

CAPACITY BUILDING AT RURAL INTERNET CENTRES IN THAILAND

2017

POST IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT REVIEW



CAPACITY BUILDING AT RURAL INTERNET CENTRES IN THAILAND

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Project Number..... 9THA15031

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The National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC) in Thailand has been mandated to implement Universal Service Obligation (USO) for telecommunications/ICTs in Thailand. It has set up hundreds of rural Internet centres known as USONETs throughout the country and has a plan to establish more USONETs in the next three years.

To further build human capacities at the USONETs, a call for local volunteers in Thailand was made. A group of volunteers, called NBTC-ITU Volunteers (NIV) have been selected, trained and dispatched by NBTC and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to the rural USONETs in various locations in Thailand in July 2016. At the USONETs, the communities have been provided with access to ICTs and these volunteers.

PARTNERS



National Broadcasting
and Telecommunication
Commission (NBTC) in
Thailand



International
Telecommunication Union

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BACKGROUND

Thailand's Telecommunications Business Act B.E. 2544 (2001), particularly Section 17, stipulates that the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) shall have the duty to administer the Universal Service Obligation (USO) for basic telecommunications service and shall have the power to prescribe that the licensee shall provide certain telecommunications services e.g. services in rural areas, services for educational institutions, etc. In this regard, the NBTC through its Universal Service Obligation Bureau formulated a USO five-year plan aimed at, among others, establishing rural Internet centres known as USONETs nationwide and especially in remote/rural areas of Thailand. Each USONET has been equipped with about ten (10) computers connected to the Internet, as well as other equipment e.g. printer, LCD projector and peripheral devices. The USO five-year plan also aims to promote the use of ICTs and build human capacity in ICTs for people living in rural areas.

Having recognized the power of youth as volunteers, at the WTDC-14 Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) held in Cambodia from 30 April to 2 May 2013, a proposal on 'international

WTDC (World Telecommunication Development Conference) is held every four years with aims to establish work programmes and guidelines for defining telecommunication development questions and priorities and to provide direction and guidance for the work programme of the Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) over the next four-year period.

collaboration on multi-stakeholder empowerment of ICT volunteers' was initiated by the Republic of Indonesia and tabled at the meeting. This proposal was strongly supported by the ITU Asia-Pacific Member States attending the RPM.

WTDC-14 held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates from 30 March to 10 April 2014 adopted the Dubai Action Plan (DuAP) which includes an Asia-Pacific Regional Initiative on 'development of broadband access and adoption of broadband'. The initiative identified an expected result which is "international

collaboration on multi-stakeholder empowerment of ICT volunteers".

The Capacity Building at Rural Internet Centres project is an effort of the ITU to achieve the objective of DuAP, as well as to promote similar national volunteer programmes in other countries.

In 2014, the NBTC and ITU entered into an agreement to jointly implement a project to build human capacities at the rural Internet centres in Thailand through the engagement of a group of volunteers, called NBTC-ITU Volunteers (NIV). This project was completed in 2015 and 63 volunteers had been dispatched to more than 20 USONETs in over 10 provinces in Thailand. Due to this success, a 2nd project, 9THA15031 on Capacity Building at Rural Internet Centres in Thailand was signed on 8 December 2015 between the NBTC and ITU.

To further build human capacities at the USONETs, a call for local volunteers in Thailand was made in 2016. A group of NBTC-ITU Volunteers (NIV), have been selected, trained and dispatched by NBTC and ITU to the rural USONETS in various locations in Thailand to provide onsite support to build human capacities of the communities having access to these USONETs.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT:

- To strengthen human capacities of officers of NBTC, USONET administrators, students and youth as well as people living rural/remote communities in the use of ICTs for community development thereby promoting national social and economic development;
- To enhance and strengthen the Capacity Building at Rural Internet Centres NIV programme whereby people at all levels are encouraged to participate and boost volunteerism among the people;
- To promote USONETs and the use of ICTs widely especially focusing on specific needs of individual communities so as to enable sustainable USONETs as well as social and economic development in the communities;
- To equip USONET administrators with necessary tools and knowledge for operating and maintaining the USONETs through various human capacity building programmes;
- To raise awareness about cybersecurity and promote cybersecurity culture in the communities especially among women and girls and youth;
- To promote international coordination and cooperation and efforts of NBTC in the enabling and provision of equal access to ICTs among all people.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WERE CARRIED OUT

a) Programme promotion

The Capacity Building at Rural Internet Centres NIV 2016 programme was campaigned and promoted at universities and through various media including social networks such as Facebook, Pantip, NGO websites, radio, etc. Promotional material to call for local applications for the NIV 2016 programme was developed. An example of a promotional poster in Thai language is attached as Annex A.

b) Volunteer selection

Applications to join the NIV programme were made online. Two processes were put in place volunteer selection:

- Application screening
- Interview

A selection committee had been established to screen and interview the applicants.

c) NIV Boot Camp

NIV Boot Camp was organized for 6 days at The Pine Resort in Pathumthani province from 13-18 June 2016.

The boot camp was aimed at preparing volunteers for going to the field. Training and team building were carried out. Training included IT training, videography and photography, team work, safety and security, etc. The boot camp also provided an introduction of NBTC, ITU, and the NIV programme. Through a partnership with Intel, the volunteers were also trained in Intel® Easy Steps.

d) Dispatching

Volunteers were dispatched to the USONETs to build capacities on site after the boot camp

for 40 days from 19 June to 28 July 2016. Activities carried out by the volunteers are as follows:

- Conducting a community needs assessment;
- Promoting USONET;
- Training in IT courses (e.g. basic computer use, office applications, web development, photo/video editing, etc.) to USONET administrators and users/people of the community;
- Providing regular updates and reports to project team members including ITU and NBTC staff about their activities, issues and challenges;
- Developing the USONET website;
- Developing video materials for IT training and for promoting the community;
- Building relationships and promoting the network of NIVs among the volunteers and USONET administrators as well as local authorities;
- Conducting non-IT activities to support the USONET as required or as deemed appropriate.

e) Evaluation

The volunteers attended a 2-day evaluation in Nakornnayok province where all NIV teams presented their activities and outcomes of field work. The volunteers made PowerPoint presentations, and video presentations to demonstrate their work. An evaluation committee had been established and evaluated the results of the volunteers. The evaluation committee selected 3 best performing teams. The best performing teams were awarded with tokens of appreciation.

f) Closing ceremony

After the evaluation, all volunteers attended a closing ceremony at the Office of NBTC on 1 August 2016. All NBTC-ITU Volunteers 2016 were presented with a certificate.

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SCOPE OF REVIEW

A Post Implementation Review was carried out by the ITU from 19 – 21 July 2016 at the rural villages of Northern Thailand. The agenda of the mission is attached as Annex B.

USONET CENTRE @ BO KAEW

The USONET centre in Bo Kaew was setup to provide Internet access to the community in the vicinity.

The pictures below show the USONET and persons from the community using the facilities with assistance from the volunteers.



The pictures below show an example of the promotional tee-shirt and banner that had been developed for the project:



Community outreach programmes were carried out to invite and encourage people from the community to use the ICT facilities at the centre. The volunteers mainly assisted the people from the village in communicating via email and searching for information on the Internet. Some students in the village use the centre facilities to complete assignments for school. Some elderly people in the community having never had access to a computer before, requested individual hands-on training, which the volunteers then provided.

USONET CENTRE @ BAN VIENG SONG SCHOOL



The USONET centre at Ban Vieng Song School was opened in 2013. Previously the Subdistrict Administrative Organization (SAO) was in charge of the establishment and management of the USONET, but due to the lack of space and human capacity, the SAO transferred the ownership to the school. Presently, the USONET is used for computer training for students in grade 1-6.



The Ban Vieng Song School is located at 143 Moo 4, Ban Vieng Song, Thung-chang Subdistrict and District under responsibility of the Nan Primary Educational Service Area Office 2. The school has students starting from kindergarten to grade 6 coming from 6 villages namely Ban Thung Ao, Ban Sala, Ban Don Chai, Ban Vieng Song, Ban Wang Pha, and Ban Pradu.

The school has about 98 students comprising 47 boys, and 51 girls. It has 6 permanent teachers, 3 contracted teachers and 1 janitor. Main curriculum is through Distant Learning TV via Satellite supported by Wang Krai Kangwon School under the Royal Patronage. The teachers supplement teaching in other subjects as necessary.

The computers are still in good condition. The volunteers have been supporting the school teachers by providing ICT support and training. Each student has an opportunity to use the school computers. It was explained that maintenance of the computers and technical repairs require a school budget.

USONET CENTRE @ PIENG LUANG 7 SCHOOL

Previously Ban Huai Sataeng School, the Pieng Luang 7 School was established for students in Ban Huai Sataeng village, Ban Ngob Subdistrict, Thung-chang District. It changed the name to Pieng Luang 7 since it was selected to be sponsored by the Princess Ubolratana Rajakanya. Its students start from kindergarten to grade 6. Most students are from the tribes in the village.



The school has 49 students, 4 teachers. It uses Distant Learning TV via Satellite supported by Wang Krai Kangwon School under the Royal Patronage.



Each student at this primary school has had the opportunity to use the school computers. Only two or three students have computers at home. The School Principal, Mr. Wuttikrai Kabpina, explained that basic computer classes are also offered to students attending kindergarten for early exposure to the benefits of this technology as well as to build familiarity. Due to the small class size of about eight students per class on average, students are given individual training and attention. The school has 6 working computers and the teachers and principal bring their own laptops as well. The volunteers have been providing ICT support and training to the school, which have been well-received.

USONET CENTRE @ BAN PANG KAE SCHOOL



Ban Pang Kae School, established in 1985, is for students from kindergarten to grade 9. It is about 31 kilometres from the District (Thung-chang) and is in mountainous area. The school serves 2 villages which are Pang Kae 1 and Pang Kae 2. The population is mainly from the Mong tribe (approx. 100 households). There are 20 teachers in charge of 328 students.

The School Principal, Mr. Pornchai Nachaiwiang expressed that computers help the students in their studies. All students in the school are eager to learn. In addition, the students take home and share with their families the knowledge gained. Some of their families sell farming products and the students feel proud to inform their families of the price and opportunities of such products in the online market. As the number of students in the school is over 300, students in a class share use of a computer at about 3 students to 1 computer.

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RESULTS/ACHIEVEMENTS

ICT capacities of USONET administrators and local communities in the vicinity of the USONETs built



Key Performance Indicator

Number of participating volunteers

Remarks

Out of 118 applications, 76 applications were called for interviews. Then the project selected 56 volunteers to join the programme in 2016. The volunteers were grouped into 20 teams and dispatched to 20 USONETs.

Initial Target

At least 60 new volunteers will participate in the programme including university students, professionals and entrepreneurs.

Achieved

Yes

ICT capacities of USONET administrators and local communities in the vicinity of the USONETs built



Key Performance Indicator

Number of participating USONETs

Remarks

20 USONETs participated in the programme. These centres are (by region):

Initial Target

At least 20 USONETs from all 6 regions of Thailand i.e. Northern region, North-Eastern region, Central region, Eastern region, Western region, and Southern region.

Northern Region

- 1) Bor Kaew in Chiang Mai province accommodating 3 volunteers;
- 2) Ban Vieng Song in Nan province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 3) Dok Kam Tai police station in Phayao province accommodating 4 volunteers

North-Eastern Region

- 4) Khao Kaew in Loey province accommodating 2 volunteers
- 5) Selebhumi in Roi Et province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 6) Koke Mai Ngam in Khon Kaen province accommodating 2 volunteers
- 7) Don Mon Nimitr temple in Buriram province accommodating 2 volunteers
- 8) Latai in Sisaket province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 9) Wenprabat in Nakorn Phanom province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 10) Bann Kang in Chaiyabhum province accommodating 2 volunteers

Central Region

- 11) Lamphaya in Nakorn Patom province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 12) Huai Mon Thong in Nakorn Patom province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 13) Don Jedi in Supanburi accommodating 3 volunteers

Southern Region

- 14) Klonglha in Songkla province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 15) Tanode Duan in Phatthalung province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 16) Mae Kri in Phatthalung province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 17) Koh Mark in Phatthalung province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 18) Nabinlha in Trang province accommodating 2 volunteers
- 19) Laem Sob in Trang province accommodating 3 volunteers
- 20) Klong Prasong in Krabi province accommodating 3 volunteers

Achieved

Yes

ICT capacities of USONET administrators and local communities in the vicinity of the USONETs built



Key Performance Indicator

Number of training programmes

Remarks

The volunteers trained the USONET Administrators and also carried out community training programmes at each of the 20 USONETs.

Initial Target

At least two training programmes are conducted at each USONET for USONET administrators; each programme is not less than 3 days.

At least two user training programmes are conducted at each USONET for local communities; each programme is no less than 3 days.

At least 20 people in total attending the user training programmes at each USONET.

Achieved

Yes

ICT capacities of USONET administrators and local communities in the vicinity of the USONETs built



Key Performance Indicator

Number of video materials for promoting the community, which may include local knowledge, culture and tradition, historical or tourist place, etc

Remarks

40 video clips were developed by the volunteers on training and promotional material.

Initial Target

At least one video material for ICT training developed by each USONET/Volunteer Team.

At least one video material for promoting the community developed by each USONET/Volunteer Team.

Achieved

Yes

USONETs managed and run effectively and efficiently



Key Performance Indicator

Number of USONET websites developed

Remarks

20 USONET websites were developed, each website for each USONET.

Initial Target

20 USONET websites developed (one website for each USONET).

Achieved

Yes

ICT capacities of USONET administrators and local communities in the vicinity of the USONETs built



Key Performance Indicator

Number of reports generated/ submitted by USONETs.

Remarks

NBTC team actively participated in all activities to engage local communities, USONET administrators and local authorities in a timely manner.

Initial Target

At least two regular reports (e.g. monthly and quarterly) submitted by each USONET to the NBTC in time.

Achieved

Yes

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FINANCIAL STATUS

Project cash contributions ensured as planned?		
(Y/N/Not applicable)	Percentage (%)	Explanations
Yes	100%	Through an agreement with the ITU, NBTC made a contribution of 8 Million Bahts (USD 219,358) to the project.

Is the level of expenditure at the expected level?		
(Y/N/Not applicable)	Percentage (%)	
Yes		

Any funds remaining unused?		
(Y/N/Not applicable)	Percentage (%)	Explanations
Yes		There is a budget deficit in the project of USD 4,831. It is recommended that this deficit be covered by a transfer of funds from an NBTC project with surplus funds upon closure and with the agreement of NBTC.

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FINDINGS

ICT skills of the USONET administrators, students, youth and community people were found to have been enhanced. By participating as a Volunteer, university students gained hands-on experience. The project was found to:

- promote USONETs and the use of ICTs widely with a focus on specific needs of individual communities; and,
- improve access to and use of ICTs by local communities.



The programme effectively raised awareness about benefits of ICTs through several means e.g. campaigning, training, and engaging various local stakeholders resulting in increasing number of users at each USONET. Through a partnership with Intel, Intel® Easy Steps was also used to train local people.

ITU and NBTC had carried out a site survey to select the participating USONETs for the project. Proper living accommodation was a requirement for the volunteers. However, living accommodation was found to be a challenge in some areas, such as no rental accommodation for the volunteers and hence they had to stay either with some local people or at the USONET itself.

Each volunteer team was provided with one laptop computer, one mobile phone with SIM and air time, and one digital or video camera. The equipment was then donated to the USONETs upon completion at the end of the volunteer period.

The volunteers gained experience in working with the community, collaborating with each other, while at the same time being a role-model for young children in particular, to aspire to go to university. All volunteers expressed that the programme had helped broaden their own horizons. Some volunteers from the previous year coming from the general area returned to support the USONETs especially during vacation time.

The International ICT Volunteers 2016 was organized by ITU on 4-6 July 2016 in Chiang Mai, Thailand whereby delegates from NBTC and organization counterparts in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, and South Korea participated. NIV was considered as a model for other countries to replicate in building a national volunteer programme.

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LESSONS LEARNED

Local support from local authorities and USONET administrators has been key for the success of this project. Regular follow-up with the volunteers on a weekly basis, as well as online exchange of ongoing work in the field was important for good results.

Local communities in rural areas appreciated the opportunities that ICTs can bring, particularly in schools where children are being provided with basic ICT skills at an early age.

The USONET at the schools have more regular use than at the community centre.

Computer classes are scheduled in schools and these computers are therefore heavily used. However, the ratio of student-to-computer, if improved, would provide a better learning experience. Training for teachers, principals and USONET administrators on ICTs as well as a budget to maintain the ICT equipment would further strengthen the programme after the volunteer period.

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CONCLUSIONS

While there are several measures to build human capacity in ICTs especially for those living in rural areas, the volunteer programme has shown itself to be an effective and efficient means of promoting the use of ICTs. It is as well a cost-effective solution.

The volunteers met during the post implementation review on site appreciated the opportunity and experience gained. They have been engaged in collaboration with USONET administrators and people in the communities, and promoted the use of ICT.

The communities met expressed appreciation and saw benefit from having access to the Internet for communication and finding out more information rapidly to improve their daily lives.

As a result of the programme, USONETs became widely known and more importantly

people in local communities have gained confidence in using the technologies in that many of them have already applied knowledge and ICTs in their daily lives and jobs. The programme also received support from various partners such as local mobile operators and international organizations. Local support from local authorities and USONET administrators has been key for the success of this project.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the momentum of the project, and the interest of the government of Thailand to further strengthen Rural Connectivity and Capacity Building, it is recommended that the USONETs be sustained by the local government.

As this project has had international interest, particularly in the region, it is recommended that the experiences of the NIV be shared.

9THA15031 will be closed. Closure report will be prepared by the Project Manager at the ITU.



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ANNEX A: PROMOTIONAL POSTER IN THAI LANGUAGE

จิตอาสา
อาสาสมัครลงพื้นที่เพื่อช่วยเหลือชุมชน

ขยายเวลารับสมัครถึง 5 มิ.ย. 59

ปลูกพลังอาสา !
ในตัวคุณ

ไม่มีค่าใช้จ่ายตลอดโครงการ

เปิดรับสมัคร	วันนี้ - 5 มิ.ย. 59	อบรมเตรียมพร้อม	13-18 มิ.ย. 59
สับทายนำอาสาสมัคร	6-7 มิ.ย. 59	ลงพื้นที่	19 มิ.ย. - 31 ก.ค. 59
ประกาศผล	9 มิ.ย. 59	นำเสนอผลงาน	1-4 ส.ค. 59

สมัครและสอบถามข้อมูลเพิ่มเติม : facebook.com/niv2014
คุณโกศล 089-1888669, Line: RKOSOL, E-Mail: kosol@ictdforum.org

ANNEX B: AGENDA

18-22 July 2016, Chiang Mai, Nan and Bangkok

Monday 18 July 2016	
17:00	Departure from Bangkok
18:30	Arrival in Chiang Mai
19:00	Kick-off Meeting with Project Manager and Videographer
Tuesday 19 July 2016	
07:00	Departure to Bo Kaew Sub-district, Samerng District, Chiang Mai
10:00	Review Meeting at USONET Bo Kaew
Wednesday 20 July 2016	
07:00	Departure to Thung Chang District, Nan province
15:00	Review Meeting at USONET Ban Vieng Song
Thursday 21 July 2016	
07:00	Departure to Pieng Luang 7 School
07:30	Review Meeting at Pieng Luang 7 School
09:30	Departure from Pieng Luang 7 School to Pang Kae School
11:00	Review Meeting at Pang Kae School
14:00	Departure from the Pang Kae School to Nan airport
19:05	Departure from Nan airport
20:40	Arrival at Bangkok
Friday 22 July 2016	
08:00	Meeting with Asia-Pacific Regional Director and team at the ITU Regional Office Bangkok

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