace Community Development Project with five field assessment visits to villages in the five border provinces to identify five model villages that have been highly successful in projects to promote local sustainable economy, community saving schemes, public participation, community planning, budget allocation, and empowering of women and local knowledge. These villages are being used as examples to promote development in other communities in the south. Field visits were made to communities in the southern border provinces to identify CBOs and CSOs who would benefit from exposure to these models and training workshops were held on community development, livelihood, environment and justice.

- In collaboration with the Cross Cultural Foundation and the CSO DuayJai a database of organizations working for women and children in the south has been created to help monitor the situation of women and children situation.
- In addition to this, \$110,000 in grants has been given to 3 CSOs, through the Institute for Peace Studies to strengthen the institutional capacity of community-based organizations to mainstream social cohesion in their community development work, the project provided grants to three CBO to implement three sub-projects entitled

Impact

Civil society has grown considerably in the Deep South in recent years. This seems partly because of increased space as a result of changing RTG policy but also as a result of capacity development support initiatives by a number of international actors including the World Bank, USAID, the European Union, and UNDP. STEP has clearly made an important contribution through its engagement with PSU and other direct implementation activities.

Recommendations

- The Young Journalism program is a creditworthy and valuable activity. Given the relatively small number of participants and the drop-out rate it may be worth reviewing some of the design features of this program, e.g. the duration (10 days may be too long), the recruitment strategy, the possibility for internships or work experience after training, etc.
- This output represents an entire project. It contains a series of eight activities, each of which constitutes an output in its own right. The technical capacities and expertise that would normally be required to implement an output like this are considerable and certainly much more than was available to the project team and the executing agency PSU. Future programming in this area would benefit from a detailed formulation process that spells out in detail the planning and resourcing of these types of activities.
- Civil Society capacity development is not standard university business. The mapping exercise became the central focus & consumed a large proportion of the resources, ultimately producing a research product that did not meet the needs of the project. Two other international partners had similar experience with PSU & in one case terminated their partnership with PSU in this area.
- The mapping exercise encountered some problems and the lessons from this exercise should be analyzed and incorporated into any successor project. In a context where (the western concept) of civil society is in the early stages of development mapping exercises need to be carefully defined and driven by very practical objectives.
- While it was not possible to predict the number of CBOs when the project was designed the indicator of “50% of CBOs in the south benefit from CA & training programs” proved to be very ambitious. The output and indicator might have been formulated differently and this may have helped with designing the mapping and CD activities. The project should review its monitoring plan and establish accurate, realistic end-of-project targets for this output and related activities, and obtain and report against baseline data for all indicators.

Output 2: Improved income generation and employment opportunities of communities

Progress

- This output has contributed to the development of two very successful local community enterprises, in collaboration with the District Public Health Office in Yaring. The STEP team deserve credit for the active engagement of the communities to address social

cohesion and reduce poverty, development of a Local Community Business manual and IEC material, the establishment of two learning centers, and the potential to act as a pilot to transfer knowledge and good practices about product and market development to other local entrepreneur groups in other areas.

- At the same time, the allocation of project funds should be analyzed. Of the original budget of \$350,000 Study Research was allocated \$60,000 and grants to CBOs for income generating projects were to be made for \$150,000. It seems that \$225,000 was spent on research and so far only \$11,000 has been allocated to grants for CBOs. The initial plan to undertake an assessment of vocational training needs, existing facilities and market needs seems to have consumed a large part of the budget and produced research outputs with limited practical value to the objective of improving income generation and social cohesion in communities.

Impact

- The impact in the two communities is very positive in terms of poverty reduction and social cohesion, gender empowerment, and the engagement of extension of local government services.
- The potential impact is significant if the activity is taken forward in the successor programme.

Recommendations

- The success of the two community enterprises could form the basis for a Livelihoods & Poverty Reduction output in any successor programme, with criteria emphasizing social cohesion, gender and sustainability.
- While the mechanism used to disburse the grant through the District Health Office in Yaring proved successful, the advantages and disadvantages of disbursement through local government offices should be analyzed before deciding what would be the most appropriate implementation mechanism in any future grants or successor project.
- The targets and indicators in the project document RRF were not adequately formulated and as a result of changes do not provide a useful basis for monitoring progress. The project should review its monitoring plan to establish up-to-date end-of-project targets that reflect changes to this output and related activities, and obtain and report against baseline data for all indicators.

Output 3: Enhanced legal awareness of local communities and strengthened capacity of legal aid organizations to facilitate public local access to effective legal service

This output comprises a blistering series of sub-outputs and activities that would normally constitute an entire project in their own right. The four “activities” actually constitute four separate outputs:

- A map of legal aid structure and legal empowerment at local level
- An outreach and public information strategy for legal awareness developed and implemented in partnership with Adilan Centre
- Strengthened capacities of paralegals, community leaders and legal aid organizations through training and tools for accessing information
- Strengthening Adilan Centre and its networks by disseminating information and messages for legal awareness

Progress

Given the volume of work involved in this output remarkable progress has been made towards the

achievement of all four sub-outputs. In spite of the fact that capacity constraints delayed the implementation of some activities, the project team was able to revise the execution modality, identify new implementation partners, and deliver on the new objective.

Achievements include:

- During 2012 1,443 women and 2,022 men from legal aid organizations, religious organizations and communities in 250 sub-districts of 33 districts were trained on legal awareness and access to justice.
- The assessment of the Adilan Centres and existing legal aid mechanisms in the southern border provinces was completed and presented to the Secretary General of SBPAC with recommendations on support to the Adilan Centres network
- Mapping of legal aid and empowerment structures at the provincial and local levels was completed and published
- A manual for training paralegals has been developed, and reviewed by the Muslim Attorney Center (MAC) and the Foundation Promoting Human Rights and Access to Justice Network (Hak Asasi Prikemanusiaan - HAP)
- A comparative review of Thai Law Code versus Islamic Law has been produced
- A training course on Sharia law has been prepared
- A training course on comparative law for law has been developed and was being given at the College of Islamic Studies when the STEP project review team visited PSU
- Production of training manuals and IEC material

Some aspects of the original output changed as a result of changes in SBPAC policy and the replacement of the Secretary General of SBPAC in October 2011 and the adoption of the 2012 - 2014 Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy the investment in the Adilan Centres by SBPAC was not been given the priority that was anticipated when the project was designed.

Impact

It is too early to expect to be able to measure the impact of this work. Advocacy around the assessment of the Adilan Centres and the dissemination of the comparative studies has the potential to significantly influence government policy, and the use of the paralegal training materials and IEC outputs should certainly contribute to increased access to justice in the south.

Recommendation

The capacities and resources developed (in particular the training course for paralegal service volunteers based on the assessment of Adilan Centre) should be built on in an Access to Justice output in any successor project.

Output 4: Strengthened capacity of local administration in participatory planning and budgeting

This is another ambitious output focused on “developing planning and institutional models and administrative tools based on political and institutional structures and governance mechanisms of local government administration that help to promote social cohesion and integrate these models in existing national and local government”.

Progress

To date local administration experts have undertaken three studies:

- i) The first study explores minimal reform and radical reform options. The minimal reform option abolishes the sub-district administrative office in favor of an increase roles for lower-tier authorities to cover the areas of education, public health, natural

and environmental management, art and culture, religions and local norms. The radical reform option abolishes existing structures of provincial administrative offices, municipalities and sub-district administrative offices, and establishes a special local government administration in the Southern Border Provinces.

- ii) The second study examines the possibilities for a closer integration of roles, responsibilities and information between upper and lower tiers of local government administration in order to improve accountability through a multi-level participatory budgeting system. The provincial/local authority would establish a pyramid structure of civic participation and a channel for thematic participations to enhance participation of local people at community-, village-, and sub-district-level.
- iii) The third study explores the application of democratic accountability in local government and the roles and responsibilities of women in local administration.

These studies have been presented to the Director of the Bureau of Local Government Development, the Director of Local Planning, and the Director of Technical Cooperation of the Department of Local Administration (DLA). The DLA has agreed to pilot findings from the studies and identified Pattani as the location for a pilot district.

Impact

Project activities under this output have not yet been completed to a level where any impact could be expected.

Recommendations

The output described in the Project Document seeks to address some important aspects of local governance limitations:

- Develop methodologies for people's participation in line with Ministry of Interior framework for local planning
- Introduce community and gender responsive budgeting into local development planning to local government units (Municipalities and TAOs) and Department of Local Administration
- Disburse funds to small scale project formulated according to the methodologies introduced through Department of Local Administration and/or SBPAC

As described above, evaluations of government development projects have identified a series of inadvertent ways in which the projects reinforced relationships and dynamics that were often at the heart of conflict and exclusion in southern villages. Nevertheless, local people still preferred to have some level of participation in planning with local authorities.

While this project review was taking place an agreement was being signed with KPI to pilot participatory community and gender responsive budget planning with local development offices in a number of municipalities and TAOs in the south. The potential for increased public participation in local government planning processes (e.g. - community and gender responsive budgeting, conflict sensitive local planning processes) is significant.

Output 5: Strengthened local level natural resources and natural disaster management

The project set out to help establish networks in selected communities comprising local people, local authorities and local NGOs and developing initiatives to resolve natural resource and natural disaster management issues.

Progress

The project established networks of trained disaster management volunteers (religious leaders, community leaders, health volunteers and local people) in 24 villages, 19 sub-districts and 9

districts of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Automatic Weather Stations were installed in seven location and trained volunteers have been assigned to monitor the automatic weather stations in their areas. The networks include both Muslim and Buddhist communities. In total 184 community leaders and local people - 44 women and 140 men - have received training on natural resources management and disaster preparedness and response.

The difficulties of implementation and monitoring in conflict-affected contexts were highlighted by delays in setting up the automatic weather stations as a result of increasing violence that prevented technical teams gaining access to selected sites.

Impact

At a time when relations between Buddhist and Muslim communities in the south are under severe pressure as a result of fear and distrust, the project has succeeded in building cross-cultural networks to manage natural resources and strengthen preparedness for natural disasters. Concern about natural resource management and preparedness for natural disasters is a very important shared interest that brings people together, helping them to transcend the divisions created by the conflict to focus on the protection of their natural environment and their traditional livelihood. Common commitment to these long-term issues has significant potential peacebuilding impact and by building the capacity of these cross-cultural networks STEP is strengthening a critical driver of peace in the south.

By highlighting how the erosion of traditional livelihoods and the growing sense of alienation are feeding into the insurgency the project has the potential to make an important contribution to the transformation of the conflict. This is another important aspect of the project that should be built on in any successor program.

Recommendations

- The networks constitute a valuable peacebuilding resource. Where possible STEP should provide ongoing support to maintain the networks for example through micro-grants to facilitate community efforts to protect the environment or strengthen disaster preparedness.
- Actual or potential links between the local natural disaster management network and IPP, People's College, other peacebuilding capacities should be mapped to ensure their inclusion in appropriate – i.e. conflict sensitive – peacebuilding activities such as information sharing, training, and consultation.
- Carefully consider how the local natural disaster management networks can be involved in the peacebuilding strategy of any successor programme.

Output 6: Increased knowledge of and exposure to various governance models and practices among key government officials

The activities described in the project document are:

- Commissioning study of governance models and practices.
- Support series of discussions on governance models, public management and decentralization
- Study visits

The indicator for the achievement of these activities are given as:

- Number of senior representatives from key government offices, which has mandate related to decentralization, who have applied the knowledge gained on governance including decentralization by participating in the studies.
- Number of key stakeholders who reported the increase in their knowledge on governance by attending the workshop

Progress

The study of governance models and practices is ongoing, in collaboration with the Office of Decentralization, CSCD and PSU Pattani. The study tours have been cancelled.

The major achievement under this output and one of the most important contributions of the project is its support for the Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) to work with the Insider Peace Platform (IPP). IPP is an inclusive civil society-centred peace-building platform involving a wide range of representatives from civil society, academia, the security forces, government, and religious leaders from the three southern border provinces. It has direct links to the Peace Dialogue process, and both informs and is informed by a parallel systematic assessment and reflection process driven by a group of scholar-practitioners who have been at the centre of efforts to develop a solution to the conflict for almost a decade. Participants in the IPP are required to be representatives of broader constituencies – whether community-based networks, religious organizations, government staff, student associations, or NGOs representing the positions and opinions of all stakeholders and sides in the conflict. Under this output, the STEP project has supported a series of capacity development workshops, focused discussions, seminars, and action research activities.

Capacities of the IPP participants have been developed through a series of workshops mapping potential resources, sharing perspectives on the sources and dynamics of the conflict, and the drivers of conflict and peace. Participants have been engaged in the use of collective memories based on identity, culture, ethnicity and religion, to develop an understanding of the root causes of the conflict from different perspectives. Experience from other contexts has been used to broaden participants' perspectives, and to explore issues and challenges of the interim process and the transformation processes in a constructive way through negative and positive peace.

Impact

While it is too early to measure the impact of this output, continued support for these activities clearly has significant potential to produce a major impact on prospects for peace in the south. The potential impact in increased participation in the peace process is enormous.

Recommendations

- This is a critical process that deserves UNDP's full support. It is important that the contribution to the IPP process in any successor project is informed by a carefully crafted strategy producing a set of practical objectives for UNDP's involvement. This strategy should ensure connections between different funds and activities across the range of project outputs avoid that effort and resources are diffused.
- The project should review its monitoring plan to establish up-to-date end-of-project targets that reflect changes to this output and related activities, and obtain and report against baseline data for all indicators.

Output 7: Enhanced knowledge and capacities of government officials at the provincial level to provide effective dispute resolution mechanism

Activities under this output in the original project document appear as:

- Training provided to government officials and communities leaders on dispute resolution structures in mediation, knowledge of relevant laws, human rights, documentation in coordination with SBPAC and the Governor's office
- Induction course for government officials posted to the southern border provinces linking with the Coordinator Development Project under Bureau of Personnel Development of SBPAC
- Contract responsible parties.
- Develop and deliver training modules for community leaders
- Develop and deliver induction-training modules for government officials and local interpreters.
- (Training modules will be developed in close consultation with SBPAC)

Progress

The focus of activities being carried out under this output seems to have shifted somewhat from the activities and indicators in the original project document. In response to the evolving situation and emerging opportunities the project identified an important group of local partners and a series of valuable conflict transformation activities including:

- Support to the Center for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) to work with the People's College is an excellent initiative and has significant peacebuilding potential. The People's College is a group of 23 young human rights volunteers working to create a community network for peace in conflict-affected areas. Two hundred young people have been trained in a series of 3-day workshops on civil rights in peace building, human rights in Islamic perspective, and local governance. These young people form the core of a youth network for peace and work together to organize People's Forum and Peace Dialogues at community level to civic awareness about human rights, alternative dispute resolution fora, and the peace dialogue process. The network serves as a two-way link to the IPP forum passing on information about the peace dialogue process and channeling feedback from local communities into the IPP forum and the dialogue process.
- Under this output, the project also supporting the production of a bi-lingual newsletter in Thai and Yawi) to be distributed people in communities to ensure that the peace process has been shared and publicized.
- The project also supported the Institute for Peace Studies of PSU and the Association of Southern Political Science and Public Administration (South PSPA) in organizing the International Conference on Political Science, Public Administration and Peace Studies.

Impact

Activities under this output are still being developed and it is too early to expect any impact. However, if the activities continue and support is carried into a successor project the potential to promote increased participation in the peace process is clear.

Recommendations

- The project should review its monitoring plan to establish up-to-date end-of-project targets that reflect changes to this output and related activities, and obtain and report against baseline data for all indicators.
- This output should be merged with output 6 as part of any successor project. As with output 6 future strategies should be informed by a carefully crafted approach developed

during in-depth consultation and planning with local stakeholders to specify the intended impact and outcome, objectives, outputs and inputs.

4. Analysis of the Findings

The review of the STEP project presented above describes the significant progress that has made towards the achievement of the outputs set out in the project document. In the short space of time since implementation began it has made a significant contribution to the expansion of civil society in the Deep South and the empowerment of community based organizations, human rights defenders, women's groups, youth networks, and peacebuilding platforms.

Summary of the Project Achievements

- Capacities of civil society networks and community based organizations with whom it worked have been strengthened and project activities have made a visible contribution to the growth of civil society in the Deep South.
- Critical crosscutting cleavages that link communities across differences of language, identity, religion, and culture, and help them transcend tension and divisions related to the conflict have been Identified and explored, and project activities developed to strengthen these links.
- The project has developed and piloted relevant and effective capacity-building strategies under a number of key areas including women's empowerment, youth development, and community-based networks for disaster management and response.
- Valuable capacity development products have been created including training manuals,
- The project has also contributed to development of alternative media and reporting outlets and products that help increase access to information about events in the Deep South, and ensure their availability in Yawi.
- The project also supported mapping and research activities that highlighted how the erosion of traditional livelihoods is exacerbating poverty and exclusion, fuelling a growing sense of alienation that feeds into the conflict.
- The project's catalytic effect has helped build relationships, understanding and acceptance on behalf of PSU and UNDP, and develop a human resource and knowledge base on which future activities in the Deep South can be built.

Shortcomings in the Project Design

The review encountered a number of shortcomings in the project design that led to significant complications in the implementation phase. These are analyzed below to generate recommendations for any successor project.

Scope vs. Impact

Probably the single biggest weakness of the STEP project is the lack of any overarching focus that would contribute to an outcome level impact. The project contains seven outputs ranging from youth and women empowerment to decentralization, taking in disaster preparedness, access to justice, employment creation, access to information, and conflict transformation along the way. These are spread over some sixty sub-outputs and activities without a concomitant investment in staff, infrastructure, and budgetary resources. The result was a project that was spread far too

thinly, jeopardizing the implementation of individual outputs and reducing the prospect of any significant impact.

Recommendation: While peacebuilding projects should ideally address a range of multi-sectoral outputs, the focus, quantity, and range of these outputs should be informed by:

- Knowledge and understanding of the problem to be addressed, and familiarity with the operating context;
- Due regard for the project management capacities that will be required;
- The technical expertise that will be needed to guide design and implementation of individual outputs;
- The size of the budget likely to be made available for each output.

Project Strategy

The guidance on how this complex array of outputs and activities should be implemented would justify an extensive strategy, which had been worked out in advance with the various stakeholders. The strategy that was contained in the project document did not provide such a plan and did not seem to be a product of detailed joint planning.

It seems that the STEP strategy was conceptualized using UNDP's 7-pillar Community Security and Social Cohesion Policy. This may not be the most appropriate model for a number of reasons:

- The likely role of UNDP given the fact that Thailand is a middle-income country
- The political sensitivity of the crisis in the south government's concerns about "internationalization" of the crisis
- The contestation of development, and its integration with the military's counterinsurgency strategy
- The extent of technical capacities and support that would be required for the seven-pillar approach
- The requirement for a multi-sector, whole of government, engagement by UNDP.

Recommendation: There are a number of conceptual frameworks that would provide valuable guidance for strategy development for the Deep South, based on concrete examples from countries that have encountered similar problems, policy recommendations and structural prescriptions for managing the conflict. Regardless of what conceptual framework is used, the design of any project should be grounded on an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of the conflict *at the level of the intervention* and based on agreement with stakeholders dealing directly with the consequences of the conflict.

Research-Implementation Imbalance

The ambitious range of outputs planned in a relatively unknown understood programming context created a need for a wide range of mapping exercises, capacity assessments, studies, market assessments, stakeholder analyses, which given the limited budget spread thinly over so many activities, produced an imbalance in some outputs between the investment needed to diagnose the problem and the implementation of the proposed solution. This may also have been exacerbated by a policy-oriented emphasis on mapping, studies, and analysis of the context and dynamics.

Recommendation: Any successor project should ensure that while activities are driven by a rigorous analysis of the programming context and needs, the ratio of research to implementation is realistic and appropriate and adhered to in the relevant budget disbursements.

Changes during Implementation

The gap between the activities and some the outputs has widened during implementation. This is partly a result of the lack of any previous UNDP programming experience in the Deep South and partly due to the changing dynamics on the ground. But it also suggests that the development of the project strategy was not sufficiently informed by participatory analysis and planning with local stakeholders on the ground in the three provinces.

Recommendation: Any successor project should emphasize the importance of participatory formulation of the project outputs and activities, using an initial draft strategy as a set of hypotheses to be validated with key stakeholder and potential implementing partners and collaborators in the Deep South. Using the PME Handbook and adapted variants of the tools therein, carefully plan and conduct participatory strategy validation and planning activities with these stakeholders over a 10-day period as a core component of the preparation of the project document.

Monitoring

The targets and indicators in the project document RRF were not adequately formulated and do not constitute a useful basis for monitoring progress. This shortcoming was exacerbated by changes to some of the activities and problems with access to some project sites as a result of security threats.

Recommendation: The project should review its monitoring plan to establish realistic end-of-project targets that reflect changes to outputs and related activities, and obtain and report against baseline data for all indicators. Planning for any successor project should ensure baseline data is obtained for all indicators and included in the Results and Resources Framework and reported against on a regular basis in compliance with UNDP project planning, monitoring and evaluation standards.

5. Potential Strategic Intervention Points

5.1 Sustaining the Peace Dialogue and Broadening Participation in the Process

Mapping and research activities supported by the STEP project highlighted how economic underdevelopment and the erosion of traditional livelihoods is exacerbating poverty and exclusion, creating an economic underclass of people whose way of life is being overtaken by environmental erosion, liberal market economic development, inadequate water sector planning and management, and corruption, and who are disadvantaged by language and ethnicity further excluding them from a secure future in the Thai state as it is currently configured. At the same time the interaction of low educational attainment, youth unemployment, delinquency, drug addiction and crime feeds a vicious cycle in which Malay-Muslims are underrepresented in the public sector and in high-status employment. This exclusion in turn fuels a growing sense of alienation creating constituencies of support and legitimacy for violent actors - dispensable populations of young people drawn into the conflict as a consequence of the lack of alternative opportunities available to them, or ordinary communities whose fear and confusion are exploited by demonizing the “other side”.

But while underdevelopment, social grievances, and the denial of fundamental rights create the conditions for the continuation of violence, the decisive factors driving the conflict are ideological: Malay Muslims have legitimate grievances against a political system that excludes them from meaningful participation in their own development, disapproves of their language and cultural practices, and perpetuates structural conditions in which the Deep South remains among the poorest, least developed regions in the country. Today people in the Southern Border Provinces sixty-one percent of people don't think the government cares what they think and seventy-four percent believe they have very little or no influence over national government decisions. It is well known and widely acknowledged that a sustainable solution to the conflict will only be produced by changes to the structure of the state that give Malay Muslims a share in the political system. The golden rule of ethnic conflict management is to give every significant identity group a feeling of inclusion and a stake in the political system.

While there is no indication that this kind of structural change is likely to happen in the near future, the peace dialogue offers an important opportunity for people throughout the south to articulate their aspirations for a sustainable outcome to the conflict and the future governance arrangements of the region. It is essential that it be structured in a way that offers local people an opportunity for inclusion as invested parties to the process rather than excluded citizens.

Moreover, peace processes do not gain traction or advance in a vacuum: if the broader public in southern Thailand is not informed about and invested in the peace process then the limited motivation of progressive elements on both sides will be difficult to sustain. Only by increasing knowledge and understanding of the peace process and related developments, and by broadening the engagement of people from all over the southern provinces, will it be possible to empower meaningful participation and build a critical mass of support for a sustainable resolution of the conflict.

But, the issues are complex, information is often scarce, and objective, informed analysis can be even scarcer. A useful example is the interpretation of the five points issued by the BRN following the first meeting in the dialogue process. Referred to as demands by some commentators as demands, and as requests or an “agenda for negotiations” by others, they are: that the Thai government acknowledge the rights of the "Melayu Patani nation"; that detained suspects be released; that ASEAN members, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and international NGOs

observe the peace dialogues; that Malaysia act as a mediator, not just a facilitator for the dialogue; and that the BRN be recognized not as a "separatist" but as a "liberation" movement. How are ordinary people to relate to these points, or to interpret them? What should they expect from the government side as a response? In their most recent meeting the IPP worked for two days with participants to develop a consensus on behalf of their respective constituents as to what would constitute a meaningful response to the list of five issues ('demands') and to draft a policy paper based on this response, which would be made public.

Recommendation

It is evident that promoting increased participation requires a significant investment to build the capacities of civil society organizations, and to put in place and maintain the networks, systems, and platforms that will inform and sustain participation. This is a government priority - NSC policy objective 8 - and it should also be a UN priority. Objective 8 of the NSC policy aims "To create an environment suitable for peaceful solution to the conflict and for establishing an assurance that all stakeholders participate in the peace-building process". This represents an important opportunity for UNDP to reorient and intensify its programming activities in support of the peace-dialogue, building on some of the most important achievements of the STEP project to engage directly in capacity development of peacebuilding networks and activities, and civic awareness raising.

5.2 Access to Information

Ninety percent of the population in Southern Thailand is Malay Muslim. They share a common language, religion, culture - their habits, beliefs, practices, and myths - and regional identity. As the indigenous population of the former Sultanate of Patani they share an almost sacred common heritage and identity. In a recent survey, two thirds of people polled in the Deep South believe that the main cause of the conflict is ethnic and religious difference.

At the heart of ethnic conflict is a natural tendency for individuals to link their own self-worth with what they perceive to be the standing of their group in society. This basic, human need for recognition, dignity, and self worth is perhaps the most powerful psychological need of all. When ethnicity becomes a factor in politics it raises important symbolic questions about which groups are more powerful, have higher status in the social and political system, are more worthy of legitimacy, recognition, and deference. Nowhere is this more evident than in the acceptance and recognition of a group's language. Language has such a symbolic value as an indication of worth for a group in society because it is the means by which people communicate with one another, educate their children, access public services, do business, and conduct the affairs of government. It is also a means of competition - for places in the bureaucracy, the economy, and the university - and advancement. The implications are lived out on a daily basis and invoke strong feelings about group worth and group power - or group exclusion and marginalization.

Ninety-five percent of southerners believe that government officials in the Deep South should be able to speak Pattani-Malay. Ninety-seven percent want road-signs to be written in both Thai and Yawi, and ninety-six percent want children to receive bilingual education in both Pattani-Malay and Thai languages. Sixty percent (rising to 72 percent in Pattani and 74 percent in Narathiwat) felt that government recognition of the unique history of the region and the withdrawal of troops would decrease the conflict - even without elected self-governance. Yet a clear majority - 53% - of those consulted stated that they did not feel free to even discuss the issue. Acknowledgement of Pattani-Malay language and culture is clearly a central factor in the transformation of the conflict. It implies recognition and legitimation of the status of the Malay-Muslim population and the self-worth of individuals in that group.

In the past twenty years Information Communication Technology has revolutionized the way that people access and consume information, and with it the potential for public participation in

peacebuilding processes. In politically and culturally sensitive contexts TV and radio dramas offer a powerful vehicle for channeling communication about developments in the peace process, countering misperceptions, helping people to frame and analyze conflict; identifying interests; defusing mistrust and providing emotional outlets. By raising awareness and promoting discussion about what might otherwise be considered off-limits in a domestic or community setting. By creating a safe 'fictional space' to depict cultural and political dilemmas they encourage viewers to discuss and question sensitive or taboo topics, identify with 'hero' and 'anti-hero' characters, and learn about options to resolve domestic and community problems. In some conflict and post-conflict transition settings the drama/soap opera format has been extraordinarily successful in helping to increase awareness, promote public debate, and change attitudes¹⁴. In Afghanistan, the radio drama *New Home, New Life*¹⁵ has become the most popular cultural radio programme in the country, reaching 39% of Afghan adults in 2010. Storylines reflect real-life situations in listeners' lives and the information they need to help improve their own lives. Independent studies have also highlighted the positive effect of this kind of programming in educating people in conflict-affected situations and helping promote safer behaviours. A 1997 evaluation by OCHA found that of those people in mine affected areas, a non-listener was twice as likely to be a mine victim than a *New Home New Life* listener as a result of the information broadcast through the drama series.

This type of activity also has significant potential to support the development of women and children's role in society. Although TV dramas or "soap-operas" are extremely popular throughout Thailand, the quality is poor and negative stereotyping of women is widespread. A 2008 Thai Health Report also criticized the lack of good-quality television programmes that promote education and learning for children, youth and the family, noting that the actual level was only 3–4 per cent of all programming.

Recommendation

A second priority intervention should be civic awareness to promote understanding of the Malay Muslim population, and knowledge of the problems caused by the conflict, and a broad public discussion about what would constitute a solution. A television drama in mixed Patani-Malay and Thai languages using satellite television would be a powerful channel for civic awareness among ethnic groups seeking self-expression in their own cultural and linguistic terms and represents an important strategic entry point for increased knowledge of and engagement in the peace dialogue process and the wider transformation of the conflict in Southern Thailand.

5.3 Access to Justice

The perception that government security forces commit abuses with impunity continues to be reinforced by the repeated renewal of the Emergency Decree, which provides blanket immunity for security personnel and government officials from criminal, civil, and disciplinary action despite the NSC policy provisions to the contrary. The army and police have not pursued any criminal prosecutions against members of their forces implicated in criminal offenses relating to the conflict¹⁶. Questions have also been raised about the failure of the Ministry of Justice Department of Special Investigations and the National Human Rights Commission to carry out full and impartial investigations of extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations. The end result is an entrenched lack of trust among Malay Muslims in the government's commitment to provide them with justice for abuses.

¹⁴ Examples include *Katha Mitho Sarangiko* an award winning drama which was part of UNDP's post-conflict recovery programme in Nepal <http://www.bbcnepalidrama.com/main/> and 'The Secrets of this House' <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/global/2010/10/life-as-an-afghan-soap-opera-actress/18598/>

¹⁵ http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediaaction/where_we_work/asia/afghanistan/afghanistaneducation.html

¹⁶ Amnesty International (2012) 'Renewed emergency legislation leaves southern Thailand in human rights limbo' 21 Dec 2012

Although the progressive NSC policy has been in effect for more than 18-months, both martial law and the 2005 Emergency Decree remain in force in most of the three Southern Border Provinces granting the security forces sweeping powers to detain suspects and hold them without charge in unofficial detention centers. In the four districts in Songkhla, the Internal Security Act (ISA) provides a legal basis for the military to operate.

Under martial law, the military is allowed to carry out searches and make arrests without court warrants and detain suspects for up to seven days without charge. The Emergency Decree is concurrently imposed in the same area, apart from Mae Lan district in Pattani. The Decree provides an array of special powers that limit or suspend a range of fundamental human rights guaranteed under the Thai constitution and Thai law. It permits the military or police to detain suspects without charge in unofficial detention sites for up to 30 days and removes the right to challenge a detention before a court. Human rights groups have complained about the combined use of the laws to extend detention using a “seven plus 30-day formula” i.e. suspects are arrested and held for seven days under martial law before their detention is extended for up to 30 days under the emergency decree. Human rights activists point out that the Emergency Decree fails to provide assurance of prompt access to legal counsel and family members, or effective judicial and administrative safeguards against the mistreatment of detainees. The decree also gives officials immunity from civil, criminal and disciplinary penalties and suspends the jurisdiction of administrative courts to revoke illegal regulations and policies.

A Rising Trend of Extra-Judicial Killings

According to Muslim Attorney Centre (MAC), cases of torture have reduced in recent years. They attribute this to their focus on the lack of any forensic evidence presented by the prosecution or because confessions were tainted by coercion. A MAC study found that courts dismissed more than 70 per cent of security-related cases in 2011. However this decrease has been matched by an emerging trend of extrajudicial killings of suspects. Since the launching of the peace dialogue in February 2013, it is estimated that there were at least sixteen cases of suspected extrajudicial killing.¹⁷

On the one hand the NSC policy provides that

“The government shall increase emphasis on elimination of decadent political and socio-cultural conditions by preventing the violation of human rights [...] Investigation of incidents that cause doubt among Thai people and the foreign community [...] shall be expedited [...] and the culprits shall be quickly brought to justice in order to eliminate the so-called “culture of impunity...”¹⁸

The NSC has also suggested that the government is planning to lift the emergency decree in five districts where the level of violence is relatively minimal (Sukirin and Waeng in Narathiwat, Kabang, and Baetong in Yala and Maikaen in Pattani), but is more reluctant to remove the martial law.¹⁹ Other positive signs at the policy level include references in the ISOC 2012-16 policy to human rights protection and respect for the rule of law as part of their strategies, and statements by senior military commanders that any officers violating human rights or mistreating detainees would not be protected.

In reality however, what people in the south observe is that despite repeated campaigns by human rights advocates including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, a request from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and an open letter in June 2012 from the Cross Cultural

¹⁷ Interview with MAC’s senior staff, Pattani, 19 September 2013.

¹⁸ For the full text of the Policy on the Administration and Development of the Southern Border Provinces, 2012-14, see <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3019>

¹⁹ Interview with a senior official of the National Security Council, Bangkok, 25 September 2013.

Foundation and the Muslim Attorney Centre Foundation to the Prime Minister, the NSC Secretary General, the House Speaker and the President of the Senate, the laws remain in place.

Recommendation

Continued support for access to legal services should be a critical priority for UNDP in the next phase of its engagement in the Deep South..It is clear however that the Adilan Centre does not provide an environment where vulnerable people can have confidence that their case will be handled confidentially or with the authority that is required to ensure their protection, or secure a fair hearing. A frequent question during key informant interviews and focus groups discussions was “why would we go to the state to seek help with human rights abuse when it is the state that is abusing our rights?” As suggested by the SBPAC Justice Administration Affairs Director UNDP should support MAC to train religious leaders and other appropriate volunteers from villages as trusted focal points for legal assistance

5.4 Participatory Planning and Sustainable Livelihoods

Mapping and research activities supported by the STEP project highlighted how economic underdevelopment and the erosion of traditional livelihoods is exacerbating poverty and exclusion, creating an economic underclass of people whose way of life is being overtaken by environmental erosion, liberal market economic development, inadequate water sector planning and management, and corruption, and who are disadvantaged by language and ethnicity further excluding them from a secure future in the Thai state as it is currently configured.

Thailand clearly has sufficient resources to promote development activities in the south that would support sustainable livelihoods and reduce poverty and addressing economic underdevelopment has been a core element in the government’s strategy to reduce the conflict. In March 2009 the government approved a special 3-year development budget of \$2.4 billion for the Deep South. But it has failed to transform budgetary resources into these developmental activities and outcomes. There is an overwhelming sense that development is used solely to “win the hearts and minds” of the Malay Muslim population. Away from the village meetings and “participatory planning” sessions convened as part of the PHANOM project local people have a keen and articulate analysis of the way the project is being used to reinforce a governance system that is often seen as centralized, predatory, and exclusive. Studies of PHANOM have identified a series of ways in which the projects have exacerbated exclusion and marginalization:

- Instead of promoting popular participation, the project strengthened the narrow power-base of the village head and the village committee which, rather than acting as a mechanism for collective decision making is often made up of relatives, supporters, or members of the patronage network controlled by the Village Head;
- Villagers were prevented from participating effectively in planning and decision-making processes because the authorities did not provide people with information about the initiatives they are supposed to participate in, or about their roles, rights or responsibilities under these initiatives.
- By controlling access to information about the issues being discussed and the planning and execution processes, and by managing which villagers get to know about their intended roles, authority and responsibility, local elites are able to manipulate the participation of the villagers to their advantage, and control the direct resources to the recipients and priorities they favor.
- Consultations with villagers were conducted in Thai placing many Malay-speaking villagers at a distinct disadvantage;

- Majority voting was used, gratuitously creating constituencies of opposition and fuelling conflict between groups within the community rather than taking the opportunity to reach consensus and thereby strengthen intra-communal relations.
- Authorities relied on traditional customs of “phu noi tong kaow rob phu-yai” (“little people should respect important people”) and “kraenjai” (deference to people who have power or authority) that institutionalize the inferior status of villagers as subordinates who cannot and should not challenge the authority of their “betters”.

What emerges clearly is that programs should be informed by the political contestation of development and an awareness of how projects are fueling conflict in the Deep South. Planning should try to ensure transparency and greater participation of villagers in designing the projects. Decision making and prioritization processes should be structured in a way that compensates for the imbalance of power between the marginalized groups and the dominant formal structures centred on the institutionalized kamnan/phuyaibarn/village committee model and the *See saow lak* or “four pillars” model.

The World Bank’s “Piloting Community Approaches in Southern Thailand” development project seems to have been designed to address many of the shortcomings identified in the government’s PHANOM project. For example the block grant cycle runs through six different implementation steps involving ten separate consultations (compared with PHANOM’s one consultation), a specific information dissemination and institutional preparation stage, community capacity building for engagement in the process, and extensive monitoring. This would be a useful model for UNDP to learn from if it chooses to expand STEP’s sustainable livelihoods activity in a new phase next year.

Recommendation

The experience of Output 2 of the STEP project demonstrated how a small grant fund could have a disproportional impact of economic wellbeing among vulnerable women’s groups. It also gave some insight into the difficulties and the technical and management support that is required for even two such small grants. If sufficient funding is available, and the technical capacities to ensure effective implementation can be assigned, UNDP could consider including a “Participatory Planning, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Women’s Empowerment” component in the new programme that would use participatory planning and sustainable livelihood activities as a means to build participatory governance capacity, maintain the relationship between Buddhist and Muslim families, and to promote social cohesion to overcome economic marginalization. One option would be to target a small number of sub-districts in close coordination with the World Bank, to bring together STEP project experience and resources with that of LDI, and contribute to a wider impact. But this option should be considered after careful assessment of the funding possibilities from donors or cost sharing, and based on an assessment of the capacities that will be required. The resources deployed by LDI are instructive: a project office in Pattani, with twenty experienced staff, including a project manager, coordinators for each of the components, provincial coordinators, village facilitators, M&E personnel and administrative staff.

5.5 Local Governance Reform

Although there appears to be growing recognition of the need for major governance reform in the Deep South to allow for some form of local self-government, the extent, nature, and form remains highly controversial, and opposition among a conservative elite is deeply entrenched. A series of proposals have been advanced in recent years by a range of prominent politicians, academics, and

peace activists²⁰. These can be summarized in three main categories: Regionalization, Administrative Reform, and Devolution²¹.

- Regionalization: This involves a break with Thailand's centralized state power structure to establish either one new regional structure for the Deep South, or to introduce new regional administrations throughout the country. Former Vice-Chair of the National Reconciliation Commission Dr. Prawase Wasi, who was centrally involved in the creation of the 1997 constitution, issued a seven-point statement in February 2007 calling for a major reform of governance for the Deep South based on the incorporation of the three provinces into one large administrative entity – a region - called “Monthon Pattani”. This entity would have considerable control over its social, economic, educational, and cultural affairs. Prawase argued that the large number of small local government organizations, TAOs, municipalities, and PAOs makes it difficult to optimize administration and that a structure of fourteen or fifteen “monthons” or administrative regions within a unitary state would be much more effective.
- Administrative Reform: This type of reform would maintain the centralized, unitary state structure but create special governance arrangements such as a new agency to oversee the Deep South. A prime example of this approach is Professor Srisompob's proposal to create a special ministry for the southernmost provinces where the minister would be an elected representative selected from among the region's MPs, and with a permanent secretary as administrative head, under which three deputy permanent secretaries would serve as governors in the three southernmost provinces. This model involved purely administrative reform rather than regionalization, and involves no devolution of power to elected governors or an elected regional assembly. Other than the establishment of the ministry with its permanent secretaries, the basic administrative structures remain largely unchanged.
- Devolution: Devolution focuses on creating new representative offices or institutions to devolve power to people in their provinces or regions through electing provincial governors or the establishment of elected regional assemblies. Prominent examples include the expression of support for the establishment of special administrative zone in the Deep South by then Interior Minister Chalerm Yubamrung in February 2008, and the public statement in November 2009 by former Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiudh calling for autonomy for the Deep South. In September 2012 - as Deputy Prime Minister - Chalerm advocated elected governors for the three southern border provinces. Yet the standard official response to the question of autonomy continues to frame it as a potential threat to territorial integrity and national security.

It is worth noting that even as these debates about devolved local governance in the south have been taking place, security officials have been trying to reverse the increased authority and independence of SBPAC. In August 2011 ISOC proposed to incorporate SBPAC into a new Southern Border Provinces Problem Solving and Development Centre under the command of the Fourth Army Region Chief and re-deploy the SBPAC director to Bangkok. The government eventually shelved the proposal but it highlights the fact that support for any form of substantive decentralization remains deeply controversial, and despite a more open public discussion of options for the south in recent years, anyone promoting these ideas can be accused of disloyalty

²⁰ This includes a study team led by Professor Srisompob Jitpiromsri of PSU; former NRC member Gothom Arya; academic Mark Tamthai; former deputy NSC director Jiraporn Bunnag; former NRC vice-chair Prawase Wasi; ex-premier General Chavalit Yongchaiudh; and former Interior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chalerm Yumbamrung who advocated elected governors for the three southern border provinces as recently as last December.

²¹ McCargo, 2012; ICG 2012

and of undermining the central principle of Thai unity – “Nation, Religion, King”. Opposition to autonomy continues to be expressed by the Thai army including by Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army General Prayuth Chan-ocha.

The extent of opposition to any transfer of power to the south can also be seen in the reversal of self-government positions or policies adopted by successive governments:

- Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej quickly denounced Interior Minister Chalerm Yubamrung’s February 2008 expression of support for autonomy in the Deep South as ‘dangerous’.
- In June 2009 Prime Minister Abhisit suggested that some special form of decentralization for the south could be discussed as part of a strategy to transform the conflict there. However, five months later when Chavalit publicly called for the government to set up an autonomous Pattani City, Abhisit reversed his previous position declaring that the government did not support devolving power to a new administrative structure, or the idea of locally elected governors, and would focus on increasing local participation.
- In the run up to the 2011 election, the Pheu Thai Party campaigned on a pledge to introduce political decentralization for the southernmost provinces through the establishment of an special administrative zone with elected executives based on the Bangkok and Pattaya model. When it didn’t win any seats in the area the party abandoned the proposal. Then in March 2012 it reintroduced the idea with two draft bills proposing a Greater Pattani City model of decentralization and a reform of SBPAC. These draft bills were submitted to the military and security agencies for review but both were subsequently abandoned following a negative response from Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army General Prayuth Chan-ocha.

Recommendation

In examining options for UNDP support in this area, it may be worth considering that there isn’t always a technical, administrative, or capacity-strengthening solution to governance problems. In many conflict-affected situations the success or failure of local governance is not determined as much by technical capacities as it is by the structure and political character of the state. No amount of institution building, capacity development, or training, desirable and valuable as they may be in their own right, will produce a transformation – or even a reduction – of the conflict if it is not grounded in an accepted political framework. Given the deep polarization that characterizes national politics, and anxieties around the future royal transition it seems unlikely that any changes to the structure of the state will be agreed in the near future. UNDP could potentially contribute to the search for an appropriate model of decentralization through support for a study of experience with successful models in other ethnic conflicts, or exploration of potential options for the Southern Border Provinces. However, it remains unclear that this actually constitutes a priority programming area taking into account the lack of support for decentralization at the central level and the improbability of any progress in this area until the national political situation has stabilized.

5.6 Strengthening Women’s Role in Responding to the Conflict

Although Thailand elected its first female Prime Minister in 2011, political participation by women remains well below the national target of 30 percent. The number of women in Thailand’s House of Representatives increased to 15.8 percent from 11.7 percent in 2007, and local level participation is lower still, falling to only 4.6 percent for village and sub-district administration offices. Thailand ranks 92 out of 138 countries on the Gender Inequality Index and although policies relating to women have become a regular part of the government agenda, progress towards gender equality is undermined by both conservative and liberal elements in society. The media has been heavily criticized for perpetuating negative stereotypes of women, with traditional gender roles and

stereotypes strongly reinforced. Women are regularly portrayed in subordinate and submissive roles and as sex objects.

Women's economic participation is more balanced. Nationally women constituted 45.75 per cent of the labor force in 2010, evidence of their increasing role in the expansion of small to medium enterprises and the local economy. Discussions with PSU staff who had undertaken community-level studies supported by STEP revealed that women in the Southern Border Provinces bear the burden of adjustment as men with traditional livelihood skills and knowledge become increasingly redundant and female household members have to adapt their traditional roles in the home and find work in small enterprises such as fish processing factories or other basic income generating activities.

In the south, women also have to contend with insecurity, disrupted education, fears generated by the activities of insurgents and security forces and blanket immunity for security personnel, and constraints on the freedom of movement of male household members in conflict-affected districts. Over 3,000 women have lost their husbands, and have the increased responsibility of raising family members with lesser means and fewer skills. Women live under conditions that are prone to security risks and social stigma, especially when a family member is killed or detained by security forces. Some reports suggest that 70 percent of college students in the Southern Border Provinces are female compared with a national rate of 54.28 percent, raising important questions about the impact of the conflict on young males in the region.

On the other hand surveys indicate that women's participation in civil society organizations in the Southern Border Provinces is three times higher than the national average, with as many as one woman in five claiming membership in a voluntary association compared with only six percent at the national level. Women's CSOs play an important role in providing information about rights to conflict-affected families, especially to families of men who have been detained by security forces, as well as highlighting the issue of human rights abuse and violence against women and children. Local CSOs and community-based organizations are also focused on the situation of children affected by the conflict either in school or at home, and women play an important role in building peace, bridging cultural and religious gaps within multicultural communities, and are often more effective than men who may be viewed with suspicion by security forces or insurgents.

They face a range of constraints however, as a result of the conflict and the conservative nature of society that tends to interpret religion in a way that restricts women to domestic functions. Muslim beliefs and practices also create additional constraints for many women, for example, travelling, mixing with men from outside their family, or participating in community meetings. A 2010 gender-needs assessment noted that community meetings in Muslim villages had often been conducted after the Friday prayer at the mosque that is attended only by men, and consequently women were systematically excluded from community planning and decision making. Studies indicate some relaxation of traditional constraints out of economic necessity to meet household income needs and there is a long Pat(t)ani Malay tradition of women participating in economic activities, including small businesses, market trade, rubber tapping, and - more recently - factory work.

Recommendation

- (a) UNDP should build on current activities of STEP and explore opportunities to provide sustainable livelihood options for women heads of households affected by the conflict. STEP's experience with output 2 presents a valuable foundation for a follow-up project

output that would provide occupational training based on an assessment of needs and market demands, including appropriate marketing skills. This could be done as part of a broader output to promote sustainable livelihoods (see section 6).

- (b) Working outside the home provides space for Muslim women to interact with Buddhist women. As part of its support to the peace dialogue process, UNDP could consider including a cross-cutting component that would include capacity development for women activists and CSOs to strengthen their potential role as peace-builders and to promote understanding within and between multicultural communities, including through participation in the IPP.

6. Draft UNDP Program Outline

The context in Southern Thailand has evolved significantly since the STEP project was originally formulated in 2009. As yet however, there has been no major development in the trajectory of crisis and none of the turning points that might trigger a significant change in UN strategy. While the most likely scenario is a continuation of the present situation, linked to the government's current term, and assuming no major national-level crisis, the new NSC policy and the resulting formal dialogue process are positive developments that present an important opportunity for UNDP to reorient and intensify its programming activities in support of the peace-dialogue and related objectives.

6.1 Strategies for the overall UNDP programme response

The dialogue process is an important development in the southern conflict and should be the central focus of UNDP support in the region. The STEP project is one of the core supporters of the Insider Peace Platform, the civil society initiative linking networks across the three provinces and beyond in discussions and debates to actively identify activities that promote peace. This support to IPP should form the core of an interlinked series of outputs that places strengthening civil society capacity to promote public participation in the peace process at the centre of the UNDP's strategy. Key elements include: enhancing access to information to increase knowledge and understanding of political developments; improving access to legal services to increase protection for conflict-vulnerable families; and strengthen participatory planning and sustainable livelihoods to improve economic security and empower women as peacemakers and entrepreneurs. To the extent that funding and technical capacity allow, UNDP should aim to contribute to the following Country Program level outcome:

Enhanced local conflict transformation systems and capacities to raise awareness, increase public confidence, and support participation in the dialogue process

6.2 Priority Programming Areas

This outline peacebuilding strategy is based on the assessment of the context conducted during the review. The detailed strategy will need to be elaborated during consultations and participatory planning sessions with relevant stakeholders on location in the south, and will need to be adjusted to the evolving context. The proposed outline addresses three priority areas that build on the STEP Project progress and experience to date, and fits within the overall framework of the Country Programme Document:

- Strengthened Capacity to Facilitate Local Participation in the Peace Dialogue Process
- Access to Justice for Conflict-Vulnerable Communities
- Participatory Planning and Sustainable Livelihoods

The three outputs will link networks of community-based organizations to create overlapping communities of peacebuilding practice and support. For example, participants in the different outputs will be exposed to the IPP proceedings and capacity building activities; youth networks participating in the Insider Peace Platform such as 'People's College' and 'Deep South Journalism School' would be directly involved in the production of the popular drama series; legal training for community paralegals in the Access to Justice output would include information from the IPP proceedings; and anonymous versions of the experiences of paralegal volunteers', livelihood teams, and IPP participants would form the basis for storylines in the drama helping to create a broad public discussion on key events in the political life of the Deep South.

Priority Area 1.A: Strengthened Capacity to Facilitate Local Participation in the Peace Dialogue Process

Entry Point

- Support to the Peace Dialogue as specifically requested by NSC and SBPAC, through PSU support to IPP, and as an active contributor to the Peace Resource Centres

Strategy

(a) Contract an international peace and development consultant and a national expert on the south to provide expert strategic guidance on the development of the project document, and periodic support for the implementation of the new programme. These advisors could provide expert analytical input to the IPP process, participate regularly in IPP meetings and undertake regular, updated analysis of the peace and conflict dynamics in the south, their impact on prospects for peace, and the responses of the main actors.

(b) Establish a schedule of peacebuilding resources to contribute to the IPP strategy, including:

- Thematic analyses of key peacebuilding topics exploring best practice and different countries' experience with – for example – peace dialogue processes, decentralization models, preferential treatment laws, constitutional reform, demobilization processes, etc.;
- Translation in Thai and Pat(t)ani Malay of lessons learned and best practice publications on key peacebuilding issues (e.g. – UNDP's Practice Note on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-combatants)
- Creation of a roster of experts who can be called upon to provide periodic presentations or analysis on issues of relevance to IPP strategy or the peace dialogue process;

(c) Work with IPP and other stakeholders to develop a support strategy for an inter-connected series of networks at SBP, provincial, district and community level to learn about and engage in the peace dialogue process

- IPP at SBP level
- Peace Resource Centres
- People's College at district & tambon level
- Local natural disaster management network, 195 natural disaster management volunteers (religious leaders, community leaders, health volunteers and local people) from both Muslim and Buddhist communities in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat
- DSJ: publication of information in Yawi using newsletter and alternative media

(d) Develop a sub-strategy to assist women’s cross-cultural support groups that strengthens women’s potential role as peace-builders to promote understanding within and between multicultural communities; including through participation in the IPP.

Implementing Partners

- PSU, Berghof IPP, SBPAC (+People’s College, DSJ)

Feasibility

- Already an important component of the STEP project
- Has been explored with Ajarn Srisompob and Norbert Ropers – UNDP involvement is actively sought.
- Reliably informed that SPBAC would also welcome UNDP involvement, inter alia to ensure diversified funding
- NSC supportive

Suggested Sub-Output

- Strategy for strengthening SBP Peace Resource Centre capacity to foster inclusive participation in a constructive dialogue to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict developed and implemented

Priority Area 1.B: Increased knowledge of and informed debate about the peace dialogue process and the dynamics of the conflict in Southern Thailand

Entry Point

- NSC policy objective 6.1 (5) “To promote learning and recognition of the value of peaceful coexistence in a society with diverse ways of life and cultures” and 6.1 (8) “To create and environment suitable for constructive dialogues on peaceful solution to the conflict”

Strategy

Contract an international media production agency with experience in the design, scripting and production of documentary-drama products for television to work with a local Pat(t)ani-based media NGO (e.g. FT) to produce a television drama in mixed Patani-Malay and Thai languages that will channel information about developments in the conflict – including the peace process, the impact of the conflict, the lives of ordinary people, and their daily struggle to live a normal life in the Southern Border Provinces.

- Specify collaboration with existing local peacebuilding networks, CBOs and NGOs, in particular youth networks such as People’s College, as well as IPP, Deep South Journalism School, those working on education and HR
- Scripting the storyline would be participatory and involve youth, women, and conflict-affected communities to provide real life experiences and have a cathartic impact by engaging people in the making of the drama
- Involving a two-way channel where developments in the political sphere including the Dialogue Process would be channeled into the script, including in collaboration with IPP and other, and people involved in scripting would be able to express their opinions, concerns, and aspirations
- Capacity development of local media CSOs would be a core element

- Dual-language, e.g. scenes would be in Malay (with Thai sub-titles) in Malay Muslims households and Thai (with Malay sub-titles) in public scenes

Implementing Partners

- FT Media (Pattani-based NGO)
- International NGO with experience and expertise (e.g. BBC Media Action – see footnote)
- Thai PBS
- [+PSU Faculty of Communication Science/DSW/IPP/DSJ, etc.]

Feasibility

- Convenient NGO modality procured through RfP
- Pattani-based NGO (FT) with experience working for Thai service in BBC World Service HQ in London
- Strong interest from IPP, NSC, local CSOs

Suggested Sub-Output

TV drama to promote inter-cultural understanding and acceptance, and contribute to the creation of space for dialogue and peacebuilding, designed, produced, and broadcast.

Priority Area 2: Access to Justice for Conflict-Vulnerable Communities

Entry Point

Building on the work carried out under output three in the STEP project and responding directly to objectives 2 and 3 of the NSC policy.

Strategy

- (a) *Community Legal Services*: Ensuring that local people have a trusted focal point where they can seek legal assistance is essential for any increase in trust and confidence. As suggested by the SBPAC Justice Administration Affairs Director UNDP should support MAC to train religious leaders and other appropriate volunteers from villages as trusted focal points for legal assistance.

- (b) *National Human Rights Commission*: Independent national institutions with a mandate to oversee and hold the state accountable are a core component of any strategy to manage ethnic conflict. NHRC initially played an important role in the south but has been relatively less active in recent years. Capacity development assistance from UNDP could strengthen the role of the NHRC in two key areas - national level advocacy and support from UNDP to strengthen NHRC's capacity to engage effectively at provincial level.
 - Funding for the expansion of MACs community volunteer network
 - During the formulation process work with CrCF and/or MAC and PSU College of Islamic Studies to develop a strategy to identify and train religious leaders from 100 communities as community focal points for information about human rights and available assistance, and referral of cases to MAC.
 - A core component of the strategy would be strengthening the mechanism for the involvement of SBPAC and NHRC in the resolution of cases
 - National level engagement with NHRC to advocate for a more effective role of the NHRC provincial committees at SBP level

Implementing Partners

- CrCF & MAC, PSU/College of Islamic Studies/SBPAC/NHRC

Feasibility

- Supported by SBPAC
- Resources, relationships and strategies already in place
- Feasibility of NHRC capacity development at provincial level component has been confirmed needs to be further explored at national level

Suggested Output

- Human Rights Outreach & Legal Services Strategy to provide 100 villages with information and access to legal services developed and implemented in collaboration with civil society and SBPAC & NHRC

Priority Area 3: Participatory Planning and Sustainable Livelihoods and Women's Empowerment

Entry Point

- Building on successful activities of STEP's Output 2: Improved income generation and employment opportunities of communities
- Mapping has already been carried out in collaboration with Dr. Hamdia, Ajarn Metta, Ajarn Sugree, Ajarn Nugoon
- Training Manual, Community Learning Centres, DVDs and IEC material

Strategy

- Targeting a small number of sub-districts in close coordination with the World Bank
- Potentially working in partnership with LDI if it has the interest and the option to expand capacity
- Build participatory planning capacities through a carefully developed series of community consultation and capacity development activities
- Identify and Foster Cross Cutting Cleavages: priorities based on common interests – including Buddhist and Muslim members of the community - to work together. Selection criteria might include activities that address the needs of communities:
 - Under economic stress where male heads of households are no longer able to work
 - Where traditional livelihoods have been destroyed by liberal market economic policies, environmental degradation, etc.
 - Vulnerable youth as a result of drugs and unemployment
- Ensure the inclusion of women in community planning and decision-making by identifying and dealing with the social and occupational obstacles that may reduce their opportunities for active participation.

Implementing Partners

- Options:
 - Close coordination with the World Bank, LDI, TAF
 - Contract an intermediary NGO (example LDI)
 - Establish UNDP Grant Administration Mechanism

Feasibility

- Has already been developed and piloted – knowledge, resources, capacities and partnerships already in place

Suggested Output

- CBOs in [10] tambons have the skills and resources to successfully establish and manage community economic development initiatives based on locally appropriate and sustainable practices that contribute to improved human security and social cohesion

6.3 Lessons from the formulation, approval, and implementation of STEP

While the new NSC policy and the peace dialogue process present important opportunities for UNDP to consolidate the achievements of the STEP project, there has as yet been no major development in the trajectory of the crisis and none of the turning points that might trigger a significant change in UN strategy, nor is there anything to suggest that such a turning point is likely in the near future. As such, the assessment did not see any justification for a major change in implementation approach, for example a full-fledged DEX program or the establishment of a UNDP sub-office in the South. However, experience in the design, formulation, approval process, and implementation of the STEP project over the past five years has generated a number of important lessons for the development of any successor project.

Formulation

The process of developing the programme strategy and formulating the project should be highly participatory, involving a wide range of current and potential stakeholders. Participatory planning tools should be used to develop the project outputs and agree the different activities and inputs, identify targets and indicators, and potential implementing partners. This process would involve significant preparation and co-facilitated workshops with civil society and academic partners.

Implementation Modality

National implementation in collaboration with PSU has proven successful even if it has had relatively high transaction costs for both PSU and the UNDP project team. A detailed planning and formulation process would allow for the implementation arrangements for different outputs or sets of activities under particular outputs to be determined in advance. For example, the civic awareness output would be sub-contracted through a standard UNDP competitive procurement process. Other activities could be assigned to project focal points within an expanded project team, and subject to comparative advantage and available capacity, agreements could be made in advance with PSU for some outputs to be implemented directly by UNDP.

Office Location

The current office location arrangement offers distinct advantages over alternatives, including proximity for working in the three provinces, the ability to monitor project activities regularly, immunity from regular movement restrictions due to security concerns in Pattani, the possibility to continue working in Hat Yai outside the conflict zone yet within the region, and the local availability of conferencing and other business facilities.

6.4 Contribution to National Policy

The program strategy would be based on an invitation for UNDP to contribute directly to the implementation of the National Security Council's Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2012 – 2014, as requested by the Head of the NSC Southern Border Province

Security Task Group Mr. Danai Moosa²², and the Deputy Secretary General of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre Piya Kitthavorn, and specifically objectives 6.1 (3), (4), (5), (6), (7) and (8):

- “(3) To promote understanding and restore trust, not only between the government and the people but also among people themselves so that they may cooperate in dealing with problems
- (4) To promote continuous development in accordance with each region’s potential with the aim to equally distribute social and economic development, which not only meets the local demand without destroying local identities and ways of life, but also facilitates solution to security issues
- (5) To promote learning and recognition of the value of peaceful coexistence in a society with diverse ways of life and cultures
- (6) To make Thai society realize and understand the situation in the SBPs as well as be aware of the responsibility in solving the problems
- (7) To draw constructive support from the international community in solving the SBP’s problems
- (8) To create an environment suitable for constructive dialogues on peaceful solution to the conflict, and for establishing an assurance that all stakeholders participate in peace-building process.”

²² Consultation meeting with STEP Review Team at NSC Office on Sep. 25, 2013

Annexes

Annex 1: Historical Context & Government Response²³

The resistance of Malay Muslim minorities in Thailand was sparked by historical grievances, state repression and a sense of alienation from the predominantly Buddhist country. Thailand has 2.2 million Muslims, which amounts to 4.5 per cent of the total in the southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun and some parts of Songkhla. With the exception of Satun, the rest has been the theatre of Malay-Muslim resistance for the past century. Historically, the southernmost region was a separate kingdom known as “Patani Sultanate” – a region governed by Muslim rulers, whose relationship with Thailand was based on the suzerainty system.²⁴

When Bangkok consolidated its power to avert the threat of colonisation, Patani Sultanate was put under its direct rule and later annexed under the 1909 Anglo-Siamese Treaty.²⁵ The Thai state’s forced assimilation policy sparked strong resistance from the minority Malay Muslims. The first wave of non-violent campaigns led by former Patani rulers and Malay Muslim clerics met with strong state repression, prompting the movement to become more militant. Armed separatist groups emerged in the 1960s. Among the three main groups were Patani National Liberation Front (BNPP), Malay-Patani National Revolutionary Front (BRN) and Patani United Liberation Organisation (PULO). In the late 1980s and 1990s, there was a lull period before the violent insurgency resurfaced in the early 2000s.

The January 4, 2004 raid on an army depot in Narathiwat - in which four Thai army soldiers were killed and some 430 weapons were stolen - triggered a new wave of violent conflict.²⁶ By June 2013, there have been approximately 13,400 incidents, in which 5,755 people were killed and 10,201 people injured. Of these, 3,394 dead victims are Muslim (58 per cent) and 2,213 are Buddhist (38 per cent). A total of 6,024 Buddhists (59 per cent) and 3,211 Muslims (31 per cent) have been injured.²⁷ It should be noted that casualties among the Buddhists are proportionally higher, given the fact that they amount to about 20 per cent of the population in the Muslim-majority region.²⁸ Government agents or those perceived to be the symbol of the Buddhist-dominated Thai state – namely, security forces, civil servants, government-hired village-defense forces, Buddhist monks, public school teachers – are prime targets for attack. Civilians have suffered the heaviest casualties in the past decade.

The Thai state has acknowledged that military suppression could not bring long-lasting peace to the southernmost region. The movement’s clandestine operation, believed to have largely led by the BRN, has proved resilient to the Thai army’s counter-insurgency campaign. There are three main areas that the government has worked in an attempt to address the root causes and bring the violent conflict to an end: peace process, development, and justice.

²³ Written by Rungrawee Chalermripinyorat

²⁴ Thanet Aphornsuvan, *History and Politics of the Muslims in Thailand*, p. 12 available at seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/system/files/MuslimThailand.pdf

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.14.

²⁶ In the 4 January 2004 incident, some 430 weapons were stolen and four Buddhist soldiers were killed, to which some militants referred as “the beginning of a revolution”.

²⁷ Srisompob Jitpiomsri and Romadon Panjor, “Southern Fire and the Peace Initiative during the 2013 Romadon: The Protracted Violence needs to be Balanced by the Force of Peace”, *Deep South Watch*, 1 August 2013 (in Thai).

²⁸ According to the 2000 population and housing census of the National Statistical Office, there were about 1,309,000 Muslims and 361,000 Buddhists living in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat.

The Peace Dialogue Process

Preceding initiatives to establish a peace process between the Thai state and the Malay-Muslim militants bore no tangible results. This is due to at least three main factors. Firstly, Thai politics has become deeply polarized since the 2006 coup that ousted the populist Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The royalist establishment and Thaksin-supported camp have fought for political supremacy and, from 2005 to 2010, political opposition on streets overshadowed the parliament. Peace initiatives were often neglected, or disrupted, under this turbulent political climate that saw frequent changes of government. Secondly, the military, the bastion of the royalist establishment, has taken a stance against a formalized peace process, fearing that such a move would elevate the insurgents' political status and play into their hands. Thirdly, the Thai state's disinclination to allow inter-governmental organizations and foreign governments to take part in resolving conflict in the Deep South, deemed as "internal affairs", has hampered peace initiatives. There is a perception that the involvement of foreign agencies, particularly the United Nations, might take the matter out of Bangkok's hands and possibly lead to secession.

A significant policy shift came after Yingluck Shinawatra, Thaksin's youngest sister, took the premiership in August 2011. A key architect behind this KL-facilitated peace dialogue is the controversial exiled ex-leader Thaksin who kick-started this process by holding a personal discussion with Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak in January 2011. In February, Prime Minister Yingluck held further talks with her counterpart during her introductory visit to Kuala Lumpur, after which Najib told a joint press conference that Thailand had requested that Malaysia provide assistance in search of a long-term solution in the South. This is a significant reversal of Bangkok's stance towards Kuala Lumpur. Thailand did not trust that its neighbor could be an honest broker and repeatedly ignored any offer of assistance on peace-talk mediation. Another two key men behind this peace initiative are Thaksin's two close bureaucrats – Paradorn Patthanathabutr, Secretary-General of the National Security Council and Tawee Sodsong, Secretary-General of the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC). Months of behind-the-scene coordination and discussion finally resulted in the historic launching of the "General Consensus on the Peace Dialogue Process" between the Thai government (represented by Paradorn) and the BRN (represented by Hassan) on 28 February 2013.

It is important to note the crucial change of policy framework that provides a legal basis for the establishment of formal peace dialogue. This is one of the contributions of the enactment of the SBPAC law in December 2010, which enables the agency to operate independently from the military-controlled Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC). After the 2006 coup, the military-installed government led by Surayud Chulanont revamped the structure of bureaucratic operation in the South that had been set up by Thaksin. He bolstered the role of the ISOC –the counterinsurgency body established in the 1960s to fight against the communists– by enacting the 2007 Internal Security Act. He also revived the SBPAC, originally established in 1984 and dissolved by Thaksin in 2002, and, under the ISA, it functioned under the ISOC's supervision. That structure was not conducive for the SBPAC to make any policy initiative. It can be argued that the enactment of the SBPAC law, to a certain degree, enhances civilian control and provides more flexibility for this civilian-led agency to make a move towards peace dialogue. Previously, the military had been given a reluctant support, if not total rejection to this approach.

As required by the SBPAC law, the NSC started drafting the 3-year policy framework on the management of southernmost provinces in 2011 and held a series of public consultation with various stakeholders.²⁹ The "Policy on the Administration and Development of the Southern Border Provinces (2012-14) was approved by the Cabinet on 22 February 2012 and underwent a no-

²⁹ Article 4 of the SBPAC Act.

vote parliamentary deliberation a month later.³⁰ One of the nine objectives of this new policy framework states that the government has a duty to create conducive atmosphere for dialogue and all participants and stakeholders engaged in this process shall have their safety guaranteed.³¹ This new policy provides a legal basis for state officials to begin a formal dialogue track. Some officials, particularly the military, previously expressed concern about the lack of legal basis to talk to “criminals”, which, they argued, could be deemed as unconstitutional.

This formal peace dialogue is a major shift in the Thai state policy, which has significantly changed the dynamics of the southern conflicts. After nearly a decade of fighting under the veil of secrecy, the peace dialogue has, for the first time, pushed the BRN into the open. The peace process, though still in its infancy, has shown that it may be possible for the Thai government and the BRN and other smaller militant groups to search for a sustainable and mutually agreed solution to the protracted conflict. There are implicit signs and remarks that suggest the BRN may be inclined to consider a negotiated compromise short of independence, although some believe that such position is a result of arm-twisting by Malaysia. It would certainly take time for both sides, with their historical baggage, to build confidence, find common ground, and search for a long-lasting solution together. It is, however, important to note that the engagement of the armed movement in the peace dialogue could potentially reduce its radical and absolutist tendency, as the militants’ behavior would be exposed to the influence of external forces. The BRN needs to listen to messages from the international communities, particularly the grouping of Muslim countries, as well as its constituencies, whose support is critical for its existence and success. This road might be long and full of hurdles and hindrances but military victory by one side is definitely not a sustainable alternative. The immediate challenge is whether the Thai government would be able to convince the Malay-Muslim militants that it views this peace dialogue as a genuine and serious undertaking and ensure that any political turmoil in Bangkok would not derail or lead to the collapse of this process.

Justice

Martial law and the Emergency Decree have granted the security forces sweeping powers to detain suspected insurgents with no requirement for solid evidence. Martial law remains in place in all districts in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Under the martial law, the military is allowed to carry out searches and make arrests without court warrants and detain suspects for up to seven days without charge. The Emergency Decree is concurrently imposed in the same area, apart from Mae Land district in Pattani. The decree permits the military or police to hold suspects without charge in locations other than prison for up to 30 days. The extension for detention is required for every seven days. The requests for an arrest warrant need to be jointly signed by military, police and interior ministry officials before submitting it to the court. The decree also gives law enforcement officers immunity from civil, criminal and disciplinary penalties as well as suspends the jurisdiction of administrative courts to revoke illegal regulations and policies. In the four violence-ravaged districts in Songkhla, the International Security Act (ISA) provides a legal basis for the military to operate.

The security forces have abused the laws by using the “seven plus 30-day formula” i.e. suspects are arrested and held for seven days under martial law before their detention is extended for up to 30 days under the emergency decree. Despite repeated campaigns by human rights advocates and request from the Organization of the Islamic Conference to revoke the emergency decree and martial law, they remain in place and this legal framework creates a climate of impunity and

³⁰ Personal communication, NSC officer, August 2012.

³¹ For the full text of the Policy on the Administration and Development of the Southern Border Provinces, 2012-14, see <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/node/3019>.

heightens the risk of human rights abuse. The Thai government is planning to lift the emergency decree in five districts where the level of violence is relatively minimal, however, it is more reluctant to remove the martial law for fear that it would trigger a conflict with the military.³²

In the area where the emergency decree is lifted, the ISA is imposed instead. This allows the government to use a pre-bargaining measure known as “Section 21”. This allows the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), with the consent of a court, to drop criminal charges against an alleged offender in a security-related case, if the person confesses his or her wrongdoings and agrees to undergo up to six months of “re-education”. This measure has, thus far, not been successful as only a handful of suspected insurgents have decided to undergo this process. Mistrust toward the military, which is the main agency responsible for this measure, and the lengthy and complicate legal process are main problems in the implementation.

Notwithstanding the imposition of problematic special laws, there has been some positive development in recent years. The military began to speak the language of human rights. In the ISOC’s 2012-16 policies, it states human rights protection and respect for the rule of law as part of their strategies. Senior military commanders have given an instruction that any officers violating human rights or mistreating detainees would not be protected. According to Muslim Attorney Centre (MAC), cases of torture have reduced in recent years. However, it notes that the numbers of extrajudicial killing appears to have increased. It is estimated that some 16 suspected insurgents have been assassinated following the launching of the peace dialogue in February 2013.³³

In light of the ongoing peace dialogue, there may be a need to think about transitional justice – an area with which relevant government agencies have little familiarity.

Development

Thailand is a middle-income country and the Thai government has sufficient resources and capacity to support traditional development activities including income generation projects. The SBPAC has provided development funds to villages in the southernmost provinces mainly through Self-Sufficient-based Community Development for Peace (PHANOP) and Village-Based Quality of Life Improvement Project (PHANOM). The former is provided to venerable groups e.g. widows, orphans, the disabled and poor villagers, while the latter is given to communities to undertake collective development projects. The projects are meant to reach out to villagers as part of the government’s hearts and minds campaign.³⁴

According to SBPAC officials, the PHANOP and PHANOM projects have achieved its objectives in reaching out to villagers. PHANOP is discontinued, while PHANOM will continue for one more year in the 2014 fiscal year.³⁵ There are other development projects to be implemented in the future. For example, the SBPAC will provide one million baht for each sub-district to increase safety of villagers in the area, which is hoped that it would also help nurture good relationship between Muslims and Buddhists.³⁶ Lessons learnt from the PHANOP and PHANOM are that there are complaints about insufficient consultation with villagers and hence, some projects do not suit the people’s needs and that some government officials take a cut during the procurement process. Any future development programs should try to ensure transparency and greater participation of villagers in designing the projects. It will also be useful to use livelihood projects as a means to enhance greater interaction and build relationship among people of different faiths. Interfaith

³² Interview with a senior official of the National Security Council, Bangkok, 25 September 2013. The five districts are Sukirin and Waeng in Narathiwat, Kabang, and Baetong in Yala and Maikaen in Pattani.

³³ Interview with MAC’s senior staff, Pattani, 19 September 2013.

³⁴ Interviews with SBPAC officials, Yala, 18 September 2013

³⁵ Interviews with SBPAC officials, Yala, 18 September 2013

³⁶ Interviews with SBPAC officials, Yala, 18 September 2013

understanding should be cultivated in the region where the conflict has pulled Muslim and Buddhist communities further and further apart.

Annex 2: UNICEF Schools as Zones of Peace Project

Schools as Zones of Peace in the southern border provinces of Thailand: concept note

Introduction

UNICEF Thailand proposes the establishment of the ‘schools as zones of peace’ initiative at selected schools in the southern border provinces. This concept note outlines the situation in the south, the rationale for establishing schools as zones of peace, and the approaches that UNICEF proposes. UNICEF intends to work closely with the Ministry of Education, NGOs, and local communities and organizations, to develop and implement schools as zones of peace.

The initiative will be established in a limited number of State schools in a selected province – preferably Pattani, where a peace education curriculum is currently being piloted in non-formal schools - which will be identified in consultation with the Ministry of Education. For reasons of practicality and safety, the initiative will not be established in the red zones at this stage.

The situation in the southern border provinces, as it affects schools

- Schools have been attacked by militant groups; 308 schools have been burnt since January 2004;
- Teachers, students, and education personnel have been both direct targets and victims of indiscriminate attacks. Since January 2004, 88 teachers, 23 education personnel, and 32 children have been killed. Respectively, the numbers injured are 93, 14, and 124.
- School premises are occupied by the Thai military as permanent military bases whilst school lessons continue, resulting in a militarized education facility;
- Schools have been provided security by the military and volunteer defence forces, resulting in the presence of arms in educational facilities. Some teachers have taken up arms for self-defence, and some children are provided armed escorts to and from school;
- At times, all schools in the southern border provinces have been closed down for periods ranging from days to months, as a result of attacks on schools and teachers;
- Although there have been no reports to date, authorities should also be aware of possible indoctrination or distribution of propaganda by militant groups within school premises.

Rationale

In 2008, UNICEF conducted a study on children’s perceptions of living in the southern border area of Thailand. The report, entitled ‘Everyday Fears’, made a number of interesting findings. It found that children suffer anxiety and stress associated with the ongoing threat and anticipation of violence, but despite this threat of violence, no children expressed a negative view of other religions. Over a third of children identified schools as safe places, and more than half expressed compliments about their teachers.

Whilst few children expressed negative opinions of soldiers and police, those that did say they were afraid of them linked this fear to the perception that a group of men in uniform are an easy target for insurgents, and thus the children fear being nearby if such an attack were to occur.

The report concluded with eight recommendations, one of which is to “ensure that schools and communities are designated as ‘zones of peace’ by reducing the presence of arms among all

parties.” During a youth consultation that followed the release of the report, attended by fifty children from the southern border area, this recommendation was reaffirmed by the youth participants.

UNICEF Thailand is concerned about the ongoing impact of the violence on children, and in particular, the fact that schools have been targeted for attacks by insurgents, and that as a result, many schools have become militarized through the presence of soldiers to protect the schools from attacks.

As well as the untold stress of studying in a militarized environment, and the fact that children equate the presence of soldiers and police with the threat of attack, children should not be exposed to weapons in schools. For children’s psychosocial wellbeing and emotional development, they must be able to study in a safe and protective environment, free of any military influence.

Schools as Zones of Peace concept

The SZOP concept was devised by Save the Children and UNICEF in Nepal. For the Thailand context, the following points should feature as the guidelines for the SZOP initiative:

- Children should have access to education all the time
- Armed groups and armed forces should respect and recognize all ‘schools’ – including formal and non-formal schools, Pondok and Tadikas (religious schools), and child care centres - as ‘Zones of Peace’
- No one can be arrested, abducted, recruited, interrogated, detained, or tortured, on school premises
- Teachers and children must not be targeted, victimized, attacked or threatened on or off school premises
- No conflict-related violence is permitted on school premises
- No weapons are allowed on school premises
- No military or political activity should take place in the schools

Approach to establishing a SZOP initiative in Thailand

The approach would aim to halt any attacks on schools, teachers and children by militant groups, and to build the capacity of teachers and the community to ensure that schools and classrooms are safe and psychosocially supportive for children. As none of the militant groups have ever claimed responsibility for attacks on schools or people, and indeed have never even identified themselves or their causes, it is impossible to work directly with any militant group. There is no scope to appeal to a group’s reputation or ethics, and no possibility of shaming or blacklisting such a group.

Therefore, this project will work closely with communities and aim to raise awareness and promote community ownership over schools and responsibility for teachers and children, to make it more difficult for militant groups to carry out such attacks in the future. This approach would have to work with established local groups and community leaders to achieve its objectives.

In addition, the approach will combine relationship building and partnerships with the schools and communities and capacity development, to establish awareness, motivation, knowledge and skills for educators, parents and community members on psychosocial support principles. The project,

in its aim to develop safe and psychosocially supportive schools, will provide materials and training to teachers, parents, and school directors that emphasize student-centred teaching methods and methods to identify and respond to student behaviours associated with distress as a result of the on-going violence.

Using the lessons learned from the Nepal experience, each school would be taken as a unit, and an academic institute would work with the community on awareness-raising and sensitization in order to develop a declaration to protect schools and those within, and ensure continued access to education for all children: the declaration of that particular school as a 'zone of peace'. An additional point to consider would be a declaration by the adults of that community that children would not be involved in any form of political protest (as has happened before) and that certainly they would never be withdrawn from school to partake in any protests or sit-ins.

The Nepal experience found the process of declaring schools as zones of peace was particularly important, and that community participation was vital; this would need to be emphasized in any activities in the south of Thailand.

Follow-up

Once a school has been declared a zone of peace by the community, regular monitoring and follow-up would need to be conducted. The number of teachers trained in positive behaviors will need to be monitored, as will the quality and quantity of follow-up visits with parents and communities. In addition, it is envisaged that each community will make a declaration of their school as a zone of peace: however, whilst it would be hoped that community pressure may be exerted over individuals within militant groups, there is no guarantee that militant groups will discontinue attacks.

Collaboration

The SZOP initiative will require close collaboration with various actors. As already stated, these include the Ministry of Education, the principals, teachers and children of schools, and communities (through community and religious leaders).

UNICEF would liaise with the following key partners: the MoE and an academic institute responsible for working with the communities; an additional organization may be required to provide technical assistance and support to the academic institute working on the ground. UNICEF would not be working on the ground to implement this project, but would be responsible for overall coordination and monitoring. Local Authorities will need to be kept updated and informed of the process throughout; UNICEF will meet with them at both the Central level, and at the Region 4 Head Quarters, to advocate for children's rights and wellbeing.

Depending on needs, collaboration with other actors may be required: including the provincial Governors, and other government actors.

Annex 3: Relevant Excerpts from the UNDP Country Programme Document

National Priority/Goal

Promoting a just society

Country Programme/UNDAF Outcome

National legislation, policies and justice administration comply with international human rights norms and standards.

Related strategic plan focus areas

Democratic Governance

UNDP Contribution

- Institutional support to national and local governments and other independent institutions
- Capacity building of key institutions, and promoting gender equality norm

Other Partners' Contributions

- UN agencies and CSOs working on access to justice
- Associations of local governments working on institutional reform
- Academia and peace institutions on conflict prevention

These will support mobilizing local communities and local partners including volunteers, and implementing some of the outreach programme components.

Indicative Country Programme Outputs:

- National strategies for civic education on democratic governance and human rights are developed by UNDP
- Social cohesion modules are produced
- Legal empowerment programmes are launched especially in the lowest tier of provinces

Programme Implementation Modality

“While national implementation remains the modality of choice, UNDP and the Government agree that there may be special circumstances under which direct implementation or non-governmental organization implementation arrangements may be more appropriate.”

Annex 4: Terms of Reference for the Assessment



TERMS OF REFERENCE CONFLICT PREVENTION AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR

Modality:	Consultancy
AGENCY/PROJECT NAME:	UNDP UNDP Thailand/ Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation (STEP)
COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT:	Thailand (with domestic travel within 4 Southern border provinces)

1) GENERAL BACKGROUND

The Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation (STEP) Project was formulated in 2009 and started its implementation in 2010. The ultimate aim of the project is to ensure human security and social cohesion in local communities. The project is based on a two-pronged strategy, i.e. empowering communities and civil society networks through participatory approaches on one hand, and strengthening the capacities of the relevant government agencies. The project is implemented through the Prince of Songkla University in Hat Yai in collaboration with other responsible partners from the government as well as local community based organizations. The project covers 5 target provinces along the Southern borders of Thailand and addresses a wide range of challenges in the South that are best described through the seven project outputs which are: (1) strengthening community-based organizations; (2) income generation; (3) access to justice; (4) local governance planning and budgeting; (5) natural disaster management; (6) peace dialogues; and (7) dispute resolution mechanisms.

The project's implementation has reached the mid-point which marks the ideal point in time for a critical assessment of the results achieved by the project so far. In particular, because the environment surrounding the project's implementation is very dynamic and is characterized by an increasing openness of the government towards dialogue and negotiations as well as a proliferation of activities by civil society actors. In this context, UNDP Thailand decided to review the project's overall impact, direction and link it to an analysis of entry points for future peace building and development programming which can be built on the foundation of the STEP project.

2) SCOPE OF WORK

The Conflict Prevention and Development assignment will be carried out by an international consultant. Due to the complexity of the review and the need to engage with partners in the Thai language the international advisor will work in tandem with a national expert.

The international adviser will be the team leader and define the assessment approach, process and methodology as well as write up the final analysis and recommendations. The national expert will provide assistance with relevant information not available in English, some of the contextual analysis, an initial assessment of information, and be responsible for the coordination with relevant stakeholders on the ground.

Under the overall supervision of the Deputy Resident Representative the Conflict Prevention and Development Advisor will work directly with the Governance Unit, the Programme Support Unit and Project Manager of the STEP project and in close collaboration with the Prince of Songkla University (PSU).

The overall objective of the assignment is to review the current progress and impact of the STEP project as well as the overall programming response of UNDP in the South. For this s(he) will analyze the current development context and the situation in the South to identify possible entry points for future peace building and development initiatives for UNDP Thailand taking into account the overall activities of the UN system and other stakeholders in the South of Thailand.

3) DUTIES AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. The Conflict Prevention/Resolution Adviser will provide a brief assessment of the current progress and impact of the STEP project.
2. S(he) will provide an analysis of the existing stakeholders and institutions (e.g. UN, CSOs, national and provincial government, academia) and the responses developed in the South. This will include the identification of relevant risks and opportunities for peace building, conflict management and conflict sensitive development programmes/actions against the backdrop of the overall development context and the situation in the South.
3. The Advisor will base this work on a review of key documents that will be provided by UNDP Thailand as well as interviews with key stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels. Additional methods may include focus-group meetings, and relevant case studies available on the three Southern border provinces of Thailand namely Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat and the four districts in Songkhla Provinces.
4. Based on the above, the Advisor will provide recommendations for appropriate programme responses and identify relevant entry points for future conflict prevention and peace building programmes for UNDP Thailand.
5. Particular attention should be given to identifying opportunities to enhance livelihoods, address poverty reduction, and improve social cohesion and local governance structures and participatory service delivery as part of the next phase of UNDP's programme work in the South.
6. The Advisor will take into account the overall activities of the UN system in the South of Thailand and identify possible areas for collaboration with other UN partners for possible joint programming.

4) FINAL PRODUCT AND DELIVERABLES

1. A final synthesis report (60% of mission time) that will consist of a(n)
 - Short situational analysis of the current development context in the Deep South;
 - Assessment of current responses from the government, multi and international organization as well as CSOs based on a document review and the interviews/ meetings with stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels;
 - Assessment of the current progress and impact of the STEP Project including

recommendations for an improved implementation.

- A brief analysis of possible strategic intervention and possible entry points for conflict prevention and peace building in the South with a focus on identifying opportunities to enhance livelihoods, address poverty reduction, improve social cohesion and local governance structures and participatory service delivery;
2. A draft outline of a future UNDP programme that builds on the STEP Project and fits within the overall framework of the Country Programme Document (CPD) for Thailand. (40% of mission time)
- Strategies for the overall UNDP programme response
 - Identified key development outcomes
 - Prioritized areas with entry points, identified key implementing partners
 - Assess of feasibility for programme intervention in each areas
 - Key baselines and indicators at the outcome level

5) DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT, DUTY STATION AND EXPECTED PLACES OF TRAVEL

The duration of the assignment is 20 working days to be delivered in the period starting from 31 August to 22 September 2013. The duty station will be Bangkok and the Songkhla province with travels to Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat province.

6) PROVISION OF MONITORING AND PROGRESS CONTROLS

Under the direct supervision of Deputy Resident Representative, the “Conflict Prevention and Development Advisor” will work closely with the UNDP Governance Unit and Programme Support Unit of STEP.

7) EXPERTISE, COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN's values and ethical standards
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability

Conflict Prevention and Development Experience (technical):

- In-depth experience in the design, planning and implementation of conflict and development projects in developing and middle income countries
- Knowledge of relevant methodology for assessing the impact of conflict prevention and peace building initiatives
- Proven knowledge of development, and programme design in the areas of peace building and local governance
- Ability to lead the design and implementation of UNDP programme activities and the strengthening of

- strategic partnerships in the area peace building and local governance
- Demonstrates the capacity to gather comprehensive information on complex problems or situations; evaluates information accurately and identifies key programming entry points
- Ability to lead strategic planning, change processes, management and reporting

Development and Operational Effectiveness:

The ability to

- lead strategic planning and reporting processes
- work with minimal supervision
- lead formulation and evaluation of development programmes and projects
- demonstrate strong oral and written communication skills
- build strong relationships with clients and external actors

8) REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Work experience

- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in conflict prevention and recovery, including relevant field experience, especially in crisis or post-conflict settings, and in conflict sensitive programming;
- Experience in the field of area-based development approaches with a focus on recovery and reintegration in crisis and complex contexts, including experience at the international level
- Experience in partnership building and/or inter-agency coordination in post-conflict and/or post-natural disaster settings in particular at the field level and working with donors and NGOs
- Familiarity with UN common procedures and tools, especially regarding needs assessments, pooled funds and joint programming
- Experience in project design, implementations and evaluation

Education

- Postgraduate degree in Political Sciences, Laws, International Relations or related fields (e.g. international development, sociology, economics, or other related disciplines of social sciences)
- Knowledge of Thailand and its political challenges is an advantage.

Language requirements

- Fluency (both written and spoken) in English.

9) REVIEW TIME REQUIRED

Review/approval time required to review / approve outputs prior to authorizing payments

N/A

10) CONSULTANT PRESENCE REQUIRED ON DUTY STATION/UNDP PREMISES

NONE

PARTIAL

INTERMITTENT

FULL-TIME
