

Thailand



Organization: Foundation for Community-Soul (FCS)

Location: Phayaram, Surin Province, Thailand

Solution: Equipping a traditional mulberry silk community to become 'climate-smart farmers'

Factsheet Period: First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (16 months)



In Surin Province, Thailand, an initiative support mulberry silk cultivation @FCS

Sericulture, or silk farming, is an integral part of the traditional way of life and culture in Thailand, with the country one of the major silk production countries in the world (<https://inserco.org/en/statistics>). However, this centuries-old practice has come under increasing threat from rising temperatures and extreme weather events. This initiative empowers a traditional mulberry silk community to become "climate-smart farmers" by leveraging local wisdom, introducing weather forecast technologies, promoting women's roles in climate adaptation, and maintaining fertilizer quality. The key objective is to reduce income losses from natural disasters, ensuring sustainable livelihoods.



Key achievements

- Trained 400 community members on farming innovation
- Trained 105 community members and 1,200 Indigenous women in climate adaptation and on digital marketing & social media, boosting their income and participation in local governance
- Involved representatives from all sub-villages in Phayaram, covering 12,787 acres of land
- Empowered women leaders to integrate gender-responsive approaches in decision-making, with one elected as the first woman head of Phayaram Village
- Visited Tomioka Silk Mill and Tajima Yahei Sericulture Farm in Gunma Prefecture, Japan, to learn about sericulture techniques from global leaders in quality silk production
- Foundation personnel upskilled on social entrepreneurship, grant writing and facilitation skills to become a self-sustaining organization



Social impact

- Development of farmers' skills (in design-thinking and digital marketing) to enhance value of products and ensure sustainable livelihoods
- Empowered women through leadership training, economic opportunities, climate adaptation skills, and enhanced participation in decision-making, fostering gender inclusion and resilience within communities



Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA Grant: \$125,000 (initial grant)
- In-kind support from local government: \$7,000
- Government of Canada: \$20,000



Adaptation benefits

- Introduction of weather forecasting to reduce loss from natural disasters and temperature fluctuations
- Use of natural dyes to avoid environmental damage
- Raised community awareness about gender and climate resilience



Innovation

- The first initiative in Thailand to tackle silk mulberry cultivation using a climate adaptation approach
- Blending local wisdom with best practices from Japan (a global leader in sericulture technology cultivation)
- Training community members in digital marketing to reach new markets for their organic silk and by-products



Replication potential

- Model can be replicated in at least 19 other silk making provinces that face similar climate issues
- FCS is also expanding beyond sericulture production to promote sustainable practices in silk-weaving and local crafts, such the use of natural dyes

Investability

Revenue per year	Farmers earn \$6,000 annually from silk production, while FCS does not currently generate revenue.
Sustaining criteria	Fully funded by UNDP-AFCIA grant, while seeking new donors and investors interested in green products. Exploring microfinancing model for farmers and helping them create premium products with higher margins. Working with the Tourism Authority of Thailand to promote their products to new and international markets.
Financial innovation	Exploring aggregation of silk production for optimal pricing. Training upskilled community members on digital marketing to reach new markets for their organic silk and by-products. Working with local bank to educate local cooperatives and non-profits to operate microfinancing schemes. Individual farmers receiving financial training to manage their own funding.
Expected return	Exploring traditional loans and revenue-based payment models: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional loan scenario: The annual interest rate is approximately 5%, with investors receiving 3% and the FCS receiving 2% • Revenue-based payment scenario: The annual interest rate for a five-year loan is 5.39%, with a total repayment cap of 130% of the original loan amount.