The Asia Foundation

THE CONTESTED CORNERS OF ASIA

Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance

The Case of Southern Thailand

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Contents

List of Terms
and Acronyms

ADB	: Asian Development Bank
AEC	: ASEAN Economic Community
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AusAID	: Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
BDA	: Bangsamoro Development Agency
BLMI	: Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute
BRA-KDP	: Badan Reintegrasi Aceh - Kecamatan Developement Program - (Community-Based Reintegration Assistance for Conflict Victims Program)
BRN	: Barisan Revolusi Nasional or National Revolutionary Front
CDD	: Community-Driven Development
DAI	: Development Alternatives, Inc. (USAID's partner)
DFID	: Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EU	: European Union
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
ICG	: International Crisis Group
IMT-GT	: Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle
JICA	: Japan International Cooperation Agency
Juwae	: Malay term for Patani Freedom Fighter
KPI	: King Prajadhipok's Institute
LDI	: Local Development Institute (national NGO)
MAC	: Muslim Attorney Center
NESDB	: National Economic and Social Development Board
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	: National Reconciliation Commission
OECD	: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

Panop	: Thai Government Program, *Self-Sufficiency Economy*
Panom	: Thai Government Program, *Quality of Life Development*
PSU	: Prince of Songkhla University
SBPAC	: Southern Border Provinces Administration Center
SNC	: Subnational Conflict
Tambon	: Sub-District administrative zone
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	: United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	: United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

Aid agencies aiming to address the subnational conflict in the Deep South confront a difficult, entrenched situation. The structure of the Thai state, including its regional economic disparities, highly centralized governance, and ethnic nationalism is a cause of many of the problems experienced in the Deep South and a barrier to future transformation. Enduring inequalities continue to feed a sense of resentment among many Malay Muslims and foster a violent response on the part of a small minority of them. Violence is also exacerbated by local competition for resources and power. The Thai Government has not yet been able or willing to enact significant changes that might help address these causes and encourage a negotiated peace process. The insurgents have not shown that they are ready to negotiate a peaceful settlement, and serious questions remain regarding their capacity to collectively negotiate due to divisions among the core groups.

In foreign policy and aid circles, the southern Thailand case is the least well known of the country cases considered in this research, and has by far the lowest levels of international aid. However, compared to Aceh and Mindanao, this case is important because it is much closer to the norm in terms of subnational conflict in Asia. The protracted low intensity violence, contestation over state authority, low levels of international involvement, and major constraints on international assistance due to government sensitivities, have parallels in many other subnational conflicts across the region.

This report looks at development assistance to the area since the re-eruption of violence in 2004, focusing on internationally-funded initiatives. The report asks: Is there a meaningful role for aid if there is no transition to peace underway? How can international aid effectively address critical issues in a highly constrained, politically-sensitive environment?

The report draws on new data, including a large perception survey, locality case studies, a stocktaking of aid, and key informant interviews. The report also utilizes official statistics, violence data, and previous studies of southern Thailand.

Understanding Southern Thailand

Violent resistance against the perceived domination of the state in the Deep South of Thailand occurred over several periods during the 20th century, before declining in the early 1980s. The current insurgency built up momentum from the late 1990s, but was not officially recognized until 2004 when the number and scale of violent incidents rose rapidly.

Violent unrest in the Deep South of Thailand stems primarily from long-running tensions between the nation state and a minority population. Malay Muslims

make up a clear majority of the Deep South's population of around two million yet are a tiny minority—only a little over 2% at the national level. Like most conflicts, the conflict in the Deep South is not purely one-dimensional. The main axis of contestation—between the Thai state and Malay Muslims—is complicated by other forms of tension and violence. At the local level, inter-elite violence and inter-communal tensions are sometimes intertwined with the broader axis of state-minority contestation. Compared to the Philippines and Aceh, however, these localized forms of contestation are less significant in terms of violent conflict.

Transforming the Conflict

Aid agencies can play a supporting role in the search for peace, as many agencies have already demonstrated. In a middle-income country with ample government budget and without an ongoing peace process, the main contribution that aid agencies can make is to promote policy change that increases the likelihood of reaching a just solution to the conflict.

Most conventional forms of development and post-conflict assistance are not likely to contribute to transformation. The traditional goods provided by international aid programs are designed to improve economic growth, deliver better services, or reduce poverty, but do not directly address the causes of the ongoing conflict. Unless these development interventions are accompanied by other measures that help to change government policies or transform institutions in the Deep South,

they are unlikely to have much impact on the conflict.

The southern conflict touches on sensitive issues of both national identity and territorial control, and the Thai Government closely monitors donor and other international involvement in the Deep South. In this environment, external and non-governmental actors aiming to promote peace are likely to have the greatest impact if they take a long-term and pragmatic perspective. They can support small steps to help organizations that are interested in promoting peace, changing national and regional-level policies, offering opportunities for constructive debate on possible reforms, and/or finding other ways to 'nudge' the conflict towards peace.

The most urgent priority is to help initiate and sustain a political transition that will move the context from conflict to durable peace. Significant changes in government policy could help to initiate a credible transition. These measures would also build public confidence that change is possible. Significant measures and symbolic gestures could encourage local leaders and the wider public to think that change is viable. However, in order to make a sustainable difference, reforms would need to go beyond symbolic gestures and instead make a genuine difference to people's lived experiences and perceptions of injustice and inequality. Some form of new governance structure or self-determination within the Thai state, alongside special allowances or dispensations to help

redress key enduring inequalities, could help to alleviate the underlying drivers of the conflict.

Aid Strategy and Practices

Thailand is a middle-income, moderately high-capacity state that has seen rapid economic development over the past 40 years. Historically, foreign aid helped to bring most Thais out of poverty, build infrastructure, provide universal education, and improve healthcare. However, these changes have also contributed to ongoing inequalities and perceptions of injustice in the Deep South. Over the years, aid agencies rarely demonstrated interest in, or sensitivity to, the specific context of the Deep South. Even today most aid to Thailand remains focused on the core central growth region around Bangkok, and arguably has contributed to the skewed development processes that have added to tensions in the Deep South.

Current foreign aid flows are very small in comparison with Thai Government budgets and the wider domestic economy. For example in 2009, the Thai Government approved a 3-year special budget of 76 billion baht (then US$ 2.4 billion) for the Deep South, whereas from 2000 to 2010, official aid commitments to the area were a total of only US$17 million. The subnational conflict in the Deep South of Thailand presents a challenging environment for international aid agencies interested in promoting peace. There is no immediately obvious role for foreign aid in support of a peace process, and the Thai state, like many others across Asia and elsewhere, is generally reluctant to accept external involvement.

Those agencies that have found ways to support peace promotion typically prioritize human rights, equality and justice rather than a narrower and more conventional development agenda. Also, aid agencies engaging in the Deep South have tended to adopt a politically-aware approach and have recognized that long-term peace requires changes in how the state operates. All donors work through intermediaries, or implementing organizations. Some channel most of their funds through one or two organizations (mainly national or international NGO). Other donors work with a variety of institutions and agencies.

Most of the international agencies that address conflict in the Deep South have recognized that the most critical level of contestation is between insurgent leaders, or self-appointed representatives of the minority population, and the central Thai state. Generally speaking, aid agencies funding development in the Deep South have a sound understanding of the causes and dynamics of violence. These donors recognize the need to transform institutions, and use their limited resources and influence to encourage policy that helps build a basis for peace.

The majority of aid agencies addressing the conflict have adopted a thematic approach and aim primarily to influence government policies and improve how the state operates in the area. Other agencies

directly promote reconciliation by funding peace promotion or promoting negotiations to end the violence. Practical and critical elements of aid agency working methods are: setting priorities locally rather than following global policy prescriptions; building a strong knowledge base; and gradually developing selective relationships with domestic institutions.

Aid and Conflict at the Community Level

Programs at the community level can only indirectly address the key transformative factors, largely because the conflict has been generated and perpetuated by political dynamics above (or outside of) the community level. Compared to government funding, only a few donor-funded programs target a specific geographical area or project site.

This study's research focused on the complexity and risks of working at the community level, and particularly on how aid programs interact with local political and conflict dynamics. The research identified two key factors that need to be considered in community-based programs:

- *Significant variation between local communities.* This variation means that aid programs must be customized for local conditions, and monitoring must involve regular field visits.

- *Local political dynamics shape aid programs* (not vice versa). The nature of local political dynamics shapes the implementation and impact of aid programs to a much larger extent than aid programs shape local politics.

Without addressing these factors there is a risk that intervention unwittingly exacerbates tensions, for example, by fuelling local-level corruption. Additional local factors that affect the potential impact of community-level programs are: elements of village-level governance, the ethnic makeup of the community, mechanisms for delivering services and goods, 'points of entry' to the community, and individuals associated with the project who directly engage with beneficiaries.

Recommendations for Aid Agencies in the Current Context

- *Focus on improving institutions to achieve transformative outcomes.* In the absence of a transition process, it is critical for aid agencies to continue working with government and civil society at multiple levels, from national and regional agencies, to local ones. The objective is to promote positive institutional change—even if these shifts are gradual and protracted. Additionally, donors can support domestic actors who are advocating for peace negotiations. Operational approaches need to be flexible, however, and adjust to changing political dynamics in order to seize opportunities as they arise.

- *Improve conflict sensitivity for all development programs at the national level.* Larger agencies should put greater emphasis on the principles of 'Do No Harm' across their country programs in Thailand, especially for national programs focused on governance, justice and education.

- *Gradually establish contextually-defined responses.* In order to establish relevant programs, aid agencies must build institutional relationships and localized knowledge over time. They need to ensure the support and confidence of key government agencies while also retaining their neutrality. In addition, they should devote time and effort to building working relationships with intermediaries in the Deep South itself, rather than relying on national bodies. Programs should respond as well to conditions on the ground, learning over time and adapting accordingly.

- *Sponsor monitoring and analytic work.* Monitoring impact in the Deep South is exceedingly challenging, however, more can be done to monitor conditions and results. This is a potential area for greater donor coordination to ensure that multiple aspects of the conflict, and not just violence data, are systematically being documented, analyzed and used to inform both donor and government policy.

Operational Recommendations

- *Initiate alternative funding modalities.* Insulate programs in subnational conflict areas from standard donor agency rules to allow for quicker response and greater flexibility.

- *Take the time to build relationships.* Building relationships takes time and experience, especially if funding is designed to support organizational development.

- *Provide long-term institutional support to promising local partners.* Long-term institutional support is critical for developing local institutions with the potential to bring about transformative impacts.

- *Understand the intermediary chain.* The intermediary chain is critical for ensuring successful program implementation and providing a crucial feedback loop for donor agencies. It is important for agencies to spend time building relationships with intermediaries, and programs should consider how to build the capacity of intermediaries from the Deep South.

- *Adopt flexible partnership arrangements.* Aid providers should avoid trying to change their partners' structure, formal status, or operations, solely for the purposes of accepting donor funding.

• *Regularize donor information sharing.* Donors currently informally share information regarding their programs, however, it is important to hold regular meetings to share experiences, avoid duplication and identify potential knowledge gaps.

Recommendations for Aid Agencies in the Event of a Peace Process Gaining Traction

• *Continue support for improving institutions* that address the range of inequalities that perpetuate resentment and fuel violence.

• *Build trust and confidence in the peace process* of insurgent leaders and fighters, as well as the Thai state and the general public. Ensuring continued confidence in the transition process might be achieved through high profile international support to the peace process, or clear commitments to support crucial actors during a transition (such as insurgents or 'threatened' Buddhist minority populations in the conflict areas).

• *Support programs that will be necessary as the peace process advances.* Programs should provide expertise and support on issues that may arise such as: human rights, local governance, justice or amnesty arrangements; addressing minority grievances; and raising public awareness. Programs could take the form of support for dialogue forums on alternative governance arrangements, capacity building for those institutions likely to support, or be directly involved in implementing any new governance arrangements, and regional or national awareness-raising campaigns.

• *Monitor shifts in the conflict and tensions* that might arise by supporting ongoing monitoring initiatives and commissioning periodic research.

1. Introduction

The southernmost provinces of Thailand, also known as the Deep South, have been affected by subnational conflict for more than a century. According to the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, the conflict dates from 1902, making it the oldest modern conflict in Asia that is still active. While the conflict has been quite low intensity for most of the past century, the level of violence has escalated significantly in the past nine years. International Crisis Group recently referred to it as "Southeast Asia's most violent internal conflict."[1] Of the three country cases in this study, the southern Thailand case is the least well known within foreign policy and aid circles, and has by far the lowest levels of international aid. However, this case is particularly important as it represents one of the most common forms of subnational conflict in

Asia. Donor access to the conflict areas has been tightly controlled by the Thai Government for both security and sovereignty reasons. It is arguably the most challenging context for development aid to contribute to peace-building outcomes.

The conflict is concentrated in an area along the Thai-Malaysia border, where the majority of the local population is ethnically Malay and Muslim. The conflict-affected area consists of three provinces, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and the southernmost four districts in Buddhist-majority Songkhla province. This group has a distinctive ethno-religious identity and history that predates the modern establishment of Thailand by several hundred years. The region has a combined population of 1.8 million people, with more than 75%

Figure 1.1. Map of southern Thailand

Localities indicated in research

ethnic Malay Muslims. While this ethnic population is a considerable majority in this area, they make up only 2.9% of the country's total population. As a result, the Deep South has been relatively marginal in Thailand's national politics and rapidly growing economy.

The conflict dates back to the period of state formation in Thailand in the early 1900s. Since that time, the region has been affected by sporadic cycles of separatist insurgency, with the most intense period since 2004. The region has seen incidents of violence on a daily basis from 2004 to 2013, including assassinations, bombings, roadside attacks, arson attacks, and occasional attacks on military installations.

The justification for separatist violence is generally based on long-running grievances of the Malay Muslim community with the Thai state. These justifications for resistance have been consistent over time and between insurgent groups, despite considerable fragmentation of insurgent networks. By most accounts, Malay Muslim grievances are based on perceptions of systematic discrimination in local governance, political marginalization, forced assimilation to the national Thai identity, and abuses of the local population by security forces and state officials. In interviews, insurgent leaders repeatedly stress how they associate the Thai state with oppression and inequality. Thailand's highly centralized political system gives little space for peaceful expressions of grievances locally and Malay Muslim leaders have had little influence in advocating for change at the national level.[2] Over time, government policies have become more tolerant and restrained, and poverty has decreased markedly; however, these measures have not been enough to reverse the legacy of grievances and resistance.

While the insurgency is ostensibly fighting for the rights of the Malay Muslim minority, nearly 60% of the victims of violence have been Muslims—many of them killed by insurgents. There is evidence that some portion of the violence is motivated by local rivalries and criminality. Yet these factors remain secondary to the main ethnic fault-lines and associated motivations for violence.

Compared to Aceh and Mindanao, this case is important because it is much closer to the norm in terms of subnational conflict in Asia. The subnational conflict in southern Thailand is quite similar to other subnational conflicts in Asia in terms of protracted historically low-intensity violence, contestation over state authority in the region, fragmented resistance groups, low levels of international involvement, and major constraints in providing international assistance due to government sensitivities. Thailand is a middle-income country, with a moderately high capacity state, that has seen rapid economic development over the past 40 years. As a result, most international aid programs closed in the 1990s, with the little remaining aid mostly focused on the rest of the country.

The defining characteristic of the southern Thailand case is the absence of a political transition—i.e., a peace negotiation or political reform process that

addresses the causes of the conflict. Despite several attempts in recent years, and more recently, there is still no credible effort to resolve the conflict through peace negotiations.[3] Without a clear political transition underway, it is highly unlikely that armed actors and conflict-affected communities will have confidence that their security will improve or that their grievances will be addressed. As a result, they are likely to see government aid as a hand-out intended to buy their loyalty and win 'hearts and minds'.

Lack of a transition towards peace raises critical questions for international agencies providing aid in the conflict areas in Thailand. Is there a meaningful role for aid if no transition is underway? How can aid effectively address critical issues in a highly constrained, politically-sensitive environment? With limited scope to promote peace through economic development and service delivery, aid agencies need to consider how else they can support the necessary political change. Possible approaches in the Deep South include providing support for key government institutions that are considering reforms, or building civil space for discussions on how to improve governance issues that fuel the conflict. Without careful consideration, aid programs risk having no impact on peacebuilding or, at worst, exacerbating tensions.

The Thailand case also highlights the importance of influencing the national government, and supporting key reform efforts that address the core grievances in the conflict. It is likely that a sustainable end to conflict in the Deep South will require greater willingness among key national political actors to accept changes to how the area is governed. There is little evidence to suggest that purely economic and/or social protection initiatives intended to win 'hearts and minds' in the Deep South will affect the dynamic of the conflict.

1.1 Understanding subnational conflict areas and the role of aid: Concepts

This report is part of a regional study of aid to subnational conflict areas. In addition to this case study of Thailand, the research also includes case studies of Aceh (Indonesia) and Mindanao (the Philippines), and a synthesis report. All three case study areas have experienced extended periods of violent subnational conflict, but vary in terms of current conditions of conflict or peace.

Subnational conflict is defined as armed conflict over control of a subnational territory, where an armed opposition movement uses violence to contest for local political authority, and ostensibly, greater self-rule for the local population.

Armed violence may take many forms, as competition between local elites and inter-communal violence may be closely linked to the vertical state-minority conflict. Subnational conflict areas typically have three over-lapping forms of contestation:

- *State-minority conflict* - active struggle between local political factions over the primary source of legitimate authority, and the presence and legitimacy of state actors and institutions in local governance;
- *Elite competition and conflicts* - rivalries between different actors or factions at the local level (often from same identity group)
- *Communal conflict* - tensions and violence between different identity (ethnic or religious) groups at the local level

State-minority contestation (vertical) can impact on inter-elite and communal conflicts when national leaders support key local elites to wrest control of political and economic powers from their rivals. Vice-versa, inter-elite and communal conflicts (horizontal) can feed into the state-minority contestation when the forces under the control of local warlords or traditional local leaders are mobilized by the state against the insurgents.

Figure 1.2 illustrates how these forms of contestation interact with each other.

State-minority Conflict
(Contested Governance)

Intra-elite Competition & Conflicts
(Secondary Political Settlement)

Communal Conflicts
(Inter-group Rivalries And Mistrust)
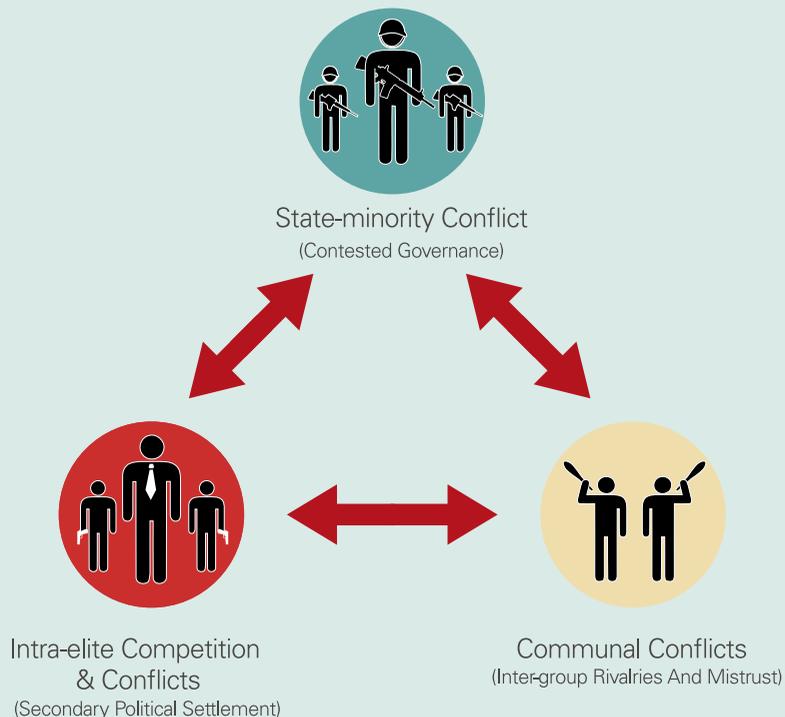
The need for transition

The study aims to assess the role that aid could play in helping support an end to violence and the establishment of durable peace in subnational conflict areas. The study conceptualizes each subnational conflict area as lying at different points along a spectrum of transition from war to peace. For most of southern Thailand's history, there has been no transition in place, with government and armed opposition groups focused on confrontation, and no clear signals that either side is willing to compromise. In Mindanao, a fragile transition, is potentially giving way to an accelerated transition that enjoys higher levels of confidence among armed actors, key leaders, and the wider population. Over the past decade, Aceh's transition has gained strength and the province may now be at an advanced transition stage, with most of the major institutional reforms implemented, and the locus of contestation and any remaining conflict shifting away from state-minority violence to local elite contestation. To break the cycles of subnational conflict, there is a need for areas to move through the different stages of transition, taking into account potential shifting levels of contestation.

Strategies for supporting transition

What are the key strategies for international actors to support a transition from war to peace? This study builds on the 2011 World Development Report, which describes a pathway by which conflict-affected countries and regions can emerge from protracted cycles of conflict and weak governance. For transitions to commence and advance, transformation will be needed in two key areas:

- **Restoring confidence.** For transitions to advance there will be a need to restore confidence among key actors and conflict-affected communities. In subnational conflict areas, restoring confidence relates to the expectation that the conflict situation (and political dynamics that influence the conflict) can be overcome, and that a credible transition to peace will occur. Governments and international actors can restore confidence by undertaking concrete steps or changes that are likely to result in increased confidence among key groups. As transitions advance, confidence will need to be shored up. A particular focus of confidence-building work should be on those who participated in the conflict (including insurgents, the state, and local elites) who must decide whether or not to continue using violence. If conflict actors believe that a credible transition is unfolding that will lead to greater personal security and attainment of some political objectives and personal benefits, then they are less likely to continue using violence.

- **Transforming institutions**. Subnational conflicts are symptoms of dysfunctional institutional arrangements. Moving along the war-to-peace spectrum thus necessitates the adaptation (or establishment) of institutions that can change the dynamics that fuel violent contestation. Transforming institutions in a subnational conflict environment

involves the creation or reform of processes, rules, or practices that manage violence and contestation, particularly around security, justice, and economic activity. Transforming institutions often translates into organizations, both government and non-government, that better meet the needs and aspirations of the conflict-affected communities. In cases of state-minority conflict, transforming institutions usually involves fundamental changes to state policies, organizations, and structures, which are contested by local non-state actors. Depending upon the context, institutional transformation may also focus on removing incentives for intra-elite contestation, by eliminating opportunities for rent-seeking, and promoting more transparent local governance.

Assessing the role of aid in supporting transition: developmental and transformational goals

Most aid projects typically have an explicit focus on development outcomes, such as improved livelihoods, better health and education rates, and local-level economic growth. In most subnational conflict areas, there are important needs in these areas and addressing them may play a long-term role in helping to cement peace. However, attending to development needs alone will not be enough to move subnational conflict areas along the war-to-peace spectrum.

If aid is to support this transition, it should help support improvements that address key factors sustaining the conflict through restoring confidence and/or

transforming key institutions relevant to the conflict.

Transformational change is fundamentally political. While international development programs are limited in their ability to influence this transition, they can play a key role in supporting or encouraging the changes needed to progress towards durable peace.

1.2 Objectives and focus of the southern Thailand case study

This case study aims to answer the fundamental question of how aid should be adapted for a conflict environment where no clear transition to peace is underway. For international development organizations, the goal to provide suggestions for how to work differently in this environment, based on in-depth analysis of the conflict, constraints on aid programs, and the outcomes of aid programs to date. For the Thai Government, the study aims to empirically analyze government policy and aid programs to the conflict area and provide recommendations on how the government could better encourage a peaceful end to the conflict.

To achieve these aims and develop a more comprehensive picture of the region, field research included in-depth analysis of conflict-affected communities, combined with analysis of conflict as well as aid from the regional and national level. Previous studies and evaluations have only focused on the conflict region as a whole,

1.3 Research methods

whereas this study also focused on specific communities in the conflict area in order to understand their experience with local conflict dynamics, as well as aid programs in their area. The localities included in the study are listed in Table 1.1.

This study contributes to understanding of subnational conflict areas by drawing on new primary field research on sensitive issues from areas and sources that are often inaccessible to researchers and aid practitioners. The three country cases

Table 1.1: Overview of conditions in selected localities

Sub-district (Province)	Religious/ethnic majority	Conflict intensity[i]	Aid programs present
Pattani Province			
Talohkapo	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: 20% Avg. violent incidents: 4.3	Oxfam (EU)
Paen	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: none Avg. violent incidents: 2.2	Save the Children (EU)
Thakham	Buddhist	Red zone villages: none Avg. violent incidents: 0.6	Oxfam (EU)
Bannok	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: none Avg. violent incidents: 0.7	None
Kuannori	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: 20% Avg. violent incidents: 1.7	Local Development Institute (World Bank)
Yala Province			
Thasap	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: 66.7% Avg. violent incidents: 7.2	Save the Children (EU)
Wangpaya	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: none Avg. violent incidents: 4.0	None
Narathiwat Province			
Koh Sathorn	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: none Avg. violent incidents: 5.4	Local Development Institute (World Bank)
Lohjud	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: none Avg. violent incidents: 0.2	Oxfam (EU)
Kawah	Malay Muslim	Red zone villages: 16.7% Avg. violent incidents: 4.7	None

included in this study were selected based on their shared conflict characteristics, and different stages of political transition from active conflict to durable peace. All three regions closely fit the definition of subnational conflict, and have a long history of conflict that is generally confined to a conflict area located in a peripheral region of the country. All three countries have middle-income status, with relatively stable, functioning central governments. However, the three cases capture a unique mix of stages of active conflict and peace.

The case study research in the three subnational conflict areas used mixed methods. Field research was conducted between October 2011 and July 2012. Key areas of data collection included:

- A detailed mapping of violence, socio-economic conditions, and aid flows to the subnational conflict area.
- Qualitative analysis of major donor practices, policies and programs through analysis of donor documents, analysis of macro aid flows, a review of recent literature and interviews with donor officials and implementing partners;[5]
- Perception surveys of conflict-affected populations living in the conflict area to assess their perceptions of the state, aid, insurgent movements, and key governance issues.
- Community-level ethnographic case studies of selected localities in subnational conflict areas to examine local political and conflict dynamics, and the interactions with aid programs at the local level;
- Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with elites, government officials, military officers, citizens, insurgents, and other influential actors in the conflict areas as well as at the national level;

The research included extensive efforts to understand the ground-level realities of people living in areas with protracted conflict. For the analysis of aid in each conflict area, the research team focused on specific communities rather than specific aid projects. This allowed the researchers to look at the experiences, perceptions and behavior of individual communities in the conflict area, and gain their perspectives across a range of aid projects. By focusing on multiple locations within each conflict area, the research team could analyze key areas of difference between conflict-affected communities, and the implications for aid impact and conflict at the local level. This approach also allowed the team to assess the aggregate effect that all types of development assistance—not just those that explicitly focused on reducing conflict—had on diverse local dynamics.

For each country case study, the project team selected 10 localities from across the conflict-affected area as the focus for the ethnographic research and perception surveys. The locality level selected was roughly comparable across the three countries in terms of population (25,000 to 50,000 people). In Thailand, the team selected localities at the sub-district (or tambon) level.

The research team used multi-stage, stratified random sampling to select the localities. In order to allow for accurate stratification, prior to the locality sampling, extensive data were collected on aid flows,

violence, and a variety of socio-economic indicators. In southern Thailand, the locality selection process was designed to examine rural areas with relatively similar levels of development, but with different levels of conflict intensity and with varying presence of international aid programs. One Buddhist majority sub-district was included as well to better understand the differences between the majority and minority populations in the area. Based on the presence of international aid programs, the sampling procedure stratified for both socio-economic profile and violence levels.[6]

Through the locality case studies, ethnographic analysis of local political and conflict dynamics addressed a major 'blind spot' for aid programs. With most aid project monitoring focused either on apolitical issues, or more macro factors, little systematic analysis is undertaken or data collected on how conflict actors and communities in subnational conflict areas perceive aid, and how they interact with it. Furthermore, by analyzing the local level, one can better understand how community-based programs interact with local conflict and political dynamics.[7]

The local research teams who conducted multiple visits to each sampled locality, were generally familiar with the area and local politics prior to the study. In many cases, the research teams documented local political networks and rivalries in order to track the implications for aid program targeting and beneficiary selection. These case studies utilized a political economy lens to investigate the complex interdependencies between local political power, access to resources, violence, governance, and aid flows.[8]

The *public perception surveys* were designed to allow for locality, or tambon-level, comparison within the conflict area. In the case of southern Thailand, the survey also included a comparator sample drawn from outside of the conflict area. The survey collected information on a range of topics including: respondents' welfare and economic opportunities; levels of trust towards other people, government, political parties, civil society groups, and security forces; peoples' experience with conflict and peace efforts; access to information; governance and political participation; access to services; experiences with (and views towards) development assistance; and level of fear and insecurity.

The Thailand sample consisted of 1,600 randomly-selected respondents in Narathiwat, Pattani, conflict-affected areas of Songkhla, and Yala, as well as a comparator sample of 400 respondents drawn from peaceful areas of Songkhla. In the case of Thailand, the survey sample included two separate groups. First, the project team randomly selected residents from the 10 conflict-affected localities in southern Thailand to allow for in-depth understanding of local dynamics and experiences with aid programs. The second sample was provincially representative, including non-conflict affected areas of neighboring Songkhla Province, which allowed for comparisons between populations in the conflict area and non-conflict area.

The research team devoted considerable effort to overcoming the challenges of data collection in conflict-affected areas. Both the perception survey and locality case studies were designed to minimize the anxiety of interviewees in discussing sensitive political and conflict-related issues. The ethnographic research and survey data collection were conducted primarily by local researchers who speak the same language as respondents, and were usually from the same ethnic group.[9] The perception survey instruments were designed using international best practices for surveys conducted in conflict and post-conflict zones. In all cases, the research team took extensive steps to ensure the safety and anonymity of respondents, using techniques that included randomized start points for enumeration teams; rapid, parallel enumeration to reduce the chances of survey teams being tracked; and the use of trusted intermediaries to negotiate access to challenging areas. The perception survey instruments were subjected to thorough in-situ pre-tests in each conflict area to filter out questions that were too sensitive, and to identify question designs that could safely probe sensitive issues. Furthermore, in order to triangulate the findings, the research process bolstered the validity of evidence by using independent channels to collect data from multiple sources.

Despite these measures, there were several challenges in data collection that may have impacted the findings. Conflict environments are notoriously challenging areas for perception survey accuracy, and as a result, survey results must be interpreted carefully. In southern Thailand, the primary challenge was the fear held by most respondents in conflict-affected areas. In these areas, there is generally no open public discussion about insurgents, the separatist movement, Malay identity and grievances, or sensitive aspects of governance. Most residents in the region are unsure of their safety when they give opinions. In some cases, respondents were unwilling to answer questions on sensitive topics, leading to higher non-response rates for these questions.

Many of the localities selected are heavily conflict-affected and, as a result, insecurity was a major challenge for the field research. While implementation of the perception surveys was not affected by insecurity, due to security restrictions, primary qualitative data collection was occasionally limited in some sample municipalities. While the researchers were able to obtain access to areas that are usually inaccessible to outsiders, inaccessibility and the high security risk made it impossible to conduct field spot checks. The perceived threat from local armed groups may have also had an impact on the accuracy of research on more sensitive issues. Furthermore, though attempts were made to conduct interviews anonymously, qualitative research was often conducted in the presence of local leaders.

2. Understanding the Subnational Conflict Area

Violent unrest in the Deep South of Thailand stems primarily from long-term tensions between the Thai nation state and a minority Malay Muslim population. Although the primary level of contestation in southern Thailand is state-minority conflict, other forms of conflict interact with this dominant axis of tension. For example, inter-elite competition is a relatively common form of contestation that can escalate into violence. While there is minimal communal violence between ethnic groups, local tensions have increased since 2004.

2.1 Key events since 2004

In the Deep South of Thailand, violent resistance against the perceived domination of the state occurred over several periods during the 20th century, before declining in the early 1980s. The current insurgency reemerged in the late 1990s, but was not officially recognized until January 4, 2004 when militants raided an army camp in Narathiwat and made off with about 400 weapons. Prior to (and even following) the January 2004 events, insurgents were dismissed as petty bandits working for influential figures or crime syndicates and creating disturbances for personal gain. Since the 2004 arms heist, violence has continued on an almost daily basis and taken the lives of more 5,000 people, in what has become one of Southeast Asia's bloodiest unresolved conflicts.

Since 2004, the state's main response to the resurgence of violence has been security-led and often heavy-handed, resulting in many well-documented excesses. In April 2004, 32 suspected insurgents who rallied in Pattani's ancient Krue Se mosque were killed by security forces. October of the same year, following their arrest at an anti-government rally in Tak Bai, 78 protesters accidently suffocated in military trucks. Also in 2004, Thai Muslim lawyer and human rights activist, Somchai Neelapaijit disappeared. Although the government has formally investigated all of these atrocities, no one has ever been tried and jailed for carrying them out. Over the years many more people have disappeared or been detained for long periods and tortured and these cases are well documented.[10]

In 2005, the government established the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) to recommend how to promote peace and reconciliation in Thai society, and especially in the three southern border provinces. In March 2006, the NRC issued a report which proposed a number of policy and procedural recommendations including: dialogue with insurgent groups; appointing more competent and culturally-aware government officials to positions in the South; improving the efficiency of the justice process based on truth, the rule of law and accountability; improving the Islamic law system; reforming the education system, including developing a language policy to provide

education in Pattani-Malay; promoting cultural diversity; declaring Pattani-Malay a working language; and promoting interfaith dialogues.[11] Unfortunately, although supported by some senior officials, these recommendations were not taken up by the government.

The government has used some non-security measures to try to improve relations with the local Malay population, including modest reforms and development programs. For example, the government has implemented some policies on language, culture and education. These include piloting bi-lingual education in primary schools and changing signs outside government buildings to include Yawi, the local dialect script. However, there has been little recognition of the need for fundamental changes in how the state itself operates.

The government has offered few significant political concessions to date. Over time, successive Thai governments have attempted to broker peace talks, allocated large budgets to a series of development programs in the Deep South, offered partial amnesties to some insurgents, modified security tactics, and repeatedly restructured their coordinating institutions. Discussion of major governance reforms in the Deep South have not advanced significantly to date, while the military has remained the most influential government body determining the government's strategy, both on the ground and at a policy level.

Meanwhile, working through semi-autonomous, small secret cells and using modern communications technology, insurgents have continued to stage attacks from their communities across the Deep South. With a few exceptions, the identities as well the locations of the insurgents and their leaders remain unknown.[12] Insurgent command structures are complex, with some identifiable factions, and most operations planned at the local level. Locally-based insurgents also respond to instructions from higher-level leaders and multiple cells have repeatedly carried out coordinated attacks across the Deep South.[13]

Since 2006, successive national administrations have been primarily preoccupied with their own political survival in an environment of national political instability, and have not prioritized bringing peace to the Deep South. Since the resumption of violence in the Deep South in 2004, there have been five prime ministers, a military coup, and violent protests in Bangkok in 2010 that resulted in 90 deaths and 2,000 injuries.[14]

With few natural resource endowments, a small population, and situated at Thailand's southernmost extremity, the Deep South has held a peripheral status since its incorporation into the Kingdom of Siam in 1909. The Deep South was an afterthought to 20th century nation-building efforts in Thailand. National assimilation policies were aimed primarily at incorporating the Chinese minority and promoting loyalty to the state, and directed at the more populous north and northeast of the country.

Historically, there have been some attempts to initiate peace negotiations, and

on various occasions, Thai officials have met groups of insurgent leaders. Facilitation of such meetings has been offered by Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as some international non-governmental peace brokering groups. To date, talks have led to little, if any, progress for two reasons. First, there is little coordination between Thai government agencies as well as military and political leaders who at times compete with each other, resulting in poor cooperation and involvement in parallel discussions. Second, key insurgent leaders who could make peacemaking decisions, have avoided meeting with government representatives due to fears of being publicly identified and later assassinated or arrested. A long history of disappearances—from the revered historical figure of Haji Sulong in 1952, to lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit in 2004—shows that insurgent leaders' fears of arrest or joining those who have disappeared are well founded. Instead, those attending meetings in Penang, Bahrain and elsewhere, have been lower-level leaders, with little authority, and on some occasions, even represented past insurgent structures whose influence has waned.

Up until 2013, insurgents saw little indication that the Thai Government was prepared to make sufficient concessions to warrant them abandoning an armed struggle. However, very recently, on February 28, 2013, the government initiated more formal peace negotiations with a faction of the Barisan Revolusi National (BRN) separatist movement, and both sides signed a General Consensus on the Peace Dialogue Process which committed both sides to engaging in peace dialogues facilitated by Malaysia. While formal negotiations had yet to start by May 2013, the first follow-on dialogue took place on March 28, 2013, and future ones are scheduled.

Figure 2.1 Deep South Watch – Monthly injuries
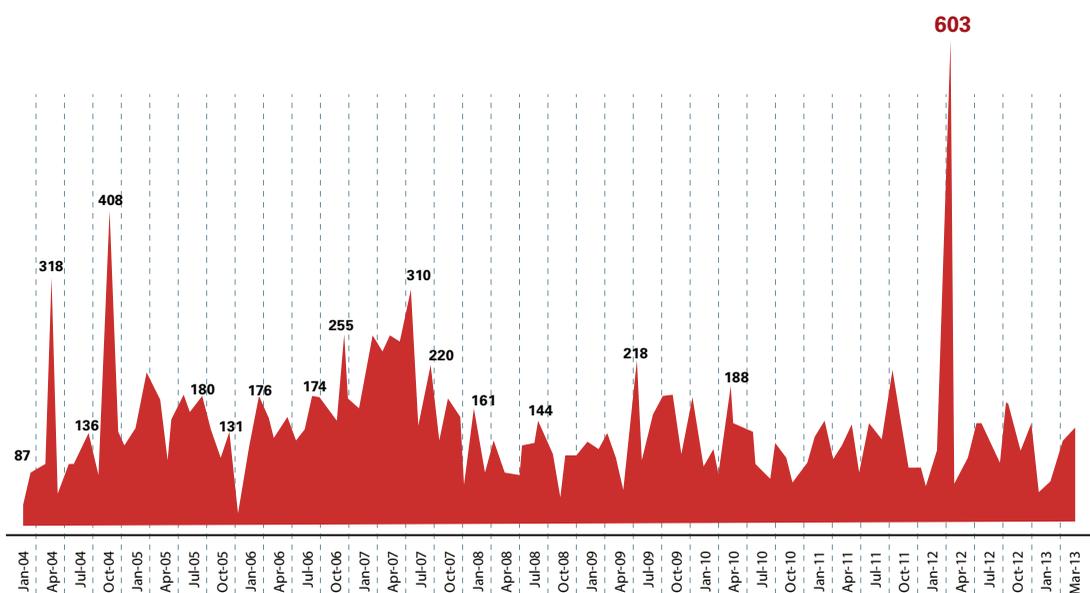
Source: Deep South Watch (2012)

2.2 Patterns of violence

The conflict dynamic is asymmetric and vertical, with insurgents opposing the state and its security forces with irregular warfare. From January 2004 to March 2013, nearly 13,000 violent events were recorded, resulting in 15,574 casualties (5,614 dead and 9,960 injured). Overall, approximately 60% of those killed were Muslims, the majority of whom were targeted by insurgents, and the rest were killed by state security forces or unknown groups. The remaining 40% of those who died were Buddhist, and most likely killed by insurgents.[15]

Schools, government offices, and state-related bodies have been the most typical targets of insurgent attacks. Methods include hit-and-run attacks, bombs, and arson. Casualties among civilian government employees (civil servants, teachers, etc.) have outnumbered casualties among security personnel (soldiers, police, and defense volunteers). Government security forces' efforts to stem the insurgency often unwittingly lead to innocent people being targeted. Disappearances and repeated use of torture by security forces have also been recorded.[16]

A macro analysis indicates similar levels of violent incidents in all three provinces of the Deep South.[17] However, within each province, there is significant variation between high-incident and low-incident districts, with the 5 most violent districts (out of 37 districts in the conflict area) accounting for nearly 40% of the total number of incidents, and the 5 least violent districts, accounting for less than 2% of incidents. Maps of government-designated 'red' zones (i.e. higher levels of violence) and 'green' zones (lower levels of violence) resemble a patchwork, while the overall

Table 2.1: Top five most violent districts

District	Province	Total 2005-Aug 2011	Avg/Mth	% of total incidents during the timeframe
Muang Yala	Yala	512	6.4	10%
Rangae	Narathiwat	386	4.8	7%
Reusok	Narathiwat	345	4.3	7%
Raman	Yala	342	4.3	7%
Banangsta	Yala	333	4.2	6%

pattern is of widespread, low-level violence across the entire area.

Since early 2012, violence has intensified, although it has not yet returned to the levels of 2005-2007. A spike in the number of events (many of them high-profile) was recorded in several different months of 2012. In March 2012 alone, 603 casualties were recorded, the highest since 2004, while in August there were 380 violent incidents.[18]

Specific incidents can often be related to local events. With insurgents operating in small, decentralized cells, patterns of violence reflect on-going tensions and local concerns, as well as security measures and the relative availability of soft targets such as schools or low-ranking state officials.[19] As occurs in many conflict environments, different sources of tension can lead to violence. Some insurgents are apparently closely connected to criminal elements, and some members of the state security forces have been accused of engaging in illicit activities. Additionally, security forces have enlisted and armed local volunteers.[20] Many specific attacks can be traced to local political and business disputes. For example, in one rural part of Narathiwat in 2007, business disputes over timber contracts ended up pitting local Thai Buddhist members of a voluntary village defense group against Malay Muslim supporters of a rival business. However, important as these patterns may be at the local level, interviews with insurgent leaders and sympathizers repeatedly demonstrate ideological or political motivations for violence.[21]

Some common misconceptions about the nature of conflict in the Deep South can be dispelled by looking closer at the evidence. Some national leaders have voiced concerns that Buddhists are being intentionally 'driven out' of the Deep South. However, evidence suggests that both Muslims and Buddhists are leaving the conflict-affected area for other parts of Thailand. Significant numbers of Malay Muslims are also departing on a temporary or permanent basis—primarily relocating to neighboring Songkhla. This refutes claims of widespread flight along ethnic lines alone, and demonstrates that the conflict adversely affects both Muslim and Buddhist people in the Deep South. Evidence shows too that while the overall percentage of Buddhists in the three provinces is declining, the percentage of Muslims in the neighboring province of Songkhla is increasing.

Similarly, insurgents' claims that the government is intent on colonizing the Deep South with Thai Buddhists has little basis in reality. Historical migration flows of Thailand's majority population into the Deep South are far less significant than in Mindanao, where the indigenous population has become a minority over time, or in Aceh, where government transmigration schemes were implemented on a major scale. While the overall Buddhist population has gradually declined over the past 20 years, this trend predates the resurgence of violence in the early 2000s.

Figure 2.2: % of provincial population by religion - Migration (Out-migration of Buddhists = green shading. In-migration of Muslims = red shading)

Out-migration
In-migration

	1990	2000	2010
Pattani (Buddhists %)	21	19	16
Yala (Buddhists %)	36	31	23
Narathiwat (Buddhists %)	21	18	14
Songklha (Muslims %)	21	23	25
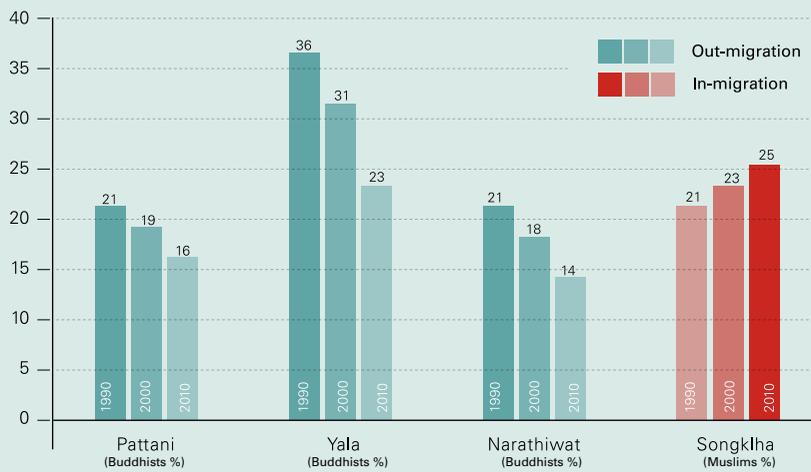
Source: Thailand Census data 1990, 2000, 2010

Another popular misconception in Thailand is that Malay Muslims in the Deep South are more tolerant of violence. The perception survey conducted as part of this study found that only 28% of Muslims said that violence could be justified in pursuit of a political objective, compared with 38% of Buddhists. More detailed investigations, including locality studies undertaken as part of this study, confirm that a majority of all residents in the Deep South try to keep clear of any direct association with violence for fear of antagonizing either insurgents or state security forces.

At the same time, deep-seated resentment at long-term injustices and inequalities has for decades heightened a sense of a separate Malay Muslim identity in the Deep South. Resentment against the Thai state's perceived security-led and inflexible response to the conflict has led many residents to sympathize with the insurgents, who share their language, religion and culture. There is sufficient local support and mistrust of state security forces to give small groups of insurgents space to operate, and to continue recruitment. The following sections explain this scenario further by describing the contested history and enduring inequalities of the Deep South.

Figure 2.3: Is it ever justifiable to use violence to achieve political goals? (%)

	YES	NO
Muslim	28	71
Buddhist	38	62

Muslim   Buddhist

2.3 State formation and local contestation

Contemporary Malay Muslim grievances with the Thai state can be traced to the process of modern nation-state formation and extension of control into Pattani, beginning around 1900.[22] However, the roots of antagonism are much older. As far back as the 18th century, Siamese diplomatic and military forces met local resistance when they entered the area.

As with minorities in other parts of the country, for much of the 20th century, Thai administrations implemented policies meant to assimilate the Malay Muslim provinces into the wider Thai nation. The process of 'Thaification' involved domination by the central Thai culture and repression of other ethnicities. Local minority customs, names, languages and dress were discouraged or banned across the country, including in the Deep South. The highly-centralized Thai state left little room for meaningful local politics. Through the Ministry of Interior, the government established a modern bureaucracy to administer the country, including the Deep South.

The grievances and demands in the Deep South have not fundamentally changed over many decades. In 1947, the influential Malay Muslim leader, Haji Sulong, issued a set of demands that still resonate today and are quoted by insurgent leaders.[23] They included calls for greater local autonomy, more locally-appointed civil servants, recognition of Islamic law, and the use of Malay as an official language and medium of school instruction. Local consultations in the Deep South often generate a similar list of proposals more than 60 years after the original demands were made.[24] This demonstrates that despite major changes in Thailand's economy and political system, the basis of the crisis in the Deep South has not fundamentally changed.

Violent conflict emerged in the late 1940s, and again in the late 1960s. Incidents continued until declining in the early 1980s following an amnesty for insurgents, the establishment of special government institutions to consult local leaders and manage tensions, and promises of a less coercive approach.

The late 1980s and 1990s also saw growing national democratic space and, by 1997, some decentralization to the local level. However, these partial steps do not appear to have been sufficient to assuage the frustrations of some local leaders. By the early 2000s, violence was again gradually increasing.

The relative calm of Satun Province, a majority Muslim province along the Malaysian border with no history of separatism, shows the importance of building positive relationships between national officials and local elites. Satun was historically regarded as a backwater, with a less prominent regional role than the Sultanate of Pattani, in terms of trade, political power, and religious learning. Early consolidation of the Thai state in Satun involved prominent alliances between existing local Malay leaders and Thai civil servants sent down from Bangkok. By contrast, administrators sent

to the three provinces of the Deep South carved out of the Patani Sultanate chose to replace traditional elites with civil servants from outside the area, thereby sowing the seeds of local grievances that remain to this day. Subsequent suppression of protests polarized the situation further in Pattani, building on a historical narrative of independence that Satun never shared. Over time, Satun has become comfortably incorporated into the Thai state, the local population universally speaking Thai and enjoying a relatively smooth relationship with the Thai state. In the conflict-affected Deep South, by contrast, the local Malay dialect remains dominant and the legitimacy of the state is continually challenged.[25]

Foreign aid has a long history of supporting state consolidation in Thailand. From the 1950s on, official development assistance helped build the capacity of the Thai state to achieve mainstream development objectives across the country. Projects gradually strengthened the state bureaucracy and extended its reach, backing government projects that concentrated especially on 'unconquered rural peripheries'[26]. Numerous aid projects over many years improved infrastructure, health and education across Thailand. This, in effect, supported the ongoing 'Thaification' process as these services (particularly education) were used to inculcate national Thai identity among ethnic minorities. Key donors initially included USAID and the World Bank, with Japan and the Asian Development Bank becoming more prominent by the 1970s.[27] Focused on economic development and

'nation-building', foreign aid agencies made little effort to address or even recognize the inequalities that have maintained tensions in the Deep South.[28]

Conditions in the Deep South: Persistent inequalities

Inequalities between ethnic groups contribute to deep-seated grievances in the Deep South.[29] Economic disparities are one aspect that needs to be seen in the wider context of injustice and marginalization. In absolute terms, Malay Muslims

Source:: NESDB (2009)

Conflict area compared to national (excluding Bangkok)
Conflict area compared to southern region
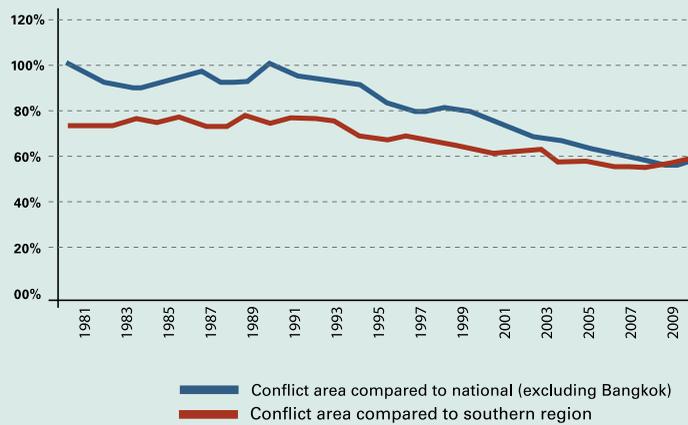
have shared some of the economic benefits of Thailand's rapid development and modernization. Yet they remain worse off on average when compared to Thai Buddhists in the Deep South, populations in neighboring provinces, inhabitants of Bangkok, and people living across the border in Malaysia.[30]

These economic inequalities have grown over time. Over the 25 years preceding the escalation of violence in 2004, provincial GDP per capita in the three provinces of the Deep South declined by around 20%, relative to the overall national average.[31] The trend of exacerbating economic inequality has continued, as seen in figures 2.4 and 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Provincial share of national GDP (excluding Bangkok)[33]

Songkhla   Yala   Narathiwat   Pattani
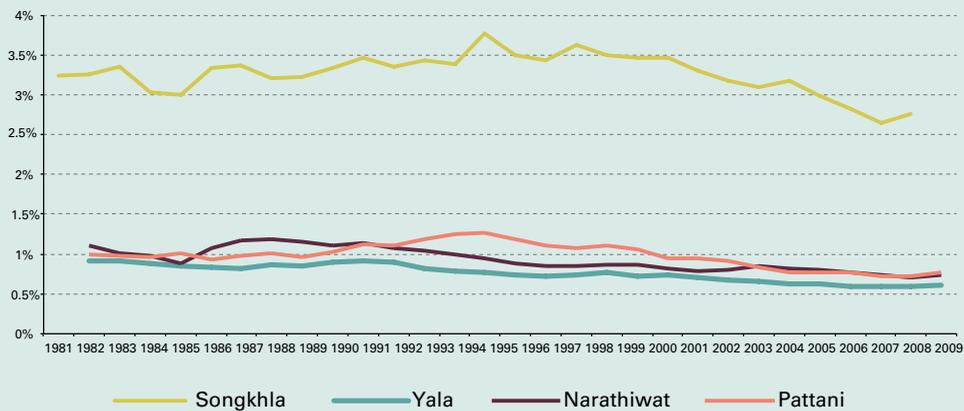
Source: NESDB (2009)

19

Likewise when disaggregated by province, all three provinces receive considerably less of the national GDP when compared to the neighboring province of Songkhla.

On average, Malay Muslims are more rural and poorer than Thai Buddhists in the Deep South or in neighboring Songkhla, a wealthier and predominantly Thai-Buddhist province. Survey results show an income gap between Buddhists and Muslims in the Deep South.[34] Over twice as many Muslims as Buddhists reported that they were sometimes unable

Figure 2.6: Which of these statements best describes your economic situation over the past year? (% respondents)

Source: 2012 Quantitative Survey

Figure 2.7 Percentage of children 0-59 months significantly underweight[35]
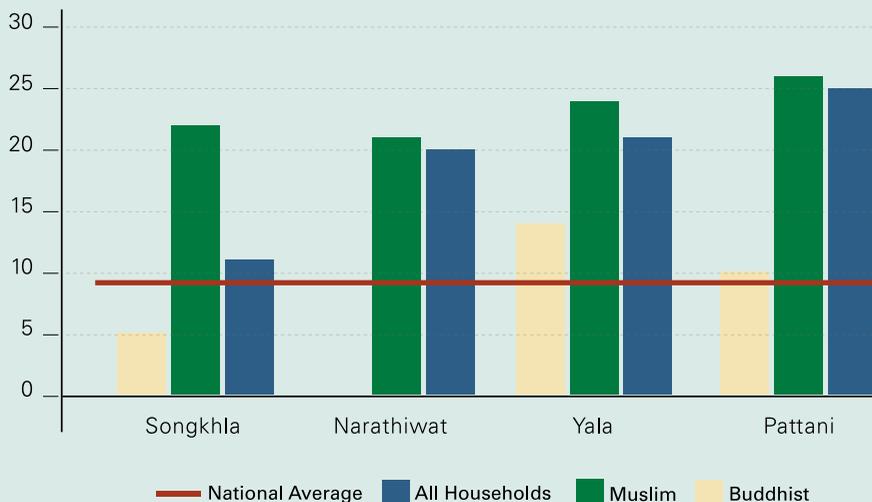
to purchase food; by contrast, over twice as many Buddhists as Muslims reported that they were able to afford necessities as well as durable goods.

Other evidence confirms the perception survey's findings. A survey conducted in 2010 found that Malay Muslims are generally over-represented in lower income groups: in urban areas, one in five (21%) Muslim households reported income of less than 8,000 baht (US$ 250) per month, compared with only 11% of Buddhist households.[36] Socio-economic statistics reveal further inequalities. Data on the prevalence of underweight children under 5 years old show that Muslim children in the Deep South are again disadvantaged in comparison with their Buddhist neighbors, as well as against the overall national average (see Figure 2.7).

Social inequalities: The comparisons made between ethnic groups in the Deep South are significant given the area's history and its difficult relationship with the Thai state. As already explained, efforts to assimilate people into central Thai culture have been repeatedly challenged in the Deep South. For example, the majority of Malay Muslim parents in the Deep South prefer to send their children to Islamic private schools rather than to state secondary schools.[37] Islamic private schools, a legacy of the traditional 'pondok' schools, receive government subsidies and follow curricula that allow for extensive religious education. Low standards for the secular part of their education (particularly in the Thai language) mean that many Islamic private school graduates struggle to gain jobs or graduate successfully from university.[38]

Figure 2.8: Education levels of respondents aged 18-35 in the Deep South (% respondents)

Muslim ■   Buddhist ☐

Source: 2012 Quantitative Survey
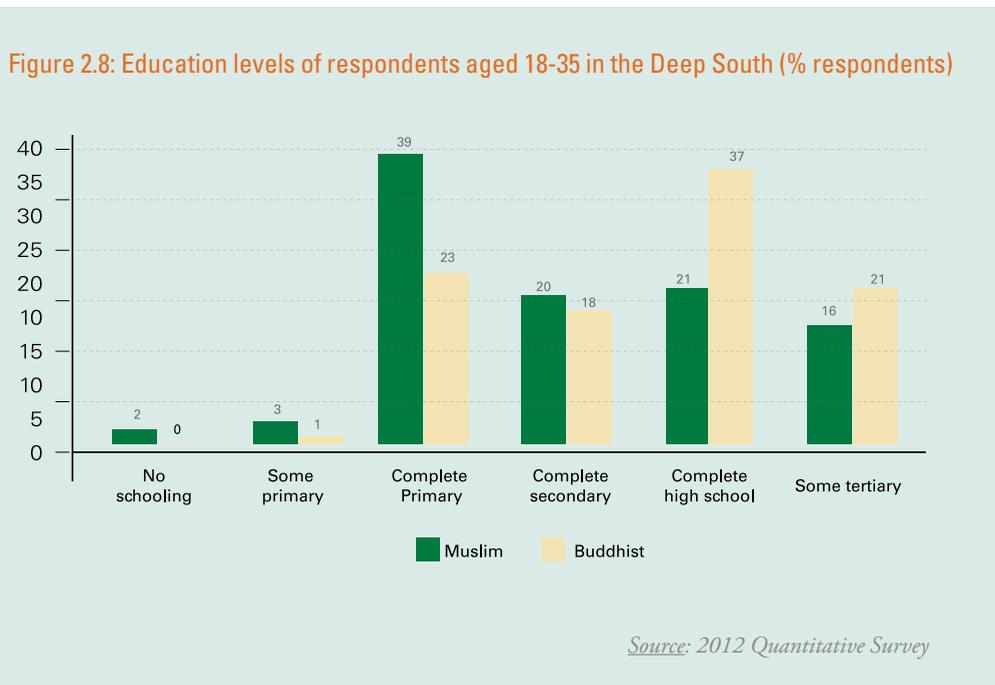
This situation is not simply a consequence of neglect by the Thai Government. Compared to other provinces in the Deep South, the government assigns considerably higher budgets to education (and other sectors). Public expenditure on education (per capita) in the subnational conflict area was 31.8% above the national average over the period 2003-2008.[39] Yet performance remains poor and education remains a key field of conflict.

Problems in the education sector also relate to a reluctance of the Malay Muslim minority to conform to mainstream Thai society and values. Traditional education has long been a mainstay of Malay Muslim culture, and for young men, a route to local status. Ensuring that the Malay language was used in government schools was one of Haji Sulong's original demands in 1947. In a small, yet significant minority of cases, Islamic private schools have been used as recruitment grounds by insurgents, leading to repeated military raids and associated harassment. Insurgents have regularly assassinated teachers in government schools, especially Thai Buddhists. In some parts of the Deep South, teachers travel to work under armed guard and have been issued with guns for self-protection. Many schools are also guarded by armed defence volunteers.[40]

Political inequalities: The Thai state remains highly centralized by regional or global comparisons. Bangkok's population is some 20-30 times larger than the next largest city, and the capital (along with its surrounding provinces) dominate the national economy.[41] Thailand is divided into 77 small provinces, with no subnational administrative bodies of any significant strength. At the local level, most governance functions are controlled by a strong, centralized state bureaucracy. Traditionally, civil servants, including teachers, have been appointed from Bangkok and rotated around the provinces in order to maintain central control. Over time, gradual democratization and administrative reforms have eroded the authority of traditional state institutions. At the national level, political parties and elected politicians have gained power. At the local level, decentralization measures include elected local representatives in sub-district and provincial councils. The 1997 and 2007 Constitutions transferred some responsibilities from the central to local levels of government, as well as mandating local participation mechanisms and public consultation. However, these constitutionally-mandated reforms have not translated into reality in many local areas as political commitment to them has weakened and the legacy of a centralized state has continued.

For instance, between 2001 and 2006, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra strengthened the role of appointed provincial governors, sidelining locally-elected provincial councils.[42] Under what still remains a hierarchical structure, government officials continue to exert authority over those lower down the chain.[43] Democratic mechanisms are also centralized, with all parties having to register nationally. Elected representatives from the Deep South have not been able to significantly influence government policies for the area and have often lost local credibility in the process.[44]

With separation being unacceptable both to the Thai state and to neighboring Malaysia, proposals for transforming the Deep South all emphasize greater autonomy.[45] Elected and adequately empowered local authorities may also be able to respond better to the specific needs of the Deep South in contested fields such as education.

Cultural inequalities manifest in a number of ways, and language barriers continue to play a dominate role in contributing to the discomfort of interacting with the state, and emerge as the main reason why people in the conflict area do not feel comfortable interacting with civil servants. The preference for the Malay dialect may be waning among younger people who can speak Thai more fluently than older generations, but language remains a barrier. More than a quarter (27%) of survey respondents in the subnational conflict area mentioned language as a reason why they do not feel comfortable interacting with government officials. Conversely 0% of respondents outside of the subnational conflict area mentioned this as a reason for discomfort.

Figure 2.9: If they do not feel comfortable interacting with a government official, why?

SNC

- Lack of transparency in how decisions are made
- Language barrier
- Lack of trust
- Superior attitude
- Feeling of humiliation
- Buddhists get better treatment than Muslims
- Others

Non-SNC

- Lack of transparency in how decisions are made
- Language barrier
- Lack of trust
- Superior attitude
- Feeling of humiliation
- Buddhists get better treatment than Muslims
- Others
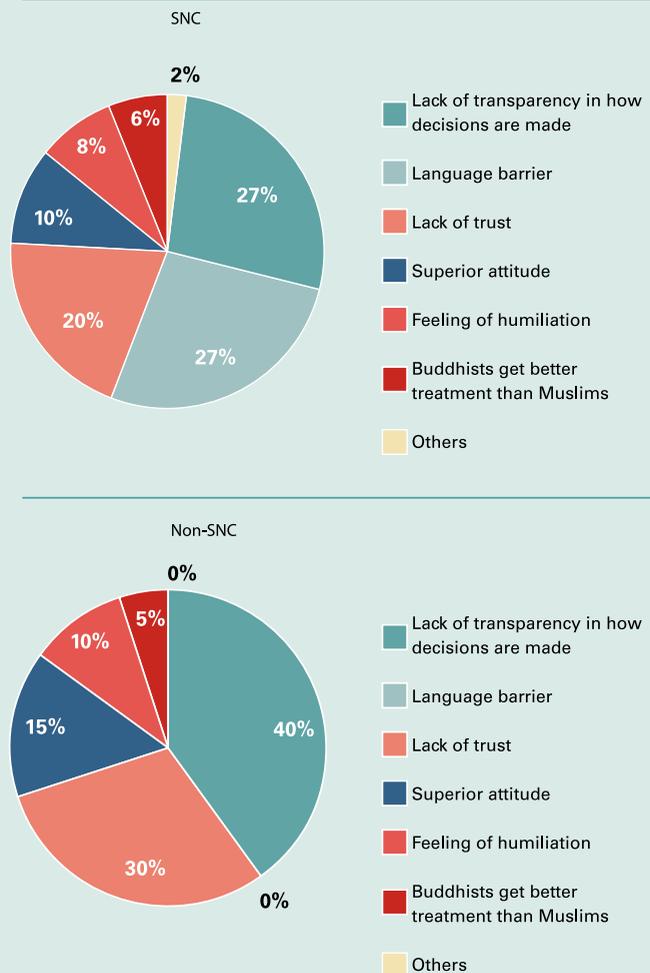
2.4 Complex ground-level reality

Like most conflicts, the conflict in the Deep South is not purely one-dimensional. The main axis of contestation—between the Thai state and Malay Muslims—is complicated by other forms of tension and violence. At the local level, inter-elite violence and inter-communal tensions are sometimes intertwined with the broader axis of state-minority contestation. Compared to the Philippines and Aceh, however, these localized forms of contestation are less significant in terms of violent conflict.

Insurgents' views do not always represent the wider population. While many Malay Muslims demonstrate some sympathy for insurgents' general aims, they typically have a nuanced view of the Thai state. A high proportion of Malay Muslims operate comfortably within mainstream Thai society, perhaps more than insurgent leaders would like to admit. For example, in urban and peri-urban areas in the Deep South,

an increasing number of young Malay Muslims speak Thai, and a significant number of local people are educated in state universities.[46] Malay Muslims (and to a lesser extent Thai Buddhists) in the Deep South typically negotiate different cultural spheres and spaces without necessarily finding it challenging or contradictory—for example speaking central Thai in formal environments and switching to the local Malay dialect at home.[47]

Malay Muslims are not necessarily more suspicious of the state than others. Perception survey data show that a similar proportion of people in the conflict area and outside it (slightly over 50% in both cases) agree that the government is concerned with what happens in their communities. When dividing survey respondents by religion, far more Muslims (57%) than Buddhists (47%) agree with the statement featured in Figure 2.11. These findings show that the insurgent narrative of a distant and predatory state is not necessarily shared by the wider population.

Figure 2.11: How much do you agree with the following statement? "The government is concerned with what is going on in my community" (% respondents)

Non-SNC Songklha   SNC   Muslim   Buddhist
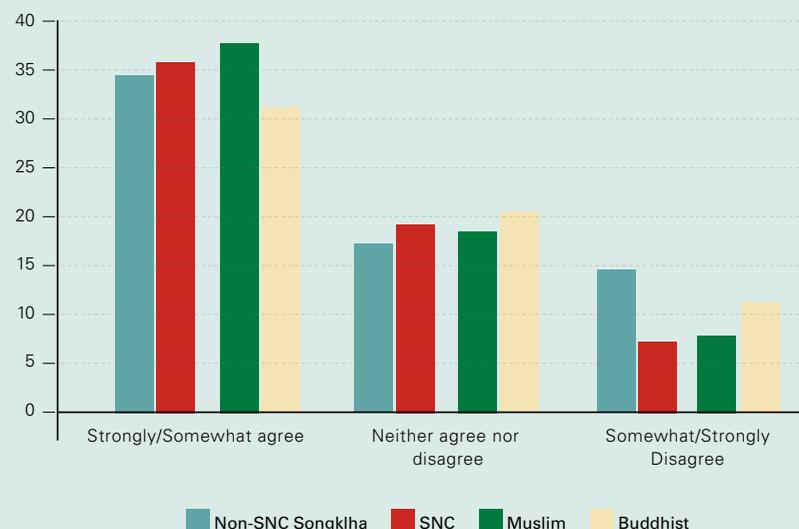
Source: 2012 Quantitative Survey

Variable local political dynamics affect levels of conflict. As mentioned previously in Table 2.1, the prevalence of violent incidents varies even between neighboring villages. Factors include the prevalence of criminal networks and local politics. Research shows that villages with stronger and more unified local leadership tend to be more able to control levels of violence than villages where authority is contested between different factions or political parties. Vote-buying and competition for potentially lucrative posts such as elected village head and sub-district chief have led to a breakdown of community structures in many localities, decreasing local capacities to prevent violence.[48]

Findings from this study's field research on attitudes of the Malay Muslim population indicate that the population has a complicated and at times contradictory perception of the Thai Government. The research produced some apparent differences between qualitative and quantitative sources of data. For example, the perception survey found that on the issue of trust in government, survey respondents in high conflict areas had greater trust in local and national administrations than was the case for respondents living in peaceful areas. However, findings on trust in government from the qualitative study show the opposite—that people in both conflict and non-conflict zones mistrust and are alienated from the local and national government. However, frustration and mistrust of the government is common

across Thailand, both among Thai-Buddhists as well as Muslims and other minority populations. Box 2.1 illustrates these contradictory findings.

Conflict area residents' levels of trust in government vary from one government agency to another. For example, national and local government agencies are more trusted than the security forces. The level of trust in security institutions, including the army, military rangers, and the police, also varies from one community to another.[49] Overall, people do not hold a unanimous view of the state, and are capable of distinguishing between government institutions.

Publicly-stated perceptions of motivations do not necessarily reflect insurgents' actual motivations. Surveys have found that people in the Deep South from all backgrounds tend to see unemployment, crime and illegal drugs, rather than the conflict itself, as the most significant problems in society and also view these issues as the main drivers of the conflict. These responses are similar to those found across Thailand.

Additionally, perceptions of community members in the conflict area do not necessary reflect the core narrative of the insurgents. The perception survey asked respondents about their views on why people join the insurgency, and what are the causes of the conflict. Figures 2.13 and 2.14 are grouped by those that support the insurgent narrative, and those that do not.

Conflicting findings on trust in the government

One normally mild-mannered Narathiwat Imam [a religious leader] became so enraged over his treatment by an obnoxious land department official that he says he now understands why some people shoot civil servants. (McCargo 2008: 57)

A Malay Muslim fisherman complains about lack of government support. "There is no one that I can ask for help in the village, or in Thailand, as everyone is dishonest and corrupt. This is rabob mueang thai—the Thai 'model' or the 'Thai way'. (Tan-Mullins 2007: 356)

A senior NGO leaders states, "The way the government thinks and the people think are contradictory... Buddhists come here to control." (Burke 2012: 116)

A local Malay Muslim resident in the Deep South states, "We do not need money, we need understanding; we need the government to understand our culture and our religion." - (Man from Narathiwat quoted in Scarpello 2005)

In February 2013, following a failed insurgent attack on a marine base which resulted in the death of 16 insurgents, hundreds of mourners turned out to bury the leader, who was called a martyr, and he and his fellow guerrillas were called heroes. (Bangkok Post, "In Southern Thailand, 16 Dead and No Peace in Sight", February 17, 2013)

Figure 2.12: Mean levels of trust in different government institutions[50]
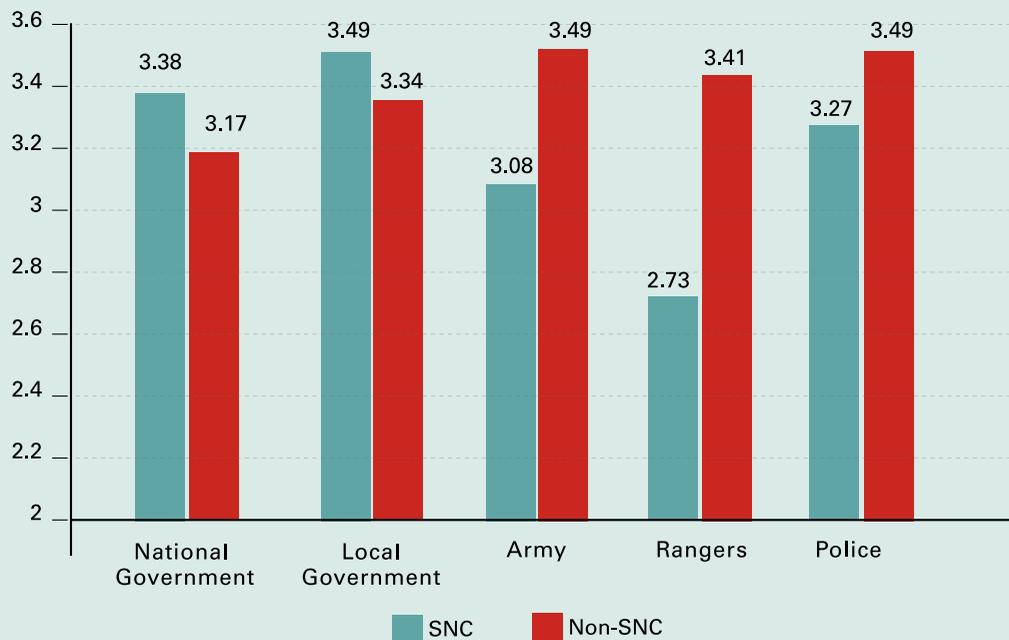
Source: 2012 Quantitative Survey

Figure 2.13: Perceptions of the drivers of insurgent recruitment, comparing non-conflict and conflict areas (% who responded somewhat or very important)
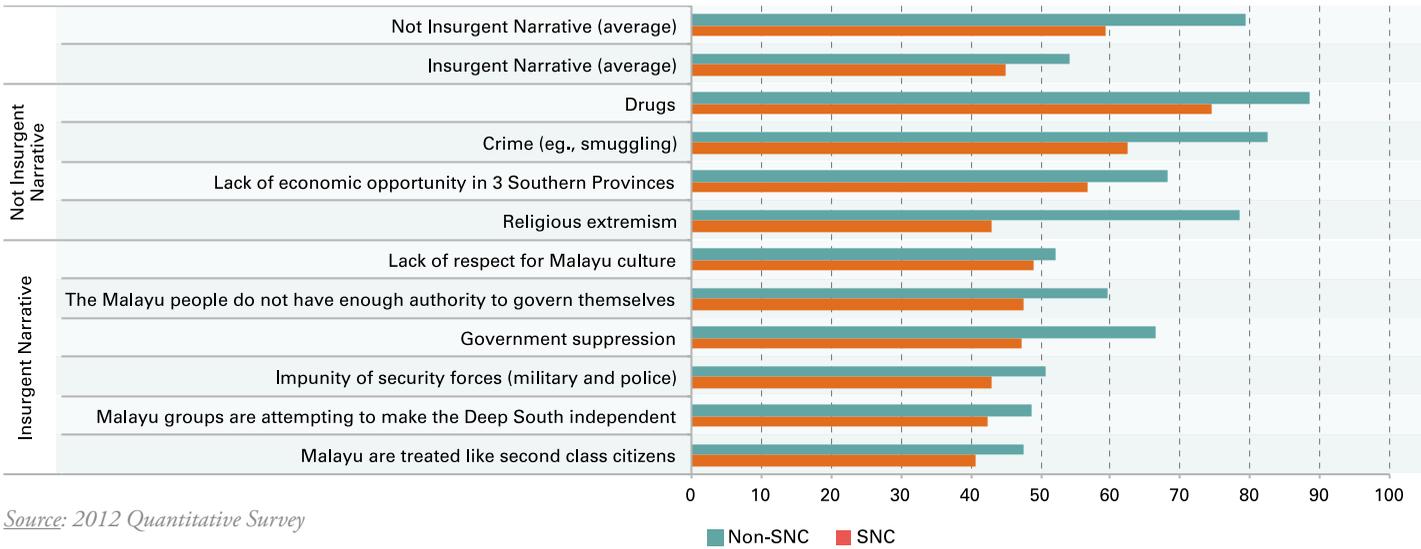
Source: 2012 Quantitative Survey

With the exception of religious extremism as a cause of the conflict, respondents inside and outside of the conflict area held relatively consistent views. However, due to the sensitivity of the questions, respondents outside of the conflict area appeared to be more willing to express an opinion than was the case with respondents inside the conflict area.

Figure 2.14: Perceptions of the causes of conflict, comparing non-conflict and conflict areas (% of people who ranked their response as high or very high)

Source: 2012 Quantitative Survey

27
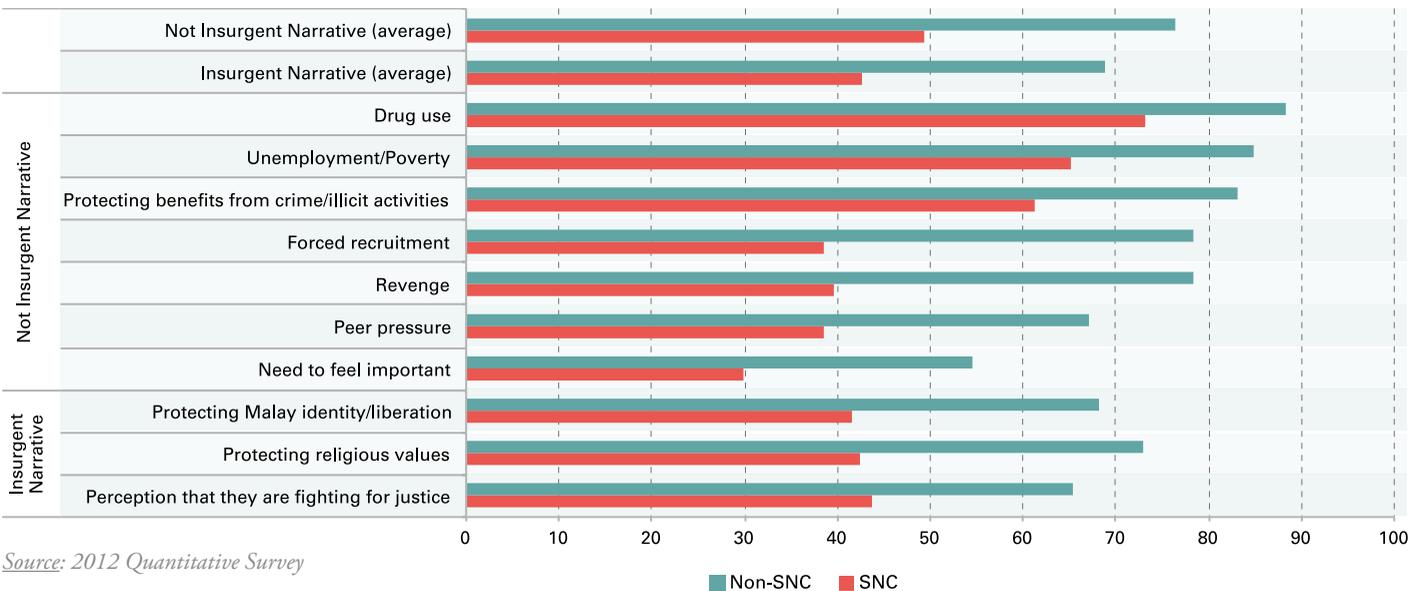
The responses that support the insurgent narrative consistently ranked lower in both the conflict and non-conflict areas which contradicts many of the findings from qualitative interviews with local leaders. For example, drugs, crime, and unemployment are the most commonly cited reasons for joining the insurgency, yet interviews with local elites and insurgent members reflect a significantly different perspective. Another finding is that respondents in the conflict area were consistently more conservative in their responses (i.e., fewer people agreed with the reason stated) compared with people outside of the conflict area. This finding may be a result of higher levels of fear and anxiety when answering these questions.[51] Another possible explanation is that people who live amidst the conflict may have more informed views of the actual drivers of insurgent recruitment and conflict.

Box 2.2 illustrates the views of an insurgent leader on the causes of conflict and the reasons people join the insurgency.

Interview with an Insurgent

The following account is based on an interview with a mid-level insurgent leader who controls a cluster of cells in Narathiwat.

This is the Malayu homeland, and everybody here shares the same sentiment and mistrust towards the Thai state. This soil is where we came from and we have a moral obligation to see that it remains under our control.

Finding people to take up arms is not difficult because there are plenty of people who are angry at the Thai state. The hard part is getting combatants to commit to the chosen course of action. It takes real commitment for a person who is angry to take up arms. Every insurgent has his own personal reasons. Some personally experienced discrimination or were abused. I just feel that it's my moral obligation to fight.

The movement is fighting for a liberated Patani, our historic Malay homeland. This is pretty simple and straight forward. Islam permits armed struggle against unjust rulers and this is what we are doing. We do this to liberate our homeland.

Killing enemies or those who committed treason (against the Patani-Malay cause) is justifiable. Of course, collateral damage, whether they are Buddhists or Muslims, is of great concern to the movement. The issue is constantly debated among our members. But as you can see, the militants are mainly targeting government security forces.

The older generation of exiled separatist leaders have talked to the Thai authorities but as far as the current generation of militants are concern, liberation is still an aim. We heard there have been talks between the Thai side and the exiled leaders from the previous generation but we, who are on the ground, have no idea what was discussed. The problem with the exiled leaders is that very few people on the ground know them. Unfortunately, the militants on the ground cannot surface to talk because there is no guarantee of our security. Whatever they agree on, the militants on the ground will have the final say.

We are not really sure what the Thai Government could do other than to leave Patani. But the Thai Government could permit the religious leaders of our region to govern the region. We are not sure how that will work out because these leaders sometimes compete with each other. They may come from the same school of thought (Shafi'i jurisprudence) but it doesn't mean they have the same political agenda. There are other Muslim groups who embrace different ideas, like the Wahabi and the Dawah (Jamaat Tablighi) but they are not part of this fight. But we have no problem with them or the Thai and Chinese Buddhists who live here. In Islam we are obligated to protect these minorities, regardless of their religion.

Variation is also found within the insurgent movement. Like the state, the insurgent movement is not a monolithic institution and there are various factions within the broader movement. Even within one faction of insurgents, who are known locally as 'juwae',[52] there are diverse views and motivations. Fieldwork conducted for this study showed that villagers in the Deep South identify different views within the insurgent movement. More senior and experienced cadres tend to have a reputation for stronger nationalist and religious motivations, while younger, lower-ranking combatants are more closely associated with local criminal networks. Figure 2.15 illustrates the spectrum of insurgent personalities, as described by various local residents and community leaders.

Other forms of local contestation including elections and crime contribute to violence. Many violent incidents go unattributed and it can be impossible to distinguish a range of local tensions from the main axis of conflict in the Deep South. Complicating factors that become entwined with the primary form of contestation include the availability of firearms, factional local politics and associated vote-buying, widespread illegal drug use and trafficking (*Kratom* and methamphetamines), corrupt government and military staff, and criminal activities, including smuggling across international borders.

Figure 2.15: Spectrum of insurgents

"Real" Juwae	"Second Level" Juwae	"Third Level" Juwae	Bandits
Strong ideologies, well trained, clean, knowledgable	"Good" radicals, No drugs, illegal logging, follow orders	"bad" radicals, sell and take drugs, links to illegal economy, act independently	take drugs, steal, randomly kill

3.Transforming the Conflict

This section looks at how southern Thailand could potentially transition out of conflict, and how international actors and government could support this transformation. As described in the analytical framework, the answer to these questions depends on the major form of contestation (state-minority, inter-elite, or inter-communal), the stage of transition, and whether aid programs are having an impact on transformational issues (i.e., restoring confidence and transforming institutions that are linked to the drivers of conflict). This chapter focuses on the stage of transition, and how aid programs can contribute to transformation under current conditions.

The long-term aims of insurgents in the Deep South are for greater political and cultural recognition and self-governance for Malay Muslims living in the area that they regard as their homeland. As a result, a peaceful settlement is most likely to be achieved through fundamental changes in how the contested area is governed, including some form of increased self-governance within Thailand, and by extension, an end to perceived domination by Bangkok.[53]

Gradual changes to the Thai state over recent decades demonstrate that change is possible but the degree of change has not been sufficient to end the cycle of violence.

Even though local government has undergone substantial reform, political space below the national level remains limited.

Without more significant political changes in the Deep South, development initiatives and well-intentioned minor concessions from the highly-centralized government are unlikely to make much difference. To achieve sustained peace, negotiations with insurgent leaders are unlikely to make sustained progress unless central state institutions are able to offer genuine concessions.

In this environment, external and non-governmental actors aiming to promote peace are likely to have the greatest impact if they take a long-term and pragmatic perspective. Rather than seek unrealistically-rapid changes or funding major peacebuilding initiatives, it is more important to support small steps to help institutions that are interested in promoting peace, changing policies, offering opportunities for constructive debate on possible reforms, or finding other ways to 'nudge' the conflict towards peace.

3.1 Stage of transition: No transition

As outlined in the analytical framework, each subnational conflict can be placed along a continuum of transition from conflict to durable peace. Despite very recent tentative peacemaking steps, the

conflict in southern Thailand can still be characterized as in the No Transition stage, as the process is still in its infancy, and there is currently limited opportunity for international aid agencies to engage in the process. Additionally, the issues that fuel the conflict remain fundamentally unchanged.

The Thai state, under a succession of different governments, has pursued ending the conflict, but only on the state's terms and without making any significant compromises. Solutions are theoretically possible without undermining the interests of key political power-brokers and central institutions, however, most solutions run counter to widely-held perceptions at the national level of how the Thai state was constructed and how it should continue

to operate.[54]

The conflict in the Deep South is fundamentally driven by political contestation. There is no evidence that the security-led approach pursued by the Thai Government since 2004 can bring peace. On-going violence, impunity, and perceived injustice continue to reinforce local-level resentment, and strengthen resistance to government authority by key local leaders and significant segments of the population. After some initial progress in curbing levels of violence, the number of violent incidents remained fairly constant between 2007 and 2011, and then rose again. In 2012, the Thai Government acknowledged the political nature of the conflict.[55]

Until the return of serious violence to the

Figure 3.1: Stages of transition, and supporting transformation

Restore Confidence

Transform Institutions

CONSOLIDATION STAGE

Broaden/deepen confidence in transition (S-M); Local elites more confident in state security provision (I-E)

HIGHEST PRIORITY
Implement/establish new self-governance institutions (S-M); Expand local institutions that strengthen trust and social capital (I-E)

ACCELERATED TRANSITION

HIGHEST PRIORITY
Bolster confidence in transition through international support (S-M); Clear commitments to support crucial actors (S-M)

Establish transitional institutions (S-M); Reform institutions that address local identity (S-M); Strengthen local security institutions (I-E)

FRAGILE TRANSITION

Expand political space for debate on key issues (S-M); Encourage public support for transition (S-M)

HIGHEST PRIORITY
Start political transition (e.g., negotiations) (S-M); Reform key security and justice institutions (S-M)

NO TRANSITION

S-M = State-Minority
I-E = Inter-Elite

Deep South in 2004, it appeared that steps taken by the government in the early 1980s to end earlier bouts of conflict had been successful. The civilian-led, multi-sectoral Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre (SBPAC)—set up in the 1980s to improve relations between Malay Muslims and the Thai state—consulted with local leaders and used its authority to remove or relocate officials accused of poor practices or discriminatory treatment.[56] Greater consultation, political privileges, and development funds secured the support of many within the Malay Muslim elite,[57] as did expectations of improving democracy at the national as well as the local level.

However, these reforms were not sufficient to address ongoing grievances. The 1997 Thai Constitution pledged democratic principles on paper, but did not provide measures to ensure a political 'voice' for the Deep South and, in any case, this Constitution was undermined and eventually abrogated in 2006. In 2002, SBPAC was disbanded, along with other mechanisms that maintained regular exchanges between local leaders and the military.[58] In 2004, politicians from the Deep South were discredited as the Thai state responded very aggressively to rising levels of violence.[59]

3.2 Improving institutions, promoting justice and citizen security

Institutional transformation is the most critical area that aid to the Deep South could support. For example, the education system, a longstanding focus of contestation, needs to address southerners' concerns about assimilation, language policies, and government interference in local Islamic institutions. Educational standards also need to improve so that young people have greater opportunities. While sweeping fundamental change may be too difficult to achieve, small steps could be taken to improve policymaking at all levels. Some government departments (for example, units within the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice) are open to new approaches.

It is hard to see how sustained peace can be achieved without some form of autonomy for the area. Greater autonomy would have immense symbolic value, as would recognizing the status and authority of local leaders. Elites in the Deep South need political opportunities to promote Malay Muslim needs through non-violent means.[60] Unfortunately, although various senior figures have called for some form of autonomy for the Deep South, key central government institutions remain resistant.[61]

Achieving long-term peace in southern Thailand requires political will and institutions at both the national and the local level that can act as vehicles for change and provide opportunities for airing local views. Civil society organizations, the mass

media, political groups, academic and other institutions can all promote discussion of sensitive issues such as autonomy, as well as policies that promote local culture, language, and education.

Devolving authority is important, but may not be enough. Experience with autonomy agreements in other countries suggests that challenges are likely to persist.[62] Decentralization can fuel local power struggles, invite abuse of authority, and further fuel local conflict.[63] Experience in other countries shows that when a peace agreement is finally signed in the Deep South, ongoing efforts will be needed to improve local institutions so that other forms of contestation do not continue to cause conflict.

The key strategy for the government and international donors should be that of focusing on institutional change that directly responds to grievances and helps the government to show genuine support for a transition to peace. Malay Muslim leaders should also have representation at the national level so that they can challenge views on Thailand having a single, national identity, and help improve national-level understanding of Malay Muslim grievances about their marginal status in Thai society.

Specific security issues to be resolved include: the impunity of state actors; the use of torture by security forces; unprofessional conduct by some poorly-trained military units that include corruption and irregular violent acts; and lack of police services.[64] Important and immediate ways to improve the justice system for citizens

in southern Thailand include tackling tangible barriers such as improving citizens' access to legal representation and improving capacities in the criminal justice chain, ranging from police investigation and prosecution, through to court procedures and prison reform, including lengthy pre-trial detention.

Small, targeted steps may have some beneficial impact. Steps that have contributed so far towards peacebuilding in the Deep South include supporting advocates for change within government institutions, and addressing specific issues such as improving methods for gathering forensic evidence, limiting the use of school buildings by military personnel, and improving the availability of defense lawyers in the Deep South.[65]

3.3 Promoting negotiated settlement

A further type of transformative involvement relates more narrowly to peace dialogue itself. Foreign, and especially Western or United Nations mediation, generally remains unacceptable to the Thai Government given their acute concerns that such mediation would both strengthen the insurgents' position and challenge sovereign authority. To date, various efforts attempted by Thai and external bodies and individuals to promote negotiations have not led to any significant breakthrough. However, these efforts may have helped build experience and begun to lay a basis for future reconciliation. Some initiatives to build the basis for possible negotiations have also been undertaken by domestic

bodies with international funding and assistance.[66] In addition to some international efforts to help develop opportunities for high-level dialogue, various local organizations have supported 'parallel' discussions among key political, government, and civil society actors, aiming to widen discussion about potential paths to peace.

As with other fields of involvement, any understanding about the opportunities for promoting a negotiated settlement must be seen in context. Political settlements in Thailand, at the national level and in the Deep South, have not generally followed standard global prescriptions for peace-building.[67] Historically, there has been little, if any, international involvement in agreements that are typically sealed 'behind closed doors'. Notions of third-party facilitation, as well as multi-track peace processes or open civil involvement in broad debate, may be regarded as theoretically valid but their implementation in practice is likely to be limited to relatively-minor supporting measures. There is a need to find a contextually-suitable negotiating path in Thailand that ensures the continued support of government as well as insurgent leaders.

3.4 Efforts to build confidence

In a No Transition context, most efforts to restore confidence will fail. The Thai Government has made major efforts to encourage trust in the state and reduce support for the insurgents. Massive levels of government funding for the conflict area have given the impression of a responsive state, while deflecting attention from the need for more fundamental political change. Justified as part of efforts to build popular confidence in the state, these initiatives have brought some material improvements. However, these 'improvements' are sometimes indistinguishable in form and intent from military campaigns that aim to 'win hearts and minds' without making any significant reforms. Indeed, many development projects in the Deep South are implemented by the military.[68]

The government has, however, taken some modest, positive steps over the past 20 years. These steps have largely involved policy changes that are intended to change how institutions operate. For example, the proportion of Malay Muslims in local civil service posts has grown as a result of shifts in recruitment policy. Some aspects of education policy such as government subsidies for Islamic private schools have become increasingly responsive to local views. Further modest steps of this type may contribute to incremental change but, on their own, are unlikely to bring about peace.

With regard to confidence building, it is important to distinguish between insurgents, elite groups, and the wider population in the Deep South. Defining 'confidence' more carefully makes it harder to use the term to justify uncontroversial development initiatives intended to win support from an undifferentiated Malay Muslim population. Improving the confidence of a narrower group of elite actors, rather than confidence of the wider population, may be a more immediate way to support a potential peace process.

There are clear differences between the attitudes of the relatively-small number of insurgents and active sympathizers (perhaps 10,000 people) and the wider Malay Muslim population.[69]

Confidence-building efforts are likely to lead to cynicism in the longer run unless underpinned by genuine change. On several occasions since 2004, politicians have announced new initiatives, and promised to adopt less security-focused policies, yet little fundamental change has taken place.

Insurgent leaders have indicated that they will need to be sure that they are safe from arrest or assassination before engaging in any public process or even joining closed-door negotiations. While some junior insurgents may be persuaded by an amnesty and material incentives to forsake violence, more ideologically motivated cadres, including senior leaders, are likely to require assurance that the Thai state is genuinely considering significant change that address stated grievances. These will likely include gaining greater political access and influence in the Deep South.[70]

Building the confidence of high-level state actors and influential figures at the national level is also important. State actors need confidence that insurgent leaders will approach any peace process with a genuine interest in finding long-term, common ground and forsaking violence. They will be concerned that insurgents may plan to use negotiations as an interim tool to gain concessions before seeking further steps towards independence. They may also need assurance that any international involvement does not present a risk to overall Thai sovereignty. The polarized, national political context presents further challenges, as political leaders potentially interested in offering concessions are concerned that opponents at the national level could depict them as disloyal or self-interested.

3.5 Improving developmental outcomes

To promote transformation effectively, economic initiatives would have to help reverse inequalities and offer opportunities for local elites as well as the wider majority of Malay Muslims. An improvement in the overall economy of the Deep South could well have little impact. For example, the rise in violence starting from 2004 coincided with historically-high prices for rubber, the area's main cash crop. There is no evidence that this had any impact one way or the other on conflict dynamics. On their own, socio-economic development initiatives or economic stimulus packages are unlikely to fundamentally change the dynamic of violence and may continue to act as a justification for the government to avoid undertaking more significant reforms. Also, added injections of funds have a record of exacerbating local tensions that contribute to raising overall levels of violence.[71]

Successful efforts to address on-going horizontal inequalities between ethnic groups are likely to involve institutional and policy change at the central, as well as, the local levels. Development interventions
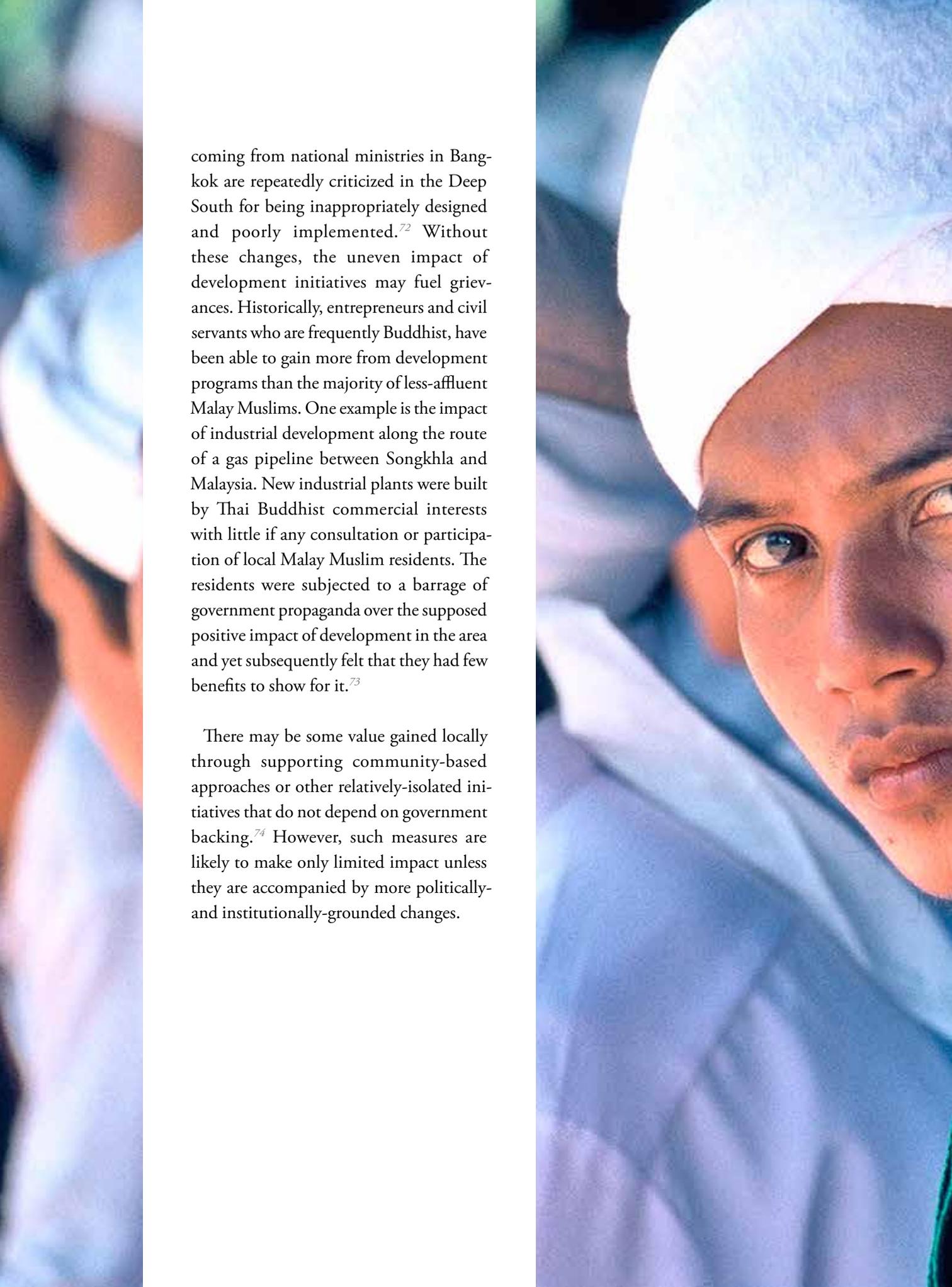
coming from national ministries in Bangkok are repeatedly criticized in the Deep South for being inappropriately designed and poorly implemented.[72] Without these changes, the uneven impact of development initiatives may fuel grievances. Historically, entrepreneurs and civil servants who are frequently Buddhist, have been able to gain more from development programs than the majority of less-affluent Malay Muslims. One example is the impact of industrial development along the route of a gas pipeline between Songkhla and Malaysia. New industrial plants were built by Thai Buddhist commercial interests with little if any consultation or participation of local Malay Muslim residents. The residents were subjected to a barrage of government propaganda over the supposed positive impact of development in the area and yet subsequently felt that they had few benefits to show for it.[73]

There may be some value gained locally through supporting community-based approaches or other relatively-isolated initiatives that do not depend on government backing.[74] However, such measures are likely to make only limited impact unless they are accompanied by more politically- and institutionally-grounded changes.

4. Current Aid Strategy and Practices

The subnational conflict in the Deep South of Thailand presents a challenging environment for international aid agencies interested in promoting peace. There is no clear role for foreign aid in support of a peace process, and the Thai state, like many others across Asia and elsewhere, is generally reluctant to accept external involvement. Other factors include a lack of donor interest in a conflict that has few international repercussions and directly affects only 2% of the Thai population; weak non-governmental institutions on the ground; and an underground insurgent movement that remains out of contact. This context has implications for the types of assistance, scale of funding, and the strategies used by donors. Aid agencies need to adapt their standard approaches and expectations if they want to work in such an environment.

This chapter explains how donors have addressed the conflict in the Deep South. Overall, the remaining large aid programs still provided to Thailand, continue to support the prevailing economic and political direction of the Thai state. As already explained, this direction has increased the overall affluence of the country but has not stopped the return of violent conflict to the Deep South.

Since 2004, however, some aid agencies have gradually established small programs directly aiming to address the conflict in the Deep South. They have done so in response to wider institutional concerns over the conflict, as well as to improve justice, and human rights. These programs mostly aim at transforming institutions, chiefly through directly or indirectly supporting government policy changes designed to tackle the root causes of grievances and associated violence. These initiatives often fund pilot activities, policy research, or aim to improve the opportunities for civil society groups from the Deep South to engage in policy debate.

Establishing such programs is not easy and aid agencies have worked hard to build essential relationships with government and non-governmental partners. Their interventions illustrate the importance of the practical steps that donors undertake when establishing programs in challenging environments. The role of intermediary organizations emerges as especially important.

4.1 Foreign aid and the Deep South historically

Thailand is a middle-income nation that eliminated absolute, mass poverty by the 1980s. For years, donors have supported the development and expansion of the Thai state. Aid flows helped to bring most Thais out of poverty, build infrastructure, provide universal education, and improve healthcare. However, as explained in Chapter 2, these changes have also contributed

to ongoing inequalities and perceptions of injustice in the Deep South.

Historically, aid agencies rarely demonstrated interest in, or sensitivity to, the specific context of the Deep South, even in critical areas such as education policies for minority populations.[75] Aid agencies have had more success in Thailand by strengthening state structures rather than countering dominant, centralized power relations. Analysts of foreign aid have found that on the occasions that aid projects aimed to support adaptations to government policies and mechanisms, they often failed to make significant impact.[76]

These findings are relevant to the Deep South, where national policy and development initiatives have not successfully changed long-term perceptions of inequality and injustice. Specific aid projects in the Deep South—for example a dam funded through World Bank loans in the 1970s, and some assistance from the Middle East—were generally aligned with centrally-defined government policy. One economic planning initiative supported by the Asian Development Bank in the 1990s, the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (or IMT-GT), included the Deep South in its project area, along with the neighboring Thai provinces of Satun and Songkhla. In the project design, practically no consideration was given to locally-defined needs nor to the range of inequalities experienced by many Malay Muslims. ADB's main counterpart was the Thai Government's National Economic and Social Development Board which, alongside ADB-funded consultants,

proposed initiatives that were criticized by academics and civil society for favoring large (and mostly Buddhist-owned) businesses and further marginalizing the rural majority.[77] More recent efforts to revive the IMT-GT have followed a similar path.[78]

4.2 Thai government programs for the Deep South

Since the resurgence of violence in 2004, the government has repeatedly committed extra funds to the Deep South which are above ordinary budget allocations for both military and civil purposes. For example, in March 2009, a special 3-year development budget for the area of 76 billion baht (then US$ 2.4 billion) was passed by the Thai Government.[79] Initiatives have been implemented by central ministries and by the SBPAC. From 2007 to 2012, international aid flows directed at promoting peace in the Deep South were financially insignificant next to the government's budget, and have amounted to less than 1% of government expenditures in the area over the same period.

The principal objectives of extra government spending have been to win the 'hearts and minds' of the local population through improved economic opportunities. Many of these initiatives bear close resemblance to national integration approaches adopted in the 1960s and 1970s, in response to the threat posed by Communist insurgency as well as by unrest in the Deep South.[80]

Specific programs have varied over time, along with the shifting national political scene. Key initiatives outside the security sector have included investment in new roads and public services, and financial support for victims of violence.

The willingness of the Thai Government to adapt some policies and to fund development initiatives presents opportunities to support positive, if incremental, change. Some initiatives demonstrate considerable willingness to modify national approaches. Government bodies have repeatedly tried to reach out to Malay Muslims through programs and some policy adaptations. Examples include removing university entrance requirements for local students, building community centers, funding grassroots media initiatives, and increasing local recruitment into some government agencies such as the health service. Grants have been provided to many local NGOs for activities ranging from income generation to youth exchanges with other parts of Thailand.

While many of these initiatives recognize the specific circumstances of the Deep South and make efforts to address some root causes of violence, they confront two main problems. First, evaluations and field-level responses show that on the ground, execution of initiatives is highly variable, with many resources being misspent or misdirected.[81] Second, on their own, initiatives cannot reverse the negative perceptions of security-focused approaches that continue, or the lack of major policy or institutional changes. The roots of violence in the Deep South stem from the area's political marginalization, a problem that spending large development budgets through existing government channels risks exacerbating rather than transforming.

4.3 Sovereignty concerns

The Thai state actively exercises its right to shape foreign aid to Thailand. This profoundly affects aid agencies' fields of engagement and their working practices. Thai Government ministries monitor, and aim to closely manage, donor and other international involvement in the Deep South. The southern conflict touches on sensitive issues of both national identity and territorial control. Although there has been gradual willingness on the part of the state to consider some small, international aid programs in support of government policy in the Deep South, high-level leaders in the military and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continue to want to minimize foreign involvement.[82] As is the case with enduring subnational conflicts in many other countries, donor agencies' efforts to engage are seen primarily as a potential political threat, rather than as an opportunity for positive change or as a source of external revenue.[83] Aid agencies are not allowed to open offices in the Deep South and usually need to gain the permission of several government departments before undertaking any initiative. [84]

Military leaders, in particular, as well as politicians and civil servants, commonly adopt strongly nationalist positions when addressing foreign involvement of any sort in the Deep South. Establishment figures, including even the former

Prime Minister and relatily moderate, Anand Panyarachun, have expressed concern over foreign involvement.[85] Given this environment, it is not surprising that large aid agencies tend to avoid involvement in the area.

4.4 Recent foreign aid and the Deep South

Given the reduction in foreign aid to Thailand over time, recent foreign assistance programs across the country have been relatively limited. Since 2004, overall aid funding to Thailand has been equivalent to under 3% of government revenue.[86] Over the 5 years from 2007 to 2012, foreign aid to Thailand increased to over US$ 3 billion, but mostly as a result of the Thai Government

borrowing from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, alongside greater concessional lending from Japan.[87] The bulk of this funding was allocated for infrastructure projects and power generation in Bangkok and the surrounding provinces, along with some technical assistance to central ministries and a range of small programs across the country.[88] In comparison, official aid commitments to the Deep South from 2000 to 2010 totaled approximately US$ 17 million, of which over US$ 15 million was earmarked for peace and conflict programs. The largest donors, in financial terms, do not target the Deep South in most of their programs. Between 2007 and 2012, foreign aid that addressed the conflict in the Deep South was under 1% of all concessional aid flows to Thailand. Even when aid flows to Thailand as a whole were substantial in the

Figure 4.1 Annual ODA commitments to the Deep South
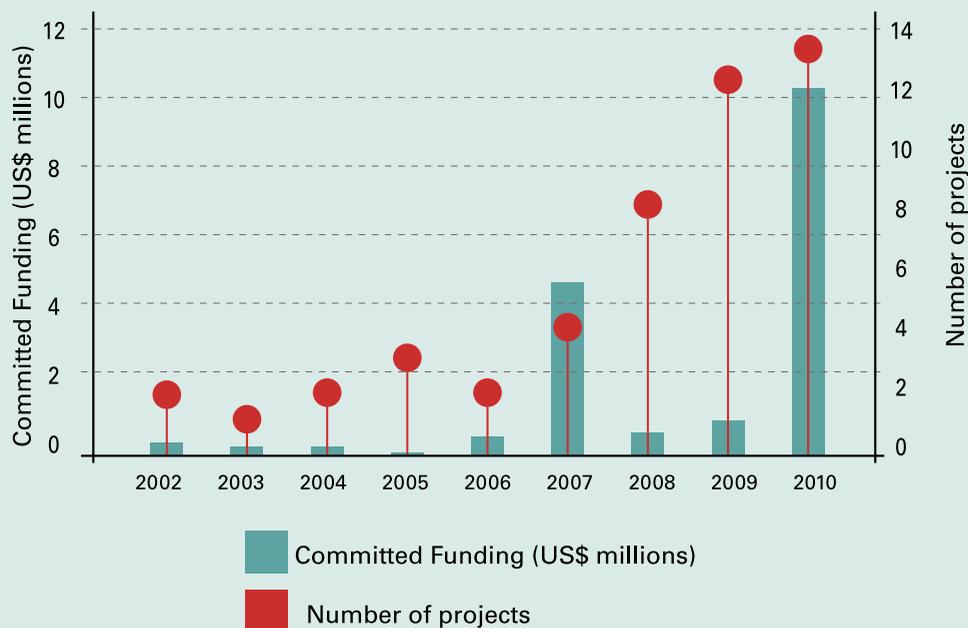
Source: Aid Data

1960s and 1970s, the Deep South generally received little targeted donor or NGO support.

For large national programs, there has generally been little effort by donors to understand the impact on the southern conflict. Written materials and interviews with aid agency staff show that most of the recent aid programs at the national level have paid little, if any, attention to possible links between their interventions and conflict in the Deep South.

It is reasonable to assume that donor governments signing up to global commitments on conflict prevention should consider how their projects and resource allocation decisions to Thailand might affect violence in the Deep South.[89] However, large programs remain focused on investments in the Bangkok region.[90] Despite the long-term salience of education to the dynamics of grievance and violence in the Deep South, national education initiatives and research conducted by donors including JICA, the World Bank, and Australia have not seriously considered implications for the conflict.[91]

Some donors have been able to support peacebuilding in the Deep South, but through relatively small initiatives. Annex 1 provides a complete list. The five largest donors addressing the area are UNICEF, USAID, UNDP, World Bank, and European Union. The main attributes of their programs are shown at Table 4.1. Many of these efforts aim to promote policy change and institutional transformation—for example addressing long-term challenges

in the education system in the Deep South or promoting debate over options for devolving some political authority.

Some agencies operate specific initiatives for the area that stand somewhat apart from the rest of their Thailand program—for example, the World Bank's community development initiative. By contrast, in a more 'mainstreamed' approach, USAID and UNICEF integrate their work in the Deep South with the rest of their country portfolio. Due to ongoing political instability at the national level as well as in the Deep South, USAID emphasizes stable democracy and reconciliation across the country. At the national level, USAID's main program, Sapan, allocates specific resources for the Deep South. UNICEF, which targets poor and marginalized children and families, tackles inequality across its work in Thailand.

Table 4.1: Summary of five key aid programs

Agency Name	Intermediaries	Sub-intermediaries	Sectors / portfolio mix	Main objectives	Strategy/ project formulation	Knowledge Acquisition
UNICEF	Wide range of government and NGO partners	Some local NGOs/ community groups	Across many sectors – mainstreamed into country approach	Improved livelihoods and services for marginalized/ minority children, youth and families	Relationships with partners, commissioned research, and country assessments	Gradual staff development, contacts with partners, situational analyses and assessments
UNDP	Prince of Songkhla University	Local government bodies and NGOs	Local governance	Community empowerment and public participation in local governance	Overall UN analysis, short-term expert input	Inter-UN meetings, discussions.
European Union	European-based international NGOs	National and local NGOs	Livelihoods, networks, information, and civil society capacity building	Civil society capacity-building for outreach and advocacy on peace promotion	Country strategy and program	Ongoing political monitoring
World Bank	Local Development Institute (a national NGO)	Community leaders and local community groups or NGOs	Social development	Improved state-society relations, local community and civil society capacity	Project preparation through research initiative	Existing staff knowledge and gradual project preparation
USAID	Subcontracted to a management agency	Thai NGOs, and government oversight bodies	The Deep South is a core element of a major national program	Reconciliation and conflict reduction, accountability, civil society capacity to improve state-society relations	Country assessment; participatory project design by contracted party	Ongoing political monitoring; partners' inputs

4.5 Change in donor engagement over time

Over the period 2004 to 2012, some international donor programs have increasingly focused on southern Thailand. Those agencies that engage typically prioritized human rights, equality and justice rather than a narrower and more conventional development agenda. There is little evidence that donors' engagement was a result of greater attention being paid by aid agencies at a global policy level to the links between development and peacebuilding. Instead, increased local understanding on the part of aid agencies emerged as more significant than policy statements or technical approaches being promoted from headquarters. Some of the increased awareness may simply have been a result of gradually improved understanding of the specific context over time.

These programs have evolved considerably to become more sensitive to the conflict and more actively engaged in promoting peace. Table 4.2 illustrates this transformation across three stages of evolution, from conflict-blind aid to modest efforts at peacebuilding. At each stage, there are institutional and political factors that affect how aid agencies have operated in the Deep South.

After the increase in violence in 2004, there were considerable initial barriers to donor involvement. Several aid agencies had to proceed gradually, incrementally establishing their initiatives, and they experienced delays in advancing relevant interventions between 2005 and 2008.

Government agencies—particularly the division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for managing donor relations—either turned down or delayed proposed initiatives.

Government sensitivities relaxed slightly from 2008, allowing a number of agencies partnering with local organizations to provide small grants to the Deep South. However, these agencies were still not allowed to open project offices in the Deep South and activities were occasionally restricted.[92]

Aid agencies interested in working in the Deep South first gradually established working relationships with domestic partners. By 2009, the World Bank had started a program with a well-respected national NGO, the Local Development Institute. UNDP, in cooperation with special government projects, was beginning to build a program for the Deep South. The EU was providing funds to various international agencies, including Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (a German foundation) and the NGO Save the Children collaborated with local partners in programming for the south. USAID also announced a program of support for democracy promotion across Thailand, with a sub-component focusing on conflict in the Deep South.

Most of the agencies establishing new programs in the Deep South demonstrated similar attributes to those already working in the conflict area Deep South (UNICEF and USAID). These donors recognized that long-term peace requires changes in how the state operates. All

Table 4.2: Attributes and limiting factors affecting the peace promotion efforts of three types of aid agencies in the Deep South of Thailand, 2007-2009

	A) CONFLICT-BLIND AID	B) STRUGGLING TO ADDRESS CONFLICT	C) ISLANDS OF PEACEBUILDING
Political and institutional priorities	**Limiting factors** • Concern to maintain diplomatic relationships given trade, security and other interests • Institutional interest in encouraging the Thai Government to borrow funds or accept grants	**Attributes** • A range of priorities; some institutional space to work on challenging issues **Limiting factors** • Intergovernmental relationships as a core element of operations • Deep South only a small part of country program, not willing to risk wider institutional relationship	**Attributes** • Rights, equality, justice seen as core considerations • Global concern about tensions and inequalities affecting Muslim populations **Limiting factors** • Need to respect sovereignty and work with government
Approach to development	**Limiting factors** • Focus on national economic growth and poverty reduction • Little interest in subnational inequalities • Weak understanding of ethnicity and identity • Technical focus of international aid agencies ignores political context	**Attributes** • Recognition of negative aspects of national development models • Some awareness of inequalities, ethnicity, justice and human rights **Limiting factors** • Continued commitment to national targets such as MDGs • Low institutional prioritization of subnational conflict	**Attributes** • Broader vision of development encompassing rights, equality, justice • Politically aware rather than technically oriented **Limiting factors** • Inability to 'mainstream' conflict concerns across programs • Unrealistic expectations of what democracy may offer minorities unless specific measures are taken
Interface between aid agencies and Thai government bodies	**Limiting factors** • Relationships with central state institutions fundamental to operations • Low levels of interaction with other agencies and individuals	**Attributes** • Aim to address state policy in order to have impact • Central state support sought for interventions. Some relationships with NGOs **Limiting factors** • Wider relationship with central state based around other priorities • Weak focus on building relationships with government institutions that generate space to operate	**Attributes** • Recognition of diversity within state institutions • Careful management of relationships at different levels: with non-governmental agencies and in communities **Limiting factors** • Restricted by what state institutions will allow • At times conservative in supporting modest reform agendas
Institutional practice of aid agencies	**Limiting factors** • Use of national level statistics and targets; skill-sets prioritize top-down economic planning • Internal uniformity and strong top-down management culture	**Attributes** • Some staff have broader range of skills and outlook • Some procedural flexibility and freedom for staff to pursue more varied development agendas **Limiting factors** • Funding and skills inadequate to build relationships gradually • Restrictive operational tools and mechanisms	**Attributes** • Emphasis on flexibility and local engagement, with a wider aim of policy change • Variety: a range of approaches and fields of action, based on the long-term knowledge and experience of key staff **Limiting factors** • Often still centralized, ground presence restricted • Limited by institutional structures and processes, little evaluation of impact

the new foreign-supported interventions (even those working through partners at the community level) ultimately promote adjustments to government policy. Before developing programs, both UNDP and World Bank invested extensive time and funds in gradually building relationships with carefully-selected government counterparts.

4.6 Review of aid strategies and practices

The majority of aid agencies addressing conflict in the Deep South have adopted a thematic approach and aim primarily to influence government policies and improve how the state operates in the area. Examples include supporting civil society advocacy bodies, promoting changes in education language policy, supporting opportunities for open discussion, and funding local development initiatives in order to improve local government or build stronger community structures. Other agencies directly promote reconciliation by funding peace promotion or promoting negotiations to end the violence.

Conversely, only a few donor-funded programs target a specific geographic area or project site. In southern Thailand, those projects that do focus on certain locations, such as the World Bank's support for community development or UNICEF's assistance to promote bilingual education, typically pilot initiatives that, if successful, can be used to influence broader government policies. Projects at all levels tend to offer 'software' related to methods, ideas

and institutional strengthening, rather than provide 'hardware' or support for infrastructure development.

Aid agencies promoting change in the Deep South have often prioritized institutional capacity-building.[93] They regard domestic partners not only as intermediaries capable of delivering a program, but as the target of interventions themselves. Funding is for incremental, targeted interventions that respond to specific openings within government institutions. These donors work with both government and non-governmental organizations, often aiming to support pilots or stimulate debate on critical subjects across a range of sectors.

Aid agencies commonly allow their domestic partners to define their own initiatives. At a national level, policy inputs are designed to increase Malay Muslims' political voice and advocacy, both of which could help to initiate a peaceful resolution of the conflict. At the local level, aid agencies target improving community responses on a range of issues that affect people's daily lives.

In pursuit of policy reforms in a specific field, aid agencies working in the Deep South combine support for both non-governmental and governmental bodies. Agencies, including UNDP and the World Bank, have preferred to implement initiatives in the Deep South through non-governmental bodies, even though the ultimate aim remains supporting government policy change and improving implementation.[94]

Case Study #1
Government institutional capacity-building: UNICEF

UNICEF works with NGOs and government departments to improve the cultural sensitivity of service provision. In the education sector, interventions addressing specific peacebuilding issues have included: improving the quality of teacher learning centers to address the lack of skilled local Malay Muslim teachers in the area; introducing bilingual language instruction into primary schools; and improving mathematics and science teaching in religious schools. Through these interventions, UNICEF is working towards the long-term goal of policy reforms that respond to Malay Muslim concerns and needs.

UNICEF has also been able to engage in more immediate issues associated with the conflict. Through relationships with local organizations, UNICEF has ongoing efforts to reduce the effects of violence on schools in the Deep South, a complex and multifaceted problem. School premises have been attacked both by insurgents and the military. Thai army units were using school buildings and grounds as their local bases. These bases brought attacks by insurgents and discouraged parents from sending their children to school. As a result of UNICEF's relationships with high-level government officials and their global campaigning for zones of peace for children, senior officers now tell soldiers not to set up camp in schools, and insurgent attacks on schools have declined.

Case Study #2
Quasi-government institutional capacity-building: The Asia Foundation has worked with
King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) to address the lack of opportunities for peace advocates to engage policymakers on conflict issues in the Deep South. KPI is a semi-autonomous Thai think-tank and training body based in Bangkok, which is known for being relatively progressive, yet uncontroversial.[95] In 2008, after the government failed to adopt any of the more important peacebuilding recommendations made by the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) in 2006, KPI developed a course building on the NRC recommendations. The key objective of this course was to stimulate discussion and innovative thinking about how to resolve the southern subnational conflict. With US$ 200,000 in USAID funds raised by The Asia Foundation, *KPI brought together experts* from a range of public and private institutions to review the 2006 NRC recommendations and make concrete recommendations for moving forward. This was launched at a high-profile event in Bangkok, with then Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, as the keynote speaker. Since 2008, KPI has continued to run the course without any need for external support.

The Asia Foundation intentionally kept a low profile throughout its work with KPI, but addressed challenges when needed, and worked with KPI's senior staff to develop a more effective advocacy strategy. KPI's work aimed to foster dialogue and collaboration among a wide range of figures from government and non-government, as well as local citizens and in the process provided a rare platform for constructive engagement on southern subnational conflict issues. Controversial subjects discussed in the course include decentralization of national authority and granting autonomy to the conflict area. Wider discussion of 2006 NRC recommendations and other issues has helped to achieve a marked shift in national debate.

Case Study #3

Civil society institutional capacity-building: At the global level, peace advocates often emphasize the potential for foreign mediators, but less attention has been paid to bringing together individuals and institutions within conflict-affected areas and countries to identify locally-relevant peacebuilding approaches. An exception to this has been the German NGO, Berghof Foundation, which trains 'Insider Mediators'. In Thailand, with funding from the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Berghof Foundation has helped to establish a 'network for effective action'—a mechanism that fosters collaboration among influential people and other community members to identify locally-relevant approaches for promoting peace. This initiative does not mediate between belligerents—instead it promotes dialogue to develop locally-relevant methods for peacebuilding.

The project followed an iterative process, with no pre-ordained set of activities or outputs. Over time, a network of interested and potentially-influential individuals and institutions has been established, while at the same time taking care to remain neutral. Prince of Songkhla University has provided a base for the network which includes a number of the university's academics as well as local peace activists. Several universities in and near Bangkok are also involved to provide a central Thai node for the network. Network members have broadly agreed to use civil society 'space' to promote policy change and draw on the network to promote peacebuilding. This approach is characterized by a well-known Thai proverb: "the body pushes for progress when the head is blocked".

While the network has not yet directly achieved a major change in government policy to negotiate for peace, it has achieved more realistic short-term goals, including the establishment of forums where specialists and influential civil society leaders can air their views and promote neutral approaches to peacebuilding. The project also supports establishing local peace promotion networks and building network members' capacity to use best practices for peacebuilding and exposing the groups to a common learning experience. Setting up these networks has been challenging as one network participant explained, "Building a common approach among activists, academics and institutions interested in peacebuilding has been like "trying to keep crabs in a basket".[97]

4.7 Gaining access by working through intermediaries

Looking in more detail at how aid agencies function in practice shows the constraints they face, and possible ways to address these challenges. The specific circumstances of the Deep South in Thailand means that all aid agencies working in the area must operate through intermediaries. The emphasis of working with local partners and need to build domestic capacity, a universal aspect of aid delivery, is especially significant when addressing the conflict in the Deep South.

The chain of intermediaries depicted in the flowcharts in Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 is typical of foreign aid agency involvement in the Deep South, and indeed elsewhere. The good performance of various agencies in the chain is vital for program success. At the far right end of the chain is the delivery mechanism or 'point of entry' which funders and intermediaries rely on to interact with communities or final beneficiaries.[98]

The relationships established by three aid agencies, UNICEF, the World Bank and the European Union, which are depicted in their flowcharts below, map the institutional chains that these agencies have established. These emphasize the importance of relationship-building in the context of an ongoing subnational conflict.[99] Variations between each agency's flow-chart show different ways of operating, depending on the respective agency's set of operational strengths and challenges.

Figure 4.2: The World Bank – Implementation flow-chart

Advocacy targets - government policy development

Program of the World Bank Thailand office

Intermediary national NGO (Local Development Institute)

Initial preparatory work with universities and others

15 civil society groups

Outreach workers for community grants

Leaders of small initiatives

Village implementing committees

International agency

Thai governement body

Thai non-governmental body (including universities)

Local recipients (not the ultimate beneficiaries)

The World Bank built its program gradually from 2007 onwards, enabling it to gather both knowledge and important contacts, while also reassuring government officials who were concerned about foreign interference. From this foundation, the World Bank developed a larger civil society support program in 2009 with two main components—one providing village-level block grants and the other supporting local civil society groups and networks.

This pilot program provided experience to feed into future programming of both the World Bank and the government. Ground-level programs facilitate learning lessons and establishing a model to improve how government approaches community development and service delivery in conflict-affected areas. World Bank funding flowed through their main intermediary, the Local Development Institute (LDI). The program's format and effectiveness depended on how LDI operated and how the World Bank collaborated with them.

Figure 4.3: European Union– Implementation flow-chart
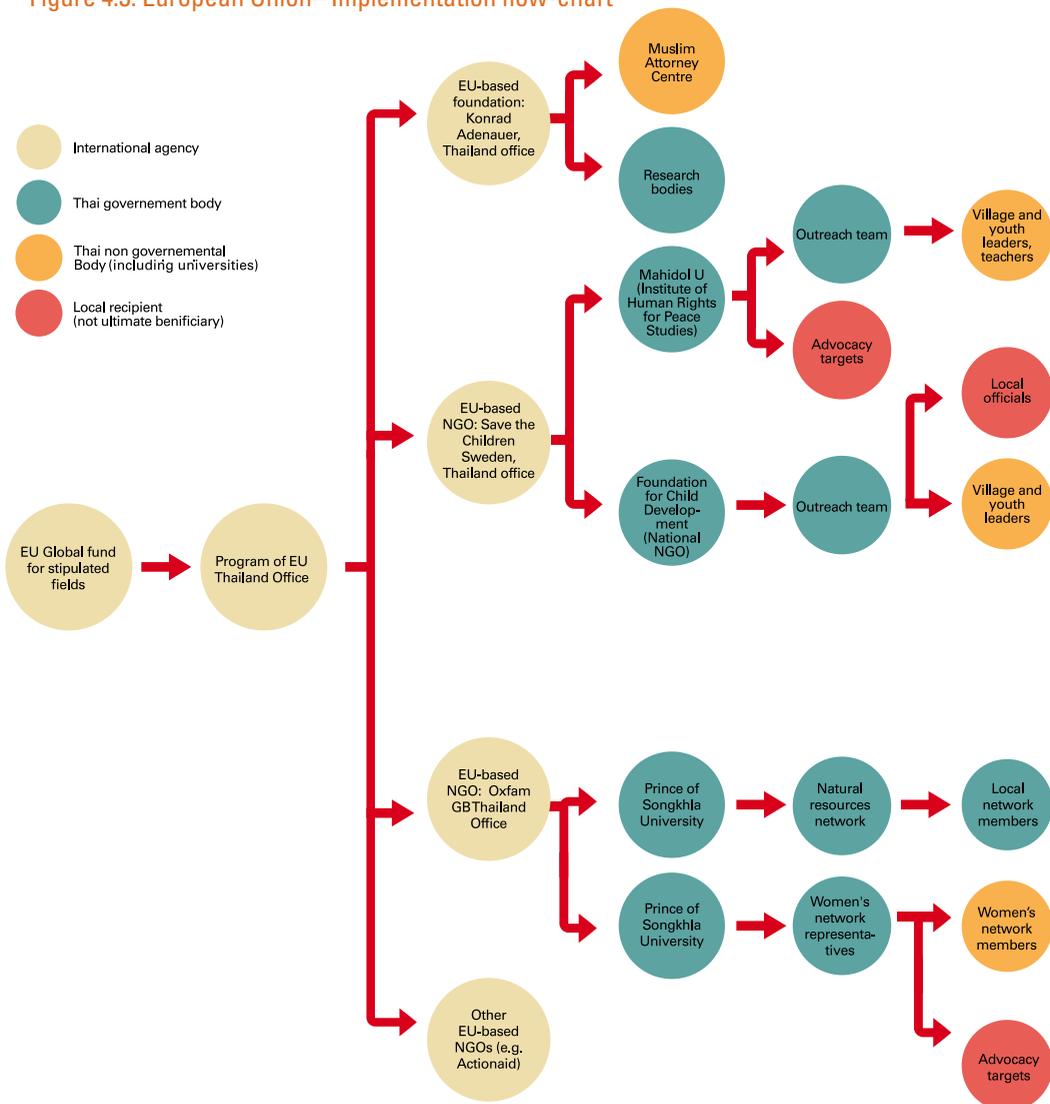
The EU has similarly long intermediary chains for programs in southern Thailand. The EU passes funding on to international and local partners. Financial assistance is offered from theme-based global funds for initiatives implemented predominantly by EU-based non-governmental organizations who then partner with Thai agencies.

Unfortunately, according to this study's interviewees, EU global funds often have very restrictive requirements that prevent local NGOs from applying for them. Interviewees complained that the EU's strict grant requirements limits their organization's ability to source EU funds to meet local intermediaries' needs and respond to changing dynamics on the ground.[100] Funding cycles are relatively short, often lasting only two years. Also, the process of mobilizing partners, tendering, and receiving EU funds takes a long time. In addition, the bidding process typically requires considerable expertise and a European base. This makes it difficult for NGOs based in Thailand to directly apply for EU funds. Another problem that EU applicants face is stating the precise number of beneficiaries that will be supported. This is usually impossible for applicants to do prior to starting the project and mobilizing intermediaries in the conflict affected area. Without knowing exact beneficiary numbers, it is very difficult for the EU to fund local intermediary partners, especially those based in the conflict area.

Figure 4.4: UNICEF – Implementation flow-chart
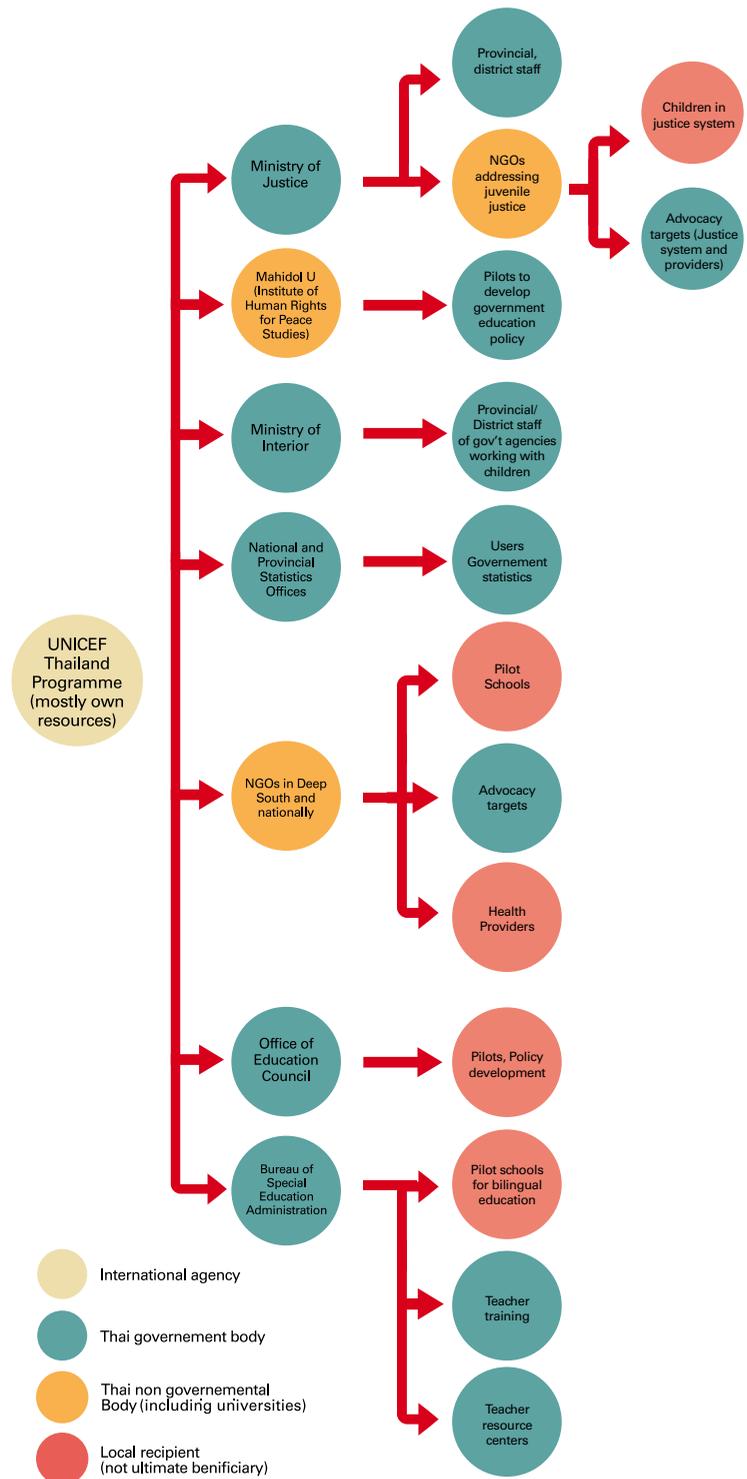
The UNICEF chart shows a different approach, with a wider spread of intermediary relationships. This reflects how work in the Deep South is 'mainstreamed' across UNICEF's portfolio in Thailand.

UNICEF's core attributes have enabled it to build up a varied program. Its global policy commitments to working in conflict-affected areas, ranging from human rights to combating inequality, make engagement in the Deep South relevant across UNICEF's whole portfolio. Meanwhile, UNICEF's relative financial independence as a result of charitable contributions from the Thai public enables it to pursue its own nationally-devised policy direction. A focus on children and a carefully-managed relationship with the Thai Government at the institutional level mean that UNICEF can build a far wider set of partnerships, and subsequently develop a broad portfolio of programs in the Deep South. UNICEF has been able to build long-term involvement through ongoing commitments and longer-term projects (or sequences of projects) and, as a result, provide continuity and facilitate the gradual development of relationships with domestic internmediaries.

An incremental approach was led by senior staff in Thailand who were already considering greater engagement in the Deep South before the increase in violence in 2004. They sought to build government confidence and establish a knowledge base through commissioned research with little interference from headquarters. UNICEF's sector specialists had the opportunity to develop working relationships with

governmental and non-governmental partners, gaining the entry points needed to pursue work on controversial issues such as language policy in schools in the Deep South. UNICEF's government partners are primarily national ministries with whom they cooperate on a range of initiatives.

UNICEF projects aim at policy change and capacity building rather than impact on the ground. As with many other agencies, UNICEF rarely aims to reach communities or individual beneficiaries directly. Its involvement typically concerns improving how other bodies function or supporting policy change through steps including research, advocacy, mobilization, and communication. Where programs do reach final beneficiaries, the work is recognized as the result of implementing partners, rather than of UNICEF itself.

4.8 The critical role of relationships

Aid agencies in Thailand have to work hard to find implementing partners. National government bodies only occasionally offer sufficient common ground and entry points to enable direct partnerships with donors. Local government has relatively little authority, given the highly centralized system in Thailand. There are also few local non-governmental bodies in the Deep South that fulfill the requirements for donor funding.[101]

Government counterpart relationships are important for aid agencies in order to gain approval for programs in the Deep

South. As a result, project design and development are often shaped by the interests of central government departments. For example, one foreign aid agency was allowed to fund local community initiatives but not given permission to support advocacy work. Another was asked to provide support to government rather than to non-governmental organizations.

At the same time, aid agencies try to maintain their independence. They tend to partner with semi-governmental bodies, especially those that have English-speaking staff, institutional capacity, are willing to accept donor funds, and appear impartial on the ground, while being acceptable to government.[102] Various donors, including the UNDP, EU, World Bank, Oxfam, and Berghof Peace Support all have partnerships with faculties in Prince of Songkhla University.[103] As a relatively neutral space that is affiliated with the Thai Government yet also maintains distance from it, the university provides an uncontroversial base for undertaking initiatives.

Another common approach of donors working in the Deep South is to select a Bangkok-based intermediary with outreach in the Deep South. Recipients of EU funds such as Oxfam and Save the Children work with Mahidol University or the Foundation for Child Development, while the World Bank funds LDI.

However, these approaches have their drawbacks. Prince of Songkhla University is first and foremost an academic institution and its capacity to manage programs is justifiably limited. Aid agencies that choose instead to support Bangkok-based bodies may find that implementation runs smoothly but they also risk further strengthening unequal relationships between the periphery and the core. In addition, funding a long chain of intermediaries adds to costs and administrative inefficiencies.

However, for most aid agencies, the practical challenges of working in the Deep South make it necessary to work in these ways. They may create some shortcomings, but aid agencies have, over time, found ways to establish and maintain interventions. The use of intermediaries has for some initiatives become an intrinsic part of the project approach rather than simply a delivery mechanism. For example, Bangkok-based institutions are often in a privileged position when advocating for policy change at the national level. If they decentralize operations from their Bangkok base and work hard to ensure sensitive engagement at the local level, they offer a useful and realistic way to engage and nurture local civil society bodies.

Some important attributes have enabled aid agencies to build good relationships with partners. The most important, is having a track-record, and capable national staff with extensive experience. The World Bank was able to learn from a past national program, the Social Investment Fund, to help devise a program of support with LDI that reaches out to local civil society groups in the Deep South.[104] They also benefited from a long research process that not only built up a knowledge base but also helped to establish institutional contacts and

credibility. Similarly, The Asia Foundation has been able to use long-term connections with bodies including King Prajadhipok's Institute and an association of Islamic private schools in the Deep South to develop innovative initiatives.

Long-term contracts or postings and sufficiently devolved levels of responsibility emerge as important practical steps that enable agencies to engage. Several aid agencies that managed to establish programs in the Deep South relied heavily on a small number of long-term, individual Thai or international staff members. These key individuals were given the institutional leeway to build relationships with other organizations over time, including government gatekeepers as well as implementing agencies. In a challenging environment, continuity appears to help organizations build the trust of government and other partners, creating space for gradual engagement. Interviews show that recently-employed staff could establish a reasonable understanding of the conflict context fairly rapidly, but they found it harder to build relationships with the intermediaries and government counterparts, both of whom are critical for successful implementation.

Flexibility is another attribute that supports engagement. This enables agencies to respond to opportunities as they arise and, critically, to build domestic capacity to promote change within the Deep South (see Case Study #3 – Civil society institutional capacity-building). Aid agencies are often restricted by funding regulations and their close bonds with the recipient state, while their staff often struggle to free up the time

to develop close relationships with local partners. Unless aid agencies can tackle their own internal constraints, they are likely to make more headway by operating through intermediaries that are more flexible, and by prioritizing good management of relationships with other institutions.

4.9 Donor strategies, analysis and knowledge

Overall, aid agencies working in the Deep South offer fairly accurate assessments of the overall conflict context and, typically, use this to try to build relevant programs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are gaps in staff knowledge that lead to unforeseen challenges in program design and implementation. Common knowledge gaps include the dynamics of village-level political organization, fluctuations in the security context, or the nuanced affiliations and institutional interests of different government bodies. On occasion, this has led to some misdirected programming. For example, a large bilateral donor worked closely with senior figures at Yala Islamic College, forming a relationship with Islamic leaders that they hoped would assist them to gain local insight and build links with important local figures. However, the strand of Islam followed by these leaders, and the networks that they operate within, have little in common with people sympathetic to, or supporting, the insurgency.[105]

Most aid agencies have tended to rely on implementing partner institutions for detailed knowledge on narrow issues, which is a realistic approach that aligns

Donor-funded projects often take up to several years to initiate. The process of moving from initial project identification to project approval is often drawn-out. The European Union took several years to finalize their conflict analysis for Thailand before initiating the Non-State Actors and Local Authority Fund. Unsolicited proposals (i.e. that do not entail competitive bidding) may also be subject to long inception periods. Some delays are caused too by external factors rather than donor administrative procedures. Between 2006 and 2008, several donors experienced delays in gaining permission from the Thai Government to proceed with proposed initiatives. At the global level, several donors such as USAID and DFID have established rapid response mechanisms to bypass administrative delays. These agencies are most often engaged in responding to humanitarian crises, with some application in conflict environments. They typically concentrate on high-profile, international conflicts, however, and they have little involvement in the Deep South of Thailand.

with their delivery mechanisms. Over time, partners usually build a deep understanding of local conditions. One example is the World Bank's cooperation with the Local Development Institute, whose field coordinators and network of advisers provide strong contextual knowledge.

Evaluating aid programs in the Deep South is not straightforward. Many of the key transformative outcomes that would contribute to peace and stability require monitoring of sensitive political factors. Furthermore, institutional change is often a non-linear process that can take long periods of time and is hard to measure. Making claims of causality is extremely difficult, especially when the aid program is relatively small compared to other major influences on the direction of policy.

Existing information on interventions is limited and project evaluations are hard to track down. Furthermore, measuring impact is challenging given the absence of direct relationships between donor inputs and any concrete aspect of peacebuilding. Chains of relationships between implementing bodies add to the layers of complexity. It is rarely possible to monitor 'transformation' at ground level since most aid agencies do not aim to work directly on local issues. Even if they did, problems of attribution would be hard to solve given that many projects are small in size, duration and scale. This issue is further explored in Chapter 5.

Lack of impact monitoring also reflects the sensitivities of working in a conflict area. Evaluation reports are politically sensitive and may damage relationships or reputation. They are often either not produced or kept confidential. This leads to a lack of open exchange of information: for example, one aid agency representative complained that donors conduct a lot of auditing and fund management, but engage in very little lesson learning or impact analysis. Another representative complained that her agency does not invest in knowledge sufficiently, relying too much on partners and subcontracted assessments. One simple barrier is cost: given small aid budgets for the Deep South, comprehensive research, monitoring and evaluation would consume a high percentage of budgets.

5. Aid and Conflict at the Community Level

The impact of aid programs at the community level is often a 'blind spot' for development agencies and governments, particularly in conflict-affected areas. The difficulties of access in subnational conflict areas, and significant variation between local areas makes it difficult to monitor and interpret the results of aid programs at this level. While community-based development programs are very common in subnational conflict areas, there is very little systematic evidence on how these programs interact with local political and conflict dynamics. For this reason, this study's research team focused on aid at the community level to analyze current aid programs, using the study's analytical framework.

As previously argued, the predominant form of contestation in southern Thailand is state-minority conflict. Programs at the community level can only indirectly address the key transformative factors, largely because the conflict involves political dynamics above (or outside of) the community level. However, community-level programs can be an important platform for influencing government policy, which can stimulate important institutional transformation or, over time, influence elite political dynamics at the local level. For some of the international programs operating at the community level, the implicit strategy for addressing the conflict is to influence government policy or actions in the conflict area, using community-level programs as a platform for engagement with government at the local, provincial and national level. As a result, it is important to understand all of the program interventions and informal influencing that occurs under the umbrella of a development program.

The primary concern in community-level programs in southern Thailand is to ensure that they have a neutral or positive effect on conflict under the current conditions, while looking for higher-level opportunities to influence government. As with any aid program in a conflict area, it is important to understand if programs at the community level are exacerbating tensions at the local level, or creating conditions that could negatively affect the state-minority conflict by reinforcing perceptions of grievance or injustice.

In fact, the challenge of ensuring conflict neutrality is widely underestimated. The research in this chapter focuses on the complexity and risks of working at the community level, and particularly on how aid programs interact with local political and conflict dynamics. The research identified two key factors that need to be overcome for community-based programs to be conflict neutral:

- *Significant variation between local communities* in critical areas such as relations with government, security conditions, local political dynamics, and perceptions of aid programs. This variation means that aid programs must be customized for local conditions, and monitoring must involve regular field visits.

- *Local political dynamics shape aid programs* (not vice versa). Qualitative case studies clearly indicate that the nature of local political dynamics shapes the implementation and impact of aid programs to a much larger extent than aid programs shape local politics.

Figure 5.1 (from the analytical framework) illustrates three scenarios for development programs in a subnational conflict area. These range from programs that unintentionally exacerbate conflict (far left) to programs that are conflict sensitive (center) to programs that contribute to transformation (far right). In southern Thailand, programs at the community level are unlikely to reach the far right (i.e., that are transformational), though they can serve as a platform for influencing officials at a higher level. Therefore, the key challenge is to move from the left to the center.

Figure 5.1: Transformational vs. developmental impact

Developmental impact

Reduced poverty, improved health/education, etc.

Exacerbate Conflict — Programs focused on developmental outcomes, unintentionally exacerbate conflict	Conflict Sensitive — Development programs, with neutral impact on conflict	Transformational — Programs shaped to contribute to transformation

1 Understand conflict and project impact on it	**2** Ensure project does not exacerbate tensions	**3** Restore confidence, and transform key institutions

Entrenching conflict (i.e., negative impact on conflict)

Transformational impact

Positive contributions to transition to peace

Figure 5.2: Examples of transformational vs. developmental impact

Developmental impact

Reduced poverty,
improved health/education, etc.

Exacerbate Conflict	Conflict Sensitive	Transformational
- Building local infrastructure that does not benefit the conflict-affected minority population - Service delivery programs that entrench or strengthen discriminatory practices - Local governance projects that reduce ability of local elites and institutions to manage level of violence in the community - Local infrastructure project that leads to attacks on project sites	- Community development programs that ensure local rivals are equally included - Service delivery programs that only include services that are not a source of grievance - Broad participation in aid program delivery	-Improving education through local language curriculum and supporting local non-state schools - Influencing government to change local development programs or services to address core grievances -Targeting former insurgents, key political actors and insurgent networks for benefits to bolster confidence in a transition - Strengthen transitional institutions to support a transition or peace process implementation

Entrenching conflict (i.e., negative impact on conflict)	Transformational impact	Positive contributions to transition to peace

The key to moving towards the right is to first understand the conflict and the project's impact on it, and then to adjust the program design to mitigate any negative impact. While foreign aid-funded programs generally fall in the center of the diagram, the locality research identified a number of government programs which were viewed as potentially exacerbating conflict. While not necessarily transformative in themselves, international community level programs can have a transformative impact if they can affect the way government programs are implemented. Figure 5.2 provides some illustrative examples of programs for each scenario.

Aid programs at the local level

Aid programs at the community level have not been a major focus of international development agencies. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the majority of foreign assistance in the Deep South is focused on thematic transformative issues such as justice or education reform which are directly related to the state-minority conflict. Most programs primarily focused on government policy, expanding space for peacebuilding, or influencing government actions in the conflict area. Conversely, Thai government programs are mostly directed to community-level assistance programs in the conflict area.

While community-level international aid programs are very limited in the Deep South, the project team focused on a group of localities where international aid projects were currently being implemented. Government programs at the community level are ubiquitous in the Deep South, so the team was able to compare international and government programs in some localities. Given the low penetration of international aid programs in the area, responses from the quantitative survey reflect the public's perception of government development programs. Perceptions of international aid programs were generally captured through qualitative research.

Both international aid agencies (via NGOs) and the central government (via SBPAC) have experimented with community-based projects in some localities across the Deep South. From 2009 to 2013, the World Bank, by working closely with the Local Development Institute (LDI), supported community-driven development (CDD) projects in 27 communities or villages. Save the Children and Sweden's Kampong Suenae program also aimed to build strong communities, in particular for children. Oxfam operates a small community-based project in 23 communities. In 2012, The Asia Foundation also undertook a community-based program in three tambons (sub-districts) which attempted to promote greater community involvement in local security issues.

Table 5.1: Community-based development projects in southern Thailand

Project	Implementing Agency	Funder	Village Allocation (USD)	Geographic Coverage
Community-Driven Development	Local Development Institute (LDI)	World Bank	$10,000 per round of funding	27 villages
Kampong Suenae	Save the Children	European Union	Monthly stipend to poor family	12 tambons (124 families)
Natural Resources and Livelihoods	Oxfam	European Union	$335	23 communities
Community-oriented Policing	The Asia Foundation	DFID	None	3 tambons
Panop (self-sufficiency economy)	SBPAC	Thai Government	$170 per household	All villages
Panom (quality of life development)	SBPAC	Thai Government	$7,800	All villages

The government projects are much larger, covering most villages in the conflict area, with budgets many times larger than international projects. For example, in 2011, SBPAC initiated its own version of community-based development, the *Panom* project (or Quality of Life Development project). Aiming to cover all 2,248 villages in the Deep South, the project's total budget was 523,769,500 baht or approximately US$ 17.5 million.[106]

The research team found that government programs were more likely to exacerbate conflict conditions (i.e., the far left of Figure 5.1) compared to NGO-led (and internationally-funded) programs. NGO-led projects tended to be more responsive to the community, and significantly less rigid in their program design. While NGO-led community projects received mixed reviews from community members, almost everyone interviewed had the opinion that the government-led *Panom* and *Panop* projects were ineffective and did not address local concerns. Some interviewees argued that NGO-led projects were more aware of local politics and allowed for much greater participation by community members, especially LDI's CDD project. The multi-year budgeting approach was also widely seen as positive. Government programs were viewed as 'top-down', with strict templates for implementation that led to lack of flexibility to customize projects to fit village- and household-level needs and concerns. However, while the NGO-led approach was more flexible and

customizable, there have been significant challenges in expanding the scale of these programs, given the need to standardize procedures and streamline risks when scaling up programs. An important contribution that internationally-funded community level programs can have is to transfer this learning to large-scale government funded programs to encourage them to be more adaptable to local conditions and adopt more conflict sensitive approaches.

5.1 Complexity: Varying conditions between communities

Delivering and monitoring aid programs in southern Thailand is challenging. With limited direct access to the conflict area, it is often difficult for aid agencies and governments to know how aid programs unfold at the beneficiary level. The results from community-level analysis help to illustrate the unique challenges of aid program delivery in this environment, and why traditional aid programs may not be well suited for this type of conflict.

This study's field research indicates extensive diversity in local conditions in conflict-affected communities in the Deep South. Survey and interview results confirmed significant variation between communities on key issues related to conflict and development programs, including trust and confidence in state officials and perspectives on aid programs.[107] There are

some clear differences between the Muslim and Buddhist populations, however, within the Malay Muslim population, significant variation does not necessarily follow clear patterns. In many cases, there are no clear patterns of variation between majority Muslim localities, making it extremely difficult to interpret local conditions or make predictions for other localities on the basis of shared characteristics. The research team compared survey research results against violence levels, income levels, and several other factors, but found very few clear patterns to explain local variation.

## 5.2 Trust and confidence in state institutions and security forces

People's views of government agencies vary considerably across localities. While trust in the national government is higher in the conflict area than outside of the area (see Chapter 2), within the conflict area, there is significant variation between local areas.

For example, in Bannok, 50% of people trust the national government, while in Talokapo only 14% of people trust the national government. These two sub-districts are majority Malay Muslim, located very close to each other in Pattani Province, though Talokapo had moderately-higher violence levels over the period 2001-2010. The qualitative research provided clear evidence that each tambon and village is distinct in terms of its level of social cohesion, experience of violence and socio-political dynamics.

Survey findings, data mapping, and qualitative case studies indicate that differences between Malay-Muslim majority communities can only be reliably

Figure 5.3: Trust in state institutions (Response: somewhat/very much)*
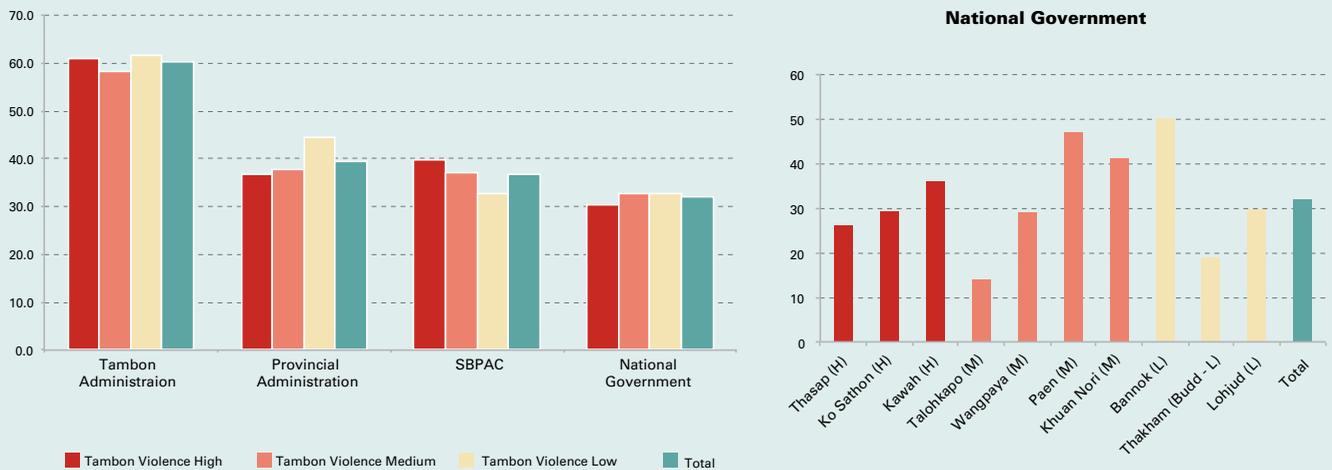
Source: 2012 Quantitative Survey

In Figure 5.3, both charts organize tambons by violence level. The chart on the right shows all 10 tambons from highest (Thasap) violence levels, to lowest (Lohjud) violence levels over the period 2001 to 2010. Source of violence data: Royal Thai Police.

determined through in-depth local case studies. To illustrate this point, Figure 5.3 shows trust levels grouped by tambon violence levels (high, medium, low). These results indicate relatively- consistent levels of trust across violence levels. The chart on the right also shows the levels of trust in the national government by tambon, and shows significant variation, with no clear pattern. This indicates that the level of violence has no clear correlation with trust in the national government. Some of the violent incidents that occur in the south may be staged by combatants from other communities, which may explain this weak relationship.

However, the survey results show relatively high trust levels for tambon officials across all tambons. Based on this study's field work, tambon officials are people from the area and are directly elected, and thus interviewees often do not associate them with being part of the broader Thai state.

The survey results on trust in security forces showed some relationship to the level of violence in the tambon. Tambons with low levels of violence had much higher levels of trust in state security forces. This may be because the level of security force presence is much lower in these areas. Furthermore, there are clear indications that security forces comprised of local people, such as the village defense volunteers, who are village members, as generally more trusted. Army and Rangers are generally people from other parts of Thailand, are predominantly Buddhist, and do not speak the local Malay dialect.

Across all tambons, local elites are trusted much more than state officials and security forces. Furthermore, the level of variation in trust is much lower between different

Figure 5.4: Trust in security actors (Response: somewhat/very much)


Army
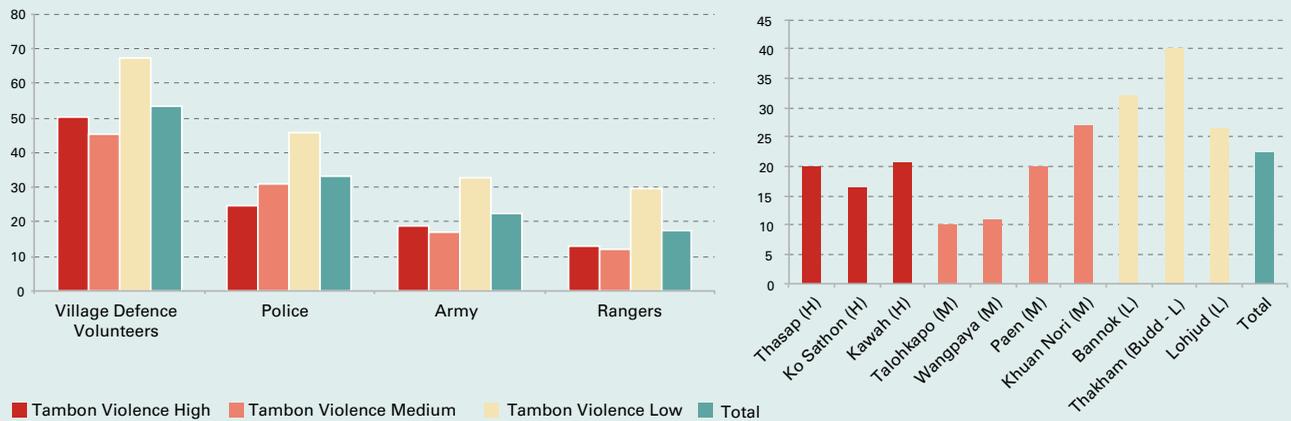
Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

locations. The survey results indicate that the levels of trust in local elites is usually around 80%, regardless of violence levels or ethnicity. This level is more than double the levels of trust for state officials and security forces. This indicates the strong connection with leaders who are from the community, and often play a lead role in managing security and local disputes.

Local elites include religious leaders, village heads, and tambon leaders. While there was some variation from one locality to another, on average individuals in Muslim communities tended to have the highest trust in religious leaders (89%), followed by teachers and village heads at 81%, and the *Kamnan* (tambon leader) at 75%.

Figure 5.5: Trust in local elites (Response: somewhat/very much)
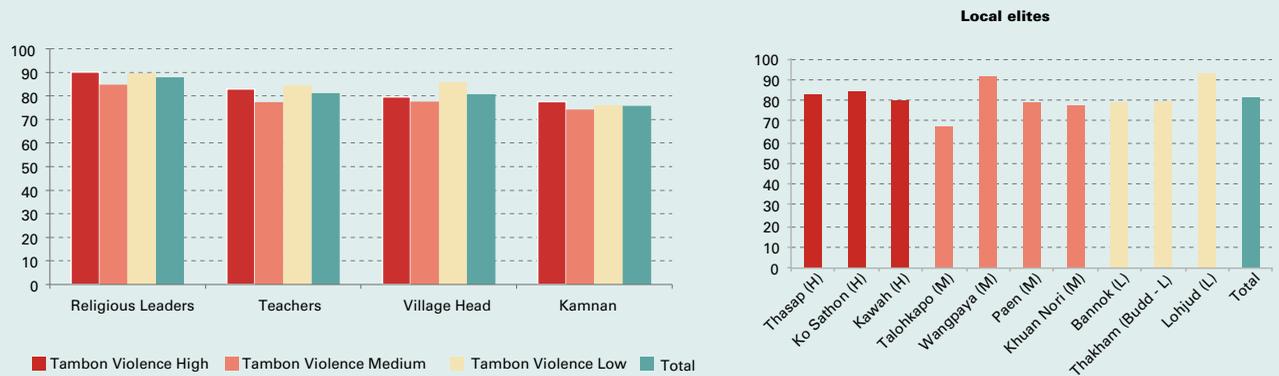
Local elites

Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

Figure 5.6: Trust in types of local elites (Response: somewhat/very much)
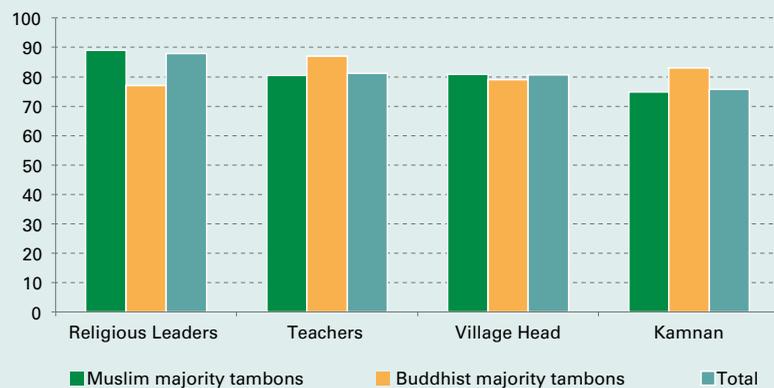
5.3 Demand for self-governance and decentralization

While there is general consensus that a solution to the conflict will entail some greater degree of decentralization, there is no clear consensus on what governance functions should be devolved to the local level. Survey results indicate wide variation in the demand for greater local control over key government functions, though there are few clear patterns to explain the variation. Figure 5.7a illustrates responses by survey respondents on five key services, with tambons grouped by their level of trust in national government actors and violence levels. Results show roughly half of survey respondents would favor greater local control, particularly on justice and social services. Surprisingly, there is a weak relationship between trust in national government and desire for more local control, with people with moderate levels of trust showing the highest demand for local control, and high and low levels of trust at roughly similar levels. Violence levels show a similarly weak relationship, though there are higher levels of demand for increased local control of security, justice and social services in tambons with high violence levels.

Centralized authority and local governance in southern Thailand

Thailand's administrative system is highly centralized and has extensive reach to the local level in southern Thailand. The national government ministries have local offices, and have significant control over budgets and delivery of local services. Each provincial administration is headed by a provincial governor, who is appointed by the Ministry of Interior. Some limited powers and authority are delegated to each ministry's representatives at the provincial level. These officials usually report to their own ministers but must work closely with the provincial governors. Below the provincial level are district administrations, each headed by a district officer, also appointed by the Ministry of Interior.

This research focused on the tambon (sub-district) level, which is comprised of a number of villages. Village members elect their village head (the phuyaiban), who has a semiofficial status (an official uniform and a stipend from the state), and is confirmed in office by the provincial governor. All the village heads in a sub-district choose a leader (the kamnan) who represents them in sub-district meetings. This makes village heads and kamnans part of the chain of administration commanded through the Ministry of Interior.

Administration from the provincial level down, comprises the provincial administrative organization (PAO), municipal administrations, and tambon administrative organizations (TAOs). Each village usually elects two representatives to the TAO. These political-administrative units are the result of on-going decentralization efforts in Thailand and are administered by elected leaders and councils. Despite demand for more decentralization, most local governments still lack capacity and have yet to realize their full potential.

Figure 5.7b shows responses from individual tambons on demand for greater local control and organized by violence levels. These results indicate high levels of variation between individual tambons, with no clear correlation between violence and demand for greater local control in the areas of justice and security.

Figure 5.7a: Demand for local government control (response: more authority)

Trust in National Government Actors

Violence Levels

- Budgeting
- Education Policy
- Security Matters
- Justice
- Social Services

Figure 5.7b: Demand for local government control (Response: more authority)

Justice (by Violence Level)

Security (by Violence Level)
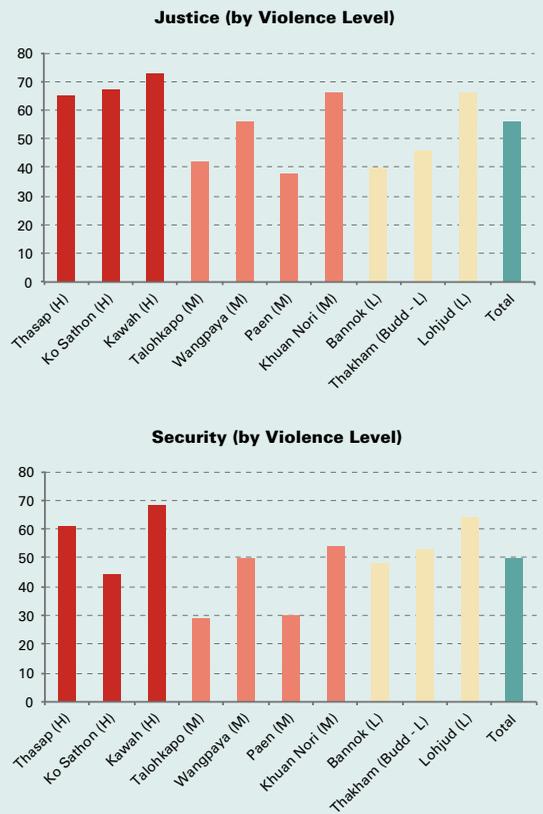
Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

5.4 Variation in experiences with aid at the local level

Communities have very different experiences and perceptions of aid programs at the community level. Even the same aid programs, in roughly comparable communities (in terms of ethnic composition and violence levels) show quite different experiences with aid programs. Even within tambons, one can see significant variation in the perceptions of aid programs. For example, Table 5.2 shows tambon- and village-level responses to the question 'When development project coordinators come, who do they talk to?' While it appears there is an overall pattern at the tambon level if the focus is down to the village level, people's views vary considerably.

Based on field observations and interviews in this tambon, Village 1 political dynamics allow for much broader consultation and inclusion than the other two villages, which may help to explain why project coordinators approach various groups, rather than just the influential people. Thus, the variation needs to be understood not only at the tambon level but also at the village level.

Most people in the conflict area (78%) believe that the goal of aid programs is partly or entirely to win support for the government. This finding is a reflection of the close association between counter-insurgency efforts and aid programs, particularly those implemented by government. However, some areas, including Thasap and Wangpaya, have a much stronger perception that aid is primarily for winning support for the government. When comparing tambons that have internationally-funded programs (implemented by NGOs), these have marginally fewer people who believe that aid projects are intended to win support for government.

While a slight majority of survey respondents agreed that those working with development projects (primarily government) had some understanding of the issues and needs of the community, there were significant differences between tambons. Surprisingly, the majority Buddhist tambon of Thakham had the lowest number of people who felt that government understood the needs of the community. The level of trust and violence did not seem to have any relationship with how people felt.

Table 5.2: When development project coordinators visit, who do they talk to?

|	Tambon level	Village 1	Village 2	Village 3
Various groups of people	60%	74%	29%	26%
Just the influential people	36%	26%	59%	63%
No answer	4%	0%	12%	10%

Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

5.5 Political dynamics shape aid programs

Politics at the tambon and village level is a crucial factor in the implementation and impact of aid programs. As previously mentioned results of research clearly show that the nature of local political dynamics shapes the implementation and impact of aid programs to a much larger extent than aid programs shape local politics.

Many internationally-funded, community-based development programs are designed to mitigate the problem of local elite capture and local power dynamics that distort aid delivery. However, the relationship between local power dynamics and aid programs is a subject of intensive debate among aid practitioners, particularly over the ability of short-term aid programs' to influence (or mitigate against) local political practices. Historically-determined social

norms and local institutions are very difficult to understand and transform.[108] Research has commonly concluded that this problem is worse in more authoritarian or unequal communities.[109] Thus, in conflict areas and fragile states, in particular, there is growing recognition of the need to understand local political dynamics.[110] Political competition at the local level plays a key role in shaping aid programs. If there is active, non-violent political competition in the village, village leaders will usually compete to be responsive to the community members and might show interest in aid and make the attempt to implement projects well. For example, one village had many well-functioning civic groups covering a broad range of community members. In villages where there is no contestation, village leaders might turn down aid projects for various reasons such as: a) they think the project will not benefit the community; b) they do not trust the organization that brought in the project; c)

Figure 5.8: Goal of aid projects: Are they to provide assistance or win support for the government?

Legend: Not answer/Don't know · Provide assistance · Win support for the government · Both reasons
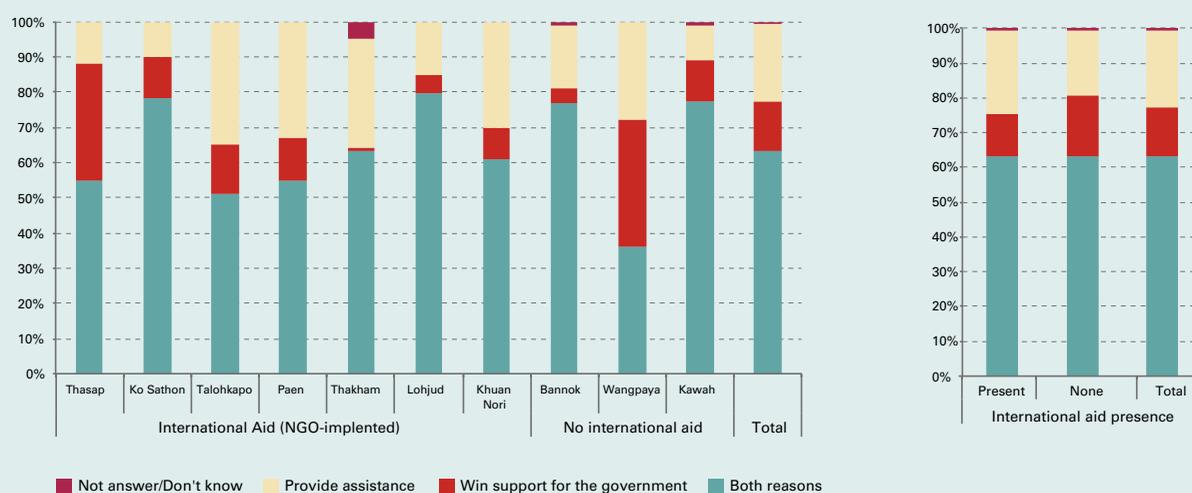
Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

they disagree with conditions attached to the project; or d) they do not want their power eroded by the projects (when the project aims to empower certain groups in the community). However, they usually cannot turn down government projects, although they will just do the minimum needed to complete the checklist enforced upon them.

However, in the context of a conflict environment, as mentioned in Chapter 2, research shows that villages with stronger and more unified local leadership tend to be more able to control levels of violence than villages where authority is contested by different factions. Programs that are designed to challenge existing power structures may risk destabilizing fragile local security

Figure 5.9a: Do those who support this project understand the needs of your community? (by trust in national government actors; international aid presence)

Legend: ■ Not answer/ Don't know ■ a little/very little ■ Neutral ■ Very/Somewhat
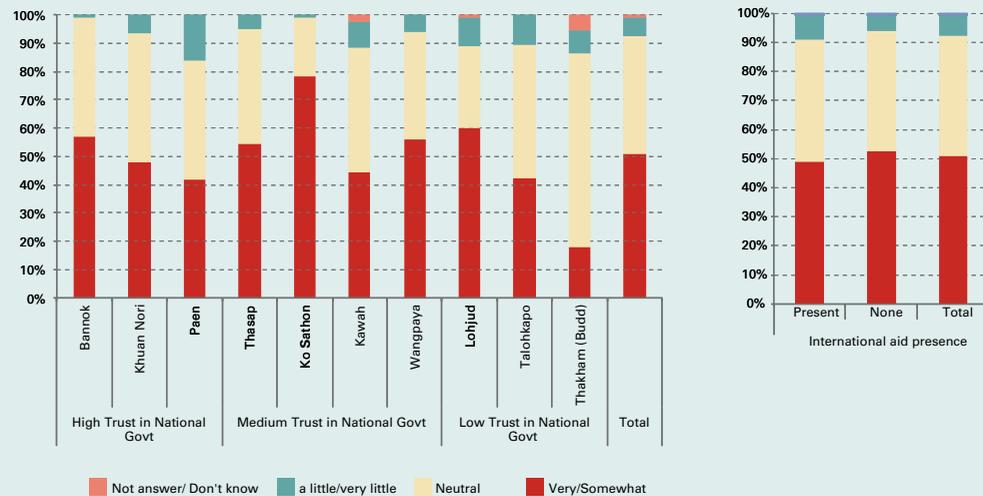
Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

Figure 5.9b: Do those who support this project understand the needs of your community? (by violence levels)
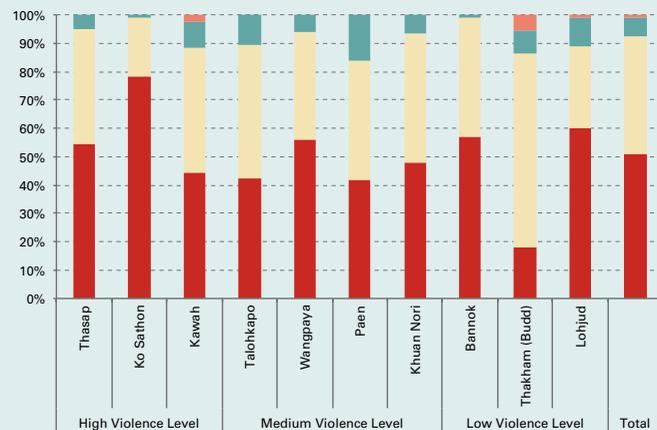
Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

arrangements that involve informal negotiations between local elites and armed actors. While there is a need for more evidence on this issue, it is plausible that efforts to undermine the control of local elites may increase the risk of violence in sub-national conflict areas.

While not unique to southern Thailand, there are several common scenarios that allow local elites to personally gain from their positions. Common forms of elite capture include: a) taking public or common goods as their own; b) selectively distributing resources for political or personal gain; and c) complying with stronger forces in the community to stay alive. Many interviewees who were not part of the village's governing team, stated that it is common for leaders to distribute resources from government-led development programs to their family and friends first, before distributing benefits to anyone else. Community members chose to turn a blind eye to such elite capture because they had no choice. Some were afraid to speak out for fear of retaliation or violence. The level of corruption is also high among government authorities that manage certain projects.

Figure 5.10: How often is aid misused or stolen?

The quantitative survey data support the findings from the qualitative data gathered in field visits.[111] A strong majority (71%) of survey respondents indicated that aid is often or sometimes misused or stolen.
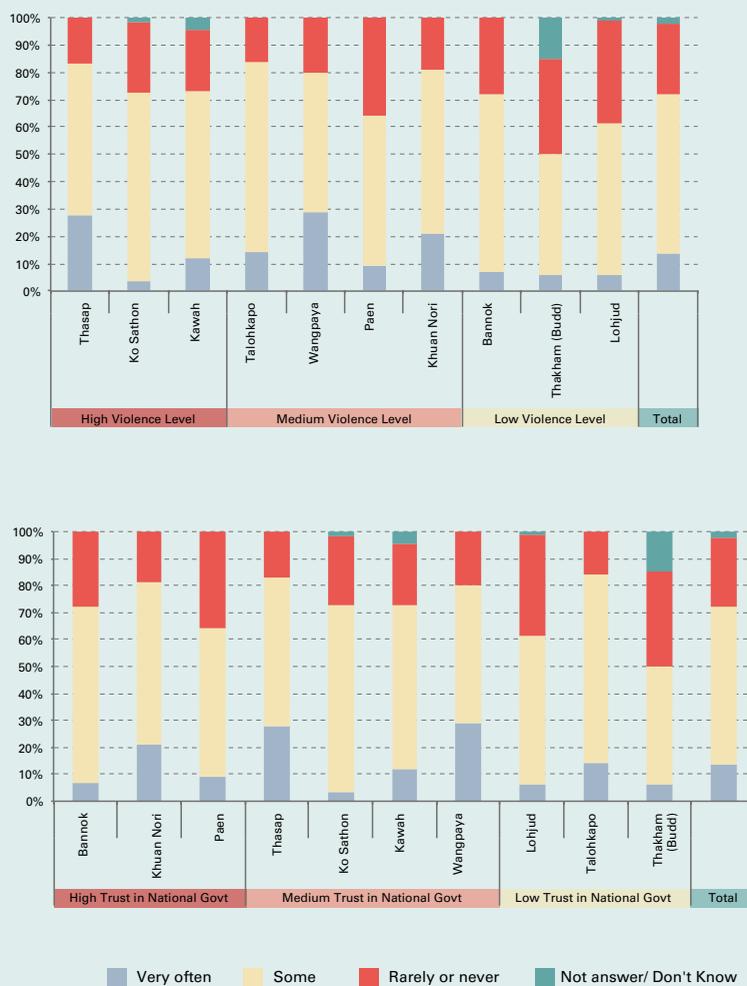
There was some variation from one locality to another, with only 50% of respondents in Thakham expressing this view, however, a further 15% declined to answer the question.

Box 5.1 Local elite contestation

Elite rivalries in a Malay Muslim village

This is a map of a village's political dynamics that depicts linkages between elite competitors, drug dealers and a development program.
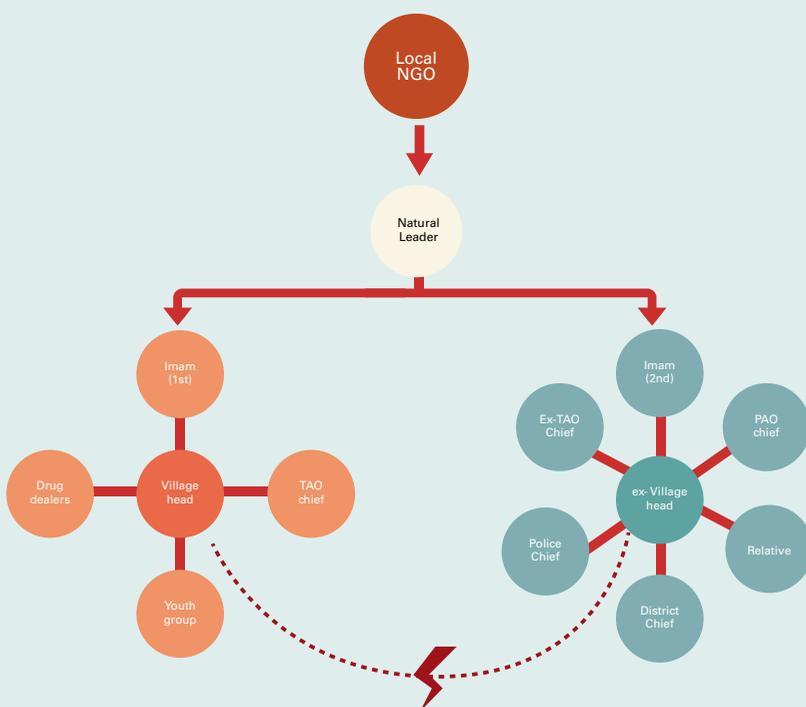
In the last election, the current village head won by 35 votes. His opponent was the relative of the ex-village head. The ex-village head claims that the current village head spent about 3 million baht (US$ 100,000) to buy votes, while his relative spent half a million baht (US$ 16,000) to buy votes. Those who changed their support from the previous leader to the new one were youth group members and their votes ensured that the current village head won the election. The ex-village head also claims the current village head is supported by drug dealers in the village. The main Imam explicitly supported the current village head, which was unacceptable to the losing side. The current village head and the Imam have since refused to repay their loans to the Village Fund as the fund is headed by a relative of the ex-village chief.

This village was raided by the military in 2004 after a bomb targeted military personnel who were on patrol in the village. Village youth have also been killed by military. The ex-village head stated that during his time as leader he was able protect the village from attack. He would hold meetings with the insurgents to tell them that if they wanted to stay in his village, they could not stage any attacks on the military from inside the village. According to the ex-village head, there are currently several drug dealers in the village. He also claimed that the Imam had loaned mosque funds to a drug dealer who has since been arrested. Thus the loan will not be repaid. Based on interviews in the village, so far 10 people have died from drug abuse.

This intense elite contestation has influenced how aid is managed in the village. The community-based project coordinator, who is a young Malay Muslim man from a nearby town, has to carefully navigate through these politics. Given such an intense and dangerous context, community-based programs are generally overwhelmed by such local political dynamics. This village's local elite competition is not based on ethnic differences, and so has little to do with state-minority contestation over the legitimacy of the state. It is mostly about local political power that is entangled with criminality i.e. drugs and the illegal smuggling of goods and some insurgency relations. Each side has supporters higher than the village level, and even all the way to the national level. The contestation is too complex and deep-rooted for a very small community-development project to have positive influence in the short run.

Community-based aid programs must navigate a web of local power dynamics. When aid project supporters visit, it is critical for them to meet with a wide range of local actors to understand the political dynamics. Survey respondents indicated that in most cases, project supporters are meeting with a wide range of people, though there is significant variation between tambons. In Paen, for example, 60% of respondents (twice the average) indicated that project supporters only met with influential people.

In general, community-based development programs, regardless of whether government or NGO led, are shaped by local power dynamics. Most programs will either play into local politics, or be forced to work with willing, rather than ideal, partners. The qualitative case study produced multiple examples of local politics leading to distortions in aid program implementation, or wasted resources. The case study 'Community Leaders: Caught in the crossfire' is one example that illustrates how this can occur.

Figure 5.11: When project supporters visit, do they meet everyone or just influential people?
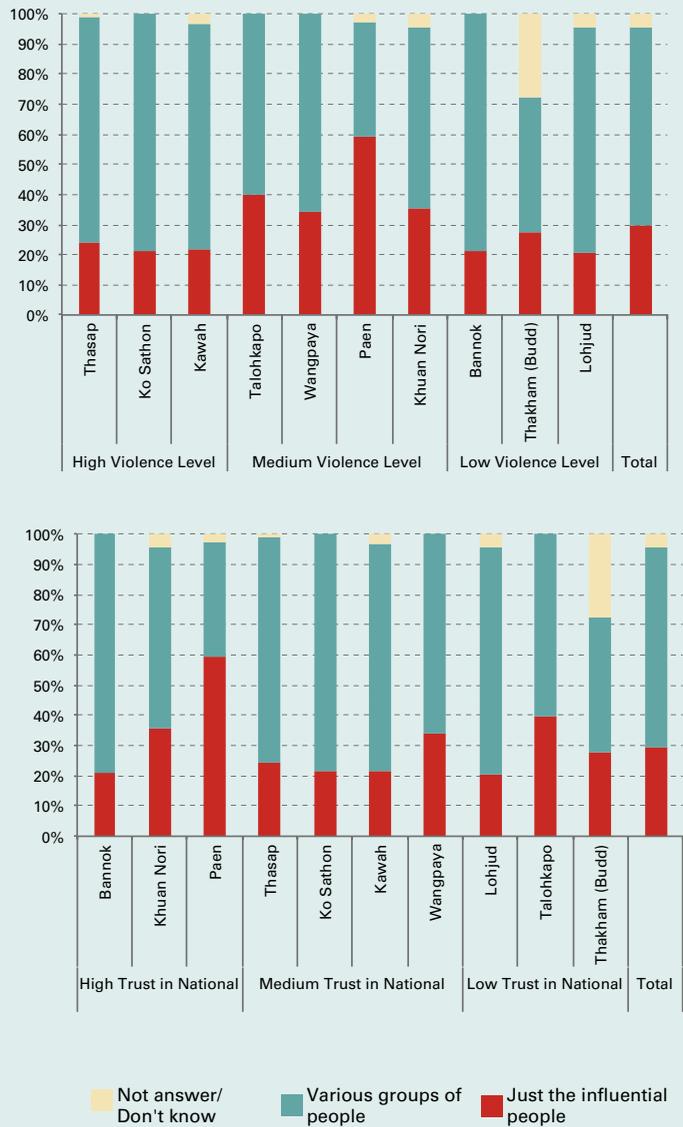
Source: 2012 Quantitative survey

Community actors are put in a very difficult position when exposed to power and resources that come with certain types of development projects. Low-level politicians and administrators are often caught in the crossfire: being accused of not cooperating with state forces, while also being labeled as 'collaborators' by insurgents and their sympathizers. They have to carefully calculate safety risks when they decide to accept and be involved in certain development projects. Many know very well that most of government-led projects are offered to win the 'hearts and minds' of local people. However, leaders cannot say 'no' to these projects.

Projects that focus on the delivery of material goods to individuals pose the greatest security challenge for a local leader or aid worker if s/he has to identify beneficiaries or manage a collective process to identify beneficiaries. Examples include the SBPAC's Panop project, where village heads have to choose the poorest families to receive material goods and Save the Children Sweden's Kampong Suenae project, where village volunteers have to identify needy children for project benefits. The military-led Masjid Sanjai project, where religious leaders have to identify households with drug abuse problems is a particularly problematic project. As drug dealing, smuggling and usage are quite rampant in many parts of the Deep South, some religious leaders protect themselves by agreeing to help the military, but then fail to find any drug abuse cases. No doubt, development project aims can be distorted by the fears of community actors.

5.6 Additional local factors

Differences in local context can achieve positive impact in one area and exacerbate local tensions in another. The following list of local conditions summarizes key factors that shape aid programs in southern Thailand:

- *Village-level governance* refers to how the village governing structure is organized. For example, some villages are divided into sub-governing zones, with a deputy village head managing each zone. When deciding on aid allocation, this zoning structure is often used, and explains why in some villages, community-based projects are sub divided. Unsurprisingly communities that already have well-functioning local governance tend to be more successful at implementing both government-led and NGO-led community-based development programs.

- *Ethnic makeup* refers to the proportion of Buddhist and Muslims in a village. As there is a general decline in relations between the two religious groups in ethnically-mixed communities, project leaders, who are usually village heads, divide any aid provided according to ethnicity. For example, despite requirements to have participation processes, one village head would always divide the aid personally. In an interview, a village head explained that if the aid was not divided like this, the Buddhists would always get less. Similarly, in another village, the head explained that he would always split aid between Buddhist and Muslim families, based on the ratio of the two ethnic groups.

- The choice of local actors who typically serve as the '*point of entry*' for aid programs in a community is a critical factor in how the community perceives the aid program. In subnational conflict areas, the behavior of local actors is driven by their priority need to ensure their physical security. The government delivers its community-based projects mainly through the chain of command in the Ministry of Interior (province, district, tambon, village). Other channels used are volunteer youth groups (set up by government), teachers, religious leaders, village committees, and tambon council members or tambon administrative officers. NGOs usually work directly with beneficiaries by cultivating a close relationship with natural leaders who are close to the target group for the project (i.e. a women's group or a youth group).

- The '*last line of handover*' is the person associated with the project that directly engages with beneficiaries. This person plays a very important role and greatly influences the success of community-based development projects. Because of the challenges of accessing conflict areas, most aid programs have long intermediary chains between the donor and the actual beneficiaries. In southern Thailand, each intermediary often has a simultaneous role in multiple programs from multiple funders. These people often have the power not only to choose the point of entry into communities, but also to steer community decisions by influencing people's preferences. Especially in places where trust, leadership and inter-communal relations are problematic, the relationship between an intermediary and the community holds the key to a sustainable project in a village. The intermediary's gender, religion, attitude, experience, and views on conflict all make a difference on the community's receptivity to aid.

6. Key Findings and Recommendations

Aid agencies aiming to address the subnational conflict in the Deep South confront a difficult, entrenched situation. The structure of the Thai nation state, including its regional economic disparities, highly centralized governance structure, and ethnic nationalism is a cause of many of the problems experienced in the Deep South and a barrier to future transformation. Enduring inequalities continue to feed a sense of resentment among many Malay Muslims and foster a violent response on the part of a small minority. Violence is also exacerbated by local competition for resources and power. The Thai Government has not yet been able or willing to enact significant changes that might help address these causes and encourage a negotiated peace process. The insurgents have not shown that they are ready to negotiate a peaceful settlement, and serious questions remain regarding their capacity to collectively negotiate due to extensive divisions among the core groups.

Despite many challenges, international and domestic development organizations can still play a supporting role in the search for peace, as many agencies have already demonstrated. In a middle-income country, without an ongoing peace process, the main transformative contribution that aid agencies can make is to promote policy change that increases the likelihood of reaching a just solution to the conflict. Aid agencies have shown that they are able to engage in a range of sectors relevant to the causes and ongoing dynamic of conflict. They have found indirect ways to address the inequalities and grievances that foster the violence. They work with different partners, including government departments, NGOs, civil society groups and others to promote policy change, to build the capacity for advocacy, and occasionally to improve conditions at the local level.

6.1 Need for political transformation

The most urgent priority is to help initiate and sustain a political transition that will move the context from conflict to durable peace. Significant changes in government policy could help to initiate a credible transition. Finding a peaceful solution is likely to require negotiations between insurgent and government representatives. In addition to immediate steps to reassure leaders of their personal safety, some form of political space needs to be opened up in the Deep South. The provision of stronger local bodies with political authority and elected leadership could give rebel leaders a reason to seek non-violent solutions.

These measures would also build public confidence that change is possible. Significant measures and symbolic gestures that encourage local leaders and the wider public to think that change is viable could reduce support for the insurgency. However, in order to make a sustainable difference,

reforms would need to go beyond symbolic gestures to making a genuine difference to people's lived experiences and perceptions of injustice and inequality. Some form of autonomy within the Thai state, alongside special allowances or dispensations to help redress key enduring inequalities, could help to alleviate the underlying drivers of the conflict. At the same time, there is a need for insurgents and political leaders to reassure key national institutions that the Thai state has more to gain than to lose from genuine reforms and a negotiated settlement.

Currently special government development projects for the Deep South continue a long tradition of central state efforts to win the support of people in peripheral parts of the country. Without a credible transition, they will have little significant impact on the dynamics of the conflict.

6.2 Aid agency engagement in the Deep South

Most conventional forms of development and post-conflict assistance are not likely to contribute to transformation because the traditional goods provided by international aid programs designed to improve economic growth, deliver better services, or reduce poverty, are not what is most needed and will have little impact on increasing people's confidence or on improving key institutions. Additionally there is little need for reconstruction, given low levels of material damage. Humanitarian support is needed only in rare cases, and levels of absolute poverty are low.

International aid actors must effectively navigate government sensitivities, which usually requires flexible long-term approaches, working through local intermediaries, and using creative methods to influence key actors and government. The protection of sovereignty is often a major concern when addressing sensitive issues of national security and ethnic identity. Likewise, Thai Government scrutiny and restrictions on international agencies have a profound impact on the shape of aid programs. Compared to Mindanao in the Philippines and Aceh in Indonesia (the latter since 2005), Thailand is much closer to the international norm on this issue. Many aid agencies, especially those interested in building large programs that rely on good relations with the Thai Government, remain reluctant to engage in a conflict with few international repercussions.

Foreign aid flows are very small in comparison with Thai Government budgets and the wider domestic economy. Thus, foreign aid is likely to continue to play a minor role. Relatively limited international interest in a conflict with few wider repercussions creates further limitations, while the practical challenges of turning positive intent into action on the ground add another set of barriers.

In the absence of a transition, the space and opportunities for aid agencies to work on transformative outcomes is limited. Some agencies are better positioned than others to work in this environment. Those agencies that prioritize conflict mitigation, justice and human rights within their

overall approach to development, usually have more space to support minority groups and work on politically-sensitive issues. These actors are less bound by institutional incentives that prioritize relationships with the recipient state. Furthermore, agencies that can engage in the conflict area, are effective at managing their relationships with domestic governmental and non-governmental partners, usually over long periods of time. They also generally have more flexible working methods that allow for setting priorities locally, rather than following global policy prescriptions; employ continuous learning to build a strong knowledge base; gradually develop selective relationships with domestic institutions; and adopt an incremental approach to implementation. Finally, agencies have practical attributes—long-term staff contracts and longer funding cycles—that enable them to work incrementally.

6.3 Supporting long-term, incremental transformation

Most of the international agencies that address conflict in the Deep South have recognized that the most critical level of contestation is state-minority conflict. Overall, aid agency approaches to the Deep South typically have a sound understanding of the causes and dynamics of violence. In particular, these donors recognize the need to transform institutions, and use their limited resources and influence to encourage policy adaptation towards meaningful change in order to help build a basis for peace.

Aid programs are most likely to contribute when they are customized for the particular state of transition, and the dominant form of contestation. Table 6.1 illustrates the particular transformational needs at each stage for each level of contestation. In southern Thailand, over the period 2007-2012, international development actors have generally followed these guidelines, though without support for a transition by the key domestic actors, there has been only modest impact.

While it is important to recognize the limits regarding what development assistance can offer, there are examples of aid agencies making important contributions. The findings of this study show that effective programs in southern Thailand generally use non-conventional aid approaches,

based on long-term strategies, with extensive focus on building and maintaining local relationships. The example of the Muslim Attorney Center (see Case Study #4) is illustrative of how international aid has supported meaningful contributions towards peace in southern Thailand.

Effective aid programs focus on finding ways to support carefully-targeted initiatives that 'nudge' existing institutions and build the capacity of advocates for change. Some modest positive impact has been achieved by encouraging and supporting reforms in key institutions, and supporting local institutions to push for a credible process of transition. In many cases, only small amounts of funding are needed. The policies involved cover a wide range of issues from specific sector interventions in health and education, through to promoting human rights, supporting greater discussion of local autonomy, or capacity building for broad peace processes.

These programs use a range of different approaches to support political changes or find ways to build pressure for change. Specific initiatives respond to specific circumstances and partners' needs in a variety of ways, including pilot studies, seminars, training, research, support for networks and so on. These initiatives focus on building domestic capacity and supporting reformers within or outside government departments. The most promising examples are small-scale projects working on sensitive but critical issues, carefully brokered with government and other domestic institutions.

Table 6.1. Aid in the current context – lack of transition

Type of contestation	Transformational need		Focus of government programs	Focus of donor programs
	Confidence	Institutions		
I. Center-periphery	Advocate for transition process; Create an enabling environment for peace negotiations	**Improve institutions to address underlying drivers of the conflict—justice, security, identity, and education**	Some relevant policy shifts (e.g. local language signs and TV station; recruitment of more locals into government positions)	*Reform of government policies and practices which address underlying drivers of the conflict—justice, identity, and education*
II. Inter-elite	Not a priority issue			
III. Inter-communal	Not a priority issue		*Development programs focused on improving economic conditions and combating drug abuse*	Limited development programs focused on economic development and marginalized groups.

Note: Bolded issues above are priority needs, italics indicate main program focus.

Injustice is a core driver of conflict in the Deep South, and to address this, international aid agencies have supported the Muslim Attorney Center (MAC), a southern-based network of lawyers established in 2005. MAC provides legal counsel for vulnerable and marginalized persons in the Deep South. Over time, MAC has developed into a highly-regarded and trusted organization. In 2008, MAC received an award from the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand. It was nominated by the Embassy of France in Thailand for a French Human Rights Prize and received another NGO award in 2011. These awards are recognition of the transformational impact MAC has had in addressing the issue of justice in the Deep South.

Assistance from a number of international donors has been critical for supporting MAC's development in three ways:
1. Providing long-term institutional support, including core funding for MAC
2. Providing technical and administrative capacity building in a responsive manner
3. Being flexible with regard to partnership arrangements

Institutional funding history: Initial funding to support the establishment of MAC was provided by the World Bank in response to the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that affected some other parts of southern Thailand, but not the conflict-affected Deep South. From this low-key and uncontroversial start, further funds were provided by The Asia Foundation, USAID and the US Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This funding helped expand MAC's network into the Deep South. These grants were administered by The Asia Foundation whose long-term contacts on the ground gave The Asia Foundation the means to implement a potentially-controversial program. In 2010, MAC has also received funding from the American Bar Association and the Fund for Global Human Rights. In 2011, MAC, along with the Cross-Cultural Foundation, commenced a new 2-year grant, overseen by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, with funding from the European Union and the German Ministry for Development Cooperation. They also received further assistance from The Asia Foundation to support the development of a wider network of paralegal advisors across the Deep South.

Institutional development: Throughout their engagement with MAC, international agencies have provided technical assistance as well as support for core institutional development, including project cycle management and developing skilled administrative and finance staff. MAC is principally a network of practicing lawyers, rather than an organization that employs its own experts or support staff. This structure gives it limited capacity to manage donor funds. As a result, some donor agencies have chosen to bring in a separate organization, the Cross Cultural Foundation, chiefly in order to provide the administrative and financial management capacity

that MAC lacks.[113] This holistic approach has been integral for ensuring that MAC can fulfill its programmatic mission, but also has the administrative and financial systems necessary to comply with donor reporting requirements.

Trusted relationships and flexible partnerships: MAC's director, Sittipong Chandharaviroj, says he finds that some aid agencies attempt to push specific agendas or activities that do not fit with the priorities of MAC's members. While MAC is open to working in new areas, particularly as the conflict transforms, they have turned down proposals by aid agencies that would pull MAC away from its core institutional mandate. This highlights the importance of trusted institutional relationships, and donors adopting a flexible partnership model in working with local organizations to identify program priorities.

As a result of this support, MAC and its international supporters have been able to achieve some transformative outcomes in the justice sector. While there are a number of factors contributing to an overall decrease in torture, including increased awareness of human rights principles by both security forces and the general population, people in the Deep South regularly comment that by legally representing alleged victims of torture and other forms of state repression, MAC has had an instrumental role in improving the security forces' treatment of prisoners across the conflict-affected area.[114] Additionally, MAC was rated number 5 out of 26 individuals or organizations that are the most trusted by people in the Deep South.[115]

Source: Muslim Attorney Center case records [116]

6.4 Adapting community-level programs to local conditions

This study's findings generally confirm that small-scale community-based development projects, while potentially contributing to developmental outcomes, have limited prospects for transforming the conflict in the Deep South, largely due to the challenge in connecting with the wider state-minority conflict. There are several key challenges inherent in the operating environment that should be taken into consideration when planning programs at this level. These include significant locality variation, basic security concerns for participants, a complex web of local power dynamics, and an inability to scale programs.

Due to variation in localities, a standardized aid delivery process may play out in very different ways. Many development programs, especially those led by government, do not account for variation at the community level, and therefore generally use the same design, and process in all local beneficiary communities. This requires a high degree of generalizing about local conditions that can lead to inappropriate interventions at the community level. Regardless of whether it is government-led or NGO-led aid, at the village level, local

dynamics and existing social norms and institutions will often influence who will receive the aid, how the aid will be managed, and how the aid will be used. Leadership and politics, village-level governance, and ethnic makeup are possible determinants of the variations.

However, given the limitations of international, donor funded, community-based programs, indirect impacts such as applying strategic learning from pilot initiatives have important application. While it may not be possible to scale up donor programs to have broad transformative impacts, capturing and sharing best practices and lessons learned with government implementing agencies is a valuable contribution.

The results from this study's community-level analysis help to illustrate the unique challenges of aid program delivery in this environment, and why traditional aid programs may not be well-suited for this type of conflict context. In addition, this study has revealed the extensive diversity of local conditions in conflict-affected communities in the Deep South, and how some variations in local context make the difference between positive impact and exacerbating local tensions.

6.5 Incorporating subnational conflict into national programs

For many years, programs at a national level have failed to consider the specific circumstances of the Malay Muslim minority in the Deep South, even in highly relevant fields such as education policy and the promotion of democratic institutions. This situation continues today, underlining the practical challenges that aid agencies face in adopting conflict-sensitive approaches more comprehensively. Realistically, in subnational conflicts, in order to progress from relatively small and isolated initiatives towards a more comprehensive approach, aid agencies need to make a strong policy commitment to peacebuilding.

There is a risk that conventional aid approaches at all levels will further exacerbate tensions in the Deep South. Rather than promoting conflict-sensitive methods, while leaving the fundamentals of aid practice unchanged, there is a need to move away from more traditional development approaches in the Deep South. Donors should recognize more widely how unequal growth and political marginalization exacerbate the risk of violent unrest along ethnic or other fault-lines.

In other countries with subnational conflicts, such as the Philippines, Nepal and Indonesia, many donors have incorporated special measures that balance minority group interests with the interests of government and the majority population. In Thailand, it is challenging to find this balance. The operational challenges for aid agencies and the need to negotiate space with the Thai Government have created barriers that limit the adoption of approaches that accommodate minority interests.

6.6 Monitoring impact

Program claims of peace promotion should be more realistic. In some cases, the logic linking interventions with peacebuilding aims is not clearly expressed or depends on long, indirect links. For example, some community initiatives that aid agencies undertake are based on a premise that small, local-level development initiatives contribute to well-being or community strength and therefore help to support peace. Such initiatives may contribute to long-term improvements in people's lives at the local level, but the links with peacebuilding locally or more widely, are rarely rigorously explored or tested. Small, short–term, local interventions are unlikely to have an impact on peacebuilding unless aiming to tackle a specific, targeted issue.

Given political sensitivities, in order to gain access and be in a position to influence government, aid organizations often frame their engagement in innocuous apolitical concepts such as building community resilience or strengthening social cohesion. As a result, international aid agencies have liberally applied these concepts with little explanation of how interventions interact with political dynamics at different levels. Positively, this approach enables agencies to engage. Less positively, it inhibits careful consideration of how interventions influence political dynamics and makes evaluating impact difficult.

Even for the most effective programs, it is inherently difficult to verify claims of direct impact of aid work. It is challenging to monitor and evaluate impact on key transformative issues, partly due to security issues, and partly due to the nature of the intangible outcomes that much aid is trying to achieve such as equality, justice, confidence, and trust. It is often impossible to establish a causal link between the tangible outputs of a program and the ultimate impact on the conflict. This poses a problem for donors and aid agencies. They are held accountable by their respective governments and constituents to show tangible results (often in the form of numerical outputs) and to explain causal relations to the outcomes and impact of the aid. Due to this pressure, many donor and aid agencies make broad statements about their programs' positive impacts.

6.7 Recommendations for the current context

Based on this study's analysis, the research team identified several effective strategies used by aid agencies to improve their program effectiveness and potential transformational outcomes. In many cases, several agencies (or individuals within these agencies) had adopted similar strategies, largely in response to the same pressures and challenges in the environment.

Focus on improving institutions to achieve transformative outcomes. As previously outlined, a number of donors have successfully focused on addressing the underlying drivers of the conflict, including the issues of special autonomy arrangements, justice, identity, and education. In the absence of a transition process, it is critical for aid agencies to continue working with government and civil society at multiple levels, from national and regional agencies to local, in order to promote positive institutional change—even if these shifts are gradual and protracted.

Donors not currently focused on these issues can contribute to incremental change by making minor adjustments to their programs. For example a number of embassies have programs focused on poverty alleviation for widows and orphans in the Deep South. Rather than narrowly focus on income generation activities, these programs can incorporate empowerment, mediation or peace building components to help these groups understand potential triggers of violence and equip women members to become proactive advocates for peace.

Foreign governments with limited or no funding to the Deep South can also contribute by using other mechanisms, such as diplomatic or defense channels, at their disposal to encourage positive change. Activities such as including elements of human rights training for the Thai military during joint military exercises or highlighting the need for multi-lingual, including mother-tongue, education at regional conferences where the AEC or ASEAN integration are discussed could be valuable strategic contributions to influencing the behavior of the Thai Government.

Additionally, donors can support domestic actors who are advocating for peace negotiations. Operational approaches may need to be flexible and adjust to changing political dynamics in order to seize opportunities as they arise. However, the outcomes should remain focused on advocating for a transition process or transforming institutions. Both are critical in addressing local grievances related to justice, education, and local administration such as SBPAC. Illustrative program examples include:

- Building capacity of both local government officials and civil society groups to engage on issues.
- Building demand-side pressure for governance reform and transition. This may include: supporting local civil society groups and academics to advocate for policy change, including peace negotiations; documenting and disseminating examples of good practice (from the Deep South and elsewhere); and supporting journalists in holding politicians to account.

- Supporting efforts to expand political space to bring about change by developing alliances and working with reformers within government agencies, both within the subnational conflict area and at the national level.

Improve conflict sensitivity for all development programs at the national level. Larger agencies should put a higher priority on the principles of 'Do No Harm' across their country programs in Thailand. This requires considering which entry points to use in addressing the specific needs of Malay Muslims in the Deep South. For instance, programs in the education sector could consider issues of language policy and the specific needs of Islamic private schools that receive state subsidies in the Deep South. Other programs can consider the scope to increase local recruitment into civil service positions. Initiatives addressing governance challenges confronting Thailand should consider the specific perspective of the Deep South as an integral part of their work, recognizing that national democratic systems need to be adapted in order to ensure that minorities are not denied a political voice.

Understand context rather than relying on the application of conflict analysis tools. Those aid agencies supporting peacebuilding initiatives in the Deep South of Thailand demonstrated contextual understanding and flexibility rather than adherence to generic 'best practice'. Initiatives were planned at the national or local level in response to specific context, rather than through the application of conflict-sensitive methodologies or other

approaches. Analysis was generally conducted by country specialists or people knowledgeable about the Deep South, rather than conflict specialists. In several cases, this analysis was effectively put into practice because it was led by long-term national staff who were able to build relationships incrementally with key domestic actors, and simultaneously find space within their organizations for well-targeted, low-profile programs.

Gradually establish contextually-defined responses. For international aid agencies, this case study on conflict in the Deep South of Thailand demonstrates that aid agencies need to adopt specific approaches, depending on the environment in which they are operating. In order to establish relevant programs, aid agencies must build institutional relationships and localized knowledge over time. They need to ensure the support and confidence of key government agencies, while also retaining their neutrality. In addition, they also have to devote time and effort to build working relationships with intermediaries in the Deep South itself, rather than relying on national bodies. Programs should respond as well to conditions on the ground, learning over time and adapting accordingly.

Sponsor monitoring and analytic work. As previously mentioned, monitoring impact in the Deep South is exceedingly challenging for a number of reasons, however, more can be done to monitor the situation in the Deep South. Currently, Deep South Watch is the only institution devoted to monitoring the situation and while their violence incident data is invaluable and well respected, they cannot be expected to monitor all aspects of the conflict. Thus, it is necessary to invest in, and build the capacity of other research institutions to provide continuous monitoring of issues. Examples include the number of security-related charges made by the police, and the number of cases prosecuted by the courts. Both are necessary to provide a basis for measuring the impact of justice sector inventions and tracking changing conditions. This is a potential area for greater donor coordination to ensure that these data and knowledge gaps are being addressed, shared and used to inform both donor and government interventions.

6.8 Operational recommendations

This analysis also points to a number of operational or practical recommendations for aid in southern Thailand.

1. *Alternative funding modalities.* Foreign donor governments can consider a wide range of policy instruments. Initiatives can, in some cases be supported from regional or global pooled funds, rather than assistance earmarked for a specific country. This approach bypasses administrative filters that define and limit what country programs can directly assist. Given typically low levels of international attention to the conflict in the Deep South, another potential approach is to address subnational conflicts from a regional basis. Key global policy aims should include a more nuanced approach to state-building and fragility, along with a search for new ways to build on the Millennium Development Goals that integrates into the development agenda, concern over different forms of inequality.

2. *Insulate programs in subnational conflict areas from standard donor agency rules.* The most effective programs in the subnational conflict areas would not have been possible without some degree of insulation from the typical bureaucratic rules and regulations that govern most aid projects. Most of the donor officials managing these programs can recount the struggles they encountered in trying to persuade their colleagues of the need to use non-traditional approaches in the conflict area. Specialists responsible for the peace and conflict programs are often marginal to the main work of aid agencies and may have to make a strong case to their own managers or their head office in order to gain their support. This internal advocacy process is especially important in Thailand and other subnational conflict environments where conflict concerns may be a very low priority within a wider country program.

3. *Take the time to build relationships.* For many aid agencies, the decisive factor shaping a program is not the quality of conflict analysis conducted, but the ability to build relationships with viable partners and gain permission from the government to operate. Building relationships takes time and experience, especially if funding is designed to support organizational development. For example, the international agencies that funded the Muslim Attorney Center employed staff with experience of the operating context and spent time working out how best to support a new and unconventional local institution. The initial stages of engagement are often designed around relationship-building needs as much as diagnosis of the context.

4. *Long-term institutional support to promising local partners.* Long-term institutional support is critical for developing local institutions with the potential to bring about transformative impacts. The actual process of finding and building relationships with intermediary organizations is fundamental to the effective use of aid in the Deep South. Given relatively weak local institutions in the area, supporting

domestic capacity is important yet challenging. For many aid agencies, the practical needs of reporting and administration heavily influence how they provide funding. This risks creating incentives for local organizations to secure support by adopting the structure, and building the capacity that aid agencies require, rather than responding to locally-defined need or assuming more organically-defined structures. By keeping to its objectives and working with flexible donors, the Muslim Attorney Center is an example of a local organization that has managed to avoid this trap. (See Case Study #4 on MAC).

5. *Understand the intermediary chain.* The intermediary chain is critical to ensuring successful program implementation and provides a crucial feedback loop for donor agencies. Spend time building relationships with intermediaries and consider how to build the capacity of intermediaries from the Deep South. Only a few foreign-funded agencies have the capacity and flexibility to work directly with local groups. For example, Berghof Foundation was able to work closely with local partners after establishing a partnership with Deep South Watch. It is important to help reduce the reliance on Bangkok-based, civil society organizations and instead to build organizations in the Deep South. At the same time, aid agencies need to work through intermediaries and some Bangkok-based or national bodies—government and non-government—that are well positioned to support policy change. At all

levels, working to foster good relations with intermediaries supports effective programming and deserves more recognition in aid planning.

6. *Partnership arrangements need to be flexible.* Functioning institutional relationships between local and international partners may take years to establish. Yet without them, programs are often impossible to set up or are likely to suffer from poor implementation. In practice, programs are typically shaped more by the need to work in ways that suit all operating partners (local associations or communities, NGOs, government, and international agencies) than by scientific assessments or official policy. This means that partnership arrangements need to be flexible. Aid providers should avoid trying to change their partners' structure, formal status, or operations, solely for the purposes of accepting donor funding.

7. *Regularize donor information sharing.* While donors currently informally share information regarding their programs in the Deep South as more agencies engage in the area it will be important to hold regular meetings to share experiences and identify potential knowledge gaps. Additionally if the peace process proceeds, it will be crucial for donor's to coordinate their support to various actors and sectors to avoid duplication. Given government sensitivities this process will need to be led by the agencies themselves or an intermediary organization.

6.9 Recommendations in the event of a peace process gaining traction

As already mentioned, in order for the conflict to be solved, a political solution will need to be negotiated. While peace dialogues between the government and insurgent forces are still in their infancy, there may be a potential transition process underway in the future. This will present new opportunities for aid agencies but will also entail new challenges.

While the transition process may open new opportunities to directly support the peace process, this does not mean that the underlying drivers of the conflict related to state-minority relations will be resolved immediately. Aid programs should continue to address the range of inequalities that perpetuate resentment and fuel violence. This means remaining engaged in the institutional transformation processes outlined above and in Chapter 3.

In the event of a transition, the key new area that opens up to donor engagement is 'restoring confidence'. Trust and confidence building in the peace process of insurgent leaders and fighters, as well the Thai state, will be critical during the transition process. Peace processes are never linear and commonly take years to come to fruition. Ensuring continued confidence in the transition process might be achieved through high profile international support to the peace process, or clear commitments to support crucial actors during a transition (such as insurgents or 'threatened' Buddhist minority populations in the conflict areas). Other than publically supporting the peace process, opportunities for international actors to provide direct support to the peace process may be quite limited early in the transition process. However, donors can support broad coalitions for peace by focusing on raising regional or national awareness.

As seen in Aceh, often during or immediately after a peace process, programs are focused primarily on building the confidence of, and generating buy-in from those who could potentially de-rail the process. In Aceh this required providing funds to formerly-warring elites and delivering benefits quickly to groups such as ex-combatants who could cause problems. In the case of southern Thailand, the most critical 'benefits' are likely to be enhanced political and social status, rather than economic support. Additionally, while in the short term it is important to ensure buy-in from potential spoilers of the peace, this should not divert attention from the long-term need for political change.

As observed in other subnational conflicts such as Mindanao and Aceh, as greater local political space is opened up, the dominate form of contestation may shift from state-society to inter-elite or inter-communal. Aid agencies should be aware of this potential, monitor shifts in the underlying drivers of violence, and adjust their programs accordingly. This could be achieved by supporting ongoing monitoring initiatives and commissioning periodic in-depth research.

Donors should support the development of local expertise that will be necessary as the peace process advances. Programs could develop local expertise and support on key issues such as: local governance arrangements, justice or amnesty agreements, addressing minority grievances, human rights, and raising public awareness. Programs could take the form of support for technical reviews of amnesty agreements, dialogues on alternative governance, capacity building for those institutions likely to support or be directly involved in implementing any new governance arrangements, and regional or national awareness raising campaigns. In learning from the experience in Mindanao and Aceh, support to key transitional agencies, such as the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA) or the Bangsamoro Leadership and Management Institute (BLMI) in Mindanao or the Aceh Reintegration Agency (BRA), should be provided early in the transition process in the Deep South, rather than waiting for the peace agreement to be finalized.

Table 6.2. Aid in a future context with a clear transition process in place

Type of contestation	Transformational need	
	Confidence	Institutions
I. Center-periphery	**Build the confidence of formerly-warring parties in the peace settlement**	**Continue support to improve institutions to address underlying drivers of the conflict – justice, security, identity, and education** Develop institutions to implement the peace agreement
II. Inter-elite	Build confidence of local elites in the peace settlement	Ensure institutions are in place to mediate inter-elite competition by supporting the development of local-level elected governance institutions involved in autonomy arrangements
III. Inter-communal	Build the confidence of the general public in the peace settlement by supporting victims and community projects in a conflict-sensitive way	Ensure institutions are in place to mediate inter-communal competition

Note: Bolded issues are priority needs

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International Agency	Programs for Thailand	Focus on Deep South	Funding for work in Deep South	Key recipients/partners for work in Deep South
UNICEF	Focus on vulnerable children from marginalized groups, including migrants and ethnic minorities Priorities: child protection, education, HIV/AIDS, local capacity building, social policy	Allocations and adaptations for the Deep South across sectors, based on detailed analysis. Focus on pilots and policy changes to improve government service provision, as well as some more direct impact	Most funds raised within Thailand from public and other donations. c.$10M per year nationally, of which some—perhaps 20%—is for the Deep South	Working with both government and NGOs. Wide range of national and local government counterparts, NGO and research institutes involved
UNDP	Promotion of democratic governance, environment and poverty reduction. Emphasis on equality, justice, political empowerment	After earlier efforts rebuffed by Thai Government, main program (STEP) promotes community empowerment and public participation in local governance	UNDP/Japan Partnership Fund, Belgian Grant, UNDP resources. c.US$1.6 million over 2 years	Prince of Songkhla University is the main partner. Also local government, NGOs
World Bank	Major donor historically. After long period of minor involvement, recent major loans have been approved including US$1 billion public sector policy loan	After a long process of initial research and project design, project started in 2010. Community funds (CDD), plus support for civil society. Aim: to develop community approaches that increase state-society and community interactions	Grant from World Bank Global Trust Fund supported by bilateral donors – US$2.6 million over 3 years	LDI (Local Development Institute, a national NGO) provide funds to local community groups and civil society organizations
USAID	Major donor in past, country program since 2008, in addition to long-term environmental and Burmese refugee funds. Key program is 'Sapan', 5 year, c. $30 Million project of technical assistance, training, etc. to civil society organizations and oversight bodies. Aim: reconciliation and stable democratic governance	One part of Sapan reserved for Deep South to support civil reconciliation efforts and diminishing the potential for conflict in southern Thailand	USAID funds from US Government. $2-3 million annually plus some allocations from other US government departments	Implementation is the responsibility of a US contractor (DAI) in close coordination with USAID. DAI provides funds to a range of NGOs, CSOs, research institutes, etc.

Organization				
European Union (EU)	Range of funds for projects in health, environment, higher education, 'stability', 'capacity building of non-state actors', trade and investment. Support for displaced people along Myanmar/Burma border	The EU Delegation worked for several years to find ways to engage and now backs a range of initiatives implemented by EU-based organizations alongside local partners	EU's global non-state actors & Local Authorities Fund, also Instrument for Stability. Overall spend is up to $2 million annually	Funds provided to European-based NGOs, who then partner with domestic non-governmental bodies
Sasakawa Peace Foundation	Only with reference to Deep South	Funding youth camp, peace media network, policy dialogue	Private Japanese Foundation. $100,000 - $150,000 annually over 3-4 years	Prince of Songkhla University/Deep South Watch, local groups from Deep South
Berghof Peace Support	Only with reference to Deep South	Coordinating network of peace advocates from all sectors to support and encourage negotiated settlement	Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs: about $450,000 over 3 years 2010-2013	Prince of Songkhla University/Deep South Watch. Many other individuals and institutions
American Bar Association	National anti-corruption program	Rule of Law: access to justice, paralegal support, improved forensic methods	$700,000 over 2 years, 2009-2011	A range of local NGOs including Muslim Attorney Center
The Asia Foundation	National programs on governance, democracy, environment, economic development, and regional cooperation	Long-term involvement: access to justice, education, advocacy on decentralization, other fields	Various: EU, USAID, foundations. Some core funds	A range of local NGOs including Muslim Attorney Center, and national policy bodies including KPI
Oxfam	Support for domestic civil society predominantly on livelihoods	Support for natural resources and gender networks, with civil society actors and Prince of Songkhla University	Funds from EU project	Prince of Songkhla University and networks of civil society actors
Save the Children - Sweden	Programs addressing child rights, especially for minority and disadvantaged groups	Kampung Sunae project on child rights in conflict-affected areas, with a focus on avoiding physical punishment of children through community involvement	Funds from EU project	FCD (national NGO) and a network headed by Mahidol University

International Agency	Programs for Thailand	Focus on Deep South	Funding for work in Deep South	Key recipients/partners for work in Deep South
Actionaid	Support for domestic civil society and human rights	Support to build capacity of local civil society network for community initiatives	Funds from EU project	Sata Foundation (local NGO)
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung	Programs across Thailand with governance/democracy focus	Promotion of research and dialogue on peace promotion	Funds from EU project, some further core funds from German Parliament	Universities, Cross-Cultural Foundation (national NGO), Muslim Attorney Center (local NGO)
Human Rights NGOs	Wide range of human rights issues	Support for domestic NGOs, research, awareness raising	Funds from Embassies, bilateral donors	Local and national NGOs
Other NGOs, foundations, UN agencies	Wide range of work focused on local empowerment, usually with Thai NGO implementing partner	Some small programs in Deep South on local livelihoods, local media, human rights	Various donors: US, EU, others	Various
Other Bilaterals	Range of small programs, mostly relating to trade, higher education, environment, migrants/ displaced people from Myanmar/Burma	Some Embassy funds, small grants for NGOs	None	National human rights groups, NGOs, universities
Germany	Strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and environmental work	None beyond the work of autonomous government-funded political foundations	N/A	N/A
Japan – JBIC	Largest recent aid donor to Thailand. Loans since 2008 include over US$1.8 billion for Bangkok's subway	None	N/A	N/A

Japan - JICA	Grant and technical cooperation. $50-70 million annually. Main fields: health, education, climate change, community development, land management, disaster management	None	N/A	N/A
France	'Trilateral partnerships', education links, industrial assistance	None	N/A	N/A
Asian Development Bank	Major lender, totaling over US$5 billion from the late 1960s. Recent loans include $350 million for natural gas power projects and $100 million for energy efficiency improvement	None	N/A	N/A
IMF	Major loans following 1997 Asian crisis repaid by 2003	None	N/A	N/A

Notes

1. *International Crisis Group 2012.*
2. *For details, see for Surin 1985, Chaiwat 2005, McCargo 2008, and Thanet 2009.*
3. *At the time of publication, the Thai Government had begun exploratory talks with a faction of the Barisan Revolusi National (BRN) insurgent group. However, as these talks are in a very early stage, it is difficult to determine whether they represent the beginning of a credible transition to peace.*
4. *Average annual violent incidents at the tambon level, based on data from 2001-2010. Source: Royal Thai Police.*
5. *The research team conducted over 30 interviews with all the major donors and aid agencies in Thailand that work on, or in, the conflict region.*
6. *Violence intensity was measured based on two factors: a) the percentage of villages in the sub-district that were designated as "red villages" (or insurgent strongholds) by the Thai Government, and b) the average number of violent incidents per year. See background document "Locality Selection for Southern Thailand" for a detailed overview of how the sample areas were selected using the four parameters of aid/no aid, high/low violence.*
7. *For a detailed overview of the research methods, see background document "Guidance Note for Locality Case Studies".*
8. *In the conflict region, this study's researchers conducted over 170 interviews in 10 sub-districts. In 4 sub-districts, an in-depth study of 12 villages was conducted to trace how aid interacts with political dynamics at the community level.*
9. *However, care was taken to ensure that enumerators did not work in villages or areas where they lived or worked.*
10. *See ICG 2005, Human Rights Watch 2007, and NHRC 2010.*
11. *NRC 2006.*
12. *Human Rights Watch 2007: 64, ICG 2010b.*
13. *Liow & Pathan 2010.*
14. *World Development Report 2011.*
15. *More Buddhists than Muslims have been injured. Deep South Watch 2012.*
16. *See ICG 2005, Human Rights Watch 2007, and NHRC 2010.*
17. *Violence-related injury surveillance data from 2007 to 2010 indicate 907 incidents in Yala, 915 in Narathiwat, 1,036 in Pattani, and 84 in the 4 southernmost districts of Songkhla Province. Srisompob (2010) documented a similar pattern.*
18. *The increase in violent incidents followed efforts by Thaksin Shinawatra, former Prime Minister and de facto leader of the ruling Pheu Thai Party, to start peace negotiations. Deep South Watch 2012.*
19. *ICG 2009.*
20. *ICG 2009.*

21. *Academic accounts regard these views as more than purely instrumental efforts to mobilize public opinion. See, for example, McCargo 2008: 147, Askew 2009b, Liow 2009, and Helbardt 2011. See also earlier sources including Surin 1985, Che Man 1990, Supara 2004, and Chaiwat 2005.*

22. *Patani is the preferred spelling for the former sultanate which roughly correlates to the area of the Deep South, whereas Pattani refers to the current province of Thailand.*

23. *Montesano & Jory 2008.*

24. *For example, consultations conducted by the National Reconciliation Commission in 2006*

25. *Parks 2009.*

26. *Connors 2007: 61.*

27. *Over time, development growth models changed globally. In Thailand, foreign aid supported an increasingly private sector-led, and export-oriented economy that in the late 1980s and early 1990s reached spectacular rates of growth.*

28. *Burke 2012b.*

29. *Stewart et al. (2008) emphasize multiple aspects of inequality, all of which depend on people's perceptions and on the comparisons that they commonly make.*

30. *Some other groups in Thailand such as villagers from impoverished parts of the rural northeast, may be still more disadvantaged, but they do not figure in the comparisons that people typically make in the Deep South.*

31. *G. Brown (2008: 272-273) uses Thailand National Statistics Office data. Also UNICEF (2006: 20-21) uses data from NESDB (2004).*

32. *Source: NESDB (2009) 2010 year added using equivalent NESDB data. Data from later years are not available or are not comparable given changes in calculation methods.*

33. *Source: NESDB (2009) 2010 year added using equivalent NESDB data. Data from later years are not available or are not comparable given changes in calculation methods.*

34. *The survey utilized an economic well-being question designed by Keister (2009), which asked respondents to indicate whether their household was able to afford a baskets of goods, ranging from bare necessities to expensive durable goods. While questions regarding a respondent's (or a household's) monthly income or expenditures suffer from various biases and recall problems, this qualitative question design captures the essential outlines of the household's consumption power.*

35. *Data compiled from Table Six, statistical annexes for each province. Data for Buddhists in Narathiwat not available. UNICEF 2006.*

36. *While reliable poverty data disaggregated by religion is not readily available, some surveys and other sources do show such prevailing trends, and these are used here. TAF 2010.*

37. *At the primary school level, most children in the Deep South attend government schools. By the time they reach secondary schools, over two-thirds attend Islamic private schools rather than government schools. The proportion attending Islamic private schools would be even higher if excluding Buddhist children. See Liow (2009: 51), using information from the National Reconciliation Commission; UNICEF (2006*

38. *Liow Op cit.*

39. *Thai Government Budgets 2003-2009, Bureau of the Budget, Thailand.*

40. *UNICEF 2008 and ICG 2009.*

41. *Calculated using historical census data quoted in Wyatt 2004: 302 and from MoI 2011. Figures vary depending on how population and city limits are defined.*

42. *The elected Chairman of the Provincial Administrative Organization for Pattani Province, Zahid Al Yufry, complained in 2008 that as a result of these changes he was no more than a "Seuakradat", or paper tiger. Burke 2012: 107.*

43. *Meetings for village representatives are more likely to involve lectures than any form of participatory discussion. Arghiros 2001: 30.*

44. *The marginalization of the Wada faction of politicians from the Deep South within the Thai Rak Thai (later Pheu Thai) Party is a prominent example. See McCargo 2008: 70-75.*

45. *McCargo 2008 and Tansupwathana 2010.*

46. *Chaiwat 2005 and Bonura 2008: 388.*

47. *Such practices are common in many multi-cultural environments. Horstmann 2004.*

48. *Local political groups do not form only along religious divides. In the ethnically-mixed subdistrict of Kuannori, for example, groups affiliate with rival power networks that cut across religious identity.*

49. *Rangers (Thahan Phran) are paramilitary light infantry who patrol border areas of Thailand and are part of the Thai Army. They have been extensively deployed in the Deep South. ICG 2007.*

50. *Perception survey data. The figures on the vertical axis show the results of T-tests comparing mean trust levels.*

51. *The average non-response rate was 10% in the conflict areas, compared with 2% outside the conflict area.*

52. *The term 'juwae' derives from the Malay term Pajuang Kemerdekaan Patani, or Patani Freedom Fighters.*

53. *For instance Members of the Barisan Revolusi Nasional, the main insurgent group, recently informally stated that they wanted the Thai Government to offer them autonomy within the Thai state and an amnesty. (Ruangdit and Jikkham 2013.) Both issues are addressed in this section.*

54. *On the development and maintenance of Thailand's hierarchical, centralized and often chauvinist national policy, see Thongchai (1994). Thai schoolchildren learn how in the late 19th century Siam (later Thailand) managed to avoid colonization. Under pressure from Britain and France, the kingdom absorbed those remaining peripheral protectorates, including the Deep South, and managed to hold on to these as Thailand became a modern and centralized nation state, headed by a constitutional monarch.*

55. *As early as 2006, some senior military officials informally recognized the need for a political, rather than a military, solution.*

56. *Noiwong 2001.*

57. *See McCargo 2008: 53.*

58. *Wheeler (2010) comments that while disbanding SBPAC may have contributed to the escalation of violence starting in 2004, by then SBPAC, along with other government institutions, had earned a reputation for inefficiency, corruption and paternalistic attitudes.*

59. *On the marginalization of politicians from the Deep South, see McCargo 2008.*

60. *See McCargo 2011, Srisompob and McCargo 2008. Also see field reports and workshop findings on autonomy options from the Civil Society Council of Southernmost Thailand (2012) and the King Prajadhipok's Institute. It is unlikely that leaders based in Bangkok have sufficient understanding or incentives to undertake changes that reflect the needs and demands of people in the area.*

61. *Some senior national Thai political figures have, on an individual basis, proposed a range of autonomy ideas but then renounced their suggestions or made little progress with them. Examples include Abhisit Vejjajiva, Chaturon Chaiseng and Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (Bangkok Post 2009, Luek 2009 and Funston 2009: 132). Reforms to central institutions have also been proposed as an alternative to, or accompanying decentralization—for example, the suggestion to form a discrete Ministry for the South. Srisompob & McCargo 2008 and McCargo 2011.*

62. *Factors influencing how decentralization affects a peripheral conflict context include the specific dynamics of group differences, the support of powerful local and national figures, the extent of local authorities' financial independence from central institutions, and local administrative capacity. See Siegle & Mahoney 2006.*

63. *See Askew (2007) on local violence and elections in the Deep South of Thailand, McVey (1998) on similar issues nationally, and Batterbury & Fernando (2006) on similar examples around the world.*

64. *Human Rights Watch 2007 and National Human Rights Commission of Thailand 2010: 275-308.*

65. *Further detail of such initiatives is provided in Chapter 4.*

66. *Examples undertaken with full government approval between 2010 and 2012 include efforts to promote discussions and local awareness of the scope for further dialogue.*

67. *See, for example, Ramsbotham et al. 2011.*

68. *See Chapter 4 for details.*

69. *Average estimate. Individual estimates of the number of insurgents vary wildly.*

70. *Other figures who may not be part of the insurgent movement but are influential at the local level include religious leaders, village heads and local politicians. Often caught between the two conflicting sides, these individuals will need to be sure of their own safety before supporting any political process. McCargo 2008 and Askew 2007.*

71. *See Chapter 6 for detail.*

72. *See for example ICG 2005.*

73. *See King 2005. Another example is the pressure that local fishermen face from larger commercial fishing fleets whose owners use their influence to circumvent the regulations designed to protect fish stocks from overfishing. Tan-Mullins 2007.*

74. *See, for example, Prapertchob 1995.*

75. *By contrast, aid agencies were often motivated by concerns over the communist insurgency that persisted in many parts of Thailand until the early 1980s. See Randolph 1979, Muscat 1990, World Bank 1988, and World Bank 2006.*

76. *Among other sources, see Caldwell 1974, Lobe 1977, Pasuk & Baker 1997.*

77. *See Thant & Tang 2006 and King 2005.*

78. *In November 2006, ADB was involved once more in agreeing to a new program of US$ 1 million in technical assistance for development planning. Project documentation and the terms of reference for consultants again gave no indication that any specific attention should be given to the conflict or to related issues. ADB 2006.*

79. *In March 2009, a 3-year budget of 76 billion baht (US$ 2,375 billion) was passed by the Thai Government for development in the Deep South. Mangeronline 2009.*

80. *See, in particular, Randolph 1979 and Noiwong 2001.*

81. *Panom Project Review 2012. At the local level, injections of funds through development initiatives have in some cases fuelled tensions and violence. See Chapter 5.*

82. *Recent national administrations have varied in their openness to external involvement, although all have aimed to keep external involvement to a minimum. It is possible that the current government will be more open in the future, although any significant change will encounter resistance from the military, some national ministries, and potentially the opposition.*

83. *The Thai Government has other sources of revenue. It typically prefers to borrow funds commercially, although development finance agency concessional loans are accepted for certain items—typically for major infrastructure projects.*

84. *One aid agency representative in Thailand stated that: "Everything donors try to do in the South clashes with nationalism." Burke 2012.*

85. *Pauker 2005/2006.*

86. *Gross figures calculated without subtracting loan repayments made by the Thai Government. Bank of Thailand 2008 and OECD 2009.*

87. *The Thai Government's planned budget for 2013 was around US$ 80 billion. Thai News Agency (2012). Increased government revenues and borrowing from non-concessional sources mean that foreign aid comprised 1% or less of the overall government budget.*

88. *Figures calculated by comparing a combination of sources, including OECD DAC data and individual aid agency records. Other programs elsewhere in Thailand included small bilateral aid agency and United Nations grants for diverse issues ranging from environmental management, to support for Burmese displacement camps along Thailand's western border. From 2007 to 2012, bilateral agencies and the United Nations provided an estimated US$ 450 million.*

89. *OECD 2009 and OECD 2001 provide guidance on such commitments.*

90. *An extreme example of urban primacy, the population of greater Bangkok is around 30 times larger than the next largest Thai city. The wider Bangkok region contains some 22% of the country's population and produces over 44% of its GDP (NESDB statistics, 2012). Bangkok also dominates the country's political as well as its economic life.*

91. *JICA: technical support for computer use in secondary schools (interviews with JICA country managers and project staff, 2003). See Burke (2012). The World Bank: research on various aspects of the public education system (Interview with sector specialist, 2007 – ibid.). AusAID: teacher training and other programs (Interview with AusAID staff 2011).*

92. *Aid agencies are asked not to open offices in the Deep South.*

93. *The need to prioritize the capacity building of domestic institutions is emphasized repeatedly in aid literature. See, for example OECD 2012, or for a broader institutional perspective, Acemoglu & Robinson 2012.*

94. *Interviews with aid officials confirmed this perspective, and they also expressed concern that government operations are frequently seen as potentially counterproductive and insufficiently aligned with neutral peacebuilding goals. Aid agency interviewees also indicated they are open to working with government if more amenable circumstances arise because they recognize the importance of government policy and implementation in conflict-affected areas, and they are eager to support improvements in both.*

95. *Interview with KPI Program Officer, 28 August 2009. See Burke 2012.*

96. *Berghof Peace Support 2011.*

97. An English idiom similar to this phrase would be "like trying to herd cats".

98. The point of entry is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

99. The challenge of building an 'aid relationship' with domestic partners, especially government counterparts, has been researched in other countries. See, for example, Shimomura 2008, Eyben 2006, and ware 2012.

100. See, for example, the EU grant application form: 'Non State Actors in Development: In-Country Interventions', page 2012. This issue was discussed with staff from agencies that included Oxfam, Save the Children, Foundation for Child Development, and Mahidol University.

101. Aid officials from NGOs, bilaterals and multilateral agencies stated during interviews that there are a limited number of NGO partners in the Deep South that are able to implement large programs in an accountable manner. Some aid agencies implement through international intermediaries such as those international NGOs that EU funds. This shifts the problem to another institution but the challenge remains.

102. Agencies that have worked in some capacity with Prince of Songkhla University since 2004 include UNDP, Oxfam, World Bank, EU and UNICEF. One aid agency interviewee stated that Prince of Songkhla's status as a government body, that maintains relative independence. put it in an unusual position.

103. This includes the university's Hat Yai and Pattani campuses (respectively, one in the Deep South and one just outside the conflict-affected area.

104. Personal knowledge of relevant institutions persuaded World Bank staff that LDI would perform this role better than their partner on the previous project. This is an example of the need for aid agency staff to invest time in building their knowledge of local institutions.

105. The broadly Wahabi-influenced strand of Islam that they follow makes US government agencies interested in 'bringing them on board', given Wahabi association with extremist groups elsewhere. But they are marginal to the conflict in the Deep South where the majority of Muslims follow the Shafi'i school of Islamic jurisprudence, similar to that predominating in most other Muslim parts of Southeast Asia.

106. SBPAC official document dated 29 June 2011, based on the exchange rate of 24 February 2013.

107. The quantitative survey was designed to be statistically significant at the tambon (sub-district) level to allow for this level of comparison.

108. Easterly 2001, 2006.

109. Mansuri and Rao 2004.

110. World Bank 2013.

111. It is important to note that the survey responses related to aid programs were primarily referring to government programs.

112. Sources consulted in compiling this short case study include project and organizational literature from the website of the Muslim Attorney Center and The Asia Foundation. Interviews were conducted with staff of these two agencies, along with the Cross-Cultural Foundation, USAID, Internews, and the American Bar Association. Further material was provided through other interviews and informal discussions in the Deep South.

113. The Cross Cultural Foundation is a Bangkok-based NGO founded in 2002. It is a small, yet reputable, body that aims to promote understanding across different cultures, while working for the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy.

114. The Asia Foundation 2012.

115. *Deep South Watch July 2012.*

116. *While MAC data suggest that the organization's efforts had a direct impact on levels of torture, this claim cannot be verified without conducting an in-depth contribution analysis of their program. Other factors could have influenced this change, including the change in government, a new Director General of SBPAC, or a new Police Commander for the region.*

117. *This table indicates the major actors but does not capture all inward flows. International agencies promoting peace dialog, Thailand components of global initiatives in many sectors (e.g. HIV, carbon emissions reduction), support for displaced Burmese, INGO initiatives, small funds administered by embassies, and other sources of assistance may not be included.*

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