



The Synergos Institute

## **Unfinished Business**

ODA-Civil Society Partnerships in Thailand

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## Introduction

This paper examines the experience of foreign donor phase-out in Thailand and explores the possible role of official development assistance (ODA) in providing lasting support for civil society through endowments or other funding mechanisms.<sup>1</sup> The views of three Thai grant-making and operating foundations and various bilateral and multilateral agencies were solicited as background research to this study. The foundations examined in this paper work at the intermediary level and mobilize domestic and international resources in order to make grants or other financing mechanisms available to civil society groups.<sup>2</sup> Although ODA agency representatives acknowledge the importance of civil society, a number of constraints limit the extent of ODA support at this time. In particular, the Thai government is focused on accelerating government restructuring and addressing the lingering impacts of the 1997 economic and financial crisis as well as the general global economic slowdown. It has thus assigned low priority to supporting civil society other than for instrumental uses, such as health campaigns. Faced with these constraints, Thai civil society organizations therefore need to articulate clear and compelling plans for the future in order to generate support from the Thai government, ODA partners, and the Thai public.

Thailand preceded a number of its Southeast Asian neighbors in graduating from external donor funding. As the economy boomed in the late 1980s, a number of ODA agencies instituted discussions and plans to phase out official assistance programs, including some arrangements that left permanent funding for ongoing civil society initiatives. Although some donors put phase-out plans on hold in response to the 1997 financial and economic crisis, most donors left their exit strategies in place. Before reviewing the history of ODA-civil society partnerships in Thailand, the first section examines current challenges to Thai civil society. The final section examines current prospects for further partnerships between ODA agencies and civil society, and implications for the future of Thai civil society.

### The Rise of Thai Civil Society

The rise of the middle class and civil society – defined broadly to include NGOs, foundations, people’s organizations (POs), labor unions, and the media – are among the most fundamental recent shifts in Thai society (Girling 1996). During the 1990s, NGOs gained increasing prominence in shaping the social agenda, including that of the government. The most

1 This paper builds on follows on the general overview of ODA-NGO collaboration in Southeast Asia presented in Winder (2003).

2 The Synergos Institute has previously characterized these organizations as “civil society resource organizations,” or CSROs. They are not unlike the “foundations” of North America.

3 Subsequent civil society involvement in preparing Thailand's Ninth Plan was much less broad-based due to budgetary and time constraints.

important cases that illustrated this are NGO involvement in developing Thailand's Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan and the drafting of the 1997 Constitution.<sup>3</sup> A number of NGOs and social visionaries have focused on linking civil society to the defense of human rights, grassroots politics, people's participation, and enhancing the self-reliance of communities.

The peak of civil society's influence thus far was perhaps its role in seeing through the country's 1997 "People's Constitution," which allowed for structural changes that enhance the position of non-elites in Thai society. A number of NGOs played central roles in conceptualizing and implementing a process to develop a national consensus regarding Thailand's goals. The resulting "People's Constitution" was a revolutionary document enshrining both unprecedented human, social, and economic rights (including universal access to education and quality health care) and community rights to manage natural resources. The 1997 Constitution provides for the establishment of a number of independent organizations, including the Human Rights Commission, Election Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, a revamped National Counter Corruption Commission, National Audit Commission, and an independent telecommunications regulatory body. The importance of these bodies in redressing historical patterns of corruption, abuse of power, and official disregard of the public is best illustrated by the lengths to which politicians go to undermine them. Politicians, including current Prime Minister Taksin Shinawatra, have called for a rollback in powers of independent organizations. (After running on a platform of corruption busting, Shinawatra was himself subsequently cleared by the Constitutional Court of a National Counter Corruption Commission indictment, a decision shrouded in controversy.)

Significantly, a number of these independent organizations see civil society as critical to accomplishing their mandates. The chair of Thailand's Human Rights Commission states the challenge as how to create a "mutual sense of belonging ...between itself and the public at large." The commission also outlined a multi-tiered system involving civil society in the protection and promotion of human rights (Chamarik 2002). Creating public demand for transparency, accountability, straightforward government procurement, open information, and protection of human rights is fundamental to the principles underlying the independent organizations.

Civil society was also greatly responsible for gains – protected by the 1997 Constitution – regarding women's issues and community rights (particularly regarding management of local natural resources, consumer rights, and AIDS).

Decentralization, enshrined in the 1997 Constitution, is an integral part of political changes occurring in Thailand. New local responsibilities and capacity supported by a complex system of transfers from central budgets to local Tambon Administrative Organizations (*Por Tor* in Thai) considerably alter relationships with national government agencies. These local administrations now receive some 25 percent of national budgets, an amount scheduled to reach 35 percent by 2006. A recent study indicates that some 140 government funds provide loans or grants for which civil society can compete, amounting to a total of US \$575 million (Local Development Administration 2000).

At the same time, in a variety of thematic areas, organizations and networks of groups are institutionalizing themselves to differing degrees. Women's groups have relied to a large extent on university-based women's studies centers and on linkages with the old-line National Commission on Women. Some networks of women leaders, however, are demonstrating capacity for action on their own, as exemplified by the Women's Paralegal Volunteers Network (a largely Northern Thai network of village women who work to create a better understanding of the Constitution and rights issues at the local level).

The Consumer Protection Association prints a high-quality monthly magazine, boasts strong nationwide readership, seeks redress of violation of individual consumer rights, and, by networking with other NGOs, addresses structural issues such as universal health care.

Health-related NGOs have played crucial roles, not only in achieving universal health care but in unmasking extensive corruption in the Ministry of Public Health procurement procedures. NGOs and groups of people living with HIV/AIDS have established strong regional and national networks and work closely with public health officials to address AIDS prevention, reduce stigmatization, ensure equitable access to care, and promote home and community-based care. Over 100 NGOs and several hundred informal groups network through the Thai NGO Coalition on AIDS and the Thai Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS.

Environmental NGOs appear to have the least institutionalized linkages of these issue-oriented groups. No single national coordinating body represents environmental groups and their diverse agendas and perspectives of urban versus rural groups and preservation versus sustainable human development approaches. Despite this, significant networking among the numerous organizations addressing environmental concerns throughout Thailand is occurring. Many are members of the NGO Coordinating Committee on Development whose environmental arm is large and active, having hosted annual reviews of the environment during the 1990s. Environmental NGOs have actively protested dam and power plant construction and have worked at the local level to promote environmentally sustainable agriculture in a number of settings, from mountains to rice fields to mangrove forests.

Nonetheless, certain weaknesses – including factionalism, gaps in coordination, limited funding and capacity, and incomplete institutionalization of linkages between the largely urban middle class and other, often rural and poor, communities – continue to hamper civil society's progress. Although important gains have been achieved in developing such linkages, NGO activists rate them as relatively weak and therefore deserving of support. Some argue that the support needed is largely non-monetary and press for greater voluntarism in Thai society (Nakabatura 2002).

In a period of declining external support, domestic Thai NGOs have found themselves increasingly under pressure to work at the Southeast Asian regional level as a survival strategy. While this shift may provide new opportunities to network at increasingly broader levels on issues with regional and global dimensions, in some cases it is clear that NGOs are simply following the money. As a consequence, Thai NGOs have fewer resources to devote to local needs and issues.

## The Shape of Thai Civil Society Organizations

Until recent years, those intermediary NGOs in a position to mobilize and transfer resources have been dominated by government-established and government-funded institutions, such as the National Council of Social Welfare, the National Council of Women, and the Thai Red Cross.<sup>4</sup> Although the 1960s brought a wave of activism and the emergence of independent nonprofit organizations, the mid- to late-1970s conservative backlash and severe restrictions on any organization not supported by government resulted in a period of stagnation for civil society. It was not until the mid-1980s that nonprofits re-emerged as a social force. It is largely the organizations and leadership that emerged during that period which continue to shape Thai civil society today.

<sup>4</sup> Such organizations are detailed more in the *National Directory of Civil Society Resource Organizations: Thailand*, 2002, by the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society and the Synergos Institute.

Given declining external funding for civil society, many organizations that have played key roles in promoting civil society have turned to the Thai government for support. In the government's view, however, civil society is often seen as a means to a short-term end, such as improved community health or reduced drug use, rather than as a worthwhile goal itself which might encourage communities to become more self-reliant and develop local solutions. At the same time, NGOs are becoming increasingly compartmentalized in response to declining funds. The institutionalization of civil society is neglected and perhaps even eroded as civil society is exploited for its instrumental value.

As a result, the promise of the 1997 constitution of increased community control and self-determination remains at best only partially fulfilled. Aside from some notable exceptions, community activities look very much the same as they did a decade ago: they respond narrowly to mandates established in Bangkok and are shaped by the constraints of annual government budget cycles. At the same time, the media faces heavy pressure to report only what the government wants. All told, the state of civil society in Thailand appears less robust than it did during the period surrounding the 1997 promulgation of the constitution.

### Outstanding Challenges

Thailand's principal local funding organizations tend to have a development focus that is lodged in a framework challenging underlying structural issues, which allow for great disparities in income and in access to the rights of citizenship, including education and other social services. While this framework remains relevant, their funding focuses on addressing these challenges at the lowest level – the village – rather than fully exploiting opportunities to effect national policy and regulatory change consistent with the constitution.

The absence of broader-based aims which would support human rights watchdog organizations as well as organizations monitoring the process of government and constitutional reforms has resulted in an ad hoc funding process and contributed to periodic disruptions in activity. In a sense, civil society has not kept up with the changes which civil society itself fostered in the development of the 1997 "People's Constitution."

Thai decentralization and presumed increase in local control provide an opportunity for a major shift in the roles of NGOs (many of which have in the past characterized their relationship to communities as one of *pii liang*, or “nanny”), in anticipation of the day when communities might have more power. That day has now come. The challenge is to develop a new sense of direction and an enhanced sense of the nature of the relationship between NGOs and communities which takes into account new local powers.

In this context, several outstanding challenges to civil society deserve reiteration. These include:

- Institutionalization of civil society linkages from the local to national levels and across sectoral lines. Such linkages could support the efforts of Thailand’s new independent organizations by creating public awareness and strengthening local capacities for effective communication with these agencies, as well as the broader range of government institutions.
- Broadening civil society development in communities yet untouched by prior efforts and developing new ways of working to advance constitutional guarantees which remain limited by existing laws.<sup>5</sup>
- Support for key provisions of the 1997 constitution including community resource management, human rights, and freedoms of speech and the press.
- Strengthening public understanding and acceptance of NGOs and their roles in society.

Regarding the latter challenge, an earlier study of Thailand’s nonprofit sector found the private sector unlikely to support civil society because of trust issues (Pongsapich 1997). These relate both to concerns regarding perceived radicalism of NGOs, Bangkok frustration with street protests (resulting in snarled traffic) seen as linked to NGO activism, and the lack of social accountability of many NGOs – a factor conceded by NGOs themselves. A recent survey by the King Prajadhipok Institute confirms the low opinion society holds of NGOs, ranking them at the low end of the spectrum just above the police and media. Public sentiment toward NGOs has also been shaped by larger political events: driven by fears of Communism, right wing government officials of the 1970s banned organizations such as NGOs because they were not created by the government. As the ban was relaxed during the 1980s, politicians allegedly manipulated civil society – particularly labor unions – for their own purposes. Subsequent government interest in maintaining a favorable climate for foreign direct investment, presumably buttressed by concerns regarding political manipulation of labor, led to the Anand Government’s action to ban labor unions in the early 1990s. Although this ban has been rescinded recently, many government officials still perceive NGOs to be supported by a “Third Hand” of ominous outsiders, intent on destroying Thailand. Thai civil society therefore needs to improve public understanding of and sustained support for itself. This aim might be of potential relevance to the donor community.

<sup>5</sup> In a quixotic legal twist, existing regulations remain in force regardless of inconsistency with the constitution until successfully challenged in a court of law.

## The Road Once Traveled

As Thailand's boom began in the late 1980s, several major ODA players developed plans for the phase-out of their development assistance. As those plans were implemented during the 1990s, the country suffered a major economic and financial crisis starting in 1997. Thailand went from a model of successful development to one of what can go wrong.

While the collaboration between Thai ODA and civil society during this phase-out planning period had some successes, the experience reveals several common problems in developing sustainable funding arrangements. These problems provide clear entry points for both the international community and Thai public looking to support civil society. Four organizations are detailed in the appendix; because several raise important issues for sustainable financing, three of them are discussed briefly here.

### *Local Development Institute*

Foremost among ODA-civil society partnerships is the work of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with the Local Development Institute (LDI) and its funding arm, the Local Development Foundation. This partnership is synonymous with the Thai NGO movement having fostered nation-wide action and capacity through both resources and a focus on process that created strong linkages between local communities and development issues. Owing to a legal framework in Thailand that does not permit an operating organization to also extend grants or loans, two institutions were set up: the foundation which holds and transfers the monies accrued and the institute which operates programs and projects. For the purposes of this paper, the name LDI will be the name used. LDI was never technically endowed by CIDA owing to regulations not allowing CIDA to participate in such an arrangement. The agency did, however, transfer loan savings to LDI in the amount of approximately US \$660,000 when it terminated its project funding in 1998.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> All conversions are at the rate of Baht 40 = US \$1.

<sup>7</sup> Counterpart funds refer to those that come from a local proponent (often the government) in the country where the project is occurring and is usually contributed in local currency.

### *Development Cooperation Foundation*

A one-time injection of Thai counterpart funds from US government operations in Thailand, managed by the Thai Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation and complemented by a grant of Canadian funds channeled through CIDA, established a second institution, the Development Cooperation Foundation (DCF).<sup>7</sup> The combined inputs established an endowment of US \$952,000. During its early years, interest earned on this endowment enabled DCF to support a number of activities that fostered one of its principal aims: to promote Thailand's philanthropic and civil society movement. DCF has utilized its permanent funding base and linkages of prominent Thai Board members to mobilize international and Thai private sector support for its agricultural water shortages project.

### *Kenan Institute Asia*

A third foundation needs mention in this context. The Kenan Institute Asia (KIASIA), registered in 1996 as a private Thai nonprofit foundation, aims to continue a Thai-US develop-

ment partnership following termination of the bilateral US Agency for International Development (USAID) program in Thailand. USAID, the Royal Thai Government, and the William R. Kenan Charitable Trust (including the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise) contributed to the KIASia endowment. The original partners continue to support the foundation through funding projects and by board membership.

While KIASia focuses largely on business practices, environmental management, human resource development, and information and communications technology, it emphasizes the importance of civil society in all its work. KIASia also funds NGO and community projects that contribute to improved understanding and monitoring of environmental issues at the community level and better environmental management practices.<sup>8</sup>

Kenan views its US \$12.1 million endowment as conferring financial stability and funding flexibility, which Kenan has successfully used to attract additional funding. KIASia continues to draw new USAID funding and has actively and successfully sought US and Thai private sector contributions, the latter amounting to near US \$0.5 million for activities (largely in skills training and general education) during 2001 to 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Funds come from the US-Asia Environmental Partnership (US-AEP) Community Participation Initiative.

### **Constrained Financial Capacity**

As bank interest rates plummeted in the late 1990s, both LDI and DCF faced a choice: continue grantmaking at the expense of personnel cuts or meet operating expenses by cutting grantmaking. Both chose the latter route. The inadequacy of their endowments for sustained grant support to civil society is buttressed by a recent study that indicates an endowment in the billions of Baht would be required to meet current development needs (Pongsapich 2001). While one can argue about the assumptions used in estimating need, the combined assets of DCF and LDI amount to less than one tenth of this estimate.

This situation contrasts with that of KIASia's assertive and successful efforts to maintain continued donor support and generate new sources of funding to continue its grantmaking. While DCF and LDI have also successfully attracted additional funding, that funding has largely been used for direct project implementation and the instrumental use of civil society as a mechanism to achieve government goals. Indeed, LDI in particular has received monies from the government. This has meant a shift in priorities and approaches from earlier grantmaking roles played by these organizations. The critical importance of developing an adequate endowment and having diverse funding sources is highlighted by the different experiences of KIASia versus the less generously endowed DCF and LDI. Nonetheless, KIASia's favorable financial position has not guaranteed it a coherent and consistent programming approach, relying as it does on external funding to cover the majority of its projects' costs.

## Fund Management

With Thai bank interest rates hovering between one and two percent, some NGOs took advantage of a mid-2002 issue of government bonds offering returns of five percent and more, depending upon bond maturity. Neither DCF nor LDI purchased these bonds. In the case of one of these organizations, the penalty on breaking a longer-term certificate of deposit would have resulted in a financial loss for a switch to bonds. In the other case, the organization's management didn't realize the opportunity. Counterpart funds held in the name of KIASia are restricted by the initial agreement to certificates of deposit in a government-linked bank; their low yields are offset to some extent by the dollar portion of the KIASia endowment. KIASia's US fund manager is credited by KIASia management with having maintained the value of the fund in a difficult financial environment.

Thailand's experience to date with ODA-civil society collaboration demonstrates the importance of addressing financial sustainability issues, namely: having an endowment sizable enough to withstand drops in interest or other income; management alacrity and flexibility in financial management; and consistent board and management focus on the organization's aims, including exploring innovative ways of sustaining those in the face of changing conditions.

## Institutional Issues

While an extensive evaluation of institution building within the three organizations highlighted is beyond the scope of this review, the contrasting experiences of the three raise interesting issues for funders and others interested in the fate of civil society in Thailand.

The two smaller, and still struggling, organizations are fully Thai operations, largely overseen by boards drawn from academia, retired and current government officers, and activists. It is perhaps not coincidental that KIASia, the largest of the three (whose endowment is significantly larger than the funds of the other two), draws its board from the highest levels of Thai and US government and business echelons, and includes a decidedly bicultural staff allowing it access to US funds much more readily. The role of boards in providing strategic guidance, engaging with potential partners, and providing focus to operations appears to be critical.

KIASia also differs from DCF and LDI in the technical focus of much of its work, though it also emphasizes civil society in many of its efforts. For example, KIASia's endowment enables it to provide longer term program funding to organizations and issues in the health sector relative to LDI at this time. Longer term funding offers the potential for deeper and more permanent engagement than an annual fundraising plan.

Not unlike the experience of many new organizations in their early stages, by the time Canadian funding was terminated LDI's evaluators concluded that the organization had focused too much on internal management issues and not enough on its own strategic institution building. Although comparable evaluations have not been conducted for the other two

organizations reviewed above, the phrase resonates as one with considerable implications for Thai civil society.

## ODA Exit Strategies

Several bilateral assistance agencies developed their plans for phase-out of Thailand during the late 1980s. Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United States all entered discussions with the Thai Department of Technical and Economic Co-operation, as the government aid coordination agency, regarding future support. These discussions led to the emergence of the three Thai organizations referred to above.

Assuming that Thailand's economic growth was strong, Canada signaled changes in its priorities and plans for phase-out of assistance by the mid-1990s (Posgate 1998). The new strategy, aiming to establish more commercially oriented partnerships, prioritized assistance to the commercial and industrial sectors, including human resource and technology transfer.

The Canadian assessment reflected a view common among Bangkok's diplomatic corps that things were going well on all fronts in Thailand. It also responded to increasing pressure, emanating from the capitals of the respective bilateral agencies, to harness ODA in order to facilitate home country commercial interests taking advantage of Thailand's high-growth opportunities.

Thailand's 1991 coup d'état and the deadly clashes of May 1992 (*preutsapa phmin*, or "Black May," as it is referred to) may have jolted ODA agencies, but there is scant evidence that these events materially changed plans already in place for phase-out of development assistance. The 1997 financial and economic crisis, however, did result in the continuation of assistance from several bilateral donors, some of which are now again focused on terminating their programming in Thailand.

## Transition Plans

Canada and Australia have substantially redirected their focus toward private sector programs, as had the United States prior to its closure of the USAID Mission to Thailand in 1995. USAID has nonetheless programmed substantial funding through KIA Asia and is preparing to open a Bangkok-based USAID Regional Mission in 2003. The Delegation of the European Commission has a regional mandate, and a number of EU member countries including Belgium and the Netherlands are no longer actively providing development assistance to Thailand.

Although both the importance of civil society and the opportunities created by the 1997 constitution are generally acknowledged by donors, none indicates a strong interest in permanent unrestricted funding for civil society efforts. Some embassies, such as that of the Netherlands, indicate that their governments have no policy to support such funding arrangements. Others, including the Australian Embassy, express interest and indicate that

the constraints faced are neither policy nor home-country law but having sufficient human and financial resources to develop plans for such alternatives as debt swaps or use of counterpart funds to permanently support organizations. As one ODA representative indicated, counterpart funds managed by the Thai government are generally used for training and scholarships consistent with the original program objectives. Any request for other uses must originate with the Thai government.

In several cases, while ODA focus has shifted to the use of Thailand as a base for regional activities and support of regional work by Thai institutions, foreign donors indicate that they are continuing to provide considerable support for Thai activities. They perceive their programming to be satisfactorily engaged with Thai civil society, and hence see little reason to consider debt swaps or other arrangements to permanently endow Thai organizations.

Table 1 summarizes the status of assistance transition plans of several of Thailand's development partners. The table is based on information from agency websites augmented by discussions with officials of the relevant funding agencies, reflecting the status as of late 2002. Annual assistance levels reflect a mix of the most recent year or of average annual funding levels for a program cycle. The final two columns in the table indicate the status of consideration of the types of innovative funding options which are the focus of this study and include additional comments that are intended to provide further insight into the prospects for the development of endowments through either the use of counterpart funds or debt swap arrangements.

### *Australia*

Although Australia developed plans in the 1990s to phase out its bilateral assistance to Thailand by 2001 because it characterized Thailand's economic growth through 1996 as rapid and sustained, it no longer has a deadline for "graduation" of Thailand. Following Thailand's 1997 economic crisis, Australia agreed to extend the duration of its support.<sup>9</sup> Post-crisis assistance focused on government capacity building, specifically regarding good governance, economic and financial reform, and mitigating economic crisis impacts on the poor, amounting to US \$9.5 million annually.

Thailand's relatively high level of development and its important position in the Mekong sub-region, both geographically and economically, provide the basis for the evolution of the aid relationship from donor/recipient to development partnership in the region. Under a recently agreed trilateral aid partnership, Australia and Thailand will jointly undertake activities that benefit third countries in the region. A three-year strategy is currently being developed that would focus on capacity building to position Thailand to better engage in the Asian region. Indeed, Australia's current assistance is primarily focused on building Thailand's capacity to address economic and public sector governance issues. The new Thailand-Australia Government Sector Linkages Program will promote institutional strengthening and capacity building in Thai Government agencies. The program utilizes a partnership approach, with joint activities planned and implemented by Australian and Thai Government agencies. Direct assistance to the poor and disadvantaged will continue through

<sup>9</sup> See the Thailand Country information sheet online at [www.ausaid.gov.au/country/country.cfm?CountryId=32](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/country/country.cfm?CountryId=32) for more information.

**TABLE 1**  
ODA Exit Strategies (as of 2002)

Country	Planned Exit Date	Program Components	Annual Assistance (US\$)	Availability of Non-Grant Funding	
				Counterpart Fund Option	Debt Swap Option
<b>Australia</b>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Enabling Thailand's effective regional engagement through strengthening of foreign affairs, trade and finance capacities</li> <li>· Limited community focus to develop skills to communicate with government</li> <li>· Linkages with Australian counterparts</li> </ul>	\$9.6 m	Possible, but constrained by funding and personnel limits	Possible, but constrained by funding and personnel limits
<b>Canada</b>	2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Trilateral cooperation with Thailand in neighboring countries</li> <li>· Continuation of on-going community development, good governance, and poverty reduction programming</li> </ul>		Counterpart funds used to create DCF but similar arrangements not under consideration	Not considered, nor likely to be
<b>European Union</b>	Regional Delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Environmental protection, stimulating rural economy, HIV/AIDS, refugee and migrant issues</li> </ul>	\$15 m	Not applicable	No outstanding loans to the Thai government.
<b>Japan</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Small grants to grassroots organizations</li> </ul>		No information available	
<b>Netherlands</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Private sector</li> </ul>	Modest	Not applicable	No policy in support of debt swaps and no outstanding loans
<b>New Zealand</b>	Contingent on outcome of planned review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Currently reviewing strategies</li> <li>· Graduate scholarships and small projects funds (principally NGOs and community organizations) available</li> <li>· Other traditional bilateral aid has ended</li> </ul>	Modest	Not applicable	No outstanding loans
<b>United States</b>	Mission closed in 1995; regional to open 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Regional issues, including HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, migrants, good governance, economic reform</li> </ul>	\$25 m	Counterpart funds jointly created DCF and KIAAsia but similar arrangements not under consideration	Attempted forestry-related debt forgiveness; abandoned because of complexity

grants to local NGOs, available in the past as the Australian Community Assistance Scheme, a quick-disbursing grants mechanism managed by the Embassy and focusing on five areas: environment, sustainable agriculture, health, education, and good governance.

The Australian government also provides some A \$11 million (US \$6.8 million) over a three-year period for the development of improved skills at the community level to communicate with government. While acknowledging the importance of civil society support and the theoretical possibility of innovative financing to provide such support, budget and staff realities combined with the political climate are not conducive to such efforts.

*Canada*

Canada is currently embarking on a transition plan that would end its bilateral program in March 2006. During the transition period, CIDA will continue to work with the Department of Technical and Economic Co-operation in support of Thai training and education needs, research programs of the Thailand Development Research Institute pursuant to the Canadian emphasis on poverty reduction, and good governance programming with DCF. Through the foundation, CIDA has been helping to strengthen the Office of the Ombudsman, Administrative Court, Human Rights Commission, Secretariat of Parliament, and Office of Official Information. In addition, DCF funding will support the Parliament Secretariat, the Thai chapter of Transparency International, and the King Prajadhipok Institute, a research institute focused on politics and democracy.

As part of its transition plan, Canada will also reduce support levels for the Canada Fund, although the extent of that reduction has yet to be determined. The Canada Fund is designed to be responsive to proposals relevant to its focus on poverty reduction and sustainable development. The fund currently supports the Thai Fund Foundation, profiled in the appendix. Generally, it makes one to two-year grants to both registered and non-registered development organizations and grassroots groups, but not individuals. Grants average US \$5,900 to \$8,300 annually. CIDA sources indicate that the outlines of the transition are well in place, and that debt swaps, counterpart funding, or other alternatives to provide long-term funding support through NGOs has not been considered and nor is their future consideration likely.

*European Union*

At the time of Thailand's rapid development in the mid-nineties, Thailand and the European Community agreed to re-focus cooperation activities on increasing their economic links in order to build closer relations in the long-term between the EU and Thailand.<sup>10</sup> EU support focuses on strengthening the cooperation framework and on making an effective contribution, through institutional dialogue, economic and financial cooperation, to sustainable development, social and economic stability, and democracy. Activities are developed and funded on a project basis under the framework of the EU Commission, focusing on trade and investment and public health reform (EC-Thailand Country Strategy Paper).

A number of bilateral EC-supported projects/programs operate in Thailand in sectors such as energy, public health, environment, rural development, narcotics, and humanitarian assistance. Ongoing programs are valued at some US \$60 million, and include support to civil society efforts to address HIV/AIDS and migrant/refugee concerns (see Table 2 on the following page).

*Japan*

The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) administers a technical assistance program within the broad JICA framework of transfer of technology and knowledge, as part of its nation-building objective. JICA provides five broad categories of assistance (social

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see the Delegation of the European Commission to Thailand website at [www.deltha.cec.eu.int/en/index.htm](http://www.deltha.cec.eu.int/en/index.htm).

<b>Table 2</b>			<b>Annual Assistance (US \$)</b>
<p>EU Member States: Assistance to Thailand (as of 2002)</p> <p>The countries included here are the main sources of foreign development assistance to Thailand.</p> <p>Source: EC-Thailand Country Strategy Paper, 2002-2006.</p>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Program Components</b>	
	<b>United Kingdom</b>	· Education, human rights, good governance, HIV/AIDS, peacekeeping, health, refugees, landmines.	\$2.5 million
	<b>Germany</b>	· Economic reform and development of a market economy and specifically the strengthening of Thai small/medium enterprise competitiveness. · Private-public partnerships, advisory services for industry, cooperation with German political foundations and scholarships.	\$5 to 7 million
	<b>Denmark</b>	· Gives to Mekong River Commission and Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. · Mixed credit schemes are being explored.	\$8 million
	<b>Finland</b>	· Mostly regional programs funded. · Poverty alleviation and improvement of environment in the Mekong River Region. · Some support for small-scale projects, especially through local NGOs. · A financial technical assistance program for industrial joint ventures exists through Flinnfund, a Finnish investment company.	\$1.7 to \$3.4 million
	<b>Sweden</b>	· Burmese refugee concerns. · Contributes to Asian Institute of Technology, Mekong River Commission, and UN Environmental Programme for Thailand. · Awards soft loans for technical cooperation and 50 Thais participate annually in training courses in Sweden.	\$ 2.2 million

development, health and medical care, agricultural development, forest and nature conservation, and development of mining and manufacturing industries), although not all are represented in Thailand. The program is explicitly bilateral – therefore working principally with government agencies – and viewed as technical assistance rather than as a funding resource.

Japan stands as Thailand's main creditor, having pledged more than US \$2 billion under the regional Miyazawa Initiative. Even prior to the 1997 crisis, Japan's bilateral program was the largest one in Thailand, at about US \$1 billion annually (principally loans). Japanese assistance focuses on export finance, agricultural credit, industrial training, central markets and co-operatives, the environment, and social development. Those close to the JICA program indicate that while JICA in principle supports the strengthening of civil society, existing financial regulations are not NGO-friendly, even for Japanese NGOs. Assistance to civil society largely takes the form of small grants for grassroots organizations, provided both by JICA and the Embassy of Japan.

#### *United States*

Anticipating the 1995 closure of USAID's Thailand mission, the agency and the Thai government agreed to the release of counterpart funds to support the DCF and KIAAsia. Since that time, USAID has supported the regional work of organizations based in Thailand.

Regional funding now amounts to some US \$30 to \$25 million annually. While a large share of this amount is spent in Thailand, officials emphasize there is no intent to re-launch a bilateral program. The US is currently developing a strategy to work through the Thai government as part of the 2003 opening of a Regional Mission, based in Bangkok. Tentative plans include support for the Office of the Civil Service Commission and Ministry of Public Health as well as training and scholarships. USAID works with a few key civil society partners: The Asia Foundation, KIAAsia, and the American Center for International Labor Solidarity.

USAID sources indicate that funding from counterpart funds is not currently on the table, but that any such request would have to be initiated by the Thai government, which now uses remaining counterpart funds principally for training consistent with earlier USAID bilateral programming. USAID and the Thai government recently worked to develop a forestry-related debt forgiveness scheme but found it to be so complicated that the effort was terminated, according to US sources. One such complication was the development of the debt swap plans with limited indigenous input, resulting in NGO protests shortly before the agreement was finalized.

### **What's Next?**

The 1997 constitution set in place reforms of fundamental importance to Thailand's ability to achieve equitable and sustainable development. Ensuring that the promise of the constitution is realized requires sustained public attention; civil society, including NGOs, labor unions, business groups, the media, and POs all have important roles to play in this process. Neither the process nor the outcomes are inconsequential to Thailand's international partners.

The development planning process varies in complexity and duration among the ODA agencies surveyed in connection with this report. In most, it involves three- to five-year lead times, political priorities of the home government, some weighing of the relative urgency of need in Thailand versus other countries, and an attempt to balance the relative importance of various sectors in Thailand. As resources become increasingly scarce among Thailand's development assistance partners, the challenge to civil society becomes more intense, especially as the case for long-term support really has to be made to politicians in a distant capital. Clearly, it is easier for ODA agencies to continue established project modes than to seek out support of distant bureaucrats and politicians to support a strategy of building endowments.

For civil society organizations, the development officers within embassies or assistance agencies along with the ambassadors represent the points of entry in any effort to secure long-term support. Given the bilateral nature of development assistance, the importance of securing political support from Thai leadership is crucial to any effort. Perhaps the greatest challenge for Thai civil society in obtaining permanent financial support from development

agencies lies within Thailand's own bureaucracy, including, but not limited to, the Department of Technical and Economic Co-operation. While this department has historically looked upon official development assistance as a resource for public agencies, there are precedents of support being extended to civil society, both through time-bound grants and in permanent arrangements such as those referred to above – LDI, DCF, and KIAAsia. Funding arrangements involving debt swaps or debt forgiveness would involve other actors, including the Ministry of Finance and possibly the central bank. Nonetheless, current government reforms intended to reduce the role of central government agencies may offer civil society organizations a rare opportunity to make the case that they produce important public goods and deserve consideration in programming of ever-scarcer development assistance budgets (or through the less conventional alternatives of debt swaps and debt forgiveness schemes).

While it is not the intent of this paper to paint a gloomy picture of the prospects for ODA-civil society partnerships in Thailand, the realities are clear:

- Most ODA programs have already embarked on transition plans, as outlined previously.
- No ODA programs canvassed in connection with this paper have plans to augment its support for civil society through permanent unrestricted funding in the form of an endowment.
- Thai civil society faces major public education challenges to overcome public antipathy toward the sector.

Maintaining civil society programming appears likely to become a greater financial challenge in Thailand, requiring increasing resourcefulness on the part of Thai organizations to access the progressively smaller and more narrowly targeted pool of external funding and tap domestic resources. Should civil society become more reliant on government as a funding source, maintaining an independent, critical voice will require great political acumen to avoid simply being cast as service providers.

While no ODA agencies indicated specific plans to augment their support to civil society, it is perhaps premature to rule out this possibility. To date, civil society organizations have not come together to develop and present a strong rationale for more ODA support. Given general donor acknowledgment of the importance of continued development of civil society, a concerted joint effort on the part of civil society leaders might yet meet with donor support.

*The progressively smaller and more narrowly targeted pool of external funding requires that Thai organizations become increasingly resourceful in how they tap resources*

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## Profile of Development Co-Operation Foundation

### Origins

Supported by counterpart funds generated in connection with Thai development activities of both the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Development Cooperation Fund (DCF) was established in 1993 to support sustainable development through the cooperation of government, the private sector, and domestic and international NGOs. DCF received a one-time injection of USAID and CIDA counterpart funds, managed by the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC) in the Office of the Prime Minister. Although DCF founders originally envisioned a larger endowment, DTEC came to an administrative decision to limit the endowment to Baht 40 million (US \$1 million), held in long-term interest-bearing bank accounts.

### Structure

DCF is overseen by a 12-member Board drawn largely from the ranks of current and retired government officials, and, to a lesser extent, from business and academia. DCF indicates that its mission is to address the following four goals:

- promote Thailand's philanthropic and civil society movement
- improve economic opportunities and quality of life of the urban and rural poor
- network with both local and foreign organizations doing philanthropic work
- support good governance through public participation.

Day-to-day management rests in the hands of an Executive Director, assisted by a staff of less than 10. Board membership is reflected in DCF programming.

## Mechanisms

Prior to Thailand's 1997 economic crisis, DCF provided more than 10 civil society grants annually of up to Baht 200,000 (US \$5,000) each. Following the crisis and reflecting continued declines in endowment income, DCF has been constrained to fewer than 10 grants per year, of roughly Baht 50,000 (US \$1,250) each. DCF has focused on co-funding activities supported by other donors.

Much of DCF's civil society grant activity has supported meetings, seminars, and workshops. With CIDA funding, DCF has implemented a good governance program to strengthen the independent organizations provided for in the 1997 Constitution, including support for the National Counter Corruption Commission and the National Audit Commission, and grants to the Elections Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, and Office of Official Information. DCF staff indicates that they tried to increase civil society linkages by inviting NGO and community participants to attend seminars and workshops related to these independent organizations. DCF has also supported radio programs to raise awareness of the purpose of these organizations.

In 1995, DCF launched support for His Majesty the King's "new theory of agriculture" by expanding and improving water management. DCF has successfully raised millions of Baht annually and earmarked it for the Golden Jubilee Village Pond Project. Contributions have come from the Thai public, corporate sponsors, and embassies as well as special events DCF organizes. These fundraising efforts have, from 1995 to 2002, enabled DCF to support the excavation of nearly 2,000 ponds in Thailand's Northeastern and Northern regions.

## Assessments

DCF has not conducted broad programmatic or institutional evaluations. Some project-based evaluations have been conducted, although none have examined the role of DCF in encouraging philanthropy and civil society.

## Future Directions

Right now, DCF's efforts to promote philanthropy and civil society are focused on the Golden Jubilee Village Pond project. DCF emphasizes the importance of this activity for both philanthropic and development purposes. Whether DCF's success in generating contributions for this highly visible project might be a springboard to broader fundraising efforts to support civil society development is yet to be seen. DCF competes for grants from the small pool of ODA grants still available to Thailand in order to carry out its governance agenda, which will continue to focus on strengthening the independent organizations set up under the 1997 Constitution.

## Profile of Kenan Institute Asia

### Origins

Kenan Institute Asia (KIASia) was established in 1996 as a private nonprofit foundation to continue Thailand-US partnership on development issues after the end of the bilateral USAID program in Thailand in 1995. USAID, the Thai Government, and the William R. Kenan Charitable Trust (including the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise) contributed to the KIASia endowment of US \$12.2 million. Thai counterpart funds, amounting to the Baht equivalent of US \$3.5 million at the time of transfer to the Institute, are held in a trust-type arrangement in Krung Thai Bank certificates of deposit, earning less than one per cent interest at present. USAID dollar contributions and Kenan contributions are held in the United States and overseen by a professional fund manager.

### Structure

A board of prominent Thais, Americans, and representatives of the William R. Kenan Charitable Trust govern the institute. The original partners continue to support the Institute through funding projects and board roles. A former Thai university president holds the office of KIASia President, assisted by an American Executive Director. KIASia includes five major divisions: better business practices; environmental management; human resources development; information and communications technology; and special projects. A Thai director heads each division, although KIASia employs additional non-Thai staff.

KIASia involves civil society in broad issues of business standards, greater transparency, and good governance. Both US government and corporate funding have supported the development of more specific civil society programs, such as:

- KIASia managed the United States-Asia Environmental Partnership (US-AEP) Community Participation Initiative (CPI) to provide grants to NGOs working to improve the quality of community participation in environmental protection.
- Through the UNOCAL-supported Cornerstone Project, KIASia promotes voluntarism through leadership training and mobilizing volunteers to support local NGOs and communities. Through Cornerstone, KIASia is also cooperating with seven other Thai organizations, including LDI and DSC/TFF, and The Synergos Institute in an initiative to promote the creation of community foundations in Thailand.

KIASia management views this engagement with civil society as part of a larger engagement of business in the long-term response to social problems and sees the Institute as particularly well suited to shaping the debate and encouraging corporate participation. KIASia and its Thai partners have benefited from American voluntarism as it brings several volunteers annually to work on a range of issues, from technical concerns of an industry or individual business to fund mobilization for civil society.

## **Mechanisms**

Its endowment confers on KIASia financial stability and funding flexibility. KIASia continues to draw new USAID funding, and has actively and successfully sought US and Thai private sector contributions, the latter amounting to near US \$0.5 m for activities (largely in skills training and general education) during 2001 to 2004.

KIASia emphasizes creating partnerships rather than a traditional donor-grantee relationship. Partnerships often link universities, cities, business support organizations, and government and regulatory agencies in Thailand with US counterparts.

## **Future directions**

Although KIASia appears sustainable by any measure, management hopes to diversify the organization's funding sources. KIASia emphasizes its long-term interest in civil society, and the importance of a well-thought out corporate philanthropic program to support civil society. Staff notes, however, that Thai regulations discourage philanthropy by having onerous requirements for foundation registration and eligibility for tax-exempt donations.

## Profile of Local Development Institute

### Origins

The independent Local Development Institute (LDI) emerged from CIDA's support in the 1980s for the Local Development Assistance Program. This marked a significant shift away from traditional bilateral assistance. The organization was established as an autonomous organization, receiving and administering approximately US \$6 million of CIDA funding from loan repayments from 1991 to 1998 when funding was terminated. Owing to a legal framework in Thailand that does not permit an operating organization to also extend grants or loans, two institutions were set up - the Local Development Foundation, which holds and transfers the monies accrued, and the Institute which operates programs and projects. Technically, CIDA was not permitted to grant an endowment to LDI's funding arm but the loan repayments extended were able to serve as a quasi-endowment for a few years.

### Structure

Currently, a 10 member Board of Directors oversees LDI. While linked with CIDA, a 32-member Board of Trustees and 10-member Executive Committee existed to provide direction to LDI. Both of the latter two groups were disbanded in 2000 following the termination of bilateral funding, and the Board of Directors (the Local Development Foundation Committee) has since assumed all oversight and direction responsibilities for the Foundation and the Institute. Daily operations are in the hands of two Directors and a staff of some 20 persons.

### Mechanisms

The contributions of LDI and its forerunner, LDAP, in strengthening community development, networking amongst communities, and bridging between communities and a range of other actors (principally government, academia, and credit institutions) is generally acknowl-

edged to have contributed significantly to the development of Thai civil society. This contribution emerged both through the direct provision of grants and loans, but more importantly through LDI's emphasis on local learning processes and networking with other individuals, agencies, and communities. Each of the three major LDI mechanisms-regional networks, loan funds, and research and policy-is examined in greater detail below.

## **Regional Mechanisms**

LDI focused on intensive interaction with its development partners, particularly during the 1991-1994 Phase I period of CIDA assistance. This role was transferred to Regional Project Review Committees during Phase II from 1995-1998 as part of a broader strategy to strengthen local and regional capacity and participation. This strategy involved channeling 50% of funds through the regional mechanisms of the NGO Coordinating Committee on Development (NGO-COD), which comprises some 200 registered and unregistered NGOs. The regional mechanisms organized activities around the particular needs of each region (e.g. community forestry and watershed management in the North and local fishermen's networks in the South). LDI's pioneering work in developing the NGO-COD regional mechanism has led other bilateral and multilateral donors to use this mechanism as a means to provide grants to groups who don't often have access to funding because of their small size and informal nature.

## **Loan Fund**

Some 30% of LDI funds were earmarked for village and enterprise loans in an experimental effort to work with commercial banks. Because of the high cost of administering small loans in remote rural areas, commercial bank interest was not forthcoming. LDI modified its original plans and identified other partners, including the Credit Union League of Thailand and the Rural Capital Partners Fund Co., Ltd. While this modality worked better than cooperation with commercial banks, higher interest rates charged by the two partners led to low demand and, subsequently, a decision to terminate the lending program in 1998. Nonetheless, the Loan Fund assisted some 500 families to develop small scale enterprises, including taxi driving, mushroom cultivation, fish farms, integrated farming, savings groups, and community rice mills. This was the source of LDI's quasi-endowment.

## **Research and Policy**

Working with a diverse set of strategic partners, LDI supported, participated in, and assisted in seeking additional funds for collaborative research in community forestry, environment,

bio-diversity, and community enterprise. LDI has also published a series of 14 books on civil society.

LDI's approach to policy change has revolved around public fora designed to encourage debate and develop a broader public understanding of issues. Its research base enabled LDI and its networks to engage in successful advocacy for community forest management, now enshrined in the 1997 Constitution. LDI has also collaborated with the national planning agency, most prominently in the development of Thailand's national plan for the 1997 to 2002 period.

## Assessments

CIDA's staff in Thailand views LDI as a pioneer in civil society-related movements and urges the Institute to use all its capacities to maintain this leading role. CIDA conducted an End-of-Project Report in conjunction with the termination of its funding in 1998. No formal evaluations have been conducted since then; LDI staff indicates that this is due to a lack of funds.

At project termination, evaluators contracted by CIDA noted three success stories, as follows:

- Contributions through research, conferences, and activist networks that led to the development of the Community Forests Bill.<sup>11</sup>
- LDI collaboration with the National Economic and Social Development Board in the development of Thailand's Eighth Five-Year Plan; this involved a grassroots review of development goals and aspirations of Thais nationwide.<sup>12</sup>
- LDI's impact on movements for democracy and civil society, particularly LDI's association with participatory approaches to constitutional reform and the strengthening of decentralized administration.

The evaluation indicates that LDI's impact derives from its ability to act as a mediator and facilitator. According to the evaluation, "achievements in building a permanent viable organization are substantial but not complete. Six years of external support with no outside assistance except funds is perhaps an inadequate platform for creating a permanent multi-functional organization from scratch." This points to the importance that capacity building should play alongside the granting of endowment funds.

## Current Operations

Some Baht 9 million (US \$225,000) has been granted through the NGO-COD Northeast Regional mechanism to activities in several poor provinces. Constrained by the limited grantmaking possible from its current funds, LDI focuses on three sources of additional support. First, LDI has successfully attracted some Baht 80 million (US \$2,000,000) from

11 The bill has since languished and the implementation of community forest management provisions remains problematic.

12 This process was somewhat short-circuited in the development of the Ninth Plan; although LDI was involved, the broad civil society emphasis of the Eighth Plan process was neglected in favor of a simpler and less involved consultation process with academics and leading provincial figures.

Thai government funds for current grantmaking, and is focusing it on using civil society mechanisms to address local health and drug abuse prevention challenges. Second, it receives periodic grants from a dwindling pool of bilateral and multilateral sources. Third, it facilitates knowledge transfer to neighboring countries. This is made possible by the greater availability of bilateral and multilateral funds for those countries that lag behind Thailand in economic development.

LDI's focus has seen a programmatic shift away from its original emphasis on community learning processes and strengthening civil society networks within Thailand. It has moved towards helping civil society to achieve government goals within time frames dictated by the annual government budgeting cycle while learning about other opportunities in the region. These new directions reflect the decline in LDI's grantmaking role, partnering model, and research focus.

## Future Directions

LDI has identified six focus areas for its efforts in the ten years following the termination of CIDA funding. These include:

- assisting networks of civil society groups and grassroots organizations to develop community funds for economic crisis recovery
- supporting development of civil society structures, monitoring tools, and civil society mapping in each province
- encouraging civil society groups and grassroots organizations to play active roles in participatory democracy to promote legal, macroeconomic, bureaucratic, and social reforms
- improving learning models and resource centers to promote economic self-sufficiency and civil society
- supporting the development and networking of community radio, local media, and urban consumers
- coordinating with relevant government agencies in charge of social development to achieve policy reform.

Management recognizes that LDI's ability to fully engage in these issues is constrained by limited funding and competing demands for staff time.

## Development Support Consortium/ Thai Fund Foundation

### Origins

The Foundation for Thai Development Fund was established in April 2000 as the fund-mobilization arm of the Development Support Consortium (DSC), an unregistered network of seven national-level member NGOs which coalesced in 1996. In the interests of simplicity, the Board changed the name to the Thai Fund Foundation (TFF), a change legally acknowledged in 2001. DSC/TFF (as it is now called) identifies three challenges facing Thai civil society organizations:

- withdrawal of external development support
- capacity gaps in grassroots organizations which hinder their sustainability
- lack of Thai public support for civil society organizations.

The DSC/TFF solution involves resource mobilization, grantmaking, capacity building, and technical support. It assists civil society organizations in mobilizing resources to build capacity and promote philanthropy, focusing particularly on grassroots and local level organizations. DSC/TFF have a vision of striving toward balanced and sustainable development through cooperation and synergy with various partners in an ever-changing environment. Resource mobilization focuses on sources both within and outside Thailand. DSC/TFF views itself as a bridge between civil society organizations and government, public, and the potential donor community.

### Structure

The 10-member DSC/TFF Board oversees general operations and policy directions, and comprises representatives of seven (registered and unregistered) organizations. These include DCF and LDI, networking and coordinating bodies (such as the NGO-COD), implementers (such as the Thai Rural Reconstruction Movement), fundraising networks from Thailand's North, Northeast, and South, and one international donor, The Asia Foundation. An Executive Committee sits beneath the Board, with responsibility for general

operations vested in a Director who oversees four divisions: fund mobilization, program, technical support, and administration.

## **Mechanisms**

DSC/TFF manages an endowment of Baht 10 million (US \$250,000), 30% generated from Thai business contributions, complemented by a Baht 7 m (US \$175,000) contribution from Novib (Oxfam Netherlands). From this endowment and periodic grants from other sources, DSC/TFF makes roughly 10 grants annually, focusing on partnerships and DSC/TFF consulting to strengthen the management capacity of grantees. Staff considers DSC/TFF to be an intermediary rather than a grantmaking organization.

DSC/TFF extends grants in the following areas, focusing on working through regional mechanisms of the NGO-COD: poverty alleviation and human security; human rights, governance, and participation; community development and civil society strengthening; and health and environment.

DSC/TFF regional work includes assistance with regional fundraisers, including the Lanna Fair in Chiangmai and the “Nature March for Moon River” in the Northeast. While both events generate some surplus, expenses absorb much of the earnings (the bulk of which come from corporate sponsorships). Donation boxes and t-shirt sales are among other fundraising techniques employed. DSC/TFF also provides training courses in the following: strategic planning; monitoring and evaluation; basic course on fundraising; project proposal writing; and financial, accounting and tax management.

## **Assessments**

The 2001 Annual Report indicates that an internal assessment found DSC/TFF staff overwhelmed with grantmaking related tasks. It also noted declining participation in its training, attributed to the repetition of training themes conducted by a limited pool of trainers. To better address DSC/TFF fundraising needs, a team has been developed, which includes the Associate Director, a staff member, and foreign volunteers. The Board Chair concedes that the current endowment level is inadequate for sustained grantmaking; the organization is therefore aiming for increased international and domestic funds.

## **Future Directions**

DSC/TFF’s plans for international fundraising are less developed than its plans for domestic appeals, which include working with a commercial bank to appeal to thousands of potential Thai donors, particularly within the general public.

## About the Author

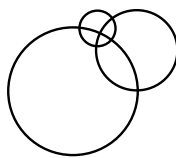
Gary Suwannarat has several decades of experience in promoting the development of Thai civil society through positions she has held in both the foundation world and in development assistance agencies. An American citizen, she currently resides in Chiangmai, Thailand, and consults on social policy issues.

## About Synergos

The Synergos Institute is an independent New York-based nonprofit organization founded in 1986 to develop effective, sustainable and locally-rooted solutions to poverty. Synergos and its partners mobilize resources and bridge social and economic divides to reduce poverty and increase equity around the world.

Our goals are to:

- strengthen the capacities of grantmaking institutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America to mobilize resources and build collaboration to reduce poverty and increase equity in their countries
- strengthen the capacities of leading philanthropists from around the world to deepen the effectiveness of their social investments and to forge partnerships to leverage their impact
- build effective collaboration and partnerships across social, economic and institutional divides by advancing the development and application of collaborative leadership and bridging dialogue processes.



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