



THAILAND'S PATH TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

HOW DOES "SEP" GET US TO "SUSTAINABILITY"?

We make sure that our decision-making is in line with three basic principles.



THAILAND POVERTY REDUCTION

Just 30 years ago, 67 percent of Thais were living in poverty. Today, that figure is about 10 percent and falling, and just 0.6 percent are living in extreme poverty.

67%
30 years ago

10%
Today

Thailand's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is a powerful tool to end poverty and help others achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

NO POVERTY. The first goal of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations sounds so simple, but has proven enormously difficult to achieve. Despite progress made by many nations in recent decades, more than 3 billion people, half of the world's population, still live on less than \$2.50 a day. Even more heartbreaking, a billion of the world's children remain mired in hardship and want. The stubborn persistence of poverty has led some to doubt whether it can ever be defeated. Many believe it can be, but the question remains: how?

One nation with a proven formula for success in alleviating privation is the Kingdom of Thailand. A nation of 69 million situated at the crossroads of Southeast Asia, "Thailand has made remarkable progress in social and economic development ... with sustained strong growth and impressive poverty reduction," said the World Bank. Just 30 years ago, 67 percent of Thais were living in poverty. Today, that figure is about 10 percent and falling, and just 0.6 percent are living in extreme poverty. Investment and exports helped generate economic growth and development, but Thai leaders have also adopted a set of policies to spread the gains more widely among the people and ensure they are sustainable. Those policies are driven by the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

Developed by Thailand's late constitutional monarch King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy's central goal is to alleviate poverty and hardship. King Bhumibol formulated the philosophy not in the comfort of a palace, but in the field: by working hands on with poor villagers in every corner

of his kingdom over a period of decades; researching, experimenting, using trial and error to find what works, and with the participation and feedback from the villagers themselves.

"The Sufficiency Economy places humanity at the center, focuses on well-being rather than wealth, makes sustainability the very core of the thinking, understands the need for human security and concentrates on building people's capabilities to develop their potential," wrote Joana Merlin-Scholtes of the United Nations Development Program.

Many of the philosophy's tenets and principles were piloted in more than 4,000 royal development projects and 8,000 model Sufficiency Economy Villages. Pilots that proved successful were often adopted and scaled up by the government to amplify and extend their benefits to more people nationwide.

The philosophy's approach blends knowledge and virtue: reasonableness, moderation and prudent decision-making are at its core. As Thailand's economy took off with a strong component of agricultural exports, many farmers engaged in mono-cropping to pursue as much profit as possible. But when market forces beyond their control sent prices crashing, they found themselves in debt and without enough to eat. That convinced many farmers to try the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. They began growing vegetables, raising chickens and fish, and reducing their dependency on a single crop. The farmers who diversified were able to withstand subsequent economic shocks and uplift their families.

Those same principles can be applied to many fields – business, government, even life in general. Nations that practice prudent stewardship of increasingly scarce natural resources, and encourage rather than repress diversity in their societies and economies, increasingly find they have the human capital, wealth and innovation to survive and thrive in an increasingly unpredictable world.

It shouldn't be surprising that a practical approach to sustainable development would be found in a relatively small country that isn't ranked among the global economic powerhouses. Because it is often in small developing nations where the negative impacts of globalization can hit hardest and present the most difficult challenges to overcome.

In the spirit of fellowship with all nations and the global poor, Thailand has been offering its knowledge and experience with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to all those in need. And the world has been welcoming Thailand's contribution. There is a "need to embrace the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for the Sustainable Development Goals in all the key sectors," said Amina Mohamed of Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To date, representatives from 105 countries have participated in Sufficiency Economy Philosophy seminars and trainings.

No poverty, the First Sustainable Development Goal, may not be that simple to achieve and may take a long time to accomplish. But Thailand is among the believers that it can be achieved. And so it will continue to share its Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. Because those living in hardship and want simply cannot be left behind.

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