

Art as a mechanism of youth and community development in Thailand

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This paper is an ongoing research based on the observation of art and the artists' role in developing and healing the various communities in Thailand. The insights and observations gathered from arts programs in education, community development, and youth participation. The speculations are drawn from different case studies ranging from academic contribution, artist contribution and the private/commercial organization. As there are numerous congested communities in Thailand, there are still long ways to develop those communities. Policy and strategy are formed to make the changes, but still some of them are too general and not fit-in to the particular context of the community.

Art as a mechanism for youth participation in community development has been introduced to many Thai communities for this case is the Smaedum community, on western urban fringe of Bangkok. This is an academic service project by REDEK (Research and Design unit of KMUTT), under The School of Architecture and Design of KMUTT, together with the collaboration The Crown Property Bureau and other sectors drawing the Master Plan for Development Smaedum Area which covers the land area of 300 Rais comprises of 3 communities with about 735 family households. Young participants went through several art workshops at the initial development.

The second case study is the Artist contribution, on Re-Writing the City Project, Pom Mahakarn community located in the heart of Bangkok's historical area of Rattanakosin Island. This is the cross cultural art experiment in questioning on the making of Historical city conservation with contribution from artist, academic, NGO and also the media.

The third case study is the art therapy of Uthan Mahamitra, who worked with the Tsunami victim children in Southern part of Thailand and produced an art document with the children art work. Also art was introduced as the way to express and also to heal their horrifying past.

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