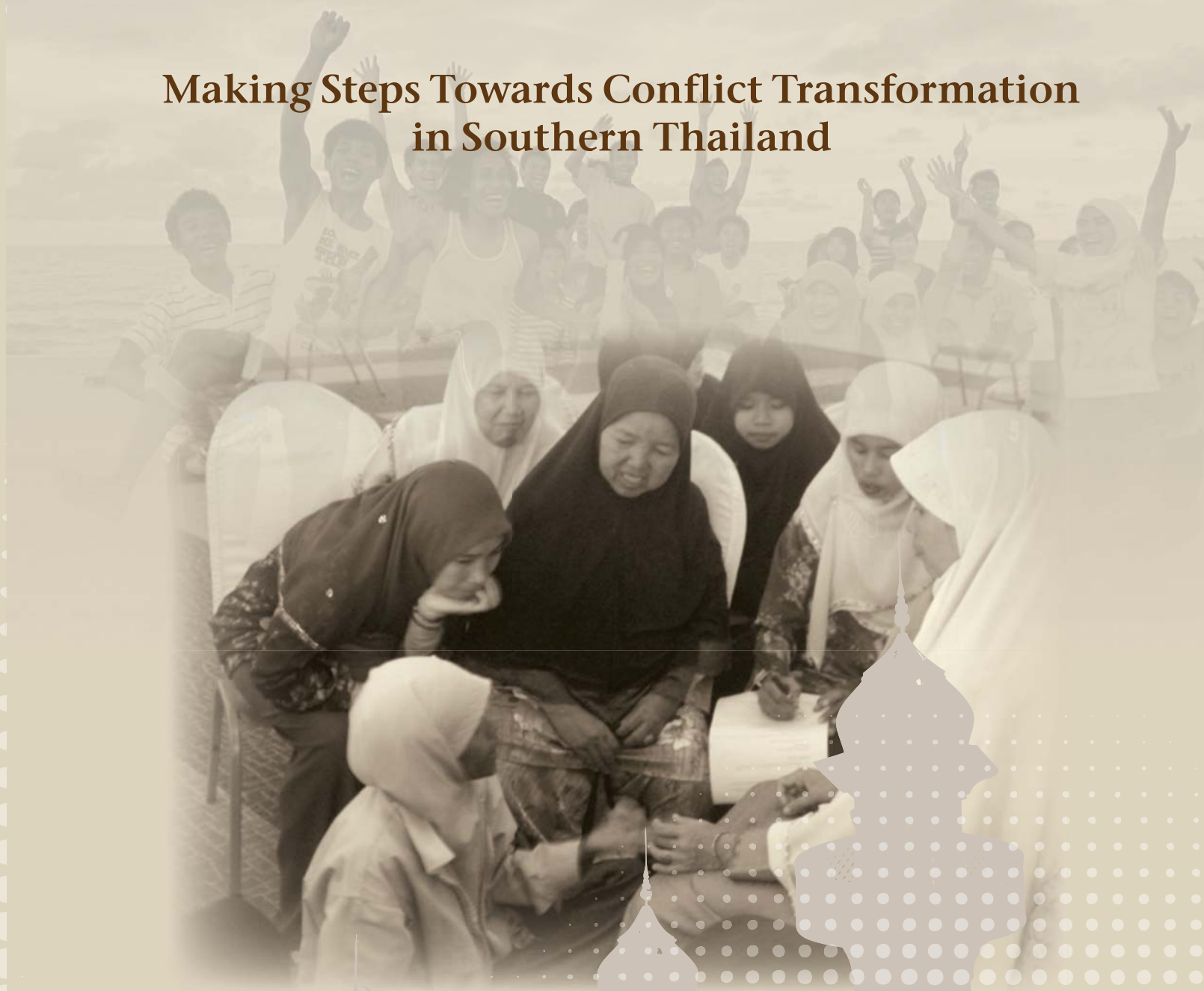




People in Dialogue, People for Peace

Making Steps Towards Conflict Transformation
in Southern Thailand



**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**

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Introduction to the Work of FES on Conflict Transformation in the South of Thailand

Since the end of the 1990's, wars between states have been increasingly replaced by new modes of transnational and internal conflicts. Characterised by state failures, migration, violence based economies and terrorism, these new conflicts demand the development of suitable instruments and approaches in order to resolve them. Besides traditional military interventions, the concept of civil conflict transformation is gaining growing importance for peaceful conflict resolution. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Germany's oldest political foundation committed to the values of social democracy, has a special role and responsibility when it comes to civil conflict transformation. The international development work of FES in more than 100 countries is based upon the strong belief that the development of democratic structures must lead to stability and peace. Vice versa, only a peaceful society can be the foundation of a sustainable, social democracy. This interdependence characterises the work of FES in the fields of civil conflict transformation and in its larger framework of democracy promotion.

In Thailand, FES has been supporting democratic development and social human rights. The project work is implemented alongside a wide range of partners in state and civil society institutions. Long lasting working relationships have resulted in a high level of trust between FES and its partners. Hence trust built with relevant Thai authorities and civil society organisations enabled FES in 2005 to concentrate on the priority area of civil conflict management and to promote knowledge and instruments for conflict resolution and peace building in the Deep South of the country.

Since 2004, the re-emerged conflict in the Deep South of Thailand demanded increased attention and engagement of policy makers and peace builders, security experts, non-governmental organisations, academics, media, human rights activists and many other varied stakeholders. While it is a sad and tragic reality for the affected populations, among them a huge number of women and children, that peace and stability seem to be yet a distant goal, it is reassuring and encouraging to know that many members of civil society and government institutions continue to work towards these aims.

Due to the high sensitivity of conflict related work by outsiders in conflict situations, and the difficulties of how to measure progress in processes which involve trust building and the changing of mindsets in order to create peace oriented action and policies, FES bases its conflict related work on a methodology called Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA). The PCIA method (http://conflict.th-vi.com/conflict_prevention.htm) was adjusted by FES to the specific needs of political foundations, in close cooperation with several other concerned organisations in Germany, and in order to offer systematic, conflict sensitive methods of project planning, monitoring and evaluation. In line with this approach, the project work in the South of Thailand started with a conflict analysis study in 2006 written in the German language as part of the series "Country Conflict Analysis Studies" published by the FES Division for International Cooperation, Department for Development Policy (<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/04749.pdf>). This study issued recommendations for FES and other German foundations on how to support conflict management and peace building in the larger context of democracy promotion.

Based on intensive discussions with its partners and on the working experiences of FES in other countries, the Thailand Office decided to take up four out of eight possible project working areas:

1. Organising multi stakeholder dialogues between civil society and government institutions for the Deep South of Thailand;
2. Strengthening the roles and responsibilities of the Thai media in conflict transformation and increasing their competencies in sensitive reporting and peace building;
3. Supporting conflict transformation and peace initiatives of women and youth and increasing their visibility as important agents for change; and
4. Building capacity on the use of innovative and participatory dialogue methods for relevant institutions and individuals who are active in organising events for conflict transformation.

All activities implemented under these four working areas, such as workshops, trainings, multi stakeholder meetings, information visits and occasional publications, aimed at supporting a dialogue based and participatory approach to conflict transformation. Activities aimed at fostering networking, trust and peace building efforts among relevant state and non-state actors in the South of Thailand and Bangkok, as well as supporting knowledge and communication on conflict related policies, practices, instruments and issues. While trying to include all stakeholders involved in working on the conflict in the South of Thailand in the overall FES project work, important yet often overlooked potential promoters for peace have been identified in the media, women and youth, who were focused on in this project.

To be able to reach out to relevant change agents and decision makers and to respond to their actual needs, FES relied on its extensive network of contacts in many different sectors including academia, non-governmental organisations, ministries, media, trade unions, political parties, and youth, women's and other civic groups. This contact network is a result of many years of physical presence, support and ongoing socio political dialogue organised by FES and its professional and highly committed Thai partners. In the Deep South of Thailand, FES started its work more than 15 years ago and therefore valuable contacts are already in place. Yet at the same time, the civil society in this conflict region is weakened by violence and mostly informally organised. People's relationships are strained by fear and mistrust. Thus special and often time consuming efforts were undertaken to reach out to a wider circle of stakeholders and to new potential peace activists in all participating institutions and sectors, including the security sector.

From early 2008 to the end of 2009, FES implemented a series of activities as part of a special, short term project on the South of Thailand. This publication aims to document and illustrate some of the efforts and initiatives undertaken by FES and its partners in order to strengthen conflict transformation and peace building. What kind of events took place and with which results? Who participated in these events? Which innovative dialogue methods were tried out? What publications were produced and what was their purpose? Did it all matter, did it make a change? FES is aware that an end of the violence in the Deep South of Thailand is still a distant reality, but without meaningful dialogue, the situation would remain unchanged at best, or deteriorate at worst.

It would be sheer impossibility to mention all people and organisations who contributed to this project and its smaller or bigger successes. Be it persons who generously dedicated their time as speakers for one or two events, or long term advisors who consistently provided expertise, access to information or potential participants – FES is truly grateful to all of them for their work, and impressed by their support and commitment. Nevertheless, some partners and collaborating institutions are named here: the Thai Journalists Association, the Thai Broadcast Journalists Association, the National Press Council

of Thailand, the Southern Journalists Association of Thailand, Issara News Centre, Friends of the Victimised Families Group, the Provincial Department of Social Development and Human Security – Pattani, Department of Skills Development – Pattani, the Fasai Center, Friends of Women Foundation, the Raks Thai Foundation, Mahidol University's Research Centre for Peace Building, King Prajadhipok Institute, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre, Prince of Songkla University – Pattani Campus, the Department of Non-Formal Education of Pattani, the Young Muslim Association of Thailand, Local Administration of Kuan Don – Satun, the Foundation for Media Professionals – New Delhi, and FES offices in Manila and New Delhi.

FES would like to once again take the opportunity to express its sincere gratitude to the European Union and the Delegation of the European Commission to Thailand for its generous support and funding, which has enabled this comprehensive two year civil conflict transformation project. FES would also like to convey its appreciation and thanks to its team members and other collaborating individuals who have worked with consistently high professional standards and personal commitment to implement the planned activities.

Of course, the real heroes behind this project were the participating women, men and young people. Their willingness to work towards peace in the South of Thailand is the sole reason for this project. They deserve the deepest admiration and gratitude from their fellow citizens and all concerned people outside of Thailand. It takes courage in difficult times to mobilise energy, to open up to others, and to keep hoping and acting for peace in an atmosphere marked by violence.

FES will continue to work with various partners in Thailand in order to support peace through dialogue while building on the experiences and results described. With its activities for civil conflict transformation, FES aims to reach out to all relevant stakeholders working for peace and democracy. In the end, the chance to become a more peaceful and just global society is certainly more attainable when all are doing their best to contribute to this noble cause.

Bangkok, November 2009

Vesna Rodić, Resident Director
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Thailand Office

Promoting the Need for Conflict Sensitive Media



The FES 2007 conflict analysis report, entitled “Southern Thailand,” identified print, television and radio media as central players in assisting Thai society to move towards a peaceful solution to conflict in the South of Thailand. Under normal circumstances, media coverage is limited by time, space and availability of information. In a conflict situation, these factors become more important, yet are conversely more difficult to realise. The complexity which marks conflict situations demands careful consideration by media practitioners of what is reported and how it is reported. Conflict sensitive journalism requires that the media presents nuanced information which analyses and considers carefully the structural and cultural roots of a particular conflict. Whether news presented to the world is accurate, balanced and impartial can drastically change the public perception of the central actors in any conflict situation. The media possesses immense potential for promoting dialogue and enriching the public’s understanding of the situation of people living with conflict in the South of Thailand. The continued activities of FES aim to assist Thai media to realise this potential.

Together with a range of partners from the media sector, including journalists and stringers, owners of

media outlets, academics, policy makers and think tanks, FES organised a series of events from May 2008 to October 2009 to increase the capacity of the Thai media to carry out conflict sensitive reporting. These activities also aimed to strengthen reporting standards and to create new fora for discussing the roles, responsibilities and possible contributions of the media towards peace in the South of Thailand. Among other topics, trainings and capacity building events focused on building better understanding of Thailand’s political situation and the working conditions of the media in the South of Thailand. Study tours were conducted to promote knowledge exchange and to help Thai media practitioners to develop comparative views based on international experiences and best practices. FES also assisted media partners with the development of Thailand’s first ever guidelines on conflict sensitive reporting. The culmination of the media activities was an International Media Dialogue Conference on the role of media in conflict situations, involving media practitioners from Thailand and all over the world, in an enriching knowledge exchange. Overall, over 150 media representatives, most of them active journalists, participated in the media activities.

Studying Conflict Reporting and Peace Building Abroad

Due to the similarities between the Mindanao conflict in the Southern Philippines and the conflict in Southern Thailand, FES Thailand, in collaboration with FES Philippines, organised a study tour to support the sharing of experiences between journalists working in these two conflict zones. Through the study tour, participants gained first hand knowledge and understanding of how the media in the Philippines has handled reporting on the Mindanao conflict. They engaged in a series of discussions and interviews with various leading journalists, academics, media policy makers and civil society activists in Mindanao and Manila. One of the indirect consequences of this study tour was that it enabled greater cooperation and networking between the Thai and Philippines media. A direct consequence was that participants were later able to apply knowledge and experiences gained from this experience to contribute more effectively to conflict transformation and peace building in the South of Thailand.

To share one example: After the Philippines study tour, several Thai participants used their new knowledge in a specific piece of media. The Southern news agency, the Issara News Centre, ran a three part article discussing the Southern conflicts in Thailand and Mindanao and the crucial role of media as promoters of peace. The English language newspapers The Nation and Bangkok Post also published articles in October 2008 entitled "The



Philippines and Thailand: Parallel Southern Unrest," and "Negotiations, the Key to Ending Insurgency, Say Scholars." The Thai Public Broadcasting Service (TPBS) television station also ran a three part series entitled "Tales from the South Programme on Thai and Mindanao Peace" and "Lessons Learnt from Mindanao for the Thai Border Provinces."

In a second study tour, FES Thailand collaborated with FES India in a continued effort to promote awareness of Thai media of its important role when reporting in conflict zones. The focus of this second tour however was on how media could foster positive public perceptions on cultural diversity. The Indian press is, for the most part, independent and privately owned, boasting tens of thousands of newspapers and magazines published in English, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Bengali and nearly one hundred other languages. The diversity of TV and radio stations is similarly impressive. Participants of this study tour were able to consider first hand how the multi ethnic, multi lingual, multi religious society in India is reflected and shaped through the media. They gained greater insight on practices of professional and sensitive conflict reporting. In addition, they were able to evaluate the Thai Southern conflict better by analysing how the Indian media portrays its pluralistic society in a manner that helps advance societal tolerance and understanding.

FES India identified leading media experts on various conflicts to create fora for participants to discuss topics such as media law, media ethics and minority media. Since in comparison to Thailand, India faces many conflicts rooted in ethnic, cultural



and religious differences, Indian journalists spoke on the importance of recognising one's overlapping identities in order to bring neutrality and non-partisan viewpoints to news reporting. One of the main points stressed by these Indian journalists was the importance of portraying a story honestly, while avoiding becoming overpowered by personal identities. A highlight of this study tour was the panel discussion on positive and negative impacts of conflict reporting. During the high profile Mumbai terror attacks in November 2008, new media platforms including twitter and blog sites allowed for citizenship reporting and amplified television and newsprint coverage. The media hype resulted in the Indian News Broadcasters Association's introduction of self regulatory guidelines for the reporting of sensitive events in order to better uphold fundamental ethics of journalism. The representatives of the Indian media shared with Thai participants their ground rules for reporting in conflict situations – act as a communication bridge between the warring sides; maintain impartiality, balance and sensitivity at all times; humanise the faces of conflict and look for the positive; and lastly, choose words carefully and be wary of focusing only on violence.

The messages and experiences from this India tour resulted in several reports in Thailand. The Bangkok Post and Post Today published articles entitled "In Fighting Insurgency, Justice Is the Best Weapon" and "Journalism Can Put Away the Fire of Conflict". The essential role of media in conflict mitigation was further highlighted in Thai newspapers, for example in the Matichon through the article "Media Conflict Sensitive Reporting from Indian Perspectives," and in a three part series



in the Komchadluek entitled "Media and Conflict Sensitive Reporting." FES Thailand considered the intensive media coverage resulting from both study tours as an important step for Thai print and mass media to contribute to a more informed public awareness on conflict situations, as well as to demonstrate the application of conflict sensitive reporting by Thai media practitioners.

A Thai Handbook with Guidelines on Conflict Sensitive Reporting

During the planning stage of this project, FES and its Thai media partners identified a pressing need for a formal set of Thai language guidelines for conflict sensitive reporting. The hope was that such written guidelines would act as a useful reminder tool for those familiar with the concept of conflict sensitive reporting, as well as be an introduction to conflict sensitive reporting for media practitioners who were as yet unfamiliar with the concept.



In Thailand, the Prince of Songkla University had previously translated Ross Howard's "Conflict Sensitive Reporting: A Handbook." However, this book's circulation within media circles remained limited. To date, very few resources on conflict sensitive reporting had been developed for the Thai public by Thai people themselves. In addition, several efforts had been undertaken by organisations and individuals in past years to discuss the role of media in the on going conflict in the South of Thailand which required further support. One of the aims of the FES project was to build and expand on these past efforts by assisting partners with the development of a handbook on the role and ethics of the media in conflict situations. As was to be seen later more clearly, it was crucial for the success of these guidelines that Thai media practitioners retained one hundred percent ownership of the guidelines. These individuals were able to direct the handbook's development and finalisation with merely logistical support from FES.

The guidelines were developed through several meetings. The first meeting allowed key actors in the Thai media sector to brainstorm on the guideline's content and plan the necessary steps for its development. An editorial team was established and tasks delegated. Other journalists were consulted for their contributions and feedback on the first draft of the guidelines. A second meeting enabled editing members to finalise the headings and contents of the guidelines. In the next round, members of civil society were invited to comment on the draft and generate more ideas, whilst working groups were assigned to fine tune the chapters. The level of commitment to the guidelines by Thai media was apparent throughout the process, as certain individuals began operating independently of FES and organising ad hoc meetings to assist in the development of the handbook.

As a result of these processes, several secondary goals of the Southern Thailand project were fulfilled. By discussing the contents of these reporting guidelines, participants were engaged in dialogues with various stakeholders on the general impact of media reporting; the media's influence over public perception in conflict situations; and the need to promote a non-biased, nuanced understanding of the conflict in the South of Thailand. Formal and informal fora for journalists and stringers were



established in order to share experiences on conflict sensitive reporting. The active participation of senior professional journalists and reputed academics in drafting the guidelines was encouraging. Overall, the cooperation and networking among media professionals and academics were enhanced through this joint effort.

The guidelines were officially launched at a media event organised by the Thai Journalists Association, the Issara News Centre and FES in June 2009. Since its release, 2,000 copies have been distributed to relevant organisations and individuals. The demand for the guidelines exceeded the numbers printed and an additional 2,000 copies were thus ordered. Media partners commented that the guidelines were a milestone and precedent for the Thai media on the topic of conflict sensitive reporting. Forty media practitioners from the South of Thailand, and sixty from Bangkok, joined together to make the guidelines possible.

Several newspapers reported on the publication of the guidelines. One of the most notable reports was an article placed prominently in the Sunday Bangkok Post, published in July, 2009. The article discussed the role of the media in conflicts and quoted several journalists actively involved in media activities organised by FES and its partners.



Summary of Contents for the Guidelines on Conflict Sensitive Reporting (translated from Thai)

Chapter 1: Definitions and Types of Conflict

Chapter 2: Examining Recent Conflict Situations in Thailand

- 2.1 How Journalists Have Been Affected by Events of Political Conflict Between 2006 to 2009
- 2.2 The Risks, Dangers and Potential Losses Faced by Journalists Working in Conflicts
- 2.3 How Factors Such as Law, Ethics and Reporting Standards Influence Journalists in Conflict Situations

Chapter 3: Guidelines for Conflict Sensitive Reportage

- 3.1 Basic Principles Underlying "Peace" Journalism and "War" Journalism
- 3.2 Lessons Learnt on News Reporting on Political Conflict Situations
- 3.3 Overview on the Field Experiences of Journalists from the South of Thailand
- 3.4 Conflict Stemming from Competition over Limited Natural Resources
- 3.5 Conflict Between Marginalised Populations and the State or Society

Chapter 4: Lessons Learnt from Other Countries

Chapter 5: Final Summary and Recommendations



Conflict Reporting: Sensitisation Trainings

The support of FES media activities was designed in several steps in order to enable media practitioners to internalise the values of conflict sensitive reporting. The study tours to the Philippines and India increased exposure and provided differing models on the positive roles of media in conflict situations. The guidelines provided a source of reference on conflict sensitive reporting. A further step was taken, however, to use practical trainings as a means to assist in the operationalising and application of the guidelines. Participants selected to attend these trainings came from the same media networks which had helped with and participated in the study tours and the guidelines production. The three trainings were designed to each stand alone and involve of a mix of media participants from the South of Thailand, as well as Bangkok.

Two reputed media experts, Carol Arguillas, the editor-in-chief of The Mindanao News, and Fiona Lloyd, an internationally recognised media trainer in reporting for peace, were chosen to conduct the trainings. Carol Arguillas obtained notable field experience in conflict sensitive reporting and was among the initiative group of journalists in the Philippines who incorporated aspects of “peace journalism” before the term was coined and made popular by Ross Howard. Carol conducted the first media training. Fiona Lloyd, from South Africa, conducted the second and third trainings. As an expert, she has worked with hundreds of media practitioners in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and in 1999 she co-founded a training



programme entitled “Reporting for Peace.” Though the trainers’ approaches differed, the contents of the media trainings were similar in that they covered the basics of conflict sensitive reporting such as placing a story in context; diversifying sources; broadening the scope of the story; and choosing words carefully.

The first training stressed the responsibility of the media to be investigative and preventive, rather than inflammatory. Due to the limited space allowed in television, radio and print media, a reporter’s ability to gain the audience’s attention through unique delivery styles and content was highlighted. Participants in this training discussed how the Thai media had contributed to a negative image of the situation in the South of Thailand, and considered what should be done to reverse this situation. Participants analysed the impact of words and how certain terms had power to incite negative emotions. Participants were also familiarised with the “Three C’s” of reporting: Character (sources), Context (background and analysis) and Consequence (how will the report resolve or exacerbate the situation). Finally, participants used the Tak Bai court ruling in June 2008 as a story from which to practice the use of non-inflammatory language, thus allowing them to share their perspectives whilst broadening the scope of their stories.

The second and third media trainings were conducted with a highly participatory approach. For example, in order to explain the impact of framing a story, the trainer asked a few participants to act out a situation in which two men were fighting in a market, while simultaneously two youth were discussing solutions for peace. Other participants were provided cut out



rectangles and asked to capture a scene within their “frames.” The conclusion was that the broadest and most inclusive picture required that participants be very creative, for example, by standing on a chair. If they did not think “out of the box,” the easiest “frame” of the story would have been of the men’s angry fists. The role play thus illustrated that journalists should be innovative in their positioning to challenge stereotypes and polarisation in their reporting. The trainings also emphasised interview techniques and the need for journalists to be constantly self aware. Trainings closed with participants brainstorming fresh story ideas on the conflict in the South of Thailand by utilising the skills they had learned during the sessions.



Participant Feedback on Conflict Sensitive Media Trainings and Study Tours

“I will be more aware of the reports I write on the subjects I work on. And although the media already realises its influence on public opinion, the training helped to remind us again of our role to inform the public objectively and constructively. For instance, we should try to report on the lives of people with a focus on cultural aspects, and help the public to understand the problems of the people of South Thailand better than they currently do.”

“[I’ve learned that] News reporting is more than presenting the conflict as the number of casualties. We can present aspects of culture and society too.”

“[Having participated in events organised by FES,] I know more about the different ways to present sensitive conflict situations in newsprint and other forms of media. I have learned about the role of media in India, where many different factors must be taken into account, for example, race, religion, class, gender, economic status, etc. and how every report must be done with care.”

“In both cases [concerning the conflicts in the south of Philippines and Thailand], misunderstandings result from insufficient understanding and respect for cultural diversity, as well as the history of people from differing backgrounds. Cultural sensitivity is very important to ensure that people with different cultures and religions will be able to live together peacefully.”

“The press in Mindanao and in Thailand has the same function, which is to report on conflicts. What should be kept in mind however is that reporting must avoid creating conflicts and balance information, so that the situation will not be worsened.”



International Media Dialogue on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Media in Conflicts

The international media dialogue conference was the centre piece of the media project. During the conference, cooperation and networking among media practitioners was promoted, whilst dialogue on their roles and responsibilities in the de-escalation of conflict intensively discussed. The event provided an opportunity for Thai participants to gain a solid overview of experiences from other countries and to share their own learning processes resulting from the study tours and trainings with others. Journalists, editors, politicians, government officials, academics, think tanks and representatives of civil society from Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Israel, Germany and South Africa were invited to join in the two day conference.

The main objective of this event was to generate purposeful dialogue between individuals, within small groups and the group in the plenary on the topic of conflict sensitive reporting. FES designed the conference with participatory approaches and interactive discussion forums which are not usually applied in traditional conferences in order to maximise interaction between the national and international participants. The international resource persons shared their respective country contexts and working environments in presentations and were able to communicate experiences and lessons learnt in different sessions. Topics discussed included how the media has developed strategies and tools of peace reporting in countries such as Nepal, Indonesia, India and Palestine. Participants analysed in their dialogues the media's potential role as a positive or negative influence on public perception, and discussed in depth the major difficulties faced by professional and non-profit media. Besides presenting a wealth of knowledge, experiences and practical tools on conflict sensitive reporting, this international media dialogue resulted in new and stronger media to media networks within Thailand, as well as between Thailand and abroad.



Participant Feedback on the International Media Dialogue

"I attended conflict reporting forum recently, and it [the methods of dialogue] was truly useful to me. . . I admire the organisers who supported the participants in every manner in order to meet the concept of "dialogue," helping us to hear all voices. It was my first time to attend an FES activity on the Southern conflict, and I found it interesting to hear from local alternative media voices – citizen journalist people. Apart from the guidance on how to cover conflict issues, we need to discuss how to promote and amplify moderate voices and [show] the nonviolence involved in conflicts. Such voices should be heard louder than the bombs."

"[I learned that] Media needs to play its role in creating more dialogue in order to deliver peace to the world. Every country has conflict and journalists go through similar experiences all over."

"There was a lot of interaction in the sessions and a good variety of country experiences. It was also a good networking opportunity for civic organizations, media practitioners, academics and others. The less formal style of dialogue kept the meeting interesting and productive. Many issues facing us in the Southern Thailand conflict share commonalities around the region, e.g. the Mindanao problem in the Philippines. It is possible to have good dialogue process between media across borders."

"The media dialogue in Bangkok was quite an interesting experience for me. For the last five years, I have not been an active media person but an active media trainer. I have been organising workshops on peace journalism/conflict sensitive journalism as well as on understanding and reporting on religions. What I have received [from the Bangkok conference in] is not so much in terms of content as much as in terms of techniques. This is the first time I have seen first hand techniques like Speed Dating and Timeline. I will now be able to use them. I am familiar with Open Space and World Cafe techniques but the experience during the Dialogue [Conference] taught me the importance of harvesting, collating and presenting the ideas."



Increasing Visibility and Participation of Women and Youth in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

Experience from many conflicts around the world suggests women and youth possess immense capabilities for contributing to peaceful solutions in conflict areas, both as change agents and peace keepers. As its second component, the FES project on Southern Thailand therefore aimed at enhancing the capacity of women and youth as actors in initiating reconciliation and peace building within their communities. Unfortunately, women and youth often have limited opportunities to participate in national or local decision making processes regarding conflict transformation. They also lack appropriate fora to discuss issues which arise as a direct consequence of the ongoing conflict on their lives – common concerns such as the difficulties of being a single parent, or the importance of education and gainful employment for young adults. Their voices are too frequently overlooked, and they have limited opportunities to develop their own contributions towards peace. Through a range of activities such as women's study tours, youth camps, a photo project and several large group events, where other crucial activists and leaders were involved as well, FES and its partners from civil society and governmental organisations aimed to bridge these gaps. Between May 2008 and October 2009, 44 women from the South of Thailand were able to participate in three study tours, while each of six youth events attracted between 19 and 58 young women and men. In addition, five large group events with 582 participants took place, out of which 327 were women. Women who had been affected by violence, who were peace activists from the South, and who were from self help women's groups or various partner networks participated in



the study tours, trainings and workshops organised by FES. Considering the largely traditional and patriarchal gender roles in the South of Thailand, and the enormous difficulties and stress caused by the Southern conflict, it is remarkable that so many women mastered the strength and courage to engage in the activities offered to them.

Empowering Women Through Study Tours

The social, political and legal empowerment process for women affected by conflict can be driven forward through much needed consultation, information sharing and capacity building. FES organised study tours to Bangkok and Chiang Mai, two important administrative centres of Thailand, to help sensitise Thai citizens outside the conflict zone to the situation of women in the border provinces. The voices of women from the South of Thailand were made audible to various institutions and individuals, raising awareness about the impact of the Southern conflict on women's lives, and sharing opinions on possible problem solutions on a range of issues from the women's own perspectives. In addition, for the participating women leaders from the South of Thailand, the study tours provided a chance to strengthen their local networks with each other, paving the way for closer collaboration in the future.



The objective of the first study tour to Bangkok was to broaden the perspectives of women from the South of Thailand by exposing them to contrasting role models, as well as a different social and cultural setting. The study programme was designed in a way to support a more thorough understanding of the cultural diversity and pluralism of Thailand, and it provided the women leaders and social activists from the three Southern most border provinces a chance to meet and engage in knowledge exchange with varying sectors of Thai society. As an example, participants met with Huwaideeyah Pitsuwan Useng, who shared her experiences as a former female elected Member of Parliament (Lower House) from Nakhon Si Thammarat. The women expressed that they felt more empowered after seeing how a Muslim woman was able to hold an important position in Thai society. The participants also visited the Thai Labour Museum to learn about the women's struggle in labour unions for their social and human rights. The group was most impressed, however, by the visit to the self organised, community based narcotics fighting unit in Klong Toey, where community members, women, men and youth had been mobilised and worked to solve local societal problems under the leadership of 75 year old Amina bin Dilae. This community based organisation had won the Vienna Civil Society Award in 2001 for effective grassroots initiatives. In another part of the programme, women had the opportunity to engage in dialogues on the importance of multi cultural diversity, ethnicity and



identity with several resource persons. They visited the Amadiyah Mosque community in Ayutthaya and met with the women's group there, exchanging views on the Southern conflict and peace building. The women from the South felt encouraged hearing about the Amadiyah community's experiences of living peacefully as a Muslim minority in a predominantly Buddhist region.

In the second study tour to the greater Bangkok area, FES networked women from the Deep South with women leaders in the metropolis, many of them originating from other provinces of Thailand. The objectives of this study tour were to increase the understanding of the groups as to each other's situations, share experiences and gather new ideas and approaches for problem solving. The visiting group met with the officials of the Office of Women Affairs and Family Development in the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to share their views on the policy needs and recommendations for the South of Thailand. At the TV station Thai Public Broadcasting Service (TPBS) the women gave a live broadcasted interview where they spoke frankly about the conflict in the South of Thailand and the specific difficulties they faced as women. Participants also spoke with the Muslim Women Vocational Group on how to identify and organise appropriate small scale businesses. There, the women learned about women's rights to independence and various ways they could contribute to financially supporting their families. A visit of the women's group of the ethnic Mon community of migrants from Myanmar/Burma based on Koh Kred Island provided an opportunity

to exchange views on the importance of preserving ethnic identities within the framework of tolerance and respect for diversity.

Participant Feedback on the Women's Study Tours

"My favourite aspect of the study tour was seeing and learning about different cultures that I had never known existed. I have learned how other people live peacefully in society and how cultural diversity can be found everywhere on the streets of Bangkok."

"I learned about various leadership skills. In every place we visited, I saw an example of it."

"I gained a lot of experience and liked everything very much. What I experienced at the Amadiyah Mosque touched me to the extent that I had tears in my eyes. I think everybody here [participating in the study tour] will bring back and use what they have learned in their work."

"I've learned how to be together with people from different backgrounds and learned about the problems they have faced. It has made me realise that everyone has their own problems, and we all deal with them. Last but not least, I learnt that women have great power."

"I've learned about the different ways to strengthen a community. I hope to apply this knowledge to my own community as well. I believe we need more collaboration between organisations that have great diversity so that we can maximise the knowledge we possess and apply it to our communities."

In the third study tour to Chiang Mai, the participants visited the Youth and Women Development Coordination Centre in Ban Donluang, Lampun Province, where they were able to gain insight on how the women there organised themselves to produce local textile products. The group was also given the opportunity to engage in a dialogue on peace building with the Lanna Women's Network and the Northern Women



Ethnic Network, comprised of nine ethnic minorities. Topics of discussions included women's role in the community, women and their role as peace promoters and possible solutions to the Southern Thailand conflict. Guests and hosts alike agreed that a sustainable solution to any conflict required the active participation of women. They also met with Muslims who originated ethnically from Bangladesh, Pakistan and China, which was a new experience for most of the group members who did not realise there could be such diversity of the Muslim people. Participants touched on the challenges women have to face, such as cultural and traditional practices that hinder them from fully participating in their communities and in society

at large. The programme also included a field visit to two ethnic Karen villages of Ban Nongtao and Huay Ekan, where the peaceful lifestyle embraced by a village of 120 families could be witnessed, despite the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. At Ban Nongtao, the group had the chance to talk with an esteemed Karen leader, a former member of the National Social and Economic Advisory Council, who stressed the need to resolve conflict through peaceful means.

Feeling empowered through such experiences, women participating in the study tours actively engaged in dialogue with all the resource persons who worked towards peace in the South of Thailand or who wanted to know more about their situation and their lives. Their voices were captured in the mass media. In April 2009, a live report on Chiang Mai Community Radio was broadcast, explaining the objectives of the third study tour, and highlighting the women participant's learning experiences. The "Di Salatan" programme of the Thai Public Broadcasting Service (TPBS) also covered the visit in May 2009. All three study tours resulted in valuable knowledge exchange and confidence building for and among the Southern Thai women leaders, who then later shared their new insights with peers in their communities.



Actions Inspired by the Women's Study Tours

"I learned a great deal about the cultural diversity in many areas that the tour covered. It really touched me, how there are so many places in Thailand with unique cultures and characteristics, similar to the Deep South, yet everyone co-exists peacefully. People have their own languages, they are not ethnically Thai, they have unique traditions... and they do not have a conflict like in the Deep South. I have brought back the stories I've heard and shared them with friends and colleagues. People had not been able to imagine this could be. The stories surprised everyone. They could not believe that such communities existed yet were living harmoniously together. I wish we could visually record a tour like this so that my community can really see it – some people just cannot picture what the world outside of the South could be like, this world I describe."

"I would like to change the attitude in my community towards other religions. I plan to work towards helping people to live together peacefully, despite the religious diversity."

"I will talk to people in my community about how people from different cultures and nationality live together, and how this is possible."

"I was impressed by how each tribe maintained its identity. This inspired me to discover more about my own culture and to conserve and cherish these traits. When I returned from the women's study tour organised by FES, I began to raise awareness in my community, particularly among the youth. I encouraged them to see the value of our culture and to protect it from disappearing in this modern era. For when you lose culture, it can never come back. In July, I also co-organised the Maolid Festival, which is an old Muslim ceremony filled with folk theatre, local food and traditions. The event was very well received by the entire community. Everyone was enthusiastic to revive our traditions."

Building Capacity Through Youth Camps

FES is convinced that young people should not be overlooked as potential ambassadors for peace. It is common knowledge that youth hold the future of their societies in their hands, and that in conflict situations, it is youth who can substantially contribute to lay the foundations for peaceful problem solving. Cultural and local practices, the distrust of the older generation about the capacity of young women and men to make informed decisions, and the lack of confidence and knowledge among the youth themselves, however, are all obstacles to their full social and political participation. In collaboration with local partner organisations and academic institutions, FES therefore initiated a series of youth camps with the objective to encourage and support young people to become more involved in and be a part of community decision making processes – from the private to the public spaces, and from local to global levels. Participants for the camps were identified with assistance from several diverse partners such as the Prince of Songkla University (Pattani Campus); other Southern traditional educational institutes such as pondoks and rajabhats; women, student and religious groups; state departments and civil society organisations; and key long standing resource persons for the South.



These youth peace building and active citizenship camps highlighted conflict resolution, leadership, skills training, community involvement and gender awareness. In addition, the three to five day events provided young adults between the ages of 17 to 25 a platform for self expression, confidence building and networking. These camps also brought together youth groups from diverse social and religious backgrounds through mutual learning and behavioural change sessions. This was an important objective of the youth camps given the reality of the social segregation between Malaya Muslims and Thai Buddhists in the border provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, where the former makes up over ninety percent of the local population. FES had previously supported several youth camps for Southern Thai youth and found them effective in building trust and counteracting societal divisions. The interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds helped participants to develop an understanding and acceptance of ethnic, cultural and religious difference. Each camp provided the basis for the one that followed, whilst integrating theoretical as well as practical knowledge on how to engage in social innovation and collaboration amongst peers.

Youth Camp I: Understanding Conflict and Fostering Civic Engagement

One of the aims of the first youth camp was to develop the young participants' understanding of the problems and structural causes to the conflict in the South of Thailand. Through presentations by reputed guest speakers, the youth gained knowledge about the history, geography and natural resources of their region. This helped to kick off a process of dismantling and analysing unconscious aggressions, prejudices or miscommunication they may have experienced in the past. Building on this, youth discussed and broadened their understanding of the vital role of peace building and conflict resolution processes for their respective communities. A positive transformation process regarding values, thoughts, attitudes and behaviour has been initiated. Throughout the camp, young women and men were encouraged to envisage their roles as promoters for peace.

Furthermore, this camp acted as a forum to discuss how conflict impacts on the lives of youth and the larger society, as well as the steps needed to transform their society. The practical knowledge provided in the first camp included measures of improved interpersonal communication, critical thinking, team building and cooperation, leadership, conflict management and problem solving skills. The sustained interactive and supportive learning environment of the camp fostered young people's understanding on how cultural diversity supported a culture of peace, rather than acting as a barrier against it.



FES and its partners recognise young people as valued resources with unique insights and perspectives on community problems. Active citizenship as a concept is providing the opportunity to draw on youth's experiences and to look for shared patterns of experience and knowledge, so that new information and ideas can be explored and integrated. The young participants therefore were acquainted with the concept of civic engagement: it was discussed how civil engagement is a powerful tool which offers young people the relationships, networks, challenges, and opportunities to personally develop in a positive manner. Civic engagement, the resource persons stressed, also challenges youth to contribute to their immediate communities and society, while nurturing the development of social relationships.

This first peace building camp assisted FES and its local partners in strengthening the relationship with youth and youth organisations in the South of Thailand, as well as in understanding better how to support young people in the region based on their real needs and concerns.

Youth Camp II: Enabling Youth to Envisage and Understand Their Roles as Active Citizens

The second camp launched the theme of "Youth Active Citizenship (YAC)" and provided a rich learning environment for the participants, enabling them to understand more clearly their

roles and responsibilities as citizens. The YAC camp supported the development of skills which would help youth to participate more effectively in politics and society. Analytical skills were emphasised throughout the camp programme and introduced in creative ways. For example, participants identified their relationships with the social and physical environments by modelling an ideal, imaginary community in clay. Discussions focused on understanding how young people saw their community and the people in their lives. The participants created problem tree analyses for media critique, drugs awareness, gender issues, domestic violence and protecting the environment/natural resources. They also learned how to write project proposals and create action plans. These new skills were immediately integrated into the design of relevant community development projects.

Youth Camp III: Active Citizenship in Practice – New Social Development and Civic Engagement Initiatives

As a result of the first two camps, participants expressed keen interest to serve their communities and to become agents of change, while tackling their communities' problems. In order to support the young leaders with the necessary knowledge and confidence to attract potential donors and successfully launch the community projects to be developed in the last camp, this third camp introduced further skills with the following aims:

- ❑ *Facilitation* – to build group work skills, to promote trust within a group, to learn the



value of listening to varied viewpoints, and to enhance presentation skills;

- ❑ *Problem analysis and strategy formulation* – to brainstorm and examine the existing problems in youth groups or communities, to formulate strategic objectives, and to select realistic activities for a project;
- ❑ *Project development and monitoring* – to learn how to identify indicators to measure success and to set up a method to follow up the implementation of a project; and
- ❑ *Budget and project funding* – to properly plan a budget and identify funding sources for a project.

The young women and men who participated in the camps applied their new skills on the spot by creating and presenting group community development projects to a panel of representatives from governmental and private organisations. An intensive round of knowledge exchange between the youth and these adults followed. As a result, participant's projects were fine tuned and presented again, this time to potential donors, which included the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC), the Provincial Department of Social Development and Human Security of Pattani and Narathiwat, Tambon Administration Organisation (TAO), of Sukirin, the Pattani Provincial Office for Non-Formal Education, the Department of Skills Development of Pattani, and the Stop Drink Network. The proposals on the "Promotion of Wellbeing for Tadika Kids," "Hijab Decoration Skills Development for Girl," and "Promotion of

Domestic Violence Reduction” were supported by the Asia Think Centre, the Skills Development Centre of Pattani and the Stop Drink Network, respectively. The other five proposals remained in the process of consideration. Throughout the proceedings, the young women and men were able to establish contacts with important funding institutions and were empowered to take control of their projects’ future, rather than to depend on further activities of FES in order to fund their projects.



Youth Initiated Community Development Projects

Addressing Domestic Violence and How to Reduce It, by youth from the non-formal education initiative of Nathawi, Songkla

Educational Support for Children of Illegal Migrants, by the Youth Council of Pattani

Encouragement of Skills Development in Creativity and Imagination, by youth from the Young Muslim Association of Thailand (YMAT)

Hijab Decoration Skills Development for Girls, by youth from the non-formal education initiatives of Mai Kean, Pattani

Promotion of Children’s Wellbeing in Tadika, by youth from the Fasai Centre of Yala

Social Development and Ethics Development Camp, by youth from the Asia Resource Foundation (ARF) and College of Islamic Studies

Youth Against Drugs, by youth from the non-formal education initiatives of Amphoe Muang and Puyut, Pattani

Youth Against Drugs, by students of the Prince of Songkla University



Youth Camp IV: Enhancing Commitment

The next camp provided an opportunity for youth to utilise their leadership and organisational skills. The objective was to challenge the participants to take on more responsibility and to evaluate and deepen their understanding of their roles as active citizens within their society as well as the nation. The young adults, with logistical assistance from FES and its partners, designed the camp's curriculum themselves. They chose to emphasise on the importance of tolerance and of celebration of multiculturalism in a peaceful society by organising home stays with families of different religious and cultural and social backgrounds. The meaning of "active citizenship" and its foundation in civic engagement and responsibility – an integral theoretical pillar stressed throughout the youth camps – was revisited.

This camp enabled participants to practice various life skills such as decision making, communication and team work. They were encouraged to make plans, take action, and reflect on lessons learnt, and to share their stories on how difficult situations can be impacted as a consequence of their work. The emphasis on civic engagement helped to facilitate the empowerment of Southern Thai youth and to support their efforts to make a difference in their communities. With the experience of independently designing and organising a camp, the youth were poised to replicate the camps for their communities in order to enable further outreach.

Excerpts from Letters of Youth Camp Participants

"I'm so glad to have participated in the Youth Active Citizenship [YAC] camps. I have never experienced this kind of camp before. It's so different and unique. We learnt a lot from you, but also from ourselves, from our own experiences. I feel also sad for other youth who didn't have this chance to join the YAC camp. So I will transfer as much as possible from what I have learnt and experienced during our YAC camp to other youth at the Youth Council of Pattani."

"[We] really put in practice what we have learnt by organising the [fourth] Youth Active Citizenship Camp in Satun. We were the organisers, and we worked together on the programme for the camp. Through the good or bad, we did it together and we learnt it together. Thank you also, because through the camp, I now have more friends."

"The last camp at Satun was so great. People there were very nice and friendly with us. A camp like this should be held again and again... We have never been in a camp where we spent time with local people, living with them, sharing their daily life. We learnt so much about our differences and how to live with people who are different from us."

"My participation in the camp taught me how to develop a project from its concept to its organisation, and especially how to combine the needs of people we want to work with and our aims... I have never joined such a camp where there is a variety of activities like this before. This camp taught me to live with other people. It helps me to take my vision further."



Youth Camp V: Gender Awareness and Sensitisation

FES recognised the need to round off the experience of the youth from the camps by building awareness on gender, since in the predominantly Muslim society of the South of Thailand, gender roles are defined more strictly and marked by strong and ingrained inequalities. Young women and men, highly active in their communities, previously had no opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of gender roles and their meaning for the needs of democratic societies which promote equal participation of and equal access to resources by both women and men. In many communities in the Southern Thai provinces, men are more involved than females in decision making. Women might hesitate to speak out or assert themselves, because they are expected by society to defer to their male counterparts. Such views within a community usually make it difficult for women and girls to be actively involved in community work. This final camp thus aimed at helping the youth to learn about gender. It was hoped that this would enable them to challenge gender stereotypes in their daily lives.

A series of role play games enabled the participants to realise to which extent the behaviour of women and men is stereotyped by society. During the reversal of gender roles, the boys reported a “loss of strength” and a need to act “more polite, sweet and sensitive,” while the girls stated that they felt “stronger” and “could lead the group.” In the discussions, female and male youth expressed their insights on how gender roles were influenced by unspoken societal cues and expectations. Towards the end of the camp, participants demonstrated their understanding that every child is born with expectations from the people around them. Sex was a biological difference, whilst gender was a social construct controlled by institutions such as the media, society and religion. In addition, gender was transformed by changes within generations, context and cultures. An important first step for integration of gender in the community and peace building project work of young people was been undertaken.

How Youth Want to Challenge Gender Stereotypes

“I used to always only listen to others [because I am a girl] but now I feel ready to also express my own opinions. I believe that women can also be leaders. I am challenging my own view about girls.”

“I will talk about gender with my family, friends and community members too, and work to help girls in gaining more confidence.”

“I [as a male] feel that I have more rights to show and express my feminine side. I will try to convince my friends in my residence to not always go out for dinner, but instead to cook sometimes together, because cooking is o.k. for boys too.”

“I will not call someone bad names because they do not behave according to what I think are the norms.”

“In my youth group, I will not decide the tasks of group members based on gender, but instead ask for their skills and decide on their capacities rather than gender.”

“I want to be a policewoman. Before, I thought it was not appropriate. Now I know that it’s o.k.”

“I have a sister who enjoys playing games that are considered ‘boys’ games.’ I know now that this is o.k., and it is her right to choose what kind of games she likes.”

“I am a programme officer and in charge of selecting participants for my youth camps [independent of the ones organised by the FES]. I will make my selection representative of both genders in future camps.”

Curriculum on Youth Active Citizenship (YAC)

The YAC camps raised the interest of the Social Development and Human Security Centre of Pattani and the Pattani Provincial Office for Non-Formal Education, both state actors who were keen on integrating guidelines on YAC into their own activities, with the assistance of FES. One suggestion was to compile the youth camp experiences and contents into a written document.

The entire YAC process was designed to achieve positive changes for young women and men on two levels. The first emphasised on personal impact – in other words, participants involved in YAC gained practical skills, enhanced their self confidence, and developed stronger values in the understanding and tolerance of people from different sociocultural backgrounds. The second level stressed community

impact. In the youth, their families and their communities, the capacities acquired in the YAC camps would set in motion positive changes in attitudes and behaviours, and improve relations between youth, adults and their institutions. The curriculum on YAC, which was produced as a result of the camps, integrated both levels of impact and provided a structured framework for building skills, commitment and active leadership of young women and men on community projects initiated and led by themselves. The curriculum was one of the most significant outputs of the youth activities, with a strong chance that in the future it will be formally assimilated into non-formal and state education in Pattani.

Summary of Contents for the Youth Active Citizenship Curriculum (translated from Thai)

Chapter 1: Overview on the Youth Active Citizenship (YAC) Curriculum

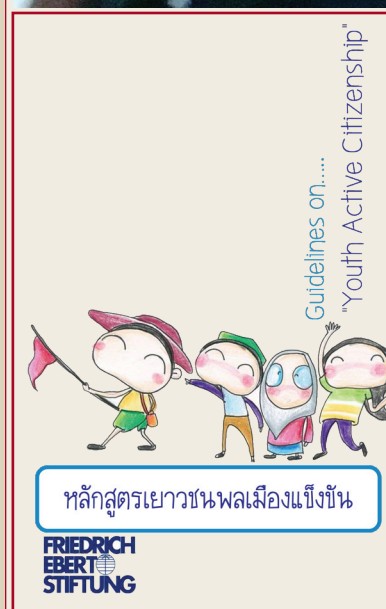
- 1.1 YAC Approach, Its Definitions and Objectives
- 1.2 Intended Audiences of the YAC Curriculum
- 1.3 Application and Usage of the YAC Curriculum

Chapter 2: The Six Steps in the Youth Active Citizenship Process

- 2.1 Building Teamwork
- 2.2 Sharing Ideas
- 2.3 Choosing Topics
- 2.4 Further Explorations
- 2.5 Planning and Implementing Action
- 2.6 Evaluation and Improvement

Chapter 3: How to Use the Youth Active Citizenship Guidelines

- 3.1 Facilitation of YAC Workshops
- 3.2 Building Understanding of the YAC Approach
- 3.3 YAC Programme Design
- 3.4 Examples of YAC Short Term Programmes
 - 3.41 One Day Programme
 - 3.42 Three Day Programme
 - 3.43 Five Day Programme
- 3.5: Examples of YAC Long Term Programmes
 - 3.51 Phase One
 - 3.52 Phase Two
 - 3.53 Phase Three
 - 3.54 Phase Four
 - 3.56 Phase Five



Creating Space for the Voices of Women, Youth and Their Allies

In addition to women's study tours and youth camps, FES created new platforms of dialogue for women and youth through workshops which did not merely promote women talking to women or youth talking to youth, but rather provided them equal opportunities to speak and be heard in the wider society. These workshops involved participants from government sectors, civil servants, civil society, academics, think tanks, media and non-governmental organisations. These large group events enabled and supported women and youth to engage more fully in the peace building process in the South of Thailand and to increase mutual understanding between the various stakeholder groups. In addition, FES aimed to build on the knowledge participants had gained in the previous trainings on dialogue and collaborative action. Hence these workshops offered opportunities for participants to gain yet further insight on how the innovative methods they had learnt could be applied in different settings and contexts.

Women in the South: Overcoming Difficulties During Difficult Times

A one day forum, jointly designed and organised by FES and the University of the Prince of Songkla, Pattani Campus, brought together 85 women from all walks of life to discuss how the continuing violence in Southern Thailand affected their lives, how they could cope with the current situation and what possible solutions they could work together



on. In general, women have rarely been included in discussions on Southern Thailand policy related topics on such a large scale, and to target this need, FES therefore chose two large group methods – World Café and Open Space – known for their ability to achieve a high level of interactive participation amongst forum participants. Through these methods, women who attended the forum were also able to build on each other's ideas, thereby creating richer dialogue than they would have had in one on one interviews or in focus group discussions. These women were provided a rare opportunity to talk to a truly empathetic audience about their everyday experiences of life in Southern Thailand. In one session, women identified and led their own discussions on what they felt most passionate about, which included issues such as maintaining family stability, raising children, creating rich home learning environments, the role of women in peace and politics and how to be involved more in their local communities. These discussions resulted in a wealth of knowledge exchanged between participants, which in turn led to greater support and cooperation among the women. The themes which emerged from the event also provided FES a solid overview of the most relevant concerns of the women affected directly or indirectly by the violence in the South of Thailand.

The Role of Teachers and Students in Non-Formal Education for Peace Building

The second and third large group events supported by FES were co-sponsored by the Pattani Provincial Office of Non-Formal Education and opened fora for 159 teachers and 133 students respectively, to explore their understanding of how the conflict

affected their peer groups. Teachers and affiliated persons from the educational sector are often targets of the violence in Southern Thailand which makes this stakeholder group an important one to engage and support. In separate events, the teachers met on one day, and the students met on the following day. The teachers, nearly two thirds of them female, discussed the challenges and opportunities faced by educators in Pattani's non-formal education system, the steps needed in order to overcome these challenges, and how to improve the quality and effectiveness of their work. The students discussed similar topics including the challenges and opportunities faced by young women and men from the non-formal education sector in Pattani, society's positive expectations of these young people, and finally how they could meet these expectations. Both groups were able to voice their concerns, hopes and possible solutions to the conflict situation. Ideas were generated on steps towards improving non-formal education overall in Pattani. The World Café and Open Space approaches were utilised. At the workshops' conclusion, the Director of the Pattani Provincial Office of Non-Formal Education requested support from FES to introduce the dialogue methods used to the provinces of Yala and Narathiwat, in order to help the Department replicate the productive discussions they had witnessed.

Dialogue on Moving Peace and Development Forward

As a consequence of the regular participation and active involvement of government officials in most of the events of the Southern project, the Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC)



invited FES to facilitate an internal workshop with the aim of sharing experiences among SBPAC operating officers. SBPAC, which was re-established in 2006, uses a non-military approach to address the issues in the South and works closely with the various provincial organisations and communities as well as the police and military institutions. In the workshop, the methods Timeline, Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space and World Café were used in order to foster dialogue among the participants on how SBPAC could move forward in its work on peace and development. The various dialogue and facilitation techniques were highly appreciated by the 80 women and men participants seconded to the agency by their respective home ministries and departments.

Inter Religious and Multi Stakeholder Dialogue

In the next workshop, Mahidol University's Research Centre for Peace Building (MURP), FES and the SBPAC, organised and designed a three day, multi stakeholder meeting where 125 women and men from the police, military, government, non-governmental, academic and religious sectors were invited to engage in dialogue on the possibilities for conflict transformation in the South of Thailand. The dialogue and collaborative methods of discussion were tested for effectiveness in an atmosphere in which the group would be comprised of people holding drastically dissimilar views, values and loyalties.

Following the theme of "How do we bring work for

peace and development in the South forward?" the World Café, Appreciative Inquiry and Open Space methods were used to promote interactive and intensive dialogues. Over the duration of the event, invisible boundaries were crossed as participants broadened their views and relied less on interacting solely with their peer groups. For some, this was their first honest conversation with someone from "the other side," be it a Buddhist or Muslim, a civil society activist or a military figure. For others, the experience provided a strong example of how non-hierarchical, inclusive dialogue could be achieved. Participants clearly showed increased capacity, desire and responsibility for promoting peaceful means to solve the conflict through the approaches applied in the workshop.

Photo Project: Through the Eyes of Affected Women and Youth in the South

With the objective of providing an authentic "window" into the lives of affected women and youth in Southern Thailand, the Friends of the Victimised Families Group and FES developed a photo project entitled "Through Our Eyes." It was hoped that the photos, presented in the form of a photo book and travelling exhibition, could help combat the stereotypes and misconceptions about Thai Muslims living in the South of Thailand. Often images depicted by the Thai media would focus on the violence, the victims or the destroyed infrastructure. The Friends of the Victimised Families Group and FES endeavoured to sensitise the Thai public and interested international

audiences living in Thailand to the human aspect of the Southern Thai violence and to broaden people's understanding on the situation in the three Southern border provinces.

The approach for the photo documentation relied on volunteer photographers identified and coordinated through the Friends of the Victimised Families Group. The 34 self selected women and youth told stories through photos and captions, chosen and written by themselves. FES provided them with simple digital cameras and basic instructional training on usage, and then invited them to capture and to share moments of their daily lives. The resulting personal narratives covered a broad range of focus, for example, going to the market, planting rice, playing with grandchildren, or praying. Some photographers chose to showcase their families whilst others stressed the traditional Southern Thai way of life. There were no pictures of violence, though one photo showed a child drawing tanks and guns, which only demonstrated how the conflict has long term impacts beyond what is typically portrayed. The biographies of the photographers and captions of picture were presented bilingually in Thai and English. The book and exhibition was to be distributed and shown through a network of partners from the media, academia, civil society and governmental institutions, and was meant to reach an audience of several thousand viewers. The photos would be shown in a travelling exhibition with universities, public and cultural centres throughout Thailand.



Enhancing the Capacity for Dialogue and Collaborative Action

Active participation and dialogue among citizens from all walks of life in any society is essential for a country to achieve a strong and sustainable democracy. Yet though the number of conferences and workshops in Thailand described as “dialogues” has increased in the past years, the communication taking place in these workshops has more often than not resulted in mere debates, where people defend positions rather than being open to different points of view. However, genuine dialogue should aim instead at an exchange of ideas which enriches people’s understanding and promotes tolerance towards differing views and perceptions. The aims of dialogue are even more crucial in conflict situations.

But as much as civil conflict transformation efforts by government and non-state actors through meaningful communication are needed in order to work towards peace in the South of Thailand, many previous events have lacked characteristics of true dialogue such as inclusiveness, joint ownership and opportunities for mutual learning, among others. One reason for this is certainly a lack of a critical mass of decision makers and activists acquainted with participatory tools for dialogue.

As a long standing and trusted partner of many stakeholders who work in or around the Southern Thai conflict, and based on its project experiences from other conflict zones around the globe, FES however strongly realises that conflict transformation in the South of Thailand can only be taken forward by Thai society itself. Yet FES was ready to assume a consulting, supporting, facilitating and even mediating role if there was such demand to arise. To build the capacity



of partners and other stakeholders on dialogue methods and instruments for promoting peace was the most common demand which was voiced in various FES activities before the Southern Thai project was initiated. A series of capacity building training events on dialogue methods were therefore implemented, which involved participation from over 50 women and men. These individuals were identified as potential multipliers who would be able to share their new capacities through their professional work and through personal networks.

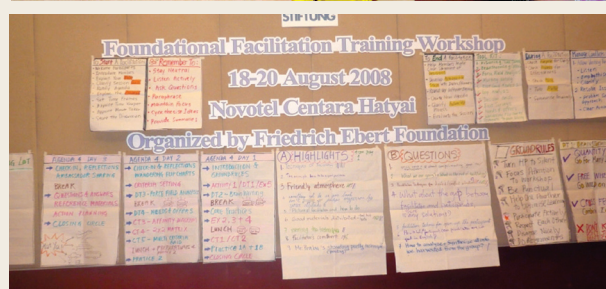
These trainings attracted a wide range of highly engaged and committed civil society and state representatives from different social backgrounds, professional sectors, gender and age. Participants included academics, government officials, women and youth leaders, human rights activists, teachers and media practitioners, from the Muslim as well as Buddhist communities. The lead trainer and programme advisor carefully chose innovative facilitation approaches that stepped beyond the traditional top down approach and hierarchical styles of communication. The presented methods were chosen in such a way that they would have a good chance of being practically applied in all the trainees’ future work. As an added benefit, the level of participation inherent in these trained methods allowed for optimal interaction, networking and exchange of ideas which helped to dismantle conscious or unconscious prejudices and stereotypes held by each stakeholder group.



The training events achieved two important goals. The first was to enable participants to apply new methods of dialogue and collaborative action. The second was to create open, inclusive and equality oriented dialogue fora on a range of conflictive issues for participants, who otherwise would never have had the chance to engage with each other, and then enable them to share perspectives, learn from one another and collaborate to transform the Southern Thai conflict.

Innovative and Participatory Methods for Dialogue: A Selection

Good facilitation is a key approach and tool for promoting dialogue and participation. In broad terms, facilitation is the art of managing the diverse personalities and corresponding ideas present in a group, with the aim to generate carefully considered answers and conclusions for issues participants are facing. At the core of facilitation lies the belief that people must be involved in creating their own solutions in order to assume ownership and responsibility for these solutions. Honest communication, a suspension of judgment and listening skills are emphasised. Good facilitation is achieved by good facilitators who support and help all voices in a room to be heard. Under the guidance of a facilitator, participants in a meeting are better able to focus on common issues, build mutual understanding and come to a consensus. FES organised four training events which introduced the trainees to facilitation methods known and used worldwide with proven results.



World Café

The World Café method focuses the experience, intelligence and energy of the participants into parallel, intimate group discussions. As the name suggests, a meeting space is set up to resemble a café atmosphere, as one of the method's principles lies in the assumption that the most meaningful conversations occur when people are at their most relaxed, and therefore also at their most authentic. The World Café approach allows groups of people to participate in evolving rounds of dialogue with four to five people, while remaining to be part of the larger group dialogue. Intimate conversations link and build on each other as people move between tables, "cross-pollinate" ideas and discover insights into questions or issues which matter most to their communities. Diversity of opinions is not only invited but honoured. People speak on a sequence of conversation prompts and note their ideas on the flipchart paper "tablecloth." A host remains at each table to summarise main points of and enable guests to build upon previously expressed ideas. The final conversations are presented to the whole group.

Open Space

Open Space was first developed in 1985 by Harrison Owen in the USA and is today one of the best known facilitation methods in the world, primarily due to its versatility. The method promotes a self organising system which requires minimal advanced planning and accommodates from fifteen to two thousand people in one to three day workshops. Its structure eliminates hierarchy and promotes equal contribution from all participants. Open Space is a multi stakeholder process and one of the central tools for change management used by people working in public, private or non-profit sectors. Essentially, Open Space has been described as a meeting with no predetermined agenda, relying instead on the commitment brought to the meeting by each attendee in order to spearhead and lead sessions on topics they feel truly passionate about. The agenda emerges from the group itself and participants have a chance to showcase their creativity and leadership. As each Open Space event is driven by the passion of its attendees, every meeting remains unique.



Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a method for discovering what is good and working well, and builds on those positive aspects to develop a shared future between diverse group members. The approach is based on a series of interview questions which uncover individuals' moments of inspiration or "positive core," through person-to-person conversations and storytelling. Appreciative Inquiry emphasises what each person values and desires, and then expands the dialogue to include larger and larger groups of people which collectively shape a shared future they want to work towards, together, through conversations. Appreciative Inquiry is an ideal planning and management tool because it catalyses a cascade of conversations about what has been most successful, most meaningful and most alive in an organisation or community. The method usually runs through the Four-D phases: Discovery, Dream, Design and Deliver. Leading United Nations agencies and international NGOs have used this method worldwide with great success for social and organisational change.



Future Search

Future Search is an interactive, large group planning process for sixty to eighty participants which emphasizes "bringing the whole system together" to develop potential solutions for complex issues. The training course spans sixteen hours and divides the group's dialogue into more manageable and meaningful sections of the past, present and future. On the first day, participants create a common historical and contextual overview of the issue of interest, to ensure that everyone shares one foundational understanding. Subsequently, they draw from the past to examine how it has impacted the present situation and develop a group "mind map" of relevant trends affecting their work and lives. Stakeholders then move into groups separated by interests and sectors to add detail to the trend analysis. They define goals for their groups, and the facilitator further assists the plenary group to find common ground that everyone can work towards. The last step, the "future search," involves creating action plans which integrate each stakeholder group's interests from the common ground. The result is a rich dialogue on the possible courses of action which is inclusive of all stakeholders.



Dynamic Facilitation

Dynamic Facilitation is a tool specifically designed by its founders to enable creative and collaborative dialogue on difficult or “impossible to solve” issues. It is meant to encourage transformational leadership and to help develop the participants’ understanding and capabilities to change the system they work in. Dynamic Facilitation rests on the principle of “choice creating,” a way of using conflict and strong emotions to compel people to create new solutions to a problem. The method differs from most other facilitation approaches since it categorises all input from the larger group as Data, Concerns, Problem Statements or Solutions. The way the facilitator rephrases and redirects the ideas or feelings into these four categories provides more objective clarity to the discussions. In Dynamic Facilitation, the facilitator protects and fully supports every participant’s interests in order to encourage maximum sharing and consensus building.



Trainings on Methods for Dialogue: Developing Capacity

With the support of FES partners, in particular from media, women and youth activities, key persons were selected and trained in the facilitation training series held in Bangkok and Hat Yai. Leading experts in their respective fields were identified to conduct the trainings.

Prabhu Naidu and Janice Lua, co-founders of the Facilitator Network Singapore (FNS), led the Foundational Facilitation training. Almost all trainees had very limited previous experience in facilitation and were introduced for the first time to basic facilitation skills, such as setting ground rules, managing time, writing on flip charts and asking clarification questions. The trainers also introduced common facilitation tools such as dot-mocracy, affinity diagrams and force field analyses. They analysed the differences between divergent and convergent processes and the appropriate context in which to use each. The most important topics covered, however, included how to develop collaborative relationships, plan appropriate group processes, create and sustain a participatory environment and guide groups to appropriate outcomes.

Dynamic Facilitation and Future Search, the focus of the fourth and third trainings respectively,

were also methods which had proved useful in conflict situations. Tom Schwarz, a trainer with the Australian Institute of Cultural Affairs and expert on the facilitation approach “Technology of Participation,” was identified to lead the training on Future Search. Jim and Jean Rough, co-founders of Dynamic Facilitation, provided coaching and feedback for participants on the methods they had developed in over twenty years of experience. Both trainings were hands on and combined experiential learning with theoretical knowledge, whilst building on participants’ skills in dialogue approaches and their confidence in applying them to this Thai context. Participants also came away with a better understanding of the crisis in the South of Thailand through the discussions generated by the methods’ systematic way of uncovering differing perspectives. Several organisations requested further collaboration and support in organising similar workshops.

Jost Wagner and Chaiwat Therapantu, facilitation experts with notable experience in Asia and based in Thailand, led the training on the World Café, Open Space and Appreciative Inquiry techniques. These facilitation approaches are well known for promoting dialogue and collaborative action. Following this training, many partners of FES have applied one or more of these methods in their working contexts. The World Café in particular has been one of the most frequently used. Several women and men trained in World Café have

adapted it to the Southern Thai culture and created fora on important issues relating to the conflict.

What distinguished these trainings from many other trainings was that diverse stakeholders who are actively involved in peace promotion and development in the Deep South were brought together in a safe and conducive environment for dialogue over several days. The training programmes provided for the immediate practice of facilitation skills and created space for participants to discuss and tackle issues on the conflict through the framework of the respective facilitation methods utilised. On several occasions, participants were able to develop joint project ideas or action plans as a result of the dialogue generated between different stakeholder groups. The result of the trainings was a clear understanding of several methods by the participants needed in order for them to more effectively organise and promote constructive dialogue and collaborative action. And as with all other activities designed by FES and its partners throughout this project, cooperation and networking among activists for conflict transformation and peace in the South of Thailand were further enhanced.

Handbook on Dialogue and Collaborative Action

A handbook on dialogue and collaborative action in Thai language was published in the final step of the FES project in the South of Thailand as a reference tool for participants with the aim to promote and share methods used during this project to other stakeholders who could not be trained during the project's duration. Compiled and written by Jost Wagner, the Thailand country representative of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the handbook was divided into three parts. The first part introduced the characteristics of genuine dialogue; the second part described the basics of facilitation and how to create an environment conducive to dialogue; and the final and main part provided detailed explanations for several specific facilitation methods. It included facilitation methods introduced in the FES trainings as well as other methods known for their effectiveness, such as the Fishbowl, Caravan and Talk Show.

This handbook aimed to reach out to all stakeholders working towards stability and peace in the South of Thailand, but also to any person or institution with an interest in contributing to peaceful conflict transformation in politics or society. As the severe political crisis of the past years has demonstrated, there is of course a continuing and urgent need for more dialogue in Thailand. Approximately 2,000 copies of the handbook were distributed to practitioners from women and youth groups, Thai civil society networks, academics, government and security institutions as well as religious leaders working with the conflict in the South of Thailand. FES expects the handbook to contribute to changes regarding how organisations and individuals conduct their meetings, in order to achieve more effective and meaningful dialogue results.



Participant Feedback on Facilitation Activities

"I have used the facilitation methods learnt in informal gatherings, village meetings and fora involving government officials. With the villagers, who are often shy and hesitant to speak out, I try to give them the freedom and space to express their concerns [through writing or speaking]. The methods help them to have fun. Issues that have surfaced were how women are affected by the conflict, poverty and the need for therapy for people with trauma. The most interesting thing I've learned in the trainings is how to gain control of myself when I am a facilitator. I must keep my opinions to myself. I have also developed new networks from attending the trainings." – Young woman leader from the South

"Participants [whom we've worked with from the South] especially like the World Café method. They are fatigued by Bangkok academics coming down to tell them what to do. They prefer to learn for themselves. At first, people feel confused because the method is so different from what they are used to, but soon they are refusing to end their conversations and continue to talk through the real coffee breaks!" – Think tank for peace in the south

"[The facilitation approaches] offer us new ideas on how to get people to open their minds. I also like the technique of visualising or writing ideas down in facilitation because the act of writing helps people to conclude and saves time and energy from having to repeat themselves. I see facilitation as a way of bringing people with opposite perspectives, e.g. a boss and his employees, to a common reality and understanding." – Trainer for methods on non-violent interventions in the South

"I like [Open Space] because I could present and think critically about everything [in the Open Space topics]. Normally, I don't listen to other people that much, but during that moment, I listened to all the participants. I found that everyone has great ideas and I was able to accept other people's reasoning more easily." – Youth leader

"We've used Appreciative Inquiry in a three day workshop with youth to build their self esteem and confidence. Listening from your heart, listening with love and kindness, listening with sympathy and not judgment – we applied and taught these Appreciative Inquiry principles in the workshop. We've used Open Space in two training events for officers and delinquents from a detention centre to build trust between the groups and provide them opportunity to listen and learn about topics related to the conflict in the South. We've used World Café with youth in rural areas with the theme 'How to Support Youth to Build the Youth Movement and Empowerment,' in order to encourage more youth participation. We've organised six events [utilising a mix of the facilitation methods] in Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala for inter religious dialogue with Muslim and Buddhist leaders with the aim of creating greater understanding, networking and cooperation between the groups." – Think tank for peace in the south

