

## **Land conflict and community land reform in Thailand**

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There are 3 main topics

- I. Strategy and working approaches of Northern Peasants Federation (NPF)
- II. Overview of land conflict in Thailand
- III. A case of community land reform

### **I. History and background of NPF**

In 1974, the Farmers Federation of Thailand had been struggled for their livelihood with the government. During the conflicts, some leaders fled to the jungle to join the Communist Party of Thailand. After the CPT failed in 1980s, those leaders have still carried on their ideologies and want to see justice in the society so they have been organized again once the constitution has been more opened.

#### Strategies

Problems of farmers mainly related to injustice of the social structure and government policies. NPF believes in the power of people and the freedom under constitution, therefore the strategies of NPF is organizing farmer movement and negotiate with the government to change their policies based on problems of communities.

#### Organization structure

NPF has been established since 1999 which comprised of 7 People's Organizations

- 1) Northern Farmer Network (NPN) Mainly they are Karen ethnic group living in forest and mountains area, work on the issues of natural resource management in state protected area
- 2) Northern Peasants Alliance (NPA) Mainly they are people living in lowland area. They work on 4 main issues 1) Land 2) Water 3) Debt 4) Product price
- 3) Rural Women Network, they work on women rights for equality of women in rural area
- 4) Indigenous Peoples Network of Thailand, comprised of different ethnic groups that having problems about rights and citizenship
- 5) The group of affected people of Mae Mok reservoir in Lampang province. They demand for compensation and land from the government
- 6) The group of effected people of Mae Mor coal mine in Lampang. They demand to move the coal mine due to health and environmental impacts
- 7) Traditional wine producer, they demand for the rights to produce wine legally

## **II. Land conflict in Thailand**

### Problems

- Land and forest zoning by the state that overlapped with the land of local people and many of them are ethnic groups that their livelihood depends on the forest. Many of local people have been arrested.

- Due to land speculation in 1992 during economic booming in Thailand and a lot of the land was bought by the capitalist for ... with the banks. Also problems of corruption in the land titling process and this has brought about problems of land ownership distribution. Then after economic crisis the land in the bank become NPL or the debt that can not generate income and those capitalist could not pay back the debt and the land has been ignored and unused.

Improperly land use and extension of cash crops and plantations such as maize, rubber, palm in the form of contract farming. The impacts are such as

- 1) Extension and intensive use of land including encroachment of forest area
- 2) Loss of biodiversity and native genetics
- 3) Loss of food security

## **III. Community Land Reform: case of Baan Pong village, Sansai District, Chiang mai**

### **Management concept**

- Land is not commodity by producing factor for feeding society
- Land is producing factors that everyone is able to access equally

### Land use principles

- Access to legal right is the highest aim. The state must accept land management by community and issue the community land title legally
- Proposes of land use is to generate income for the farmers, safe for consumer and environment and to preserve native genetics
- Propose of organization administration is participatory of men, women and youth

### Community and reform by Baan Pong village

- 500 rais (80 hectares) has been allocated for 79 families. The land originally belong to their grandparents before but they lost their land to the capitalists by selling and cheating. The land was used for building a resort and it was mortgaged to the bank. This plot of land has been unused for more than 20 years
- The land has been zoned into 2 areas, for residential area and farming. One family has 2 rais and 2 ngan ( 0.4 hectares)
- The land has been used for farming such as fruits and vegetable by using integrated farming agriculture. They use both organic farming and some still use chemical. They can earn about 40,000 – 50,000 Baht per year ( 1,200 – 15,00 USD)
- They also has basic infrastructure management such as water irrigation management
- They have initiated Community Land Title that they are able to reduce the loss of land to outsiders