

Community Services in Thailand

Background

In the year 1991, Thailand launched the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act. There are 4 main categories mentioned in that Act: education, health, job placement and living social equity. Those concepts had been developed over the years and many other laws had been enforced until now. This can be summarized with the acronym PIONEER. The following will explain what PIONEER stands for.

1. P- Policy

At present, Thailand has policies that covers all aspects: education, career, health and social equity

2. I- Information and Database

Thailand has a population of approximately 65 million. In order to provide services to the community the country needs to have accurate database of disabled people with the amount close to 2 million and around 250 thousand among them are visually impaired. There are campaigns for disabled registration and we have national database of this target group.

3. O- Organization

There are functional bodies under both private and government sectors with vision and mission to provide services to disabled people in the field of blindness.

Government Organizations

- Provincial Special Education Center under the Thai Ministry of Education
There are 77 provinces in Thailand which runs Special Education Centers to provide community services including education, rehabilitation, guidance, and trainings for target groups such as disabled people themselves, their family members/guardians and people connected to the field of blindness.

- Disabled Service Center (DSC) in all 77 provinces and districts under the Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

This functional body provides social welfare to disabled people including monthly allowance and project loan. They promote equal rights to the disabled people and provide legal assistance to disabled people who are treated with injustice or who are deprived of their rights.

- The National Center for Health Promotion under the Thai Ministry of Health

This agency is in-charge in the implementation of law on health. They ensure that disabled people get treatment in all government hospitals in the country. There are O and M and Daily Living Skills training for the blind in main hospitals across the country with a budget of 9,000 Baht per person.

- Job Placement Centers under the Ministry of Labor. In the year 2016 -2017, there is a campaign for job placement under the concept of making the rights real. Disabled people with the number of 10,000 people will be employed.

Private Organizations

- The Christian Foundation for the Blind in Thailand (CFBT)

CFBT is a charitable organization with 10 branches in four regions in Thailand. It initiated CBR projects in Mahasarakham province and its neighbors in the year 1987 and this was developed to be the model adapted in other locations. CFBT field workers are hired to assist the blind individuals to prepare and equip them with necessary skills including Orientation and Mobility, Daily Living Skills, social skills and income generating activities.

CFBT intends to expand DSC units with the structure of CBR in all 10 branches in 2017. Besides providing trainings of all necessary skills, part of the program is also giving advice about laws and rights of disabled people.

- Thailand Organization of the Blind (TAB)

TAB has a number of 15,000 members. Its members can benefit from TAB's various projects such as vocational training focusing on massage, O and M and Braille reading and writing skills. They also work for public awareness regarding visual impairment and promotion of human rights. They also provide ICT services and library services.

4. N- Networking

In order to work efficiently, organizations should work collaboratively with network organizations. They can learn and share knowledge and resources about the field of blindness to carry out various projects.

5. E- Enforcing laws and policies

Aside from having just the policies or laws we still have to ensure that disabled people in the community won't have difficulties accessing services. Thailand tried to enforce the law with a concept of promoting job placement for the disabled people. This law obliges the companies with more than 100 employees to hire one disabled staff. If the company won't hire they have the option to pay a minimum of 300 Baht/day to Empowerment and Development of the Quality of Life of Disabled People Fund.

6. E- Empower the blind in the community

We need to provide various kinds of support such as providing trainings for necessary knowledge and skills and funding. Thailand provides PWD portal websites and ICT training . A total amount 10 Billion Baht is allocated for this.

Organizations in this field can propose projects and submit for approval. This fund can be used for individual loans and sustainable income generating projects. Research to develop knowledge, methods or system which can be implemented in other locations can also be supported by this fund. Thailand promotes conducting researches by establishing the institute on research promotion.

In 2016, CFBT got supported from the government to do a research on the involvement of volunteers in implementing CBR Projects. This research was presented at CBR World Conference in Malaysia.

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Under the Royal Patronage of H.M. the King