

Dreaming **BIG** in T

BY SRISAK THAIARRY

The National Council for Child and Youth Development (NCYD) has been the driving force behind child and youth development in Thailand's private sector for 24 years—mobilizing the government and business communities to empower youth in fulfilling their dreams.

As the national-level coordinating body, NCYD initiates, coordinates, supports and advocates for child and youth development through participation from all stakeholders, especially children and youth themselves. Our ultimate goal: to empower children and youth to fulfill their aspirations of living happy, healthy lives, becoming self-reliant and participating meaningfully in the development of their communities and their country.

The following examples illustrate some of the many ways in which NCYD realizes its mission.

Dreams Come True

Ta, Diew and Pong lead youth groups in Bangkok. They have years of experience in launching innovative social action activities, serving as catalysts for an extensive collaboration among youth networks across the country. In 2006, they helped organize Young Expo 2006—where 24 youth networks and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security gave youth groups a platform to exhibit their achievements in “doing something good for others.”

Since then, the three social activists have worked to support aspiring young leaders who dreamed of doing good works but did not know how to begin or where to look for support.

Together, Ta, Diew and Pong developed what would become the *Youth with 1,000 Dreams* project, which launched in 2007 with a US\$466,000 grant from the Ministry of Social Development

and Human Security. NCYD provided grant coordination, financial management and advocacy support.

In its first year, the *1,000 Dreams* project supported more than 300 youth-led initiatives, benefiting more than 44,000 young people. Group leaders also gained skills through training in project development, implementation, leadership and critical thinking. Project goals now include supporting at least 400 youth-initiated activities in 2008—activities that together will touch the lives of more than 60,000 young dreamers.

Flair for the Dramatic

Two years ago, a group of students in a Bangkok secondary school became interested in the impact of commercial advertisements on young people. They decided to conduct a study on the subject and discussed effective ways to communicate the undesirable effects of ads to their friends and peers. They formed a drama troupe called the *Young People for Creative Media Group* and sought financial and technical assistance for their activities. Since 2006, NCYD has provided long-term funding to help the group run a mobile theater unit that regularly conducts plays in schools and public places.



A mobile theater troupe educates youth about commercial advertisements, an initiative supported by NCYD.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NCYD

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One of the funding mechanisms we use to support such activities is through NCYD's Children's Hour Project, a collaborative effort of 28 national companies to mobilize corporate and public contributions for our child and youth development work. Last year, Children's Hour raised US\$120,000—enabling more than 100 youth groups, NGOs and schools to impact the lives of 1,600-plus young people and adults.

Economic Recovery

The dreams of young people affected by the 2004 tsunami are of a different kind. With their lives disrupted by the disaster, these youth hope to begin anew and move forward. Some needed to be re-trained and assisted so they could resume their occupation or begin a new career. NCYD's *Project of Children and Youth in Tsunami-Affected Areas*, funded by Nokia through IYF, responds to their needs and provides opportunities to shape a brighter future for themselves and their families.

By the end of 2007, 180 youth affected by the tsunami participated in training programs in various occupational areas, including boat construction and repair, motorcycle repair, electronics, computers and eco-tourism. They also benefited from enhanced life and entrepreneurial skills training. Today, nearly a dozen of them have jobs and earn enough income to be self-sufficient.

Thirty have received support to set up motorcycle repair shops within their own communities.

Amarit, 17, is one of these lucky youth. Faced with the tsunami's economic aftermath, Amarit had to quit school after only completing primary education. In 2007, however, he was accepted into the project's motorcycle repair course. Upon completion, a trainer helped Amarit establish a small motorcycle shop in his local community. He feels confident about his growing business and now earns enough to help support his family.

Of course, these are just some examples of how Thailand's young people are helping to create a better life for themselves, their friends and their society. They have 1,000 dreams—and NCYD helps make them come true. **Y**

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She received her Masters degree at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States.

What Is the National Council for Child and Youth Development?

Established in 1984, NCYD is the national coordinating body for child and youth development in Thailand's private sector. NCYD's network includes:

- 77 member organizations
- 300 youth groups
- 200 schools
- Nine sub-regional and 50 provincial governments
- Government ministries and departments

NCYD's major strategies include:

- Promotion of child rights
- Assistance and development of children in difficult circumstances
- Support for youth empowerment and participation activities
- Capacity building for NGOs
- Policy advocacy
- Networking and resource mobilization

NCYD has been a member of the IYF global partner network since 1995, collaborating around leadership and life skills, career development, and support for vulnerable children in Thailand.

Across the Network

The IYF global network is a powerful force working on behalf of youth in nearly 70 countries and territories. Here are a few recent highlights from those at the heart of our work.

Foundation for Young Australians has merged with the Education Foundation, bringing together two of Australia's leading youth-serving organizations. **Adam Smith**, an IYF Board member and CEO of the Education Foundation, has been tapped as the new CEO for the merged group ...

Abring Foundation in Brazil has launched the *Programa a Primeira Infancia Vem Primeiro* [Early Childhood Comes First Program] to boost support for the enforcement of children's rights to education, health and protection ...

The Consuelo Foundation in the Philippines has published *Landas: A Condensed Report on Peace Building and the Non-formal Education Programs*—a guide to improving the lives of young people in war-torn Mindanao ...

Carmen Masias, a lifelong advocate for children's rights and a leader of **CEDRO** in Peru, was honored by the annual "World of Children" Awards as a 2007 Humanitarian Award Honoree. The award is known as the "Nobel Prize for Children."

New Additions

Every year, IYF welcomes outstanding partner organizations that work with us in communities around the world. Here are profiles of just a few that joined our global network in 2007.

ROMANIA // New Horizons Foundation

Launched in 2000, **New Horizons Foundation** (NHF) works to empower Romanian youth by engaging them in experiential education and service learning programs. Viata, one of NHF's flagship initiatives, is a state-of-the-art adventure education summer camp that attracts 1,500 participants every year. A second program, called IMPACT, is a school- and community-based service learning model that has developed 29 IMPACT Clubs in nine counties in Romania. By taking these programs to scale, NHF hopes to spark and sustain a national service learning movement across the country.

Working through a global youth initiative of IYF and Nokia, NHF will expand the IMPACT program to inspire and train more Romanian youth to become agents of change and increase their volunteer activities. Over the next three years, the program will help launch 150 additional IMPACT Clubs around the country.

www.new-horizons.ro

SENEGAL // Synapse Center

Since 2003, **Synapse Center** has promoted creative leadership and innovative entrepreneurship among Senegalese youth. Based in Dakar, the organization carries out employability training, leadership development, monthly seminars and annual conferences. In one such initiative, Synapse Center is working with Senegal's National Agency for Youth Employment to provide job training to 10,000 young people. The organization also helps young entrepreneurs access Senegal's National Fund for Youth Employment and hosts a small business incubator program.

Through IYF's Youth Empowerment Program, funded by Microsoft, the Synapse Center will implement an entrepreneurship program to benefit 2,200 young people in four areas of the country. In addition to job training, participants will benefit from job and internship placement as well as mentoring programs that involve partners in the private, public and nonprofit sectors.

www.synapsecenter.org

PAKISTAN // Rural Support Programmes Network

The **Rural Support Programmes Network** (RSPN) operates as a network of development organizations working to reduce poverty and improve sustainable livelihoods among impoverished Pakistanis. Founded in 2000, RSPN's youth-directed programs include special vocational and technical training courses, entrepreneurial skills training, business development services and access to microfinance and small loans. Funders include DFID-UK, USAID and the World Bank.

RSPN hosts the National Secretariat for IYF's Education & Employment Alliance in Pakistan, managing the program in partnership with IYF. RSPN oversees four workforce development programs and actively manages a comprehensive life skills program. The workforce development programs prepare young people for jobs in the service, hospitality and energy industries.

www.rspn.org