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USAID CHUMCHON HARAPAN

USAID Chumchon Harapan, meaning “Community of Hope,” empowers youth leaders to become community connectors across Thailand’s Deep South. This program aims to strengthen social cohesion and transfer ownership of community harmony to local institutions, leading to lasting peace in the communities.

The ethnically unique Deep South region of Thailand has been embroiled in conflict for generations. The resulting tension between Muslim and Buddhist community members in the region has inhibited progress towards lasting peace. USAID Chumchon Harapan brings together different religious community members, including Muslims and Buddhists, to support youth-led local development projects, contributing to meaningful social cohesion in Thailand’s Deep South.

THE POWER OF YOUTH TO CONNECT COMMUNITIES

The program expands on the successful people-to-people engagement model that Chumchon Harapan implementing partner, Kenan Foundation Asia, has championed in the region for the past nine years (2012-2021) through USAID assistance. USAID Chumchon Harapan focuses on using youth interests as a community connector. Youth-led community activities serve as a mechanism to bring together members of different religious communities who have a mutual interest in supporting youth development. The process fosters dialogue and promotes a recognition of shared community values. This constructive, positive engagement leads to increased trust and empathy, which over time creates a

foundation on which members of different groups can openly address grievances through meaningful discourse.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

The program trains youth, including Muslims and Buddhists together, on leadership and community citizenship skills. The youth then develop community projects, with support from the local leaders, and engage their peers at school to contribute to activities that address shared community challenges. After training, the youth become part of USAID Chumchon Harapan's youth leadership network that is embedded into schools and universities in the Deep South. Youth in this network receive ongoing training and serve as representatives in community meetings and peacebuilding initiatives to bring community members together, promote youth participation in community cohesion, and participate in government peacebuilding meetings and other forums.

JOURNEY TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

USAID Chumchon Harapan collaborates with and builds the capacity of local universities and schools, which supports the youth alumni network. The program is helping the universities mobilize resources and embed the USAID Chumchon Harapan model into their university undergraduate course subjects. This will enable the universities to become stewards to sustain program activities beyond USAID assistance. By transferring ownership to local institutions, the USAID Chumchon Harapan youth alumni network will grow into a sustainable mechanism for building trust and solving shared development challenges.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

USAID Chumchon Harapan is expected to benefit more than 1,450 youth and 600 local leaders from schools and communities across Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat provinces. The youth leaders' community activities will benefit an additional 6,400 community members. Furthermore, through the USAID Chumchon Harapan youth alumni network, youth's voices will be elevated through representation by youth alumni members in community and government meetings. This will enable youth to contribute more substantively to the community peace process, providing a platform for their views to be heard, while strengthening their potential to support future peacebuilding initiatives. This network, bolstered by support from the activity's university partners, will have the capacity, resources, and experience to transform participants into a self-reliant force for cooperation and community development in Thailand's Deep South.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please visit www.usaid.gov/asia-regional or info-rdma@usaid.gov