

Terminal Evaluation

Asia

I. Outline of the Project

- Country: Thailand
- Project title: Developing Vocational Opportunities and Creative Activities for People with Disabilities and Commercializing Hill-tribe Crafts in Thailand
- Issue/Sector: Support of People with disabilities and vulnerable, rural/community development
- Cooperation scheme: JICA Partnership Program
- Division in charge: : Social Security Team, Human Development Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
- Total cost :82,859,700 Japanese Yen
Cost per participant: N/A
Share of Japan's Contribution: 100%
- Period of Cooperation
(R/D): 10 October 2002 – 9 October 2005
- Partner Country's Implementing Organization: Foundation for Children with Disabilities (FCD)
- Supporting Organization in Japan: NPO SAORI-HIROBA
- Other related agencies: Kawila Anukul School for the Mentally Retarded, Maya Kodami Foundation, Saori Creative Center, Parents group: Healing Family Foundation (HFF), etc.

1 Background of the Project

Saori is a technique of modern hand weaving which created by Misao Jo in Osaka, Japan. The only things to be taught are basic techniques. Saori weaving has neither rules nor restrictions on colors, weaving patterns, and materials: they are all up to the person who does the weaving. Saori weaving is especially famous among Japanese housewives as a hand weaving that encourages free expressions. Since there is no right or wrong way in Saori weaving, people with disabilities began to learn it. Saori weaving helps people with disabilities become self-reliant and participate in society.

SAORI-HIROBA was established in 1982 to promote socialization of people with disabilities and their families through Saori weaving. It spread in Japan as well as abroad. In Thailand, many activities have been implemented since SAORI-HIROBA introduced Saori weaving machines to the Foundation for Children with Disabilities (FCD) in 1989. A Saori school was built in 1998 and Japanese teachers there have trained staff members from medical organizations or institutions for people with disabilities. FCD has introduced Saori weaving in education of handicapped children and maintained cooperation with SAORI-HIROBA. Given such background, SAORI-HIROBA proposed a JICA partnership program named the Foundation for Handicapped Children as the counterpart organization, and it was approved in 2000. The Project consists of two concepts. One is the development of vocational opportunities and creative activities for people with disabilities. The other component is the commercialization of hill-tribe crafts such as a hand-spun thread. The hand-spun thread made by hill-tribe peoples is used for Saori hand weaving by people with disabilities at Saori Creative Center (SCC). The Project aims at 1) income generation of hill-tribe peoples and 2) promotion of self-reliance and socialization of people with disabilities.

2. Project Overview

(1) Overall Goal

- 1) People with disabilities achieve economic independence and public understanding for people with disability deepens.
- 2) The quality of life of the hill-tribe peoples is enhanced.

(2) Project Purpose

- 1) People with disabilities at the SCC lead an independence living, and social understanding toward them is enhanced.
- 2) The living standards of targeted hill-tribe peoples are enhanced.

(3) Outputs

- 1) Developed and managed the hand weaving program and ensured that it function well.
- 2) Developed and managed the Community Based Rehabilitation (hereinafter referred to as 'CBR'), and ensured that it function well.
- 3) Activities are designed to support the development of the products of hill-tribe peoples.
- 4) Managed marketing organization to be organized separately, and ensured that it function well.
- 5) Developed a program to promote public awareness of people with disabilities.

(4) Inputs (as of the terminal evaluation)

Japanese side:

Long-term experts: 2 (Project Coordinator, Assistant of Project Coordinator/Accountant)

Short-term experts: 2 (Project Manager, Training of Trainers/Product Development)

Local staff members: 6 (1 local coordinator, 4 operational assistants and 1 driver)

Trainees accepted:

8 (2 people x 4 times. Visiting the headquarters of SAORI-HIROBA in Osaka, a one village one product project in Oita, and etc.)

Equipment

(1 car, 50 handlooms, 2 PCs, and others. Including cost of transportation):

9,275,000 Yen Local cost (general operation, construction, local training and activities, exchange technology, implementation planning): 20,263,000 Yen

Others (travel, employment, indirect charge): 6,532,000 Yen

Total: 82,860,000 Yen

Thai side:

About 600 Volunteers

II. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team

JICA Thailand Office, IC Net Asia Co., Ltd.

Period of Evaluation

8/8/2005- 2/9/2005

Type of Evaluation

Terminal

III. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Confirmation of Project Performance

(1) Inputs

Most inputs are invested as planned except for some delay in making agreement between JICA and the implementing NGO, and in transferring local cost from JICA to implementing NGO.

(2) Outputs

1) Approximately 12 people with disabilities are learning Saori hand weaving at SCC. One has graduated from SCC. Now she is working independently in Chiang Rai and earns an income by sending her products to SCC. There is a parents group of people

with disabilities at SCC. They had guidance from the Project and established a foundation called Healing Family Foundation (HFF) to take over the management of SCC. In addition, SCC has 3 trained staff members who can provide hand weaving training on their own. A board member of the Foundation of Children with Disabilities is supposed to join HFF. Thus the hand-weaving program has been developed and managed well at SCC.

2) Many exhibitions, events and seminars contributed to raising awareness toward people with disabilities and promoting the concept of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR). In addition, TV programs often introduced the Project. Understanding toward people with disabilities and CBR would thus be enhanced. The Project regards these activities for awareness raising as a CBR program. A CBR program was developed and worked to some extent.

3) In the targeted hill-tribe villages, the production of cotton and hand-spun thread increased with the assistance of the Project. Activities to support the product development of hill-tribe peoples are established.

4) Exhibitions and events in Thailand and Japan cultivated regular customers who purchase the products made by people with disabilities. Methods of marketing and quality control are established. The project is teaching the Healing Family Foundation to acquire the function of marketing.

Regarding a hand-spun thread and plant dyeing by the hill-tribe peoples, a local NGO where the Project Manager serves as the representative is going to continue the assistance. While the marketing of the products made by people with disabilities and hill-tribe peoples is done systematically, people with disabilities and hill-tribe peoples cannot market their products on their own.

5) Exhibitions, events and seminars were planned and implemented in order to develop a public understanding toward people with disabilities. The target of Output 5 was thus achieved.

(3) Project Objectives

The Project was evaluated to have achieved the Project Purpose for the following reasons.

1) The activities at SCC proved that people with disabilities can live independently and participate in society. Professors in the Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences at Chiangmai University realized it. Awareness toward people with disabilities is spreading through many exhibitions, events, and seminars by the Project, and demonstrations of mini projects in other areas.

2) The products and sales of hand-spun thread and natural dyeing by hill-tribe peoples are increasing. The Project contributes to the income generation of the hill-tribe peoples.

(4) Remarks on the Implementation Process

1) Almost every activity has been implemented as scheduled. However, a curriculum of CBR wasn't developed because it was not necessary for the CBR program conducted by this Project.

2) It took 2 years from the adoption of the proposal to the implementation of the Project because the implementing organization had to apply for foreign NGO registration at the Department of Employment of the Ministry of Labor. NGO registration requires many application forms and approvals from the authorities such as the Office of the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Agency and the Armed Force Security Center Supreme Command Headquarters. In the case of SAORI-HIROBA, the registration process took 1 year.

3) Although the Project initially positioned FCD as a counterpart of the Project, in the end HFF became a de facto counterpart of the Project. To secure sustainability of the Project, it is critical to continue SCC activities. However, FCD, located in Bangkok, has no capacity to take over SCC, and HFF ended up taking over SCC activities. Incidentally, a FCD board member is also a member of HFF. She is scheduled to move from Bangkok to Chiang Mai and teach Saori weaving.

4) The Project targeted the Japanese market. The textile market in Thailand is very competitive and there is no social class in Thailand that values Saori weaving, and prospects for selling its products were limited. On the other hand, a substantial number of people in Japan value and are expected to purchase Saori weaving products. The fact that products are made by people with disabilities in Thailand would add to their uniqueness and facilitate sales of the products as well.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

The Constitution of 1997 guarantees basic human rights, fairness and participation in the development of Thailand. The National Development Plan for the Quality of Life of People with Disabilities 2002-2006 is established by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in accordance with the Constitution. Thus the plan stresses that Thai society should be aware of the capacities of people with disabilities and their potential for self-development. The plan also points out the need for

support for vocational training and employment opportunities. Meanwhile, JICA has recently been promoting human security as an important development subject. Therefore, the Project is consistent with the policies of both Japan and Thailand.

While the National Development Plan for People with Disabilities has already been established, the support system for people with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities, is not sufficient in Thailand. People with disabilities still face discrimination. Accordingly, they need support for improving livelihoods and opportunities for working and socializing that the Project aims to provide.

With regard to the hill-tribe peoples, the royal family is implementing a project to support them. The Project is consistent with such policy. Since some of the hill-tribe peoples still have limited means of earning an income and their standards of living are quite low. They had a substantial need for cultivating a new source of income through the Project, and they need support for improving livelihoods.

(2) Effectiveness

As shown in the Project Performance section, the activities at SCC proved that people with disabilities can live independently and participate in society. Intellectuals approved the effectiveness of the approach. Meanwhile, awareness raising by mini projects, exhibitions, events and seminars has enhanced an understanding toward people with disabilities. The products and sales of hand-spun thread and natural dyeing by hill-tribe peoples are increasing. The Project accomplished a fair degree of the outputs and project objectives and stands a good chance of achieving the overall goal in the future. As these outputs were not achieved by the outside factors, the Project was highly effective in achieving the project objectives.

(3) Efficiency

Each of the Japanese experts and national staff members had a different responsibility and was necessary and suitable for the Project implementation. Regarding the provided facilities, each of them is utilized efficiently although transport of handlooms caused some delay. Total expenses were also used appropriately. Total inputs were reasonable in comparison to the achieved outputs of the Project.

(4) Impact

The Project contributed to income generation of people with disabilities at SCC and targeted hill-tribe peoples. The Project also developed an understanding of people with disabilities mainly among intellectuals by holding many exhibitions, events and seminars. Meanwhile, the activities of SCC that may be a model case will be taken over by HFF. As more participants in Saori activities are expected, an understanding of people with disabilities would gradually increase.

Regarding the assistance for the targeted hill-tribe peoples, the Project contributed to the income generation of the targeted villages, and enabled a local NGO to continue the activities. Thus, improvement in the quality of life in the targeted villages is highly likely.

Moreover, the Maya Kotami Foundation, the implementing organization of the mini project, has launched Saori hand weaving as an occupational therapy for tsunami victims in the destroyed areas. The Project sent 10 handlooms, and contributed to supporting the victims and promoting Saori hand weaving.

It is thus fair to say that the Project had a large impact on its direct stakeholders such as people with disabilities, their families, hill-tribe peoples and tsunami victims. In addition, the Project helped enhance a public understanding toward people with disabilities.

(5) Sustainability

As stated above, FCD was initially the counterpart organization, but eventually HFF became the de facto counterpart. The activities at SCC will be taken over by HFF. As the past activities succeeded in drumming up the support from Japan, there might be some support for marketing and funding. However, whether HFF can maintain the present management, product development and market cultivation remains to be seen. To strengthen sustainability to the fullest extent, members of the HFF should first do their best to keep the activities going while developing their own skills. Secondly, some continuous support for management of HFF and marketing of the products might be needed.

A local NGO will continue to support the hill-tribe peoples. However, it will take time before the hill-tribe peoples can maintain the project activities on their own due to a lack of knowledge and experience in economic activities.

3-3 Factors prompting effect and impact

(1) Factors on Planning

- The style of Saori weaving that encourages free expressions is quite unique, attractive and easy to promote to the public. These strengths facilitate sales of products of people with disabilities and enhance an understanding toward people with disabilities.
- The project concept combining the self-reliance of people with disabilities and the income generation for hill-tribe peoples also helped add value to the products in the market.
- The Project has considered the use of the media since the planning stage. By using the media such as a local newspaper and a TV program, the Project effectively conducted market cultivation and awareness raising for people with disabilities.

(2) Factors on the Implementation Process

- SCC has successfully demonstrated that the trainees can become more independent and socialize through Saori hand weaving. This achievement has been widely publicized and contributed to raising a social awareness in an effective manner.
- The market has widely expanded because the Project targeted the Japanese market.
- By conducting the activities involving academic experts and celebrities, a social understanding toward people with disabilities was effectively enhanced.

3-4 Factors inhibiting effect and impact

(1) Factors on Planning

- A part of planned CBR activities were not implemented because the Project started before its concrete contents were formulated.
- At the terminal evaluation, PDM had to be revised in accordance with the reality because PDM was prepared without extensive discussion at the beginning of the Project. The initial PDM included in its Overall Goal and Project Purpose the following: people with disabilities and hill-tribe peoples to be able to support themselves economically; and promoting social understanding of these people. However, there is no plan to promote understanding of hill-tribe peoples, and no activity has been undertaken in this regard. Accordingly, at the time of the evaluation, two components (assistance to people with disabilities and assistance to hill-tribe peoples) were separately described in both the Overall Goal and the Project Purpose. With regard to the hill-tribe peoples, the only goal was to be improvement of livelihoods.

(2) Factors on the Implementation Process

- The implementing organization did not fully grasp how to utilize PDM and evaluate a project. The organization had a difficulty setting up the indicators at the terminal evaluation. During the implementation of the Project, the stakeholders considered adding qualitative indicators to PDM to suit the Project that emphasized inner growth of people with disabilities. However, the implementing organizations insisted that the existing qualitative indicators would suffice, and no revision of indicators was undertaken. At the time of the project evaluation, no new indicators for PDM were set. Using existing indicators, qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation was done to the fullest possible extent.
- When the Project was adopted, both JICA and the implementing organization had little knowledge on the foreign NGO registration process in Thailand. It took a year to complete the registration process.
- JICA did not have a well-defined policy on handling the cost of NGO registration and the judgment of whether JICA would disburse the cost of NGO registration varied depending on person in charge, causing the implementing organization to distrust the accounting methods of JICA.
- At the beginning of the Project, the implementing organization was unaccustomed to the accounting methods of JICA and had trouble in paperwork.

3-5 Conclusion

The project demonstrated that Saori hand weaving at SCC can enhance the self-reliance and social participation of people with disabilities, and proved the effectiveness of the project approach. Holding a large number of exhibitions, events and seminars developed an understanding toward the self-reliance and social participation of people with disabilities. Regarding the assistance to hill-tribe peoples, the Project provided a new resource of income to the targeted hill-tribe villages and contributed to the income generation there. Although some concerns on the sustainability of the Project still remain, the approach of the

Project was correct to assist the socially vulnerable such as people with disabilities and hill-tribe people. Considering the amount of inputs, the Project had positive impacts to a credible extent.

3-6 Recommendations

(1) Necessity of a support organization in Japan

The activities at SCC will be passed to HFF. HFF has a weak financial base and little knowledge on the Japanese market that is important for Saori products. Therefore, HFF needs to have a support organization in Japan that provides financial support and technical advice on marketing there.

(2) Recruitment of volunteers for product development

HFF seems to have few human resources who are skilled in the product development for selling in Japan. HFF thus needs to recruit Thai and foreign volunteers with such skills.

(3) Utilization of the Internet

The website can help maintain regular communication with the Project stakeholders, attract more support for HFF and promote sales of products. The Project needs to update the website more regularly and make better use of the Internet.

(4) Investigation of other means for self-reliance

While Saori hand weaving is a unique and effective method for self-reliance for people with disabilities, the Project needs to prepare alternative work options so that people with disabilities can select a suitable one for them. With careful regard to the aptitudes of people with disabilities, HFF and its supporters should consider the introduction of appropriate technology. The ideas for appropriate technology may include drawing, and making handicrafts or sweets in a Japanese style.

3-7 Lessons Learned

(1) Disclosure of the foreign NGO registration procedures in Thailand

A foreign NGO is legally required to register with the Ministry of Labor in order to work in Thailand. When JICA conducts a Partnership Program with a Japanese NGO in Thailand, it should inform in advance the applicant NGO of the necessity of NGO registration. Meanwhile, some basic regulations and guidelines for NGO registration will be released on the Internet.

(2) Understanding of the JICA project management

The implementing organization SAORI-HIROBA had no prior experience in implementing a JICA project. Due to the lack of knowledge on accounting work and report writing, it spent too much time and energy on paperwork. From now on, preliminary guidance on management of a JICA project should be provided to an implementing organization. In addition, it is also essential that the implementing organization receive a clear explanation on the JICA evaluation method based on a logical framework and acknowledge it before the Project.

(3) Utilization of PDM

The original PDM was established without sufficient understanding of implementing NGO. That made the Project difficult to be managed and evaluated within the scope of PDM. It is essential that the implementing organization receive a clear explanation on the JICA evaluation method based on a logical framework and acknowledges it before the start of the Project. In addition, it would be necessary to discuss the pros and cons of managing NGO activities with PDM and evaluation methods.

(4) Consideration of NGO finance

Most NGOs have little financial capacity. Any delay of payment directly affects their operations. The implementing organization of the Project said that even a one-month delay in payment caused a serious cash-flow problem. Fixed expenditure amounts such as personnel costs should be disbursed in advance or every month.