



THE  
VILLAGE  
DEVELOPMENT  
PARTNERSHIP

# A New Approach to Community Empowerment and Ending Poverty



An Initiative by **Population & Development International**, a U.S.-Based 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization  
In Cooperation with the **Population & Community Development Association** and the **Mechai Viravaidya Foundation**, Bangkok, Thailand



POPULATION &  
DEVELOPMENT  
INTERNATIONAL



POPULATION & COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION



MECHAI VIRAVAIIDYA FOUNDATION

*“Government gives us a fried fish on a plate, but the Village Development Partnership teaches us how to build a fishing rod. Now we feel confident that we can determine our own future.”*

*Mr. Bakonthon, Nong Phluong Village,  
Buriram Province, Thailand*



## OUR MISSION



## Eradicating Poverty Through Community Empowerment

The Village Development Partnership has been successfully implemented in over 400 villages in Thailand and some Southeast Asian countries. Through business skills training and the power of micro-credit, the Village Development Partnership has improved the quality of life for the rural poor in the five vital development areas:

- Community Empowerment
- Economic Development
- Environmental Promotion
- Health & Human Rights
- Education, Youth, and Democracy





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## POVERTY ERADICATION AS PART OF A COMPANY'S CSR PROGRAM



Innovative Agriculture



Sponsoring Company Personnel and Villagers

### A Unique Approach

This program provides the sponsoring company or organization with the unique opportunity to work in partnership with rural villagers to alleviate poverty in their community.

### Empowerment

The Village Development Partnership (VDP) is a serious endeavor to empower rural communities to eradicate poverty and improve their quality of life. It is a genuine partnership between the villagers and the sponsoring company, organization, or individual.

### Enabling Sustainable Development

The current model has had 22 years of refinement and improvement, and it has clearly demonstrated to be a successful and sustainable formula of empowerment and self-help.

“ All members of our village now understand that transparency is a good thing. ”

Micro-Credit Recipient,  
Nong Phluong Village, Buriram Province

“ I would encourage any company looking to have a flagship CSR program to put a VDP high on the agenda of serious options. It's been an honor and privilege to work with them and we look forward to continued successful collaboration on future projects. ”

Andrew Steel, Founder,  
The Plant-A-Tree-Today Foundation, England



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# COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, BUSINESS SKILLS, AND ACCESS TO CREDIT



Training Ensures Villagers Can Start Their Own Successful Small Businesses

## Poverty Amongst Us

The gap between government services and what is actually delivered can be quite wide in emerging economies. Many rural communities are marginalized and suffer from low income, malnutrition, poor access to health care, frequent migration, and inadequate resources for education. This gap is partly supplemented by CSR endeavors of the private sector.



Sunchai Sawansit was living in Bangkok, where he was far from his family and struggled to earn a living. Through a VDP, sponsored by a shoe and apparel company, Sunchai was able to take out a loan to start a small barber shop in his village. With the income from this shop, he's been able to afford to build a house for his family.

## Our Basic VDP Formula

The Village Development Partnership (VDP) empowers communities by establishing gender-balanced and democratically-elected village committees to plan and implement their own development endeavors. Through the initial capital provided by the sponsoring company or organization, the community is able to utilize the potential of micro-credit.

## How the VDP Helps

The VDP addresses the gap in basic needs by providing access to low-interest credit and business skills training. This enables the poor to take control of their lives and the advancement of their own community with a steady stream of knowledge and capital.



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## THE APPROACH



Committee Elections in Progress



Villagers Initiating a Development Plan for the Future



The Eye-Opener Trip Allows Villagers to Learn From Best Practices of Successful VDP Villages

## Ending Poverty Through Business Enterprise

The VDP's approach, which has been recognized by the Bill and Melinda Gates and Skoll Foundations, is based on a business approach for income generating rather than a welfare approach. Simply providing charitable donations will only create a cycle of dependency, in which no meaningful and sustainable development takes place. At the onset of the project, an agreement is reached that defines each partner's contribution and specific deliverables which must be accomplished for the project to advance. Typical Village Development Partnerships last approximately 6 years.

## Creating a Plan for Sustainable Development

Villagers are empowered to create their own vision of their future. They are led in implementing this plan by their elected Village Development Committee, which comprises men, women, youth, and the elderly. The local VDP staff provides technical and idea generation support to the villagers on their path to self-help and sustainability.





The Opportunity

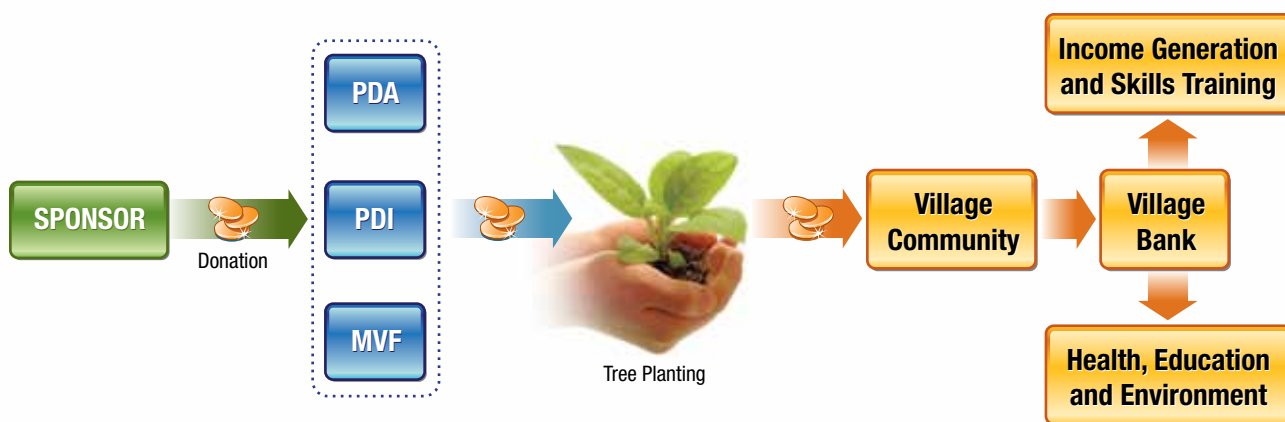
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## THE PARTNERSHIP

### How Companies, Foundations, and Individuals Can Help Empower Village Communities



#### Sponsor's Financial Support

- Provide a one-time investment to the Village Development Bank for a small (300 people), medium (600), or large (1,000) village at approximately \$100 per head
- Participation of staff in VDP activities in the village depending on the level of interest and resources of the sponsor

#### VDP Staff Involvement From PDI, PDA & Mechai Viravaidya Foundation

- Manage partnership with sponsor and village
- Provide necessary technical expertise and advice
- Monitor and evaluate village activities and provide periodic reports to sponsor

#### The Role of the Villagers

- Establish a gender-balanced Village Development Committee
- Engage with sponsor during activities and visits
- Receive initial capital from the sponsoring company or organization in exchange for tree-planting
- Create and implement a plan for the future development of the community
- Coordinate with VDP Staff for monitoring and evaluation

“Businesses need to be friends of the community.”

Prime Minister of Thailand,  
Abhisit Vejjajiva



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## PLANTING TREES TO START A COMMUNITY-OWNED MICRO-CREDIT BANK



Tree-Planting Activity



Village Development Bank in Operation



Mushroom Farming

### Initial Tree-Planting

The village partnered with the sponsor must first plant trees in order for funds to be placed into the community-owned Village Development Bank (one tree equals 40 Baht or US\$1.25). This has a multiplying effect of the villagers taking ownership in their bank, bringing the community together, and improving the local environment.

### Local Banking and Micro-Credit Key to Success

The Village Development Bank is managed by democratically-elected members from the village, while being trained and supervised by the VDP staff. Money is loaned to members in the village to start income-generation activities such as food stalls, vegetable plots, silk weaving, and organic pig-raising. Before borrowing, villagers must start a small saving account with the bank. A significant portion of the profits generated from interest on loans by the Village Development Bank must be used towards benefitting the community.

### Barefoot MBA

Since many people in rural villages lack the skills to start a small business, the VDP staff provides training on production, financial management, marketing, and day-to-day operations. This is also an excellent opportunity for the sponsoring company to get involved, as business skills are one of their most valued resources.



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## SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES

### Achieving Long-Term Sustainability

The election of the gender-balanced Village Development Committee instills a sense of empowerment, democracy, and ownership in the community, while the creation of income-generating activities fosters economic sustainability. The VDP works closely with local governments to ensure a mutually beneficial cooperation. To promote development in health, education, and the environment, supplemental income generated by the Village Development Bank goes directly to activities which improve these basic needs.

#### Examples include:

- Water tank construction and piped water systems
- Health screening and care
- Playground improvements for the local school
- Additional tree-planting
- Garbage recycling bank
- Green Village Toy Library to promote philanthropy in both urban and rural settings

Other activities that the company or organization wish to sponsor in the community can be tailored to their interests by the VDP staff (e.g. a sponsor from the medical community could establish a health link between a rural government hospital and an urban hospital).



**Water Tank Construction Improves Village Health and Income**



**Village Cleaning Improves the Local Environment**



**Children Enjoying Toys from the Green Village Toy Library**

“The villagers can choose what they want to do and the VDP staff will give ongoing guidance continuously. Access to loans is not an obstacle anymore. The VDP is the right doctor with the right medicine, curing poverty at the root cause.”

Charoen Suksawad,  
Kok Klang Tambon Administration Organization Chairman





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## SCHOOL-BASED INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### The Importance of Education

Since youth will one day be the leaders of their community, it is important to instill a sense of responsibility in children of rural areas. That is why the Lamplaimat Pattana Primary School was launched with support from the business community as a private institution for rural children, at no cost, in Buriram province (four hours from Bangkok). Through its innovative learning process, students are capable of solving complex problems with a finite amount of resources. These teaching methods have been recognized as highly successful, and the school has won praise from the Thai Ministry of Education as well as international institutions. Today, the Lamplaimat Pattana School has expanded into secondary level with its unique, environmentally-friendly bamboo architecture.



Bamboo Architecture of the Lamplaimat Pattana Secondary School

### School-Based Development

Because education is so crucial to all other aspects of development, the Village Development Partnership uses the Lamplaimat Pattana Schools as a model for change in economic and social advancement of nearby villages who now perceive the school as a place of learning for people of all ages. The Lamplaimat Pattana Schools benefit the entire community, since thousands of visitors observe the educational techniques and receive training in its unique methodology. The primary school has been designated as “a world class school” by the University of Tasmania, Australia.



Children Understand Their Roles as Responsible Citizens

### Democracy and Future Leadership

In each sponsored community, a Village Youth Government of young people aged 14 to 24 are elected to be trained in democracy, leadership, project proposals, practical business skills, human rights, and transparency. With the practical experience gained, many new young leaders have emerged from these villages with some being elected to the local government.



Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Visits Lamplaimat Pattana Primary School

“Lamplaimat Pattana is a world-class school, with a high quality of education comparable to privately-run international schools.”

2006 Study by the Faculty of Education  
at the University of Tasmania



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## BENEFITS FOR THE VILLAGE



### Empowered Villagers

Providing access to capital so villagers can start small, profitable businesses helps the villagers eradicate poverty and acquire long-term financial stability. The improvement in the quality of life will ultimately provide the villagers with better education, improved access to health care, and a cleaner environment. The Village Development Partnership empowers communities in gender equality and to work together and learn from one another.

### Sustainable Communities

Since the plan for development is made by the villagers themselves, the gender-balanced Village Development Committee (50% men and 50% women) makes a strong pledge to end poverty within six years. While the total financial support is limited to US\$100 per head over the first few years, the partnership with a sponsoring company, organization, or individual goes well into the long-term future in the form of advice and additional mentoring, as the Village Development Partnership model achieves sustainability in all development areas.

“ This project has brought so much more to our homes. In the past, villages were only concerned about their own household. We would rarely meet with people outside the family. The meetings and group activities have gradually brought all of us together. Now, we are involved in developing our village’s future and have learned to care for others. We are proud of our accomplishments. ”

Village Development Bank Accountant,  
Sponsored by Maitri Trust Fund



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## REWARDS FOR YOUR COMPANY



### Socially Responsible Organizations

The VDP began as being sponsored solely by companies, but today there are universities, schools, and families involved in the partnership. Investment in the VDP will provide a company or organization's employees, clients, and other stakeholders with a new perspective on philanthropy, and it will encourage their roles as responsible citizens. Employees of many companies have expressed their pride and fulfillment in their company's involvement. Leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility will strengthen organizational identity as an innovator in effective and meaningful community outreach. By promoting sustainable models for development, companies, individuals, and organizations give something back to their community and society.

“ Without a lot of money, without a lot of technology or science, he (Mechai Viravaidya) and his organization have had a big impact. ”

President of Global Health - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Tachi Yamada

### Philanthropy for the Young: The Green Village Toy Library

To promote Individual Social Responsibility, the Green Village Toy Library program has been launched so that young children can recognize the joy of doing public good and, at the same time, be introduced to philanthropy. Urban children are requested to donate some of their toys and books to rural children. Toys are loaned to village children in exchange for community service and tree-planting. Along with the Village Development Partnership, this is an excellent opportunity for company employees to get involved in this new model of philanthropy.



Green Village Toy Library Managed by Youth





# THE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

## CONTACT US

*To learn more about how you and your organization can be part of revolutionizing sustainable rural development, please contact Mechai Viravaidya, Dr. Tanatat Puttasuwan, or Jerry Blakeley.*

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Population & Development International (PDI) is dedicated to eradicating poverty through empowerment, participatory, and self-help programs in many parts of the world. In Thailand, PDI works hand in hand with the Population & Community Development Association (PDA), and the Mechai Viravaidya Foundation (MVF) to implement the Village Development Partnership.

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Village Development  
Partnership  
[villagedevelopmentpartnership.org](http://villagedevelopmentpartnership.org)

Population & Community  
Development Association  
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