LOCAL PROJECT CHALLENGE 2020: Accelerating the SDGs

CO-CREATING A COMMUNITY SPACE
MAE HONG SON, THAILAND

PROJECT OVERVIEW

“Co-creating an education and community space with Karen people” is a collaboration between Toys for Thailand foundation, Integrated Field Co., Ltd. and Jai Jai Group. Since August 2016, the team has been working closely with the local community to design and construct a new hub for the local people at all ages. The two-storey building will consist of a multi-functional space suitable for hosting meetings, workshops and other local activities, a storage, a teacher’s room and toilets on the first floor, while a library and an IT zone will be located on the second floor.

The project aims to address the following SDGs:

- SDG 4.a: Build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools
- SDG 4.5: Eliminate all discrimination in education
- SDG 1.5: Build resilience to environmental, economic and social disasters

The project targets to create an awareness aimed to create an awareness.

The practical knowledge of constructing earthen structure was transferred to the community. Using earth instead of wood for construction does not only reduce the number of trees that will be cut down, but also lowers the risk of house fire during the winter season when the weather is extremely cold and dry.

PROJECT IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Although the project is still in process, the following impacts and outcomes can be recognised:

- The construction process has strengthened the community as it enabled local people at all ages to meet and work alongside one another.
- Karen women were able to earn extra income from selling handmade local textiles.
- The key chains were made out of local fabrics that were produced by women from the Karen community.
- The practical knowledge of constructing earthen structure was transferred to the community.
- Karen women and children were empowered as the participatory workshops allowed them to voice their needs and opinions.
- The construction process has strengthened the community as it enabled local people at all ages to meet and work alongside one another.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The team has engaged the local community in every step of the process from creating a design brief to constructing the new building. They participated in a series of workshops to discuss their needs, provide insights and give feedback on the design. Then, together we planned the construction phase, assigned roles and responsibilities for each person.

During the construction phase, the local community has been the major source of manpower. They have been working hand in hand with us and the earth building experts from Purpun as well as several volunteers from across the country. To date, the earthen construction for the first floor is finished. In the next phase, we will be working with the local community to develop weaved bamboo panels for the second floor.

PROJECT TAKEAWAYS

- Identify key persons and influencers within the community. Establish strong connection with them and make sure that they are on board.
- Engage diverse group of people in the community as well as relevant stakeholders throughout the process.
- Design participatory methods and tools that allow everyone to engage and equally voice their opinions.
- Collaborate with other stakeholders including public, private, civil and third sector in order to scale the impact.
- Collect and keep record of the process. Constantly reflect on them within the team and with the community.
- Align the expectations of various stakeholders that are involved. Do not over-promise and leave room for errors.

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