**TRAC 2**

**Final Report**

**Leadership Academy for Muslim Women in Southern Provinces of Thailand**

**Project Number 00083997**

**(August 2014 - December 2014)**

**UNDP Thailand Country Office**

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1. **Project Summary**

The “Leadership Academy for Muslim Women in Southern Provinces of Thailand” project (July 2012 – 2015) was designed to enhance the leadership capacity of Muslim women in the 14 southern provinces of Thailand and to strengthen mechanisms to support their participation in development and decision making bodies at local and national levels. The project adopts gender sensitive approaches and addresses the issues from both the demand and supply sides through three inter-related components including: (1) cultivating new social norms and articulating demands for women leadership; (2) enhancing skills of leadership for Muslim women; and (3) strengthening capacity of Muslim women’s networks to support women’s roles and leadership.

This project is aligned with the national women development strategies under the 11th National Development Plan (2012-2016) that target the enhancement of women’s capacity to participate in politics, administration and decision making at all levels; as well as to develop capacity of women’s organization and mechanisms to promote women’s roles at all levels. The Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) is strategically selected as the national counterpart to implement this project and as a focal point to promote gender equality in the Thai society. MSDHS had earlier provided 37,998 USD to co-fund core activities, which was approximately one fifth of the total project budget. One of the project achievement is the establishment of the first umbrella Association of Muslim Women in the south of Thailand. This association brings together networks and sub-association of Muslim women from 14 provinces with an effort to improve their community life through integrated project works.

In August 2014 this project additionally received funding from TRAC 2. And along the course of its implementation period (August 2014- December 2014), MSDHS also contributed approximately 2,700 USD in parallel. This report thereby specifically records the results implemented under the support of TRAC 2 and MSDHS during the period of August – December 2014. The overall goal of the TRAC 2 support is to build upon the achievement of the project initiatives from 2012-2013 and continue to develop a model of collective leadership and to strengthen voices of Muslim women through capacity management of their associations.

In a broader context, the project also aims to achieve durable and scalable results on gender, through interventions targeted at women and girls facing with cultural discrimination in the communities. Two main target beneficiaries hence include: (1) leaders and management committee of women association of Yala and Songkla provinces and their respective members; and (2) other associations and women networks who potentially can replicate the model; (3) officers of the Ministry of Social Development and human Security who are committed to share knowledge and expertise, and to advocate for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The project continues to resort to the implementing mechanism and modality as already set in 2012 in which the Office of women’s Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is the key implementing partner while the beneficiaries, i.e. representatives from Muslim Women Associations, participate in the project board meeting as members who is also responsible for management decision.

1. **Key Achievement**

The period of August – December 2014 saw the achievement of most of the project deliverables which can be summarized as follows:

(1) Two Muslim Women Associations in Songkhla and Yala provinces were inaugurated with well-established networks. Members of these two associations were trained to leverage their capacity in the area of communication and IT. They have become effective in in managing the growing number of membership and in representing the collective voices that convey the needs of Muslim Women. In Songkhla provinces, with the support of the provincial Islamic Council, the Muslim Women Association of Songkhla held its inauguration ceremony in November with more than 200 participants from 16 districts association. The same activity was held also by the Muslim Women Association of Yala Province. As result both of the associations become well-established organizations among the CSOs networks working in the southern region of Thailand.

(2) Along with the institutionalization process, experiences and lessons-learned from the two Muslim Women Association were gathered, analyzed and developed into models of management capacity for other provincial Muslim Women’s Associations by illustrating procedures and approaches for replication.

(3) A set of training materials consisting of organizational Management, ICT and documentary program production was produced and distributed to members of associations beyond Yala and Songkhla provinces.

(4) A short documentary on the experiences of the women networks in forming association was created by Thai Public Broadcasting Services for advocating women and sharing knowledge with wider audiences.

(5) Forum for sharing experiences and knowledge with other twelve provinces was held with more than 60 representatives of Muslim Women networks and associations participating and reflecting on their experiences in different contexts. Model of management and analysis of women roles in different provinces were discussed with feedback and commitment of support from Provincial Islamic Councils.

For more details of project results and activities, please see the table below.

**Table 1: Summary of Project Outputs and Activities**

| **Outcome areas under UNDP strategic plan** | **Objectives and expected outputs** | **Activities undertaken** | **Results achieved** | **Reasons of progress below target** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome area**:  Strengthened national, regional and local level capacity to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment in government policies and institutions | **Project Purpose:**  To build upon the achievement of the on-going project and develop a demonstrable model in strengthening collective leadership and voices of Muslim women through improved capacity management of their associations. |  |  |  |
|  | **Expected Output 1:**  Two Muslim Women Associations are well established with institutionalized networks and equipped with knowledge to manage the growing number of memberships which will be a main mechanism to represent the collective voices to convey the needs of Muslim Women | Conducting capacity building needs assessment of the Songkhla and Yala Muslim Women’s Associations.  Providing training based on identified and prioritized needs of the associations, including training on:   * Organizational Management * Information and Communication Technology * Production of documentary programmes for advocacy   Providing on-going coaching on the implementation of the associations’ activities under their strategic and operational work plans by two national consultant teams (one for Songkhla and one for Yala)  Organizing a workshop to draw and conclude lessons learned | For Organizational management training:  Vision, missions, strategies, organizational structure, and work plan of both associations were developed.  Proposals for priority projects were developed by both associations and submitted for funding from local partners.  Following the training, Songkhla association’s proposal to officially launch the Association was supported by the Provincial Islamic Council. The launch took place on November 8, 2014. Around 200 Muslim women from 16 districts participated in the event and registered as new members of the association.  Yala association’s proposal submitted to Yala Provincial Administrative Organization was approved under quarter 3 of its 2014 fiscal year. The proposal focuses on capacity building of the management committee through study visits and exchange forums with Muslim women’s associations in nearby provinces.  Yala association was officially launched in conjunction with another event on 18 November, 2014. The event was chaired by the Provincial Governor  For ICT Training  Thirty-two (32) members of management committee and IT staff of the two associations were trained on basic IT uses for management and communication purposes. The content of the training included:   * Basic knowledge about computer * Windows 8.1 * Internet/Emails * Social Network * Application Line   Following the training, a closed Facebook group and Line Chat group were established for internal communication among members and supporters of the two associations.  Members of the associations use more ICT channels to communicate/correspond with the Project support team (UNDP) and consultants after the training.  For Documentary program production training  Collaboration between UNDP and Thai PBS, a renowned Bangkok-based TV station was established. As part of its plan to expand local reporter networks, Thai PBS agreed to conduct the training for the two associations.  As a result of the three-day training, 8 short documentary programs reflecting local community development issues were produced by the 34 participants.  Four out of eight programs were broadcast nationwide by Thai PBS under its regular “Citizen Reporter Program”  An article on the training which included interviews with the participants, Thai PBS and the national consultant was produced and posted on UNDP Thailand website.[[1]](#footnote-1)  On-the-job coaching by consultant teams  Under the coaching by the national consultant team, Songkhla association developed a set of working tools to support the work under each of the association’s strategic areas. The tools include:   * Member application form and member registration procedures * Stakeholder analysis form and stakeholder database design * A survey questionnaire to assess interest of members to undertake religious training * Community’s needs assessment forms   Through the coordination of the consultant team, a few members of Yala association participated in a training course on “Process Facilitation” organized by Prince of Songkhla University. | Project starting date had to be postponed from early July to Mid-August because of the Ramadan. This had delayed all activities which followed. Yet, the project was able to accomplish all planned activities within the closing date (end of December 2014) |
|  | **Expected Output 2:**  Two models for management capacity of provincial Muslim Women’s Associations developed to be replicated in other provinces | Based on the experience of the project, developing a model which demonstrates the procedures and details to develop capacity of the two associations and the analysis of the approach. | A document was developed to demonstrate the project’s approach in building/strengthening capacity of Songkla and Yala Muslim Women’s Associations. The document outlines the followings.   1. **Introduction**  * Project background * Muslim Women’s Association: a voluntary organization * Factors contributing to sustainable development of a voluntary organization   **II**. **Promoting sustainable voluntary organizations:** **case studies from the Songkhla and Yala Muslim Women’s Associations**   * Activities undertaken by the Project (objectives, content, step-by-step methods/process) * Results   **III. Analysis of the models used in promoting the two associations**   * Model for Songkhla Muslim Women’s Association * Model for Yala Muslim Women’s Association * Analysis of the Models * Conclusions and recommendations |  |
|  | **Expected Output 3:**  Training manual for Muslim Women Associations on organizational management; | Developing training manuals for the three training courses , detailing:   * Training objectives * Activities/content * Training methods, time, materials   Distributing the manuals to Muslim women’s associations from the other 12 provinces in the South and to national counterpart (Min. of Social Development and Human Security) for their references in future work/advocacy. | Three training manuals were developed, including manuals on  *Organizational Management, ICT, and Documentary Program Production* and were distributed to the project participants as well as representatives of the Muslim associations  /groups from the other 12 provinces in the South. |  |
|  | **Expected Output 4:**  A short documentary to demonstrate and share the experience to wider range of audiences | Facilitating Songkhla and Yala Muslim Women’s Association to produce two short documentary programs to introduce their Associations | The documentaries include the following details:   * Their inspiration and common concerns leading to the establishment of the associations * The associations’ vision, missions and plan. * Progress to-date. * Challenges and Way Forward   The programs were presented in the workshop to share experiences and lessons learned with the remaining 12 associations as well as representatives of 14 Provincial Muslim Councils.  In addition to introducing the associations, the documentaries also demonstrated how the knowledge from the training by Thai PBS was used for advocacy purpose. | This activity was over target. The original plan was to produce one documentary. |
|  | **Expected Output 5:**  Two sub-regional exchange forums on capacity management of Muslim women’s associations and leadership empowerment with representatives of Muslim women associations or experts from other Muslim countries in ASEAN. | Organizing one sub-regional exchange forum to share the experiences and lessons learned by the two associations to representatives of Muslim Women’s Associations/Groups from the 12 remaining provinces in the South | The exchange forum was attended by:   * 60 representatives of Muslim Women’s associations/   networks from the 12 remaining provinces in the South   * 28 members of Provincial Islamic Council from the 14 southern provinces * 32 members of Songkla and Yala Associations’ Management Committee   It included sessions on:   * Presentation of the overall project approach and activities * Presentations by Songkla and Yala Associations about their experiences and lessons learned through their engagement of the project activities as well as challenges and way forward after the project ends. * Reflections on the models and their applicability to other Muslim women’s associations by representatives of the remaining Muslim women associations/groups * Role of Muslim Women’s Association in the South to strengthen provincial level associations * Feedback and committed support from Provincial Islamic Councils on women’s empowerment in respective provinces   At the end of the forum, direction how each of the 14 provincial associations and the Southern Muslim Women Association will move forward and what kinds of support will be provided by their respective Provincial Islamic Councils were concluded. | **Expected Output 5**  Two sub-regional exchange forums on capacity management of Muslim women’s associations and leadership empowerment with representatives of Muslim women associations or experts from other Muslim countries in ASEAN. |

**III Project Performance**

**1. Main Challenges**

The two associations were selected based on their enthusiasm and commitment to pursue their voluntary mandates. Yet, both of them are relatively new. Yala Association was registered in November 2013 while Songkhla Association was registered in July 2014. However, their official inauguration was held in late 2014. For voluntary organizations like these two associations, there are nine elements/factors which are important for their sustainability. These include: (1) common goal, (2) collective commitment, (3) organizational structure, (4) management system, (5) strategic and action plans, (6) resources, (7) ability and skills needed to get the work done as planned (8) ability to learn and adjust as situation changes, and (9) advisors/ supporting networks.

Within the relatively short period (August-December 2014), the project helped them to establish some of these key elements which are fundamental to new organizations, including formulation of common goal, developing strategic and action plan, organizational structure and management system and equipped them with necessary skills for effective communication and advocacy through ICT training and documentary program production. Yet, there still remain capacity gaps to be further addressed. Priorities should be given to skills which the project has not sufficiently covered such as in fund raising/resource mobilization, reporting (to donor organization), and systematic monitoring and evaluation.

For longer term development, both organizations will need to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment on capacity building needs in all of the nine capacity areas, identify and prioritize areas for improvement and include them in their on-going capacity building plan. Capacity development could be done through various channels, such as training, study visits, learning-by-doing through the implementation of their activities and coaching by external experts.

Despite the challenges already described, the project has provided clear opportunities for both the Muslim women associations as well as their partners, including the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Provincial Islamic Councils, Local governments (PAO, TAO) and local government line agencies to further build upon the progress/achievements of this project. The analysis of three categories of factors contributing to organizational strengths of the two associations reflected the followings.

**2. Main Opportunities**

Both associations have relatively strong social capital prior to their participation in the project activities. Their management committee are strongly committed to their voluntary mandates in serving the communities, based on their Islamic beliefs that by so doing they are also serving Allah. The fact that they have registered as associations has also widened their opportunities to access resources and other inkind support from the government, especially at local level. Yala Association evolved from existing community welfare management network and has been recognized as a strong advocate and manager of the government’s welfare scheme to reach the poorest of the poor in rural communities. They managed to get their voice to the Drafting Committee of the new Constitution to include access to community welfare scheme as one of the basic citizen’s rights. For Songkhla Association, the majority of their management committee members have solid experiences in community development. And the association is well-linked to the Provincial Islamic Councial, with broad-ranged membership from all of the provincial districts.

Through their engagement in the project, the two associations have developed a more systematic approach to organizational management, beginning with common goal setting; formulation of clear objectives, missions and mechanism and strategic plan to achieve the common goal; implementation of activities through participatory action research or Action Learning Program and continual coaching by consultant teams.

Two types of outcomes are observed. Intangible outcomes are demonstrated through increased commitment and mutual trust among members of the associations. Tangible outcomes include formulation of working teams to undertake tasks and their success stories, such as selection by Thai PBS to broadcast their short documentary programs.

**3. Recommendations**

Based on this analysis, there are potentials for further actions as follows.

(1) Southern Muslim Women’s Association and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security adopt the capacity building model developed under this project to support development process of other potential women’s associations. The model should be further developed/adjusted to reflect different capacity building needs and operational context of different groups. Based on experience from the replication, variations to each training topic should be documented for further reference by interested parties.

(2) Based on Yala Association’s solid experience in community welfare scheme management, UNDP continues to work with the association to expand the community welfare network to other provinces/regions of the country, using Yala association as a mentor/demonstration model. The aim is to establish network of women (Muslim and non-Muslim) across the country to reach out to the poor, elderly, orphans and marginalized groups in the communities and provide them with necessary support through the government’s community welfare scheme. Experiences from Yala and other places in the country demonstrate that women are the best manager of welfare programs and that under their management, fair and well-covered assistance could be assured.

(3) To combine gender, governance and environmental interventions, UNDP may want to consider working on a green governance project via women’s groups and local/provincial government in selected provinces where there is a potential to demonstrate a viable model. For example, a province which has clear policy to promote green growth/green development through multi-sectoral activities/schemes such as green production, eco-tourism, energy efficiency and emission reduction, climate change adaptation, etc. Women groups/associations could be a part of actors under these schemes, especially in the production and tourism sectors where they already play an active role. Capacity building model from this project could be applied to further strengthen their capacity to work with local/provincial governments to promote sustainable green growth at sub-national level. This kind of intervention will allow women groups to have a seat in the provincial decision making body and work as men’s partners to contribute to the provincial green growth.

**IV Project Expenditure**

TRAC 2: US$ 159,000

Actual spending (August 2014-December 2014): US$ 131,560.53 (as per CDR on 23 February 2015)

Other resources (as applicable; please state sources of funding and amount):-

Estimated parallel in-cash contribution to the project cost by the Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development under Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (at 1usd=32.77) amounts to US$ 2,746.41) (90,000 Thai baht)

1. http://www.th.undp.org/content/thailand/en/home/presscenter/articles/2014/11/19/muslim-women-in-south-thailand-empowered-to-develop-their-own-citizen-news-reports/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)