

# Justice and Peace

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## Community Study on “Mainstream Development Policies and Impacts on Human Development Based on the Church Teachings”.

CCJP has contacted directors of diocesan social action centers (DISACs) to select communities for a study. In this regard, the community of Ban Kokesa-ard in Kusumal District, Sakonnakhon Province, the community of Ban Khunpae in Chomthong District, Chiangmai Province, the community of Ban Tha Pakchee in Wangnamyen District, Srakaew Province, and the community of Ban Thung Maprao in Kraburi District, Ranong Province, have been selected. The staff members of CCJP have visited these selected field areas to gather basic information on physical characteristics, history, economic, social, political, religious and cultural realities. They have also gathered information on problems of the communities from the past up to the present, the entry of DISACs, state agencies and other non-government organizations, as well as impacts of different development projects. After collecting all the necessary information, the team of CCJP staffs have analysed impacts of public development policies introduced into villages and communities, which affected relationship within these communities, which would be concluded as lessons for social development promoted by the Church in local communities and DISACs. These lessons will also be used as direction and practical guidelines for development and improvement of the work of DISACs.



1-2 : Meeting with DISAC directors and advisors.

3 : Suthee Prasartset, advisor to the community study project.

4 : Bishop Banchong Chaiyara, chairperson of the Episcopal Office for Social Works.

## Brainstorming on the Draft Constitution of 2007 and Articles Related to Rights and Religious Freedom.

This brainstorming session was held on May 14, 2007, at the 10th floor of the Bishops' Conference Building, Chongnonsi, Bangkok. This session was participated by Bishop Panya Kritcharoen, secretary general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand, Bishop Banchong Chaiyara, chairperson of the Episcopal Office for Social Works, priests, religious sisters and people responsible for various Episcopal commissions of the Catholic

Bishops' Conference of Thailand as well as Catholic lay professionals, altogether 24 people. In this session, the participants have shared their ideas on the proposal to indicate Buddhism as the national religion in the new constitution, and on how to express Christian stand on this issue. In addition, there was also a

recommendation for the Church members to play a role in doing analytical study of issues in the draft constitution. Since the issue of religion is very sensitive to political situation at the moment, the participants did not want to present their recommendations to the public.



*Photo : Bishops, priests and lay people shared their ideas on the draft constitution.*

## Public Discussion on the Draft Constitution of 2007.

Since Thailand was recently in the process of drafting a new constitution of 2007, which the constitution drafting commission has completed the first draft with comments from the public, and it was in the process of public hearing, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) considered it necessary to organize a forum for Christians who were

interested in political issues to express their ideas on the draft constitution. Therefore, it has organized a public forum on May 29, 2007, at the 10th floor of the Bishops' Conference Building. The participants included Bishop Banchong Chaiyara, chairperson of the Episcopal Office for Social Works, priests responsible for various Episcopal commissions

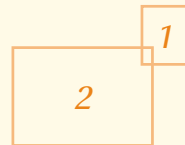
of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand, religious sisters from various congregations, staff members of various Episcopal commissions, teachers and students from Catholic schools, with a total number of 25 people.

In this forum, CCJP has invited Mr. Pairote Polpet, a member of the National Economic and Social Advisory

Council, as a resource person. He has presented comparison of the constitution of 1997 and the draft constitution of 2007. He has pointed out both strengths and weaknesses of the draft constitution of 2007 when compared to the constitution of 1997 that although the draft constitution of 2007 still had a problem of the origin of senators and the election system, which were mainly problems of the structure of conflicts at higher level, but with regards to rights and freedom of the people, it was more decentralized. For example, it supports local people to take care and manage their local resources and

lessens power of local administration organizations. It was a decentralization of the national power to local areas and it was a good change in the long run. Similarly to mass media, the draft constitution of 2007 has tried to address monopoly of media by prohibiting politicians to hold shares, directly and indirectly, in radio and television to solve the problem of using radio and television for their interest, which has been the case in the recent political situation.

The participants have also shared their ideas on the draft constitution regarding ethics of politicians, participation of the people in politics and methods to give knowledge on the constitution to the people, which is both their rights and duty to give the significance to it. In addition, there was also a recommendation for those working in educational institutions to give knowledge to students on the constitution of 2007.



1 : Mr. Pairote Polpet, a resource person.

2 : Participants are men and women religious and lay people from Episcopal commissions of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand.



## The First Human Rights Youth Camp.

The first human rights youth camp was organised by CCJP on March 12-15, 2007, at Baan Suan Joseph, Sampran District, Nakhonpathom Province. The participants in this youth camp were students of grade 3 - 5 of secondary education from 9 schools in Bangkok, Ratchaburi, Nakhonpathom, Srisaket and Pathumthani, altogether 16 students. In this camp, the young students have learned human rights through exposure visit at Ban Kanchanapisek and an activity on station and route to human rights. The first station 'my banana' gives the message that all human beings have equal human dignity. We should not look and judge human being from his/her outlook. The station 'my ladder of right to life' gives the knowledge on different human rights from birth to death. The station

'my imagination' gives that message that all human beings have their inherent thought, spirituality and imagination, which differentiate human beings from animals and plants, and no one can take away these properties from us. The station 'colour of unity' teaches that all human beings were born equal. Although they are different, they have to live together. Therefore, they have to help one another and be in unity with one another. The camp also helped the young students to learn their role towards their families, communities and society, and understand rights of children according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as mobilizing ideas on how young people apply human rights in their relationship with one another in society.



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1, 2 : Youth on an exposure trip to a juvenile detention center, Ban Kanchanapisek, a pilot project to initiate a new approach in an effort to help young people to be aware of their positive potential and values, and be ready to reintegrated with society.

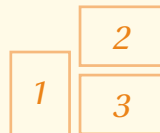
3, 4 : Activities on human rights stations, (top) the station of ladder of life, my rights, and (below) the station of color of unity.

5 : Group photos.



## Karen Youth and Human Rights Activity.

On April 23, 2007, a human rights activity was organized for Karen youth at Ban Khunpae, Chomthong District, Chiangmai Province, in which 85 young Karens took part. These Karen youth have learned about various rights through different station activities, namely the station of unity, the station of rights community, the station of ladder of the right to my life, the station of my banana, and the station of laws and constitution. This activity is an opening of a new era for ethnic youth to easily learn and understand human rights, which is very useful for them so that they would learn to protect their rights as ethnic people as well as avoiding to violate the rights of others.



1 : Youth at the station of community rights where they mutually drew picture of their community.

2 : The station of ladder of life ... my rights.

3 : Ms.Achara Somsaengsuang, secretary general of CCJP is explaining human rights to Karen youth.



## Training on Human Rights Study for Teachers from Different Schools.

On March 28 - 29, human rights study training was provided at Daruna Kanchanaburi School, Kanchanaburi Province, which is under the management of the Sisters of the Servant of the Heart of Mary Immaculate. This human rights study training was provided for 72 teachers from kindergarten to secondary education. It has helped the teachers to understand contents of related human rights, such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention for the Rights of the Child. In addition, the teachers have also drawn a human rights teaching plan for each subject and level.



1, 2 : Teachers of Daruna Kanchanaburi School.



On May 2 - 4, 2007, training was provided for teachers from area 6 of Bangkok Archdiocese at Ratbumrungsin School, Ayudhya Province, which is under the management of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Bangkok. Thirty five teachers at kindergarten to secondary education level attended this training.



1, 2 : Teachers from schools in area 6 of Bangkok Archdiocese take part in activities in the human rights study training.

3 : Mr. Nuttawut Buapratoom, a resource person from the Foundation of the Center for the Protection of Children's Rights.

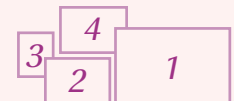
4 : Group photos with executive personnel and resource persons from CCJP.

On May 9 - 11, 2007, training was provided for teachers of Arunothai School, Lampang Province, which is under management of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Bangkok. Teachers at kindergarten to secondary education level attended this training, with a total of 98 teachers, attended this training. They have learned contents of related human rights, such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the

Child and the rights of ethnic groups. They have also written teaching plan on human rights for each subject and class. The teachers were interested in the training very much, and actively took part in the activity and sharing of ideas.

The training of teachers in the above 3 schools helped executive personnel who were women religious to realize the importance of human

rights teaching, and fully supported this training.



1 : Teachers from Arunothai School, Lampang.

2, 3 : Teachers take part in human rights station.

4 : Some teachers are seen discussing the problem of rights with Mr. Pitak Gerdhom, a resource person from the National Human Rights Commission.



## Reflection on Development Work from the Perspective of Populorum Progressio

*Achara Somsaengsuang  
Secretary General of CCJP*

**F**orty years ago in 1967, the Catholic Church has issued a document with a title of Populorum Progressio (the Progress of the People). This document is a message that the Church addressed to the world society, expressing her concern on people at the lower social strata, especially those in the Third World, or developing countries who are affected victims of development policies introduced by the western countries, or else called the First World. These policies push the people in the Third World toward agricultural destruction, widening the income gap between the rich and the poor. At the same time, natural resources were extracted to support industrial production in the First World, which is the origin of the theory of dependency. The Third World tries to develop their countries with industrial development following

the theories of economic growth and modernization along western capitalism. The more these countries develop, the poorer they become, because they are dominated and have to depend on developed countries economically, politically, technologically and culturally.

The second intention of this document is to warn the First World that uses development policies as their tactics to help the Third World, while at the same time siphon off economic base that is essential for basic livelihood of the people. It also destroys social and cultural capitals, which bind the community of the poor.

The core of this document is to give definition on development with human person as its center. The authentic development is a human development in all aspects, namely economic, spiri-



tual, cultural, social and political, so that human beings will have independence and freedom, that they will be free from personal sin, the greedy heart, and injustice of social structure. When human being is freed from these unfavorable conditions, they will be able to fully apply their potential and capacity in working with other human fellows in society with greater respect to human rights of other people, the heart that understand poverty, collaboration to work for the common good, commitment to peace, recognition and implementation of proper values. And finally, there is a belief and unity in God to build better society.

These important messages have become the principal goals for development work of social development organisations of the Catholic Church in different countries. Similarly, development work of the Catholic Church in Thailand has also been initiated almost 4 decades. Although the goal to develop fuller human life has not changed, but



through the course of operation development personnel have improved activities and operational process to conform to local contexts and needs of the people. At times, this work has been challenged by mainstream development. In particular, in the past decade mainstream development policies oriented to economic growth has affected people at the lower social strata. This situation has moved local communities towards new development direction in a faster pace and to deny old-fashioned development, which was seen as more slow and could not respond to the basic needs overnight. Empowerment of local communities based on local potentials and values as a network is at risk, especially when agricultural sector has not got support to be the base for livelihood of society anymore, although all people still have to consume products from labour of the grassroots people for their business growth.

In 2007, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of this Papal Encyclical 'Populorum Progressio', development organizations of the Catholic Church in Thailand have reflected on their work by conducting case study in local communities in 4 areas, using information gathered from these communities as indicators how these communities survived. Is it if they could survive because they still hold on the concept of development along the teaching of the Church? In these communities, the people continue to live their good values and religious teachings. Or is it because of funds revolving in the community, in which human beings are living in the situation where they could not find their human dignity and values because they were concerned with their greed and insufficiency, which is contradictory to the direction of fuller human development where when the stomach is filled,

the spirituality has to be fulfilled as well by going out to help others, helping others to learn and be aware of their human values as well.

This case study has been conducted using documented information and evidences, interview of different groups of people, observation and participation in community activities. This study took about 6 months. The information so gathered has been developed with deeper analysis to identify answers that could be verified or argued that development along the spirit of the Catholic Church is a good guard for strong and sustainable community amid the current mainstream development with money as the main goal of life rather than humanization. They study also tried to search for future direction.

The four selected field areas representing development work as implemented by the Catholic Church in Thailand are: 1) the community of Ban Khunpae in Chomthong District, Chiangmai Province, 2) the community of Ban Kokesa-ard in Kusumal District, Sakonnakhon Province, 3) the community of Ban Tha Pakchee in Khaochakan

District, Srakaew Province, and 4) the community of Ban Thung Maprao in Kraburi District, Ranong Province. Each community has different characteristics from one another. The community of Ban Khunpae is a Karen village, which has been settled down there for over 2 centuries. Most villagers are Catholics. The community of Ban Kokesa-ard is a Catholic village and has settled down as a community for 65 years. The community of Tha Pakchee is a village of settlers from the Northeast, mainly Buddhists. They migrated from different areas in the Northeast because of lack of farmland in their original communities. They have settled here for over 3 decades. The community of Ban Thung Maprao is a small Catholic community of about 33 households who live with Buddhists. All of them have migrated over thirty years ago from various areas, such as Chumporn, Prachuabkhirikhan, Ratchaburi, Songkhla and Nakhonsithammarat Provinces, to settle in this area and form a large community at present because of unfavourable conditions for their farming occupation in their original communities.







The study has found that the work of social development organizations of the Catholic Church using activities as tools to help these community mem-

bers to make their living on the basis of their internal values, and apply their physical potential and capacity to address their economic problems that threaten their basic necessities, shortage of rice for household consumption and implements and inputs for productivity development. These activities also drew them to help others by understanding their own suffering and difficulties first through a saving activity, which provides exercise for saving, learning of values for a living and self-supporting, as well as helping others. This saving activity has helped build a horizontal network of relationship from a small group to others outside their communities. The success of this activity was contributed by the factors of current situation and time. In addition, the development workers have held on a policy in implementing activities to achieve the goal of authentic human development. This implementation gears towards outcome and positive indicators when these communities have

both individual leaders and strong groups playing a role in disseminating and extending the concept of human development based on

the value of 'being more human' rather than 'having more materials' in all the field areas under this study. Although during the recent decades, the operation of these development organizations of the Church has been weakening in term of pattern of activities, lack of continuity and personnel, implying that the dissemination of the concept of human development according to the teaching of the Church has also been affected. It is also the same period of the massive entry of development projects supported by the state to address physical problems without empowering their spirituality. Worse still is the projects supported by the government the latest decade were all loans, such as the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), which has been the same old financial institution, the project on 'Gae Khai Panha Kwam Yakjon' (solution to poverty), which villagers have defined later on after being indebted to this project as 'Goo Khao Khoi Jai' (borrow first, pay

later) 'Gang Kwang Kwam Jon' (obstacle to poverty), one million Baht a village fund, a fund for community potential development, or Small, Medium and Large enterprises fund, etc. This community development that takes fund as priority, which villagers call 'revolving fund', yields impacts on all villages and villagers. All communities that used to implement development activities with the Church organizations have become indebted. Villagers have to behave well as good clients. They have to provide a sum of saving at initial stage as credit to seek loan. Later, they are drowned in the cycle of borrowing loan from this fund to repay loan of another fund. It is simply a refinancing. The study of these four communities shows that most of the loans were used for investment in occupation, education of their children, as well as household expenses. A considerable number of villagers spent these loans to buy products that are now considered to be a basic necessity. It has come up with the same conclusion for all the four communities that the concept of community-based self-supporting applying potential of community members, their values and cultural identify to safeguard their communities as in the past, does not exist anymore. Today, self-supporting of family and community requires money as a link. A community survives through various revolving funds. On the contrary, these revolving funds are like enemies at the backyard, which push the villagers to speed up their work. In the community of Tha Pakchee in Srakaew, the villagers have to work hard by earning wage as farm workers on the land (which once belonged to them), and earning daily wage to make sure the earn enough income to repay their loans so that they would be eligible to seek loan again in the future. The community of



Ban Thung Maprao, which is the largest community of the four communities under this study with quite a better economic condition since they are engaged in fruit orchard and oil palm plantation, earn income from each harvest that is enough for down payment for a new car. The villagers spend all their time in their fruit orchards and rubber plantations for the same single reason, earning income to repay their

revolving funds. On the other hand, in the other two communities, i.e. Ban Khunpae and Ban Kokesa-ard, the study has not found this rush in their daily work, because of different conditions of their occupations. However, all the four communities are facing the same fate in which they cannot become human communities that are free from this issue of social injustice.

The concern expressed by these communities is that while the villagers have fallen into a trap of modern development, development workers from Church organizations have not provided them with advice anymore. These Church development workers promoting development based on religious teachings were once strong mentors in the past, although they could not provide fund. They encouraged the villagers to hold on good values and morality. What they could do is to try their best to survive in the situation in which they fall victims physically and mentally to contribute to economic development of the society while they can still have something to do so, because ultimately human being who has become an economic being still has the dimension of values with base of faith to hold, which is their original capital and deeply rooted in their heart, reminding them to help one another. The other question is that if this reflection expressed by the people is valid, those involved in development work of the Church have to redefine their role once again to revive the spirit and intention of Papal encyclical 'Populorum Progressio'.