**Annual Report**

**Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation (STEP) Project**

**January - December 2013**

**UNDP Thailand Country Office**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **I** | **INTRODUCTION** | 3 |
|  | *Project Objectives* | *4* |
|  | *Stakeholders Consultation* | *5* |
| **II** | **REVIEW AND EVALUATION** | 5 |
|  | *Project Symposium* | *5* |
|  | *Project Review Mission* | *7* |
| **III** | **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS** | 9 |
| **IV** | **SITUATION IN SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES** | 34 |
| **V** | **IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS** | 37 |
| **VI** | **DISBURSEMENT AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION** | 39 |
| **ANNEX I:** | **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS** | 40 |

**INTRODUCTION**

The Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation (STEP) Project provides the opportunity for a large number of stakeholders, both government and non-government, to come together with the aim to find common solutions to achieve social cohesion in the southern border provinces. Prince of Songkla University is the implementing partner in coordinating with responsible parties and stakeholders in the southern border provinces to address a wide range of challenges in the three southern border provinces and to contribute to the achievement of social cohesion and human security and prevent further escalation of the conflict situation in the region.

The STEP project in the first quarter of 2013 focused on the continuation of project activities from 2012: institutional capacity of CBOs/CSOs through grants through the Institute for Peace Studies; improvement of livelihood and self-sustainability of vulnerable population; access of local people to effective legal services and justice system; mainstreaming conflict prevention/resolution and building social cohesion in local governance; natural resources and environmental management through community participatory approach; enabling common and public spaces for peace dialogues and policy recommendations; and training for government officials and community leaders to enhance social cohesion and conflict resolutions. Upon the signing of General Consensus on Peace Dialogue Process between the National Security Council (NSC) and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) on 28 February, the STEP project initiated additional activities to investigate and monitor peace talks between the Thai government and the BRN. The project intended to work with civil society groups, government agencies and relevant organizations to create safety or a road map to pave the way for peace process as it is a legitimate mean of resolving the conflict.

The second quarter of 2013 saw the full implementation of the STEP Project with the community business learning centres, the automatic weather stations and the Model for Participatory Sustainable Costal Resources Management in place and functioning. The project in this reporting period focused on enhancing community planning and participation and sharing of good practices to create sustainability of pilot activities. The Thai and Islam Comparative Law Codes and the Sharia Curriculum were in the drafting process. A series of workshops on the violation of human rights were conducted to pave the way for creating networks for effective protection of women and children rights. The insider peace-building platform (IPP) process was concluded with recommendations to expand the IPP networks in communities. The conflict prevention/resolution mechanisms and tools for training of government officials and post-graduate students were in process to gear towards the establishment of Centre of Excellence in building institutional mechanisms for non-violence, civil and inclusive discussions, negotiations and solutions.

The third quarter of 2013 saw the completion of several project activities; namely, Training of Young Journalists; Community Business Initiative; Model for Participatory Monitoring and Natural Disaster Warning System; and Action Research on the Initiation of Insider Peacebuilding Platform (IPP). The remaining sub-projects have been on their final stages, except those under Output 4: Strengthened capacity of local administration in participatory planning and budgeting and Output 7: Enhanced knowledge and capacities of government officials at the provincial level to provide effective dispute resolution mechanism, which will continue to be implemented throughout 2014. This reporting period was an ideal milestone for an assessment of the results achieved by the project and its impact in response to the needs of people in the conflict-prone provinces. Thus, a series of project reviews, i.e. the STEP project symposium, the project review mission by the conflict and development experts and the budget revision for 2013 and 2014, was conducted in August and September immediately after the holy month of Ramadan. Based on the strategies and the recommendations from the project reviews, the STEP project modified some components and revised monitoring plans to make them realistic and measurable, for future implementations.

Five out of seven outputs of the STEP project were fully completed in the final quarter. The impact of the STEP project is reflected in its seven outputs, ranging from the expansion of civil society networks to the engagement of extension of local government services, from poverty reduction and gender empowerment to building cross-cultural networks, from increased access to justice of local people to participation in the peace process. Through its implementation, the STEP project has prepared the ground works in the promotion of social cohesion and community development for both service providers and local people, has enabled the environment for peace through platforms and networking, and has built a body of knowledge to support institutional mechanisms for peace building and conflict solutions. The project has created a solid foundation for the work towards development and peace building in the southern border provinces. Innovative/pilot activities and lessons learned obtained from the project implementation will be used to pave the way for larger scale initiatives and for national level advocacy to contribute to the development and peace building response in the southern border provinces. In this reporting period, the STEP project focused on the preparation of STEP II project document (2015-2017) to integrate knowledge, best practices and lessons learned, to deepen the participatory planning and sustainable livelihood activities as a means of building participatory governance capacity, and to foster social and public trust among segments of the population and towards the national government to benefit local communities in the southern border provinces.

1. ***Project Objectives***

The objective of the STEP project is to address a wide range of challenges in the five southern border provinces of Thailand including political and socioeconomic issues by supporting activities that enhance capacity development, community empowerment and public participation in local governance in the hope that eventually the project will contribute to the achievement of human security, social cohesion and prevent further escalation of the conflict situation in the region. The following are the main areas of project activities:

*Capacity development of community-based organizations*

* Strengthening institutional capacity of community-based organizations and media in promoting social cohesion;
* Improving income generation and employment opportunities of communities;
* Enhancing legal awareness and capacity for communities to access to effective dispute resolution mechanism.

*Capacity development of government agencies*

* Strengthening capacity of local government in participatory planning and budgeting;
* Strengthening local level natural resource and natural disaster management;
* Increasing knowledge of and exposure to a range of governance models and practices;
* Strengthen capacities of government officials at the provincial level to provide effective dispute resolution mechanisms.
1. ***Stakeholders Consultation***

A review of the STEP project and an analysis of entry points for future peace building and development programming (see II. Review and Evaluation), undertaken in September 2013, confirmed significant progress towards the achievement of the outputs set out in the project document, and 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. UNDP and PSU, therefore, agreed on a need for the STEP project to continue and to be moved into the next phase to integrate knowledge, best practices and lessons learned, to deepen the participatory planning and sustainable livelihood activities as a means of building participatory governance capacity, and to foster social and public trust among segments of the population and towards the national government to benefit local communities in the southern border provinces.

Consultations of local stakeholders were organized in the southern border provinces from 10 to 13 December 2013 to verify strategies and objectives and scope of the main outputs of the STEP Phase II project document whether they are relevant to their needs and whether the project is moving into the right direction. 60 representatives from SBPAC, PSU, UNDP, local government agencies, academic institutes, and community-based and civil society organizations actively participated in the event to brainstorm ideas; to identify the project activities, their scope, possible implementing partners (for each activity); to suggest project modality and operation; and to explore UNDP’s comparative advantage in enhancing the resilience of fragile communities.

1. **REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

The STEP project’s implementation has entered its third year which marks an ideal milestone for an assessment of the results achieved by the project and its impact in response to the needs of people in the conflict-prone provinces. In the third quarter of 2013, the project conducted a number of project reviews through the STEP project symposium and the recruitment of conflict and development experts.

1. ***Project Symposium***

As the project implementing partner, the Institute for Peace Studies (IPS), Prince of Songkla University (PSU) organized the ***Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation (STEP) Project Symposium: STEPs to Peace*** on 20 August at the International Convention Centre in Hat Yai District of Sonkhla. The event was welcomed by Ms Marina Walter, Deputy Representative of UNDP Thailand, and was opened by Asst Prof Niwat Keawpradap, Vice-President of PSU. Prof Charas Suwannamala from Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, gave a special speech on *Empowerment and Knowledge Integration to Peace*, pointing out existing government mechanisms and initiatives and how stakeholders in the southern border provinces could contribute to peace building in the region. Certain sub-project leaders were invited for the Panel Discussion on *STEPs to Peace: Knowledge Integration* led by Asst Prof Bussabong Chaijaroenwatana, Director of Institute for Peace Studies, PSU, and Chairperson of STEP Project Management Committee. Five focused areas of discussion were:

1. CBOs/CSOs, Media and Insiders Peace Process
2. People/Community Education Network
3. Local Authority and Decentralization
4. People’s Participatory Network
5. Legal Awareness and legal Access

The symposium brought together 250 participants including UNDP, government officials, local authorities, academia, practitioners, civil society members and local peace networks to review the project’s overall impact in the southern border provinces and to identify strategic directions for future peace building and development programming built on the foundation of the STEP project to ensure social cohesion and sustainability of the development in the southern border provinces. The participants through the focused area discussions assessed and evaluated the results and impacts achieved by the STEP project from January 2010 to July 2013 to determine whether the needs of people in the southern border provinces were addressed/fulfilled. The symposium also opened a space to share innovative/pilot activities and lessons learned obtained from the implementation of STEP project to enable knowledge integration and cooperation of all stakeholders.

The following is the highlight of key achievements based on the review and assessment in the project symposium:

* Capacities of civil society networks and community-based organizations have been strengthened and project activities have made a visible contribution to the growth of civil society in the southern border provinces.
* 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.
* Local business initiatives have brought local government authorities closer to the local people, which is a good example of community development, poverty reduction and social cohesion through improving livelihoods and community-based participatory approaches.
* Access to justice of local people have been strengthened through mapping of legal aid organizations in the southern border provinces, producing comprehensive legal empowerment tools and training of paralegals through the College of Islamic Studies and local legal aid organizations.
* Practical recommendation packages have been developed for mainstreaming conflict prevention/resolution and building social cohesion in local governance. The recommendations were put forward to Ministry of Interior as well as the Office of the Decentralization to the Local Government Organization Committee with some commitment for future policy change.
* 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.
* Capacities of the Insider Peace Platform (IPP) 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.
* Learning and training materials have been developed to support the Institute for Peace Studies (IPS), the Centre for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) and the College of Islamic Studies to create “Peace Resource Centre” in building institutional mechanisms for non-violence, civil and inclusive discussions, negotiations and solutions
1. ***Project Review Mission***

In September, the STEP project recruited the International Prevention/Resolution Adviser (Mr Sean Deely) and the National Prevention/Resolution Officer (Ms Rungrawee Chalermsripinyorat) on a three-week assignment from 1 to 22 September to review the current progress and impact of the STEP project as well as the overall programming response of UNDP in the southern border provinces. The international adviser analyzed the current development context and the situation in the southern border provinces 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 area. In parallel, the national officer provided assistance with relevant information not available in English, some of the contextual analysis, an initial assessment of information, and coordinated with relevant stakeholders on the ground.

*Achievements and Shortcomings*

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. The shortcomings in the STEP project design and implementation, especially the lack of an overarching focus that would contribute to an outcome level impact, were also pointed out. 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 in 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.

Taking into account the review recommendations, the STEP project has reviewed 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*

Based on the situation analysis and the assessment of current responses from various sectors, potential strategic intervention points were proposed by the Prevention/Resolution experts for the STEP project to fill the development gaps in response to the situation in these fragile areas.

*Strategy 1: Enabling the environment for peace process and capacity building for peace infrastructure.*

The National Security Council policy objective 8: “*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*” represents an important opportunity for the project 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 peace building networks and activities, and civic awareness raising.

*Strategy 2: Empowering vulnerable groups to access to justice through the support of key institution and networks*

This project will continue to support for access to legal services but will focus on vulnerable communities or the demand side of the service. The project will focus on capacity building of the medium scale of service provider that can connect directly with the local public and vulnerable groups while continuing to engage the relevant national actors at the advocacy level. In order to increase its effectiveness and to engage national protection, the project should look into supporting the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) capacity on the issue and engage other national actors such as Law Reform Commission of Thailand (LRCT) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) with its emphasis on protection and access to justice.

*Strategy 3: Broadening participation for community development and social cohesion*

The experience of the STEP project demonstrated how a small grant fund could have a disproportional impact of economic wellbeing among vulnerable women’s groups. The project will continue to expand small grants and focus its attention on building social cohesion within community as well as increase its capacity in participatory planning. This strategy will pave a good basis for future local governance and decentralization, using a bottom-up approach. Participatory planning and sustainable livelihood activities will be a means to build participatory governance capacity, to maintain the relationship between Buddhist and Muslim families, to promote social cohesion and to overcome economic marginalization. This strategy will pay particular attention to women and respond to gender dimension in development transformation.

The STEP project has applied the strategies and the recommendations obtained from the assignment and has modified specific components, including the monitoring plans to make them realistic and measurable, for future implementations. In addition, based on the review assignment, UNDP has been developing the STEP project (Phase II: 2015-2017) to respond further to the needs of the local people and to enable the environment for peace process, empower the vulnerable groups to access to legal service and strengthen social cohesion through participatory process. It is expected that the project document for this new phase will be completed by March 2013.

1. **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

The project has contributed positively to three UNDAF outcomes: access to quality social services and protection; decentralization and provincial and local governance; and environment and natural resources management. The key achievements as per intended outputs can be described as follows:

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

Based on the mapping exercise of CBOs/CSOs working in southern border provinces and capacity assessments of selected organizations undertaken in 2011, several activities, including integrating and mainstreaming social cohesion in community development through provision of grants to communities, have been implemented to strengthen institute capacity of community-based organizations and civil society organizations.

In reporting the true nature of the conflict in order to encourage positive results and social cohesion, the STEP project has supported various forms of alternative media. The project works closely with Deep South Watch (DSW) under the Center for the Study of Conflict and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) to support “Southern Border Journalism School” and “media for peace”. Investigative reporting is one such tool that the STEP Project has applied to promote social cohesion as it intends for the general public to understand the root cause of core conflicts in the southern border provinces through analyzed information from various “insider” sources.

***Activity 1.1: Mapping community-based organizations (CBOs) working in the south on existing community projects***

Completed with submission of the published report in 2011. The capacity of local academic people and institutes has been strengthened, and research papers for specific purposes have been published and disseminated for community development planning, policy recommendations and data reference.

 ***Activity 1.2: Undertaking capacity assessments and gender analysis of CBOs/village committees in the south***

Completed with submission of the official report in 2012. 549 people from various communities and local authorities participated in the decision-making process in assessing the existing SBPAC’s Peace Community Development Project to enable people in the community to be self-sustained. A 150-page assessment report prepared for SBPAC’s Peace Community Development Project was distributed to 44 districts in the five border provinces as implementing guidelines for community development. It is expected that the lessons learned and recommendations from the report will be applied in the community development plan.

***Activity 1.3: Undertaking substantive and operational training for CBOs, local graduate volunteers and village committees on local community development projects***

Completed in 2012. Based on the findings of the mapping of CBOs and CSOs and the capacity assessment of SBPAC’s Peace Community Development Project, 57 participants from 22 CBOs/CSOs working on such issues as environment, development, justice, youth and women in the southern border provinces are equipped with knowledge in integrating and mainstreaming social cohesion in their work.

***Activity 1.4: Disbursing grants to CBOs and village committees working on issues of development, legal justice, development, youth and women***

Three out of seventeen project proposals from the trained 22 CBOs/CSOs were selected by the STEP Project Management Committee for grants to strengthen the organizations’ institutional capacity in community development and social cohesion. The selecting criteria focused on how CBOs/CSOs integrate their roles and responsibilities in community development and participation in the southern border provinces and how they mainstream social cohesion in their work.

The grants have been provided to three CBOs/CSOs in implementing three sub-projects through the Institute for Peace Studies (IPS). IPS has facilitated and monitored the granted projects, using them as case studies to support the research entitled *Social Cohesion Process for Development and Conflict Resolution by CBOs/CSOs in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*. The research contributes to a systematic learning process for CSOs and CBOs in planning and implementing local initiatives to promote social cohesion in the southern border provinces.

*Community Heritages to Promote Social Cohesion*

Jana District of Songkhla was selected as the site for this sub-project as it is seen as a vulnerable post-conflict area following a series of protests by local people (fishermen and villagers) against the government’s multi-million *Thai-Malaysia Natural Gas Pipeline and Separation Plant Project* in 2002 due to concerns over fishing grounds, ecological damages and public safety. There is a need to build community resilience to conflict with building trust and increasing social cohesion in affected communities. The sub-project conducted interviews and collected social capital such as local wisdoms and historical aspects of community participation and development in eight villages in Jana District of Songkhla, targeting approximately 300 religious leaders, women, low-income villagers, and village leaders in eight villages. Using heritage symbols such as local mosques to draw common interest of actors in the communities, the process of trust building has gradually been developed. Socioeconomic issues, such as the effects of pipeline and separation plant in the communities, and community development initiatives, were used to raise the awareness on participatory and social cohesion approaches for community development. Public forums and exhibitions for strengthening community participation using local heritages and religious ways of life were organized, targeting new groups such as children and youths.

*Empowering Community Organization Networks in Participatory Developmen*t

Pak Bara, located in the province of Satun, was selected as the site for this sub-project as it is seen as a conflict-prone area where there is widespread fear of eruption of violent conflict if this small seaside town is converted into a deep-sea port. The sub-project intends to build community networks to enhance participatory development and to create linkages between these networks and sub-district administrative offices to drive community initiatives into public policies. The sub-project team organized a public forum in early July, bringing local authorities and key local people in different sectors in Pak Bara together, to introduce the sub-project objectives and to brainstorm on activity plans to conserve and develop coastal areas. From July to September, committee meetings were held to determine activity plans in parallel with data collections and interviews of local people. Two out of seven public forums, attended by 45 participants, were organized on 16 and 29September to bring key local leaders to draw coastal development plans.

*Participatory Community Wisdoms*

Mayo District of Pattani was selected as the site for this sub-project as the district is a conflict-prone area with high level of violence. This sub-project intends to promote participatory community wisdoms through “*Toy Library*” located in six pilot schools in Mayo District, targeting 400 students. The Toy Library, filled with storybooks and educational toys, intends to attract primary and secondary school students. 30 trained teachers, educational personnel and university students will use story telling techniques (Power Reader Campaign) to stimulate learning and thinking skills and enable students to reflect their interests through story telling and writing (Power Writing Campaign). Religious and/or community leaders will also be involved in the process of story telling. On 6 July, the sub-project team involved teachers, school directors, Mayo hospital staffs and community members in agreeing on activity plans. Three training sessions to enhance writing skills and techniques and to create inspiration to write for university students and school students were also organized in July. Despite activity plans for August and September, the implementation was put on hold during the period due to violent incidents and security concerns in the area. The first Toy Library was opened at Peerayanukroa School on 10 September.

In parallel, IPS completed eight activities as planned for the research entitled *Social Cohesion Process for Development and Conflict Resolution by CBOs/CSOs in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*.

1. Conducting secondary research on the local context in order to design concrete methodologies
2. Introducing research objectives and activities to the three CBOs/CSOs sub-project leaders
3. Interviewing CBOs/CSOs in the southern border provinces in order to gain primary sources concerning problems and people’s movements
4. Gathering data in the field using questionnaires in order to assess the level of cooperation and social cohesion through various types of existing public activities
5. Analyzing the questionnaires obtained from Jana District and Pakabara area
6. Monitoring situations and activities of the three sub-projects
7. Interviewing community stakeholders
8. Identifying specific key informants from each sub-project

In the last quarter of 2013, the three sub-project teams experienced some delay in their implementation to mainstream social cohesion in community development due to the political situation. Anti-government protests and demonstrations both in Bangkok and many southern provinces affected the continuation of sub-projects, especially in Songkhla and Satun where local community members and leaders were actively involved. This resulted in the postponement of several planned public forums and meetings. IPS, therefore, took this opportunity to organize a meeting to review the implementation of the three sub-projects on 19 November. The review showed that the implementation of the three sub-projects was within the framework of four indicators: 1) creating social cohesion, 2) building networks, 3) strengthening institutional capacities, and 4) ensuring sustainability. It was, however, recommended that the sub-projects speed their operations in the next quarter to achieve expected outcomes. The timeframe for three granted sub-projects will be extended without additional cost to March 2014.

***Activity 1.5: Supporting database system for monitoring women situation and training curriculum on gender assessment and sensitivity for CBOs in the south***

See *Legal Capacity Building for CBOs/CSOs Working on Women and Children Rights in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand* in *Activity 3.3: Strengthening capacities of paralegals, community leaders and legal aid organizations through training and tools for accessing information* under Output 3: Enhanced legal awareness of local communities and strengthen capacity of legal aid organizations to facilitate on local access to effective legal services.

***Activity 1.6: Mapping of media initiatives***

The STEP project supported the Third *Southern Border Alternative Media Day: Fields of Southern Peace – Communication Networks of Civil Society* organized at Rajabhat University Yala, on 12 and 13 March 2013. The event was developed in coordination between CSOs working in the field of media and those working towards conflict resolutions in the southern border provinces of Thailand. It was intended for 100 participants from government agencies, academic institutes, CSOs/CBOs and media networks attending the Alternative Media Day to use this common space in monitoring dispute situation and transition of conflicts and in bargaining power with all parties that use violence as a mean to handle conflicts in southern border provinces. The Media Day also marked the launch of *Investigating Patani* *Liberation Process,* the newly published investigative reports which intend for readers to understand the root cause of core conflicts in the southern border provinces by investigating and analyzing information from various “insider” sources. Another 1,500 copies were distributed at the *Deep South Civil Society Assembly Forum* on 28 April. The forum was attended by 5,000 people representing government agencies CSOs, CBOs, academic institutes, the general public to brainstorm and voice out issues of concern to find solutions or peace and common space in a non-violent way. Issues for discussion included decentralization and special governance models, southern violence and special laws, that are in the interest of those in the Deep South. The STEP project team has observed the assembly forums since January 2012.

***Activity 1.7: Capacity development plan for constructive media / media for peace***

The signing of General Consensus on Peace Dialogue Process between the National Security Council (NSC) and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) on 28 February in Malaysia has paved the way towards a series of peace talks for the southern border provinces and has become a widely discussed issue. The STEP project in 2013, therefore, took a step further to commission a second round of investigative reporting to gain a deeper understanding into the thoughts of insurgent groups as well as to investigate issues critical to peace-building in the southern border provinces. This second investigative reporting serves as a mean of alternative media and seeks to probe major issues relating to peace building in the southern border provinces of Thailand. This formal recognition of a peace process is a major policy shift on the part of the Thai government and, for the first time, has prompted the BRN to emerge in the public limelight. However, little is known about the BRN representatives as the media has been unable or unwilling to reach out to them. This investigative report attempts to get their sides of the stories as well as to provide an in-depth reporting on the ongoing peace dialogue.

Investigating and monitoring peace talks between the Thai government and the BRN for nearly ten months, Ms Rungrawee Chalernsripinyorat, the author, completed the investigating report entitled *Southern Thailand’s Road to Peace* in December 2013. The report is divided into five chapters as follows:

***Chapter 1: Pathways towards Peace Process***

This chapter examines the development of peace talks since the conflict reemerged in 2004, starting with the meeting 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 Borgor meeting facilitated by the Indonesian governments and initiatives by the Organization of the Islamic cooperation (OIC) and by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

***Chapter 2: The Formal Peace Dialogue in Kuala Lumpur***

The second chapter investigates the structure and nature of formal peace dialogue that represents a major shift in the Thai government policy and tends 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. The components of Party A (Thai government) and Party B (Patani fighters) and the roles of Malaysia as the ‘Facilitator” are thoroughly analyzed.

***Chapter 3: Encounters of “Thai State” and BRN***

This third chapter monitors the progress of three meetings between the Thai government and BRN in March, April and June, and the ceasefire initiative during the Holy Month of Ramadan. 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 conflict.

***Chapter 4: 38-page Document: Special Governance Zone or Independence?***

This fourth chapter analyzes the so-called 38-page Document that was confidentially submitted in September to the Thai government through the Facilitator (Malaysia). The document elaborates the previously submitted Five Demands from the BRN:

1. This Peace Dialogue is between the Representatives of Patani freedom fighters, which are led by Barisan Revolusi Nasional Melayu Patani (BRN) with the Kingdom of Thailand.
2. Barisan Revolusi Nadsional Melayu Patani (BRN) has agreed to appoint Malaysian Government as a mediator which is directly involved in this Peace Dialogue.
3. The process of Dialogue must be witnessed by the representatives from ASEAN countries, OIC and NGOs which are approved by both parties: BRN and Thai government.
4. The Thai government should recognize the existence and the sovereignty of the Patani Malay nation in Patani homeland.
5. Barisan Revolusi Nadsional Melayu Patani (BRN) demands the Thai government to release all detainees held by the Thai authority due to political reasons and to abolish all warrant of arrest issued to the Patani fighters.

The document also identifies an 8-year Roadmap (2013-2020) that is divided into four steps:

1. Peace Dialogue (2013-2014)
2. Ceasefire Negotiation (2015-2016)
3. Peace Treaty Negotiation (2016- 2019)
4. Southern Border Peace (2020)

The chapter further analyzes the responses from the Thai government towards the Five Demands and raises concerns over the major national political crisis that may hinder the progress of the Peace Dialogue between the Thai government and BRN.

***Chapter 5: Next Steps towards Peace Process***

This final chapter reviews the development of peace dialogue, and provides observation points and policy recommendations for the steps towards peace process.

**Observations**

* **First**, this peace dialogue has, so far, been exclusive and failed to bring other relevant state agencies, such as the Thai military and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on board.
* **Second**, the polarized nature and the instability of national politics do 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.
* **Third**, the BRN’s acceptance to discuss the matters within the framework of the Thai constitution manifests its willingness to compromise.
* **Fourth**,the recent development demonstrates a significant change in the strategy of at least some BRN leaders. The decision to have a dialogue with the Thai government opens up a new terrain of peaceful political struggle for the movement that has mostly spoken through violence.
* **Fifth**,the fact that BRN has made their statements via Youtube suggests the intention of BRN to gain the public acceptance in the peace process.
* **Sixth**, there remains serious doubt about the BRN representatives’ control and command over the militants on the ground.

The chapter is concluded with three sets of policy recommendations for the Thai government, for the Patani freedom fighters and for the civil society, academia and media.

After being thoroughly reviewed for accuracy and sensitivity, the investigating report on *Southern Thailand’s Road to Peace* will be published on the Deep South Watch website to be viewed by the general public in February 2014. The STEP project will subsequently support the Institute for Peace Studies (IPS) in publishing this investigative report as a learning tool for the Peace Resource Centre in the next reporting period.

***Activity 1.8: Training provided for media working in and on the south***

Providing accurate, balanced information can promote peace by changing public perceptions. The STEP project has applied alternative media as a means of promoting peace in conflict-affected areas through “Southern Border Young Journalism School” in cooperation with Deep South Watch under the Centre for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) at Prince of Songkhla University and Pondok Schools (public Islamic schools).

The sub-project expanded media networks through three Media Roadshows, and ten training workshops held in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. At least 85 young Muslim students together with trainers and those working in the field of journalism attended the media roadshow and workshops to improve their news writing and reporting in both Thai and Malayu reflecting socioeconomic or conflict issues. At least 30 news pieces, including “*Common Spaces for Peace*”, “*Malayu for Peace Process*”, “*Ramadan Siege Fire*” and “*Peace at the End of the Tunnel*”, were published in nine monthly bi-lingual community newsletters (Sinaran) from January to September. Each month 500 copies of *Sinaran* were distributed to communities in the three southern border provinces, and an electronic version was published monthly on the Deep South Watch website for wider audience. At least, two *Tadika (lower-level private Islamic)* schools in Pattani use *Senaran* as an additional learning tool in a Malayu class.

The final activity under “Young Journalism School” was concluded on 24 September with the *Seminar on Malayu towards Peace Process* (Bahasa Melayu Dalam Era Proses Damai). The seminar, attended by 100 participants representing Pondok and Tadika schools, mass media, academic institutes and the general public, was organized for the local media and the general public to better understand the current peace process and to use Malayu as a tool in peace building in the southern border provinces. In September, 16 young Muslim students together with trainers and those working in the field of journalism attended four training workshops to improve their news and report writing in both Thai and Malayu reflecting socioeconomic or conflict issues.

The component under Young Journalism School is a creditworthy and valuable activity despite the relatively small number of participants. It has contributed to the development of alternative media and reporting outlets that help increase access to information about events in the southern border provinces and ensure their availability in Malayu (Yawi), which responds well to the objective 5 of Southern Border Provinces Administration and Development Policy 2012-2014: “To promote learning and recognition of the value of peaceful coexistence in a society with diverse ways of life and cultures”. In addition, the component has proven that Malayu is not the language of “insurgency” but a form of local heritage and identity that should be upheld.

**Output 2: Improved income generation and employment opportunities of communities**

Based on the research findings on *structure of community economy, existing facilities and market needs, and market accessibility and product development for selected groups* completed in 2011, this component has contributed to the development of two very successful local community enterprises in Pattani throughout 2012 and 2013. In addition to this, the project intends to develop guidelines for various stakeholders to further improve community economy in order to better meet the needs of the local communities/markets and to help improve employment opportunities.

Local Community Business has proved to not only improve livelihoods of local people but also enhance social cohesion in the community. Not only do the local woman entrepreneur groups but also many people from the community benefit from this initiative. It brings local government authorities closer to the local people, and sets a good example of community development through improving livelihoods and community-based participatory approaches. The impact of this component through Local Community Business initiatives 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 two pilot community business learning centers in Yaring District of Pattani are expected to transfer expertise and good practices to over 200 local community enterprises in 12 districts of Pattani.

***Activity 2.1: Assessing vocational training needs, existing facilities and market needs***

Completed with submission of the research paper in 2011.

***Activity 2.2: Planning and engaging stakeholders for local economy linked to market needs***

The project recruited the Community Economy Expert from the Faculty of Economics, Prince of Songkla University, from October 2012 to May 2013, to 1) develop implementation plans and guidelines on community economy to various stakeholders in the three southern border provinces based on the research and assessment on *structure of community economy, existing facilities and market needs, and market accessibility and product development for selected groups* in 2011; and 2) to engage stakeholders in the activities linked to community economy and ensure that the needs of local people are addressed. The expert completed multiple case-studies review and analysis of existing capacities of community economy based on research findings and existing structure/stakeholders at provincial and local levels in the three southern border provinces. The focus-group discussions and interviews of key informants at the regional and local government levels for strategic and implementation planning on community economy and market access were conducted in Pattani and Yala in December 2012, and in Narathiwat in January/February 2013. The guidelines/tools to promote community economy for various stakeholders were pretested in May and completed in July 2013.

***Activity 2.3: Assessing marketing and product assessment***

Completed with submission of the research paper in 2011.

***Activity 2.4: Providing technical assistance and advice to communities on product and market development, product adaption, processing and marketing***

The STEP project throughout 2012 and 2013 succeeded in strengthening the capacity of two local woman entrepreneur groups in Yaring District of Pattani to improve products/packages, standardize community products and expand market access to improve their livelihoods and enable self-sustainability. Not only that these local entrepreneur groups are equipped with knowledge in community business and use the knowledge to create sustainable incomes, two business community learning centers have been established with the facilitation of Yaring District Public Health Office and the participation of local authorities and local people in order to share and transfer knowledge and good practices on product and market development to other local entrepreneur groups in other areas. The local entrepreneur groups have been working with Pattani Provincial Office of the Non-formal and Informal Education to develop vocational training courses to transfer such knowledge and expertise to other entrepreneur groups.

The two community business learning centers, run by the woman entrepreneurs groups in Yaring District of Pattani, have been fully functioning to transfer knowledge on product and market development to other local entrepreneur groups and local authorities in other areas. In the first quarter, the learning centres demonstrated good practices on the Community Business Process and the Primary Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) to five visiting groups including 32 non-formal education students in Yaring District, 19 woman entrepreneurs from Kapor District and Mae Lan District of Pattani, and 24 consumer protection officers from 12 districts in Pattani. During the second quarter, a training workshop was organized in July to enhance training and facilitating skills of the two local woman entrepreneurs at the community business learning centre in Yamu Sub-district of Yaring by the team from Faculty of Community Science, PSU Pattani.

The Faculty of Communication Science, PSU Pattani, with the support of the STEP Project, produced IEC materials, consisting of *Handbook on Steps to Sustainable Community Business Development*, *DVD Animation on Youth and Community Business*, *Short Documentary on Improving Community Business* and *Radio Spots*, to make it easy for local people and authorities to understand how sustainable community business can be made possible through local initiatives and participation.



*Handbook on Steps to Sustainable Community Business Development*

The handbook presents community business initiatives and demonstrates 11 steps (step by step) to achieve sustainable community business development ranging from product/package development to community contributions, from suitable pricing strategy to market access/development, and from standard GMP to business management. 2,000 copies of the handbook have been published and will be distributed to local entrepreneur groups, local authorities, government agencies, academic institutes, public libraries in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, and interested people.

*DVD Animation on Youth and Community Business*

The 10-minute DVD animation displays how children and youths can be involved in the community business. 100 copies have been produced to be distributed to community libraries and selected schools.

*Short Documentary Films on Improving Community Business*

100 DVDs containing six documentary series were produced to be used as a tool to transfer knowledge and good practices about product and market development to other local entrepreneur groups and local authorities in other areas. The series consists of: 1) Setting up pilot community business initiatives, 2) Path ways to sustainable community business development, 3) Project/package development, 4) Obtaining standard GMP, 5) Market channels and expansions, and 6) Product promotion.

The Local Business Initiative was concluded in December 2013 after two years with achievements in terms of poverty reduction and social cohesion, gender empowerment, and the engagement of extension of local government services. The initiative led to better-quality products, doubling profits for local woman groups, market expansion to Malaysia and community business learning centres. Positive feedback was received from both government agencies and local communities in using the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, a colourful step-by-step guide, in print and DVD format, that was produced based on the initiative, to understand how sustainable community business can be made possible through local initiatives and participation. The two pilot community business learning centers in Yaring District of Pattani will continue to work with Office of the Non-formal Education and local authorities to build knowledge and to transfer expertise and good practices to local community enterprises in the southern border provinces

***Activity 2.5: Providing grants to women career development groups***

Completed in late 2012 with grants provided through Yaring District Health Center to assist the woman groups in standardizing community products, increasing market access, and transferring knowledge on product and market development in order to improve their livelihoods and create sustainable incomes.

**Output 3: Enhanced legal awareness of local communities and strengthen capacity of legal aid organizations to facilitate on local access to effective legal services**

Sharia is considered the moral code and religious law of Islam. Although Thailand [allows](http://thailand.ahrchk.net/docs/nrc_report_en.pdf) limited use of Sharia law in the southern border provinces for settling family and inheritance issues, the project sees the need to raise awareness of local communities on both civil law and applicable Islamic rules through comparative law codes to enable local people and government officers to understand the legal system applied in the southern border provinces to reduce tension and promote social cohesion in communities.

Realizing that women and children are in great numbers direct and indirect victims of the violence in the southern border provinces, the project looks into developing legal empowerment programmes specifically for the needs of women and children and assisting them in empowering themselves to access to the justice system and participated in the decision-making process.

***Activity 3.1: Mapping legal aid structure and legal empowerment at local level***

Completed in 2012 with publication of results.

***Activity 3.2: Organizing outreach and public information strategy for legal awareness developed and implemented in partnership with Adilan Centre***

Completed in 2012 with submission of report from SBPAC. 1,443 women and 2,022 men representing legal aid organizations, religious organizations and communities in 250 sub-districts in 33 districts in the three southern border provinces were trained on legal awareness and access to justice through the outreach and public information on legal awareness for communities to increase access to effective dispute resolution mechanism.

***Activity 3.3: Strengthening capacities of paralegals, community leaders and legal aid organizations through training and tools for accessing information***

The STEP project and UNDP met with the team from the College of Islamic Studies in Pattani on 13 February to discuss and agree on the following legal empowerment activities:

1. Develop guideline/handbook on Islamic and Thai laws;
2. Provide training for paralegals and legal aid volunteers to support the operation of Adilan Centre;
3. Design an induction course on legal awareness for government officials, combining Islamic and Thai law; and
4. Develop bi-lingual IEC materials promoting legal awareness (community radio, online media and short films).

The College of Islamic Studies conducted 10 workshops to draft the *Comparative Law Codes: Thai and Islam*. 10 Islamic law experts were invited to review the draft for further revision and improvement. The review was followed by two workshops to pretest on the Law Codes on two different target groups. The first pretest was conducted from 20 to 22 September on 40 potential university students, focusing on 1) Loan/Deposit, 2) Purchasing/Exchange, 3) Guaranteeing/Pawning, and 4) Renting/Leasing. The second pretest was conducted on 27 and 29 September on 40 paralegals working for local legal aid organizations such as Muslim Youth Association of Thailand, Southern Border Woman Network, Community Justice Network, Adilan Centre and Human Rights Supporting Network (HAP), focusing on 1) Violation of Law, 2) Criminal Law, 3) Administrative Law, 4) Justice in Islam, and 5) Special Laws for Southern Border Provinces. In addition to this, Twelve law experts were invited to review six modules of *Sharia Curriculum*: 1) Islam in Everyday Life, 2) Islamic Business Law, 3) Islamic Criminal Law and Law of Governance, 4) Family and Inheritance Law, 5) System of Islamic Law, and 6) Challenges in Islamic Law.

In the final quarter of 2013, the College of Islamic Studies completed a set of *Comparative Law Codes: Thai and Islam*, focusing on 1) Loan/Deposit, 2) Purchasing/Exchange, 3) Guaranteeing/Pawning, and 4) Renting/Leasing. In parallel, the 48-hour *Sharia Curriculum* for the general public is in place. The curriculum is an eight-day training course with six hours of training time a day, covering seven modules: 1) Islam in Everyday Life, 2) Islamic Business Law, 3) Islamic Criminal Law and Law of Governance, 4) Family and Inheritance Law, 5) System of Islamic Law, 6) Challenges in Islamic Law, and 7) Contemporary Islamic Law.

In addition to the above, the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials are also available and serve as a comprehensive tool for local people and government officers. The materials focus on civil rights, commercial law, Sharia and social norms.

Eight radio spots, available in both Thai and Malayu, have been constantly broadcasted on 18 community radio stations in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat to raise legal awareness and reach out to audience at the grassroots level.

1. Loan Agreements (2.53 minutes)
2. Loan Guarantees (3.03 minutes)
3. Leasing (4.05 minutes)
4. Selling Loans (3.10 minutes)
5. Rights of Suspects and Accused Persons (3.24 minutes)
6. Bail in Criminal Cases (4.33 minutes)
7. Special Laws (5 minutes)
8. Compensations (3.04 minutes)

Two short films (7-10 minutes) relating to *Making a Loan* and *Criminal Offences* are available on Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZiVgQ-7grw>) and DVD.

It is too early to measure the impact of this work at this stage; however, it is expected that 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 southern border provinces, to reduce tension and to promote social cohesion in communities.

To empower women and children to understand and exercise their own rights and to make use of legal mechanisms available effectively, the STEP project in parallel agreed to work with Cross Cultural Foundation (CrCF), a non-profit, non-governmental foundation working to eliminate discrimination in the Thai justice system and ensure full access to justice for all people in Thailand, on a 9-month activity entitled *Legal Capacity Building for CBOs/CSOs Working on Women and Children Rights in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*. CrCF has partnered with two local legal aid agencies: Duayjai Group and Human Rights Supporting Network (HAP) to secure the protection and promotion of women and children rights and to establish effective legal empowerment mechanisms for women and children in the southern border provinces based on pre-existing CSO structures.

On 19 June, 36 participants from government agencies and civil society groups in the southern border provinces attended the workshop to enhance their skills to better understand the violation of human rights and to pave the way for effective protection of women and children rights. The workshop was addressed by a representative from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). On 19 July, HAP trained eight members of the *Woman Activist Network* on data collection on human rights violation in Yala. This was followed by the awareness raising workshop on *Special Laws in the Southern Border Provinces and Basic Rights* for the *Protection of Human Rights Network* in Muang District of Yala on 23 July. Apart from increasing legal awareness, the workshop brought together those who are affected by the Southern violence and those working on rehabilitation programme to discuss roles of women in the southern border provinces and conflict resolutions. The 45 trained participants (23 women and 22 men) are expected to be able to collect data on human rights violation, and to facilitate and transfer cases relating to violation of rights.

Two seminars were organized in 2013. The seminar on *Peace Building in the Southern Border Provinces* was organized in Muang District of Yala on 30 July. 43 participants (38 men and 5 women) from government agencies and civil society groups attended the seminar that aimed to create better understanding and cooperation between government and civil society. The seminar on *Promotion of Rights of Children and Women in Conflict Situations* was organized at PSU Pattani Campus on 13 September. The seminar, which was attended by nine representatives from academic institutes, civil society and groups, and government agencies, called for all sectors to work together as a driving force in increasing access to justice of vulnerable people.

In addition to this, five bi-monthly fact-sheets on the human rights situation of women and children (April through December) were distributed to local civil society networks. They are also available on Facebook and Blog: [www.voicefromthais.wordpress.com](http://www.voicefromthais.wordpress.com) to ensure wider audience. The first issue is to introduce legal aid agencies working on human rights in the southern border provinces: Duayjai Group, HAP, Deep South Women Association for Peace (Deep Peace); and to present *View from State report to United Nations CRC Committee: Children in the Southern Border of Thailand*. The second issue further explores the roles of women in the peace process and provides the basic knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This third issue of fact-sheet points out the violation of rights of children and women in the southern border provinces focusing on four issues: 1) current situation, 2) root causes of violation, 3) government mechanisms and aid agencies, and 4) local people’s roles in responding to violation of rights. This issue also reports the recovery and compensation scheme provided by SBPAC, and women’s self-support roles in the southern border provinces to stop violation of rights.The fourth (October-November) and fifth (December) issues focus on the detention of women and the impact of violence on children.

By the end of 2013, eleven activities were achieved as planned under the following sub-outputs:

Increased capacities of local CSOs in addressing the rights of women and children

1. 36 people from legal aid organizations in the southern border provinces are equipped with knowledge on women and children. Guidelines for violation of rights of women and children are in place.
2. 27 interpreters working for CSOs and legal aid organizations are equipped with comprehensive legal language in Thai and Malayu and legal assistance process.
3. A database on human rights violations specifically related to cases involving women and children is in place.
4. A woman paralegal network with 100 members has been established. The members (65 per cent of which are female) are equipped with the skills in documentation of human rights violations and trial observations.
5. The *Field Handbook* on fact finding on human rights violations of women and children was published as a guideline for paralegals and those working for legal aid organizations in the southern border provinces. The handbook is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the rights of children and women; whereas, the second part emphasizes on practical fact finding on human rights violations.
6. Five bi-monthly fact-sheets/newsletters on the human rights situation of women and children in the southern border provinces were distributed to relevant government agencies and local civil society networks. The fact-sheet is also available on Facebook and Blog: [www.voicefromthais.wordpress.com](http://www.voicefromthais.wordpress.com) to ensure wider audience.

**Enhanced access to justice for cases regarding violations of women and children rights**

1. As there was no case in court relating to the violation of children and women rights during the implementation period, CrCF, therefore, decided to shift the activity from providing free legal aid for poor defendants to organizing an exchange platform under the final sub-output.

**Increased awareness the rights of women and children among all relevant stakeholders in the southern border provinces**

1. Four Facilitation Dialogue Platforms between local CSOs, local authorities and relevant state agencies were organized to increase capacities of local government and CSOs in addressing the rights of women and children. 150 participants from government agencies and civil society groups exchanged their views in the dialogue platforms on *Sub-Project Induction*, *Peace Building in the Southern Border Provinces*, *Promotion of Rights of Children and Women in Conflict Situations* and *Policy Recommendations for Protection of the Rights of Children and Women* to create better understanding and cooperation between government and civil society and to call for all sectors to work together as a driving force in increasing access to justice of vulnerable people.
2. The *Situation Report* on Children and Women 2013 with policy recommendations was completed and shared with relevant government agencies, legal aid organizations and UN agencies including UNICEF. The situation report reveals the number of casualties of children and women in the southern violence in 2013, the challenges in protecting children and women from the violence and passive and active policy recommendations. The report will be published and distributed to organizations working for the rights of children and women in the next reporting period.

**Established exchange and cooperation mechanisms between relevant CSOs across Thailand**

1. Through its mentoring programme, CrCF provided coaching and technical advice to local legal aid organizations namely Duayjai Group and Human Rights Supporting Network (HAP) on the issues of women and children rights. The *Woman Activist Network* was subsequently created by Duayjai Group and HAP to collect data on human rights violation, and to facilitate and transfer cases relating to violation of rights.
2. An exchange platform for CSOs working on legal empowerment of women and children entitled *Challenges in Accessing Justice in the Southern Border provinces* was conducted to mark the International Human Rights Day on 10 December with 43 participants from government agencies, international organizations, CSOs, NGOs and academic institutes. Lessons learned and active and passive policy recommendations from the exchange platform were compiled and will be shared with relevant agencies.

***Activity 3.4: Strengthening Adilan Centre and its networks by disseminating information and messages for legal awareness***

Completed with submission of the assessment report in 2012.

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

Three short-term local government administration consultants completed their work in assisting the Department of Local Administration (DLA), Ministry of Interior, and the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC) to design institutional and administrative packages that help to promote social cohesion in the areas focusing on (i) political and institutional structures; (ii) governance; and (iii) planning and budgeting. DLA will select innovative packages to develop local development plan and implement activities relating to social cohesion in the southern border provinces in 2013. These packages have been applied in preparing the community development plan for the community information system (GIS), and in developing the *Training Manual on Local Government Administration in Participatory Planning and Budgeting* for local government administration officers in the southern border provinces.

***Activity 4.1: Partnership with Department of Local Administration to improve local planning framework***

This is an ongoing process with regular meetings and consultations.The recommendation packages for mainstreaming conflict prevention/resolution and building social cohesion in local governance were presented to the Director of Bureau of Local Government Development, the Director of Local Planning and the Director of Technical Cooperation of the Department of Local Administration (DLA) on 25 and 29 January 2013 in order for DLA to select suitable packages to be piloted and implemented in the southern border provinces to strengthen local participation and social cohesion in the area. DLA came to the conclusion that the selected theme should be about the provincial administrative office role in planning coordination, working upwards from sub-sub-district/municipality level and having Pattani as the selected province. The project together with one of the local government administration experts took a field mission to Pattani on 13 February to discuss with various stakeholders to identify a theme for a pilot model to coordinate local planning between different levels of local administration.

The three practical recommendation packages for mainstreaming conflict prevention/resolution and building social cohesion in local governance were presented to the Director of the Office of Decentralization to Local Government Organization Committee (DLOC) and relevant officials at the Prime Minister’s Office on 14 June. Asst Prof Bussabong Chaijaroenwatana, the Director of Institute for Peace Studies and the Chairperson of STEP Project Management Committee, presented the Six Models of *Patani Mahanakorn*, developed by a network of 23 organizations including the Institute for Peace Studies, the Center for the Study of Conflict and Cultural Diversity (CSCD), King Prajadhipok’s Institute (KPI) and Deep South Watch (DSW), since 2009. The models suggest several options for restructuring the governance, i.e. either electing governors for each province, or establishing a single governor for the entire region while keeping the current local authorities in place or dissolve them altogether. The Director of DLOC expressed his interest in cooperation with UNDP and the STEP Project on decentralization models in the southern border provinces.

***Activity 4.2: Selecting targeted local authorities to assessing existing capacities in development planning and administration***

Based on the recommendation packages and research findings from the three experts on decentralization and local government are completed in early 2013, local governments should be the main entry point in promoting potential for productive implementations at the local level, as they are fundamentally accepted by community through the election process, are able to consolidate development agendas and request budgets from the central government.

King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) and UNDP Thailand signed the Letter of Agreement to work under the STEP project on a one-year assignment on *Strengthening Local Authorities and Communities in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand through Public Participation and Planning Process* in October 2013 to build a pattern of participatory process for development planning and participatory budgeting for local governments. Two sub-district administrative organizations (TAOs) in Pattani: Mae Lan and Lam Po have been selected as the pilot sites due to their capacity and willingness to work on participatory community development planning. 50 people (potential sub-district administrative organization officers, community leaders, religious leaders and local people) from the two sub-districts are expected to take part in the participatory community development planning process.

KPI organized the first meeting on 28 October to introduce the KPI research team and the sub-project work plan to UNDP and local stakeholders: Deputy Chief of Mae Lan TAO, Chief of Lam Po TAO and researchers from University of Islam Yala. The participants reviewed the work plan and the drafted questionnaire for data gathering in the field (demographic background, economic status, social institution, physical variability and public services, and community history) and confirmed the sub-project sites. It was agreed in the meeting that the scope of work would consist of two parts: 1) Community Social Capital Database Preparation: Trust and Reliance, and 2) Enhance the TAOs to prepare a development plan for the community information system (GIS) based on KPI’s local participatory process.

The sub-project experienced delays in implementation in this quarter. The pilot survey conducted by the research team from University of Islam Yala had to be put on hold due to the sudden death of the newly-elected TAO chief of Lampo in mid-November. The political crisis in Bangkok and the protesters gathering at the Government Complex hindered the progress of KPI work. The STEP project and KPI will speed up the sub-project implementation especially in working with TAOs in the participatory process to prepare a community development plan for the community information system (GIS) in the next quarter in order to complete all activities as planned.

***Activity 4.3: Developing methodologies for people’s participation for social cohesion***

Completed in 2012 with a series of online publication. Three practical recommendation packages are in place and serve as policy briefs for mainstreaming conflict prevention/resolution and building social cohesion in local governance by means of strengthening the capacity of local authorities in the three southern border provinces in initiating and engaging in participatory planning and budgeting processes and strengthening citizen participation in development planning and resource allocation at the sub-national level.

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

This component intends to establish networks of local people, local authorities and local NGOs in selected communities in the southern border provinces, and to develop initiatives to resolve natural resource and natural disaster management issues. The STEP project so far has succeeded in building cross-cultural networks between Buddhist and Muslim communities 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, the project is strengthening a critical driver of peace in the southern border provinces.

***Activity 5.1: Supporting networking process in selected communities and developing initiatives to resolve natural resource and natural disaster management issues***

Completed with submission of the research paper in 2011.

***Activity 5.2: Developing models and providing small grants to integrate environmental protection/disaster prevention with conflict management***

The Model for Participatory Monitoring and Natural Disaster Warning System was completed in July 2013. The project managed to establish 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. The trained volunteers have been assigned to monitor the automatic weather stations in their areas. Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), installed by the Friends in Need (of “PA”) Volunteers Foundation in cooperation with the Faculty of Science and Technology, have been functioning since June in seven disaster-prone communities:

**AWS-01:** Faculty of Science and Technology, PSU Pattani (prototype)

**AWS-02:** Pattani Bay at Patabudee Sub-district Administrative Office (to monitor areas around Pattani Bay)

**AWS-03:** Muang District of Yala (to monitor floods around Pattani River)

**AWS-04:** Saiburi District of Pattani (landslide and storm prone area)

**AWS-05:** Takbai District of Narathiwat (coastal erosions prone area)

**AWS-06:** Ruesoa District of Narathiwat (floods prone area)

**AWS-07:** Sukirin District of Narathiwat (landslide prone area)

In total, 184 community leaders and local people - 44 women and 140 men in 20 communities - have received training on natural resources management and disaster preparedness and response including 1) natural disaster management, 2) recovery and rehabilitation, 3) preparedness and response plan, 4) awareness on conservation of natural resources, and 5) communication and reporting.

In parallel, the Faculty of Science and Technology, PSU Pattani, developed the “Model for Participatory Sustainable Costal Resources Management in Pattani Bay: A Case Study of Green Mussels (P. viridis)”. This is a pilot model to use green mussels, the dominant economic shellfish in Pattani Bay, to monitor the physical changes of Pattani Bay focusing on local fishery and food security, and to work with community volunteers to create social cohesion/capital as crosscutting issues in the communities. The expected outputs are: (1) identify factors affecting the changes of Pattani Bay; (2) create database to be integrated in the community resource management planning; (3) explore suitable mussel culture and harvestable areas models to increase the quality of fishery for nearby communities; and, (4) create community participation in resource management planning and sustainability. Three mussel farms were built in Pattani Bay close to Prince of Songkla University using 900 poles and 4,000 bamboos for baby mussels to grow on. Data collection and analysis on the quality of water and the monitoring of the growth of mussels were conducted monthly, starting from April. Community focus group discussions were conducted on a regular basis with local people in nearby communities, providing them with cultivation techniques and raising awareness on the impact of the changes of Pattani Bay. 50 local volunteers in Pattani are equipped with cultivation techniques, and coastal resources management and food security. The model was concluded in December 2013 with lessons learned and suitable techniques for coastal communities.

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

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.

***Activity 6.1: Commissioning study of governance models***

Completed with submission of the research paper in 2011.

***Activity 6.2: Supporting series of discussions on governance models and decentralization***

This multi-donor action research on *the Insider Peacebuilder Platform in the Context of the Southern Thail*and/*“Patani*” *Peace Process* focuses not only on creating the insider peace-building platform (IPP) tools and process, but also on the systematic assessment and analysis of results to ensure that IPP will effectively respond to the peace building in the southern border provinces. 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. In all, IPP not only creates a safety space to share experiences on conflict resolutions, but also serves as a safety net to support and engage policy-decision makers (Track 1) and the grassroots people (Track 3) to bring about a meaningful sustainable Thailand’s Southern peace process.

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. The challenges remain in the assessing and building the capacity of IPP participants in order for them to apply tools in developing a peace plan and network in their communities/areas. The action research was completed in July, and the final report was subsequently submitted in September. The lessons learned from the IPP process will be made into a policy brief in 2014.

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

This component focuses on designing conflict prevention/resolution mechanisms/tools and short induction courses for government officials, post-graduate students and community people in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. The project intends to work with the Institute for Peace Studies, the Centre for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity and the College of Islamic Studies to create a centre of excellence in building institutional mechanisms for non-violent, civil, and inclusive discussions, negotiations, and solution building through designing and offering induction courses and curriculums and serving as a resource centre to enhance social cohesion and dispute resolution for government officials and post-graduate students.

A series of conflict transformation activities has been conducted under this component by the People’s College, a group of 23 young human rights volunteers working to create a community network for peace in conflict-affected areas. Nearly one 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.

***Activity 7.1: Training provided to government officials and communities for dispute resolution structures in mediation, knowledge of relevant laws***

The STEP project continued to support People’s College to train potential young people and community leaders (Track 3 of the Peace Building Strategy Framework: local grassroots/mainstream society) on conflict management/peace building process and human rights mechanisms to create “Leaders in transferring conflict to peace”. Three 3-day training workshops were organized in January and February to equip 150 young people and community leaders with civil rights in peace building, human rights in Islamic perspective and transition in government mechanism. It is expected that the young people trained will return to their communities to transfer the knowledge to other young people and to expand peace building networks through people’s forums and peace dialogues to be formulated throughout 2013. The first 3-day public forum was held at Ban Nua Masjid in Songkhla from 29 to 31 March. The public forum focused on community management using common social values to communicate on conflict management/peace building.

On 9 June, People’s College organized the Graduation Ceremony for 93 graduates (potential young people and community leaders) of the “Leaders in Transferring Conflict to Peace” Course at Price of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. The certificates were presented to the graduates by Asst Prof Srisompob Jitpiromsri, the Director of CSCD/Deep South Watch and the Vice-chairperson of STEP Project Management Committee. It is expected that the 93 graduates will organize public forums in their in the three southern border provinces to expand peace networks (Peace Net) using common social values to communicate on conflict management/peace. People’s College will follow up and monitor the Peace Net every six months. The Graduation Ceremony, with 800 attendants, was followed by the Symposium “Wawasan Patani”: Peace in Patani 2020. Renowned peace experts such as Dr Norbert Ropers, Director of Berghof Foundation, Germany, and Asst Prof Suchart Setthamalinee, Director of Institute of Religion, Cultures and Peace, Payap University, were invited to increase awareness on the role of the general public in peace building at the symposium.

***Activity 7.2: Induction course for government staff posted to the south and working in the field***

The project has worked with the Institute for Peace Studies (IPS), the Centre for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity (CSCD) and the College of Islamic Studies to support the establishment of “Peace Resource Centre” in building institutional mechanisms for non-violence, civil and inclusive discussions, negotiations and solutions through designing and offering induction courses and curriculums and serving as a resource centre to enhance social cohesion and dispute resolution for government officials and post-graduate students.

From March to December, the National Conflict Prevention/Resolution Officer was recruited to facilitate the capacity building of the Institute for Peace Studies, Prince of Songkla University, in developing conflict prevention/resolution curricula/modules; designing courses and training of trainers for the institute in relation to peace studies; and engaging in peace dialogue process. International Conflict Prevention/Resolution experts were recruited from June through October to undertake a needs and capacity assessment of peace institutes, and identify a strategic plan in developing a centre of excellence for peace and conflict resolution.

From June to July, Prof Andrea Molnar from the Department of Anthropology, Northern Illinois University, USA, was hired as International Conflict Prevention/Resolution Expert for IPS and CSCD.

*Assessment of the Needs and Capacities of the Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS)*

The Assessment of the Needs and Capacities of the Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) was completed in July by Prof Molnar, focusing on the functions and operations of IPS and CSCD as Centre of Excellence. While the two units, CSCD in Pattani and IPS in Hat Yai, are independent bodies on different campuses, their educational missions, research missions, and outreach missions (especially if a Peace Resource Center is established) are shared, complement each other, and at times even overlap. For the PACS programme to be successful in the long term, the two units will need to continue collaborating and complementing each other, while retaining their autonomy of separate units on different campuses

Apart from hosting the STEP project, IPS is the main site of academic programmes, namely the Master’s Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies, and is the proposed site for the planned PhD programme in PACS. The institute has a team of researchers who focus on Peace and Conflict issues in their research programme, and also collaborates with CSCD on various training projects and with People’s College.

CSCD is the main collaborating partner of IPS and is an independent unit on PSU’s Pattani campus. CSCD fulfills numerous training missions towards a wide range of audiences; such as the training of researchers in research methods (qualitative research methods) through workshops, training workshops for NGOs, CSOs and grassroots organizations, symposiums, conferences and the development of the People’s College for grassroots education on Peace and Conflict issues. CSCD also engages in PACS focused research.

The existing capacities are a good basis on which to further build the peace programme of IPS (PSU) which includes MA programme in PACS, PACS research, training of civil society, extensive collaboration with civil society and journalism through its collaboration with CSCD, joint projects with national and international agencies (e.g. STEP project), among others. The needs for the development of capacities are mainly three-fold and interlocking: in terms of the development of human resources and expertise, the development of material resources both for the academic programmes and for the outreach components (for the development of training modules; and the further development of the outreach component as a Peace Resource Center). All these capacity building needs will require also financial resources and support from the PSU Administration.

*Design of the PhD Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Institute for Peace Studies*

Prof Molnar designed six core courses, ranging from *Principles of Peace and Conflict* to *Conflict Management*, 33 elective courses and one internship programme for a 5-year doctoral programme in Peace and Conflict Studies to be offered by IPS. The programme intends to make students capable of scientific research as well as applied professionals. It includes both course work and the completion of a PhD research and dissertation.

This PhD programme aims to provide students with an opportunity to work on peace and conflict theory, broader issues relating to peace building and peace processes (including gender, development, etc), and on specific case studies in conflict analysis. The programme will provide a guided fieldwork experience for students in settings that introduce them to both the physical and intellectual terrain of the dynamic and complex process of peacebuilding. Students will develop the skills required to analyze the roots, dynamics, key actors and issues-areas in specific conflicts, and to evaluate specific responses to such conflicts. They will be introduced to the theoretical frameworks contained within conflict analysis that can be used to develop an understanding of case studies. Students will also be prepared for the range of problems associated with researching conflict and violence. This theoretical training will provide the practical basis for students to engage in a detailed case study of their own through conducting empirical research in the field

IPS is in the process of preparation for the PhD Programme to be offered by 2015. The process includes bringing in educational experts to review the curriculum, submitting the curriculum to the Graduate Study Committee, training qualified lecturers and administrative staffs, and obtaining/developing learning tools and materials.

*Inception Plan for Training of Government Officials and Civil Society Groups*

Prof Molmar outlined the training modules for outreach activities, such as training government officials based on the teaching modules that utilize lecture materials and power points from both the MA and the eventual Ph.D. programmes. It is recommended that such training materials should be translated into Thai (or Malayu, if needed) by designated lecturers, lecturers who have been trained in the Principles of Peace and Conflict.

FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS:

* Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Concepts and Definitions
* Theories of Conflict Resolution
* Ending Violet Conflict
* Gender, peace and conflict
* Culture, religion, peace and conflict
* Islamic Peace and Conflict Resolution

FOR NGOs, WOMEN’S GROUPS, JOURNALISTS, ETC.

* Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Concepts and Definitions
* Gender, peace and conflict
* Culture, religion, peace and conflict
* Islamic Peace and Conflict Resolution
* Art, Media and Conflict Resolution: Communication in Conflict Resolution
* Environment and Resources and Conflict Resolution

In addition to these, additional modules will need to be developed for other target groups towards peace education:

*Teaching modules for elementary and secondary schools that educate both the teachers and students about interfaith and intercommunal understanding and cooperation*

*Training modules towards a range of audiences including grassroots, CSOs, women’s groups and government officials*

These training modules then would need to be delivered through IPS and CSCD faculty and trained staff. The training modules could be organized thematically; for example,

* Civic education modules that focus on the rights and duties of citizens and basic laws
* Public administration modules: that focus on modernization of PA with focus on transparency and efficiency of service delivery
* PA modules that focus on comparative decentralization laws and models among Southeast Asian countries that have decentralization laws for over a decade (considerations of challenges, successes, and failures)
* Women’s training modules—empowerment, public speaking, development issues affecting women (health, education, economic production, etc.)—these should be aimed at BOTH women leaders (village heads, etc), women small business, women NGOs, etc.
* Peace and conflict resolution basic models and topical seminar modules to educate the public (also police and government civil servants)
* Models that highlight comparative issues / similar issues faced by Thailand to their Southeast Asian neighbors and the lessons of what not to do and what might be tried here based on the failures and successes of the neighbors in addressing such similar issues concerning Peace and Conflict
* Training modules for NGOs on grant writing and fund raising and managing skills
* Modules that educate the army, government officials, and the public (the whole of Thai society) in general on the concepts of ‘Ancestral Domain’

*Comparative Case Studies on Models of Peace Processes*

In recent years, CSCD, IPS and their network organizations have developed multiple processes of peacebuilding supports. The activities involve many academic and outreaching projects, such as researches, training programs, conferences and workshops for empowering scholars as well as civil society practitioners for peace efforts in the southern border provinces. The International Conference on Comparative Conflict and Peace Processes to open local perspectives concerning conflict resolution in other countries is one such process to compare various peacebuilding efforts.

The *International Conference on Conflicts and Peace Processes: Cases of Southern Thailand, Southern Philippines, Aceh, East Timor and Myanmar* was organized at Imam al-Nawawi Conference Room of International Islamic College, College of Islamic Studies, PSU Pattani, on 25 July. The conference aimed at 1) sharing and exchanging models of peace building among the conflict areas in ASEAN countries, such as the Southern Thailand, Mindanao, Aceh, East Timor, and Myanmar; 2) documenting and disseminating the best practices or design solutions for peace building in comparative perspectives using clearly defined terminologies on peace discourse from other countries’ experiences; and 3) creating spaces for conflict transformation in the Deep South’s violent conflict based on academic, civil society and communication networks on the ground.

# The panelists were experts specializing in the conflict and peacebuilding processes in ASEAN countries: Assistant Professor Srisompob Jitpiromsri, Faculty of Political Science, Prince of Songkla University; Professor Susan D. Russell, Department of Anthropology, Northern Illinois University; Professor Andrea Katalin MolnarDepartment of Anthropology, Northern Illinois University; and Isaac Khen Gender and Development Initiative/Gender and Peace Study Center.

The conference was a successful event with over 600 audiences from governmental sector, military, civil society organizations, media and journalists, university staff and students. Similarities and differences among all cases were raised, and the participants were encouraged to participate in the discussions. It is expected that the lessons learned from different conflict-affected countries would contribute to the local, internal insights on peace processes bringing about the better, more reasonable peacebuilding platforms for the southern border provinces of Thailand.

From August to October, IPS and CSCD worked with Dr Noah Salameh, Director and the founder of the Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (CCRR), Palestine, on the following tasks in order to strengthen existing capacities in providing courses for post-graduate students, government officials and CSOs.

*Design of the PhD Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Institute for Peace Studies*

In addition to the six core courses designed by Prof Andrea Molnar in the last reporting period, the following nine courses were suggested by Dr Salameh for MA and PhD programmes:

* Nonviolence in Philosophical theories
* Nonviolence in Religions
* Nonviolence in Practice
* Peace Building and Peace Keeping
* Peace and War Literature
* Power and Conflict
* Leadership Role in Peace Building
* Communication and Miscommunication
* Mediation

In addition to this, Dr Salameh suggests the establishment of a training center in conflict resolution and peace activism under the Institute for Peace Studies (IPS). The centre can also be used for exchange delegations, students and short courses in training, meditation and activities.

*Peace Building Workshops*

Three workshops relating to peace building and conflict resolution were organized and led by Dr Salameh for different target groups in September and October.

The *Roles of Youths in Peace Building* was organized at PSU Hat Yai on 17 September for 28 participants representing youth networks. The workshop aimed at 1) enhancing understanding of youths in peace process; 2) providing skills and tools relating to conflict resolutions; and 3) creating a training model for youths in conflict-prone areas.

The *Conflict Resolution and Non-violence* was organized at PSU Hat Yai on 24 September for 20 academic people from various peace institutes in Thailand. The workshop focused on 1) Conflict resolution and its relation to social studies; 2) Non-violence as a mean to reach people; and 3) Roles of peace institutes in peace building.

The *Roles of Civic Organizations in Peace Building* was organized in Songkhla on 12 and 13 October for 30 participants representing community-based organizations and civil society groups in the southern border provinces. The workshop aimed at 1) enhancing capacities of CBOs, CSOs and other peace networks in peace building; 2) Creating a public space in exchanging views and sharing experiences in conflict resolution; and 3) Strengthening institutional capacities of peace networks through dialogues.

It is expected that the lessons learned from these workshops and the cooperation among various networks would pave the way for the establishment of “Peace Training Centre”.

*Seminar on Peace Institutes and Peacebuilding Processes*

IPS organized the *Seminar on Peace Institutes and Peacebuilding Processes* at PSU Hat Yai on 15 July to share and exchange views on roles of academia and peace institutes in conflict resolutions and peacebuilding efforts and to establish a cluster of peace institutes in organizing joint programmes, exchanging personnel and sharing network. Approximately 30 participants representing Internal Security Operation Command (ISOC) Region 4, local media and peace institutes in the southern border provinces, Songkhla, Bangkok, Ubonratchathani and Konkhen attended the seminar and expressed their willingness to work together to support peace building.

1. **SITUATION IN SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES**

From the database collected by Deep South Watch, there were 13,895 violent incidents, in which 5,956 people were killed and 10,703 people injured from 1 January to 31 December 2013. Of these, 3,515 dead victims are Muslim (59 per cent) and 2,288 are Buddhist (38 per cent). A total of 6,346 Buddhists (59 per cent) and 3,386 Muslims (31 per cent) have been injured. Casualties among the Buddhists are proportionally higher, given they amount to about 20 per cent of the population in the Muslim-majority region. 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 and public school teachers – are prime targets for attack. Civilians have suffered the heaviest casualties in the past decade of the conflict.

The violence in 2013 became worsened on 13 February after the attack of the marine base in Bacho District of Narathiwat by 30 suspected Runda Kumpulan Kecil (RKK) militants, resulting in 16 suspected militants being killed. In contrast, the holy month of Ramadan this year saw the lowest incidence of violence since 2009. This lower violence rate is believed to be the result of the agreement between the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) or National Revolutionary Front and Thai officials in late June to stop violence during the Ramadan period in the southern border provinces. However, from 16 July onwards, the incidents and the casualties escalated. Local uncertainty raised an ambiguity of the talk as to when an agreement could be fully complied by both parties. In August, the number of incidents and casualties was rather fluctuated and likely to be escalated. Despite the fact that the attacks focused more on “hard target” such as military and police officers, civilians such as religious leaders and teachers remained victims. Incidents subsequently reduced in September, due to continuing searches and surround missions by police and military forces.

The STEP project team members were alerted by UNDSS and UNDP on the possible attacks in Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Songkhla on the 9th Commemoration Day of Tak Bai Incident, there were no incidents on 25 October. Instead, severe violent attacks took place on the following days including the killing of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) police officers in Narathiwat's Bacho district. In November, there appeared to be a high number of violent incidents targeting local government officers following the local election in October. One such incident affecting the implementation of STEP project was the shooting in Yaring District of Pattani on 13 November, killing Mr Nimu Jeh-arwae, the sub-district chief of Lampo (Yaring District of Pattani). Mr Jeh-arwae was one of the local counterparts working under the project component in strengthening a local government in the southern border provinces of Thailand by building a pattern of participatory process for development planning and participatory budgeting. In December, the political rally led by the People’s Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) escalated to a national political crisis, which has negatively impacted the peace process in the southern border provinces. The lack of political stability at the national level raised a question among the circle of the Patani-Malay movement as to how the peace dialogue would be carried out under this circumstance. Some symbolic reactions from insurgent groups such as fabric banners and graffiti revealed the dissatisfaction over the Thai government’s insincerity to solve the conflict.

## Government Policy Response

* 648 former combatants have joined and another 300 have expressed their interest to participate in the Returning Home Programme launched by the Internal Security Operation Command 4, which allows “people who have different stand points to the Thai State” and are willing to unarm to be reintegrated into the society.
* Ministry of Industry has been in preparation for nine important projects to promote the development in the southern border provinces – industrial development for sustainable employment, development and promotion of rubber industry, development of Halal products to name a few. The projects intend not only to restore the economy in the southern border provinces, but also to stimulate investments for sustainable development of the area.

### The Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) investigated financial transfers from the Middle East countries to the southern border provinces, as those countries were suspected to involve in supporting violence in the area. List of suspected persons involved was announced in the AMLO’s website including 287 persons according to Article 4 of [Anti-Terrorist Financing Act, BE 2556 (2013)](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Anti-Terrorist_Financing_Act%2C_BE_2556_%282013%29) (UN Sanction list) and 16 persons according to Article 5 (Thailand list).

* 1,800 security volunteers have been assigned to the southernmost provinces in October (beginning of the fiscal year 2014). This is an attempt to integrate the work of military and civil servants.
* The lack of significant development from the Thai government over the southern border provinces issues during the final quarter of 2013 left many people puzzled over the future of peace process.

**Development of Peace Building Process**

The signing of General Consensus on Peace Dialogue Process between the National Security Council (NSC) and the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) on 28 February in Malaysia has paved the way towards a series of peace negotiations for the southern border provinces; and has become a widely discussed issue among politicians, military, academic institutes, civil society and local communities not only in the southern region but nationwide. The first formal talks between NSC and BRN took place on March 28 in Malaysia, with 15 delegates representing the Thai Government and six delegates representing the BRN Coordinate, BRN Congress and Pattani United Liberation Organisation (Pulo). The 12-hour talks focused on reducing violence in the southern border provinces and building mutual trust between the parties. Both sides also agreed on the terms of reference for future peace negotiations and resolved to hold the next round of peace talks on April 29 in Malaysia.

BRN subsequently submitted the so-called “Five Preliminary Demands” and a 38-page document elaborating details of the demands through the Malaysian Facilitator. Asst Prof Srisompob Jitpiromsri, Director of CSCD, summarizes the details as followed:

1. BRN requests the Thai government to generally accept the five demands.
2. This does not mean that the Thai government must immediately and fully accept the five demands but to agree in principle to discuss the five demands in details.
3. All five demands may be discussed thoroughly and to have joint decisions/consensus on the details on a later date or in a later meeting.
4. The demands must be brought to the Thai Parliament to be discussed as a national agenda, not an individual or an agenda of certain groups.
5. If in principle the discussion on the five demands can be agreed upon, it may pave the way for a formal and proper ceasefire; and eventually to a peace accord for a lasting peace solution in the southern border provinces.

According to the analysis by Deep South Watch (DSW) launched on 1 August 2013[[1]](#footnote-1), the initiative to reduce violence during the holy month of Ramadan has proven to be the first mutual intention between BRN and the Thai government to restrict the use of forces by both parties, which is a crucial confidential-building measure of pre-negotiation period.

**Positive sign:** Despite various uncertainties at the local level, there seems to be a good prospect of peace process since representatives from both parties insisted to push this peace dialogue initiative forward. For example, from the BRN perspective, “peace dialogue is currently believed to be the best way towards conflict resolution and the peace initiative during Ramadan is a good effort to convey sincerity and seriousness of all stakeholders to resolve the conflict”. This conveys a message of political momentum for the protracted conflict of the southern border provinces and raises enormous awareness among the Thai society. In order to keep this momentum alive in the long run, the peace process needs to be revitalized at both local and policy levels.

**Challenges:** A number of challenges have been witnessed since the commencement of peace dialogue on 28 February 2013. Representatives from BRN and the Thai government are inevitably in a situation where their status and legitimacy to proceed with the talks have been challenged. During this fragile process, spoilers often appear and pursue any means to disrupt confidentiality of both parties and the process itself. It explicitly reveals the fact that conflicting parties need to work on their own inclusiveness and that trust between parties must be gradually built.

The followings are suggestions to stakeholders involved in the southern border provinces peace process:

1. A clarification and internal coordination process should be established in each party – promoting mutual understanding, avoiding risk of accusation of attacks and entailing cooperation from a diverse group of stakeholders within conflicting parties.
2. Truth is not an obstacle to confidential building – seeking a cooperative mechanism for investigating violent incidents is very important for trust building.
3. New opportunities to build “Peace Infrastructure” – this shall be mutually built by stakeholders involved to respond to various challenges from those who do not agree to the process or spoilers, so that possible disruptive actions can be suspended and trust can be built concretely.

The STEP project has monitored the development of the peace process between the Thai government and BRN. Although in the past several months both parties insisted on their will to proceed with the peace dialogue through the facilitation of Malaysia, and the Thai government sent a signal to the Malaysian facilitator and the BRN that it was ready to resume peace talks in November, the political instability hindered the progress of peace process as the peace talks had to be postponed indefinitely. There is a concern over the change of government, which may bring this peace process to an end. The two conditions launched on 1 December 2013 by BRN Liaison Office Chief Hassan Taib, identifying himself as a former BRN Chief Negotiator, are almost impossible to be met considering the present national political crisis: **First**, the BRN’s five preliminary demands must be acknowledged and fully implemented by the “Siamese Parliament”; and **Second**, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra must place peace negotiations on the southern unrest on the national agenda. All in all, the peace dialogue is in need to be resumed. Putting the peace on the national agenda will significantly enhance the confidence on this undertaking among members and supporters of the Patani-Malay movement, which will encourage them to make a serious commitment to this process.

# IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The violence in the southern border provinces during the first quarter caused difficulty accessing some project sites and hindered some project implementation, especially in setting up the seven automatic weather stations (AWS). The construction workers contracted by the Friends in Need (of “PA”) Volunteers Foundation were unable to complete the work as planned due to concern over their safety. As a result, the project had to readjust and postpone several community training activities. In addition to this, all monitoring missions by the project staff members to Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat were postponed in February and were resumed in March due to the rising of violent incidents, although meetings and activities implemented by counterparts were carried out subject to their discretion.

Full implementation and monitoring of project activities were seen in the second quarter of 2013 with 40 per cent delivery despite higher violent incidents. The project staffs were divided into two teams to monitor the implementation of all seven outputs, and the project managed to speed up activities to catch up with the time lost during the previous quarter.

Despite the Ramadan period, the STEP project reached 80 percent of the annual budget of 2013 in its third quarter. The project and UNDP staff members were advised in early July by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to postpone missions until further to the southern border provinces due to uncertainty during Ramadan and forecast of increasing violence, activities in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. The monitoring missions were resumed in August, followed by the STEP Project Symposium on 20 August to review the project’s overall impact and the project review mission by the Conflict and Development experts to identify entry points for future peace building and development programming in September 2013.

The final quarter of 2013 saw local and national conflicts delaying the implementation of the STEP project. The passing away of Lampo Sub-district Administrative Chief resulted in the project reconsidering the site for the local government planning and budgeting component (output 4) due to concerns over security judging from a high number of violence cases towards local authority personnel in the southern border provinces during October/November. The project will work with local authority officers under this component with cautions and apply the “Do No Harm” approach. The national political crisis affected the progress of peace process in the southern border provinces and the implementation of STEP project. The component relating to peace process will continue, as it is believed that the peace dialogue is the best solution for the southern conflict so far, although no one can be certain when or whether the peace dialogue will be resumed.

# DISBURSEMENT AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

From 1 January to 31 December 2013, **USD 755,777.34** (99.12 per cent) out of the total annual budget (2013) of **USD 762,510** was disbursedas per outputs as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Output** | **Funding source** | **Amount (USD$)** |
| 1. Strengthened capacity of CBOs | TRAC 3 | 244,616.30 |
| BPG | 16,803.49 |
| 2. Improved income and employment | TRAC 3 | 52,768.17 |
| BPG | 709.16 |
| 3. Legal awareness of local communities | TRAC 3 | 24,893.29 |
| BPG | 62,033.68 |
| 4. Strengthened capacity of local government | BPG | 3,035.90 |
| JPN | 16,315.43 |
| 5. Natural disaster management | TRAC 3 | 59,234.61 |
| BPG | 16,961.50 |
| 6. Knowledge on government models | BPG | 18,636.07 |
| 7. Provide effective dispute resolution mechanism | BPG | 134,561.93 |
| 8. M&E | TRAC 3 | 94,719.12 |
| BPG | 9,489.42 |
| JPN | 999.27 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Fund Code 04160****BCPR/TRAC 3** | **Fund code 32045****JP/UNDP** | **Fund code 30000****Belgium** | **Total** |
| Approved budget  | 1,225,000.00 | 400,000.00 | 399,743.05 | 2,024,743.05 |
| 2010 Disbursement | 131,582.16  | 41,740.34 | 0.00 | 173,322.50 |
| 2011Disbursement | 249,069.41 | 34,998.94 | 0.00 | 284,068.34 |
| 2012 Disbursement | 368,031.51 | 207,701.57 | 0.00 | 575,733.08 |
| 2013 Disbursement  | 476,316.93 | 14,150.00 | 232,043.07 | 722,510.00 |
| ***Balance for 2014*** | ***0.00***  | ***101,409.15*** | ***167,699.98*** | ***269,109.13*** |

**Total budget status: 2010 - 2013**

**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| APR | Annual Project Report |
| AWP | Annual Work Plan |
| BCPR | Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery |
| CPAPCSCD | Country Programme Action PlanCentre for Conflict Studies and Cultural Diversity |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization  |
| GMS | General Management Service |
| HAIHAP | Human Achievement IndexHak Asasi Prikemanusian  |
| IPS | Institute for Peace Studies |
| ISOC | Internal Security Operations Command  |
| ISS | Implementation Support Service |
| LEP | Legal Empowerment Project |
| LOAMAC | Letter of AgreementMuslim Attorney Center Foundation |
| MDGMoI | Millennium Development GoalsMinistry of Interior |
| MoJ | Ministry of Justice |
| NEX | National Execution  |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NHDR | National Human Development Report |
| NRC | National Reconciliation Commission |
| PEG | Project Executive Group |
| PSU | Prince of Songkla University |
| RCB | Regional Centre in Bangkok  |
| ROAR | Results-Oriented Annual Report  |
| RTG | The Royal Thai Government  |
| SBPAC | Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre |
| STEP | Southern Thailand Empowerment and Participation Project |
| TAO | Tambon Administrative Organization |
| ToRTPBS | Term of ReferenceThai Public Broadcasting Service  |
| TPR | Tripartite Review |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNPAF | United Nations Partnership Framework |

1. <http://www.deepsouthwatch.org/sites/default/files/dsw_analysis_-_southern_violence_and_rpi2013_th_0.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)