



Population & Community
Development Association



Mechai
Pattana
School

Executive Summary

School-Based Integrated Rural Development (School-BIRD)

Educational institutions are frequently under-utilized by only being open from 8am to 4pm, Monday through Friday, 200 days a year. By having a school open on weekends, children from other schools, and even adults, can use the facilities to learn about improved agriculture, income generation, the environment, business skills, IT skills, and other aspects important to rural life.

The School-BIRD program is a combination of three independent and successful rural development projects which have been implemented over the past six years by three related organizations.¹ In these three endeavors, villagers in rural communities have partnered with companies, institutions, and individuals to address community empowerment, income generation, education, environmental protection, health improvement, gender equality, youth philanthropy, and democracy.

The three endeavors preceding the School-BIRD program are 1) the Village Development Partnership, which is a partnership between a company or organization and a poor, rural village, 2) the Green Village Toy Library, where toys donated by urban children are provided to children in rural villages to borrow in exchange for general and environmental clean-up as well as tree planting, and 3) the Bamboo School (Mechai Pattana School), which is a model school for underprivileged children with a modern student-centered educational system where the school is a lifelong learning center for the community and a platform for social and economic advancement.

This School-BIRD program is being implemented in rural, government primary schools catering to poor families. The starting entry point of activities is at the school, which serves approximately five villages. By involving children in rural development and community empowerment, there is strong support and participation from the parents, grandparents, and local communities. In the long run, it is anticipated that the School-BIRD program could become a significant alternative strategy for social and economic advancement in rural communities.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

Mechai Viravaidya Foundation – <http://mechaifoundation.org>
Village Development Partnership – <http://villagedevelopmentpartnership.org>
Green Village Toy Library – <http://villagetoylibrary.org>
Mechai Pattana School – <http://mechaifoundation.org/school.asp>

¹The above three related-organizations are Mechai Viravaidya Foundation (MVF) in conjunction with the Population and Community Development Association (PDA) and Population and Development International (PDI)