

# Map to help community prepare for flooding in Ayutthaya

## Interest Story

**AYUTTHAYA, Thailand** – Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) hosted a handover ceremony to present community flood maps and preparedness manuals to the Chief Executive of Tha Luang Subdistrict Administrative Organization of Ayutthaya province.

ADPC, with support from USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), initiated the Program for Reduction of Vulnerability of Floods in Thailand in 2012 to address the risk management challenges that were identified as a result of the 2011 flood disaster. The program works to strengthen the capacity in disaster risk management in Thailand and provide support for flood vulnerability reduction.

“After the Thai floods in 2011, USAID wanted to find a way to help,” said Brian Heidel, Regional Advisor East Asia & Pacific USAID/OFDA, “With ADPC provided training, people now have a better understanding of how to prepare for floods.”

The course was designed to strengthen community-based disaster risk

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said Brian Heidel, Regional Advisor East Asia & Pacific USAID/OFDA



Mr. Brian Heidel speaks with prominent elderly Tha Luang Sub-district committee member, Mr. Sopon Sawanapoed.



**Asian Disaster Preparedness Center**

SM Tower, 24th Floor 979/69 Paholyothin Road, Samsen Nai Phayathai, Bangkok 10400 Thailand

Tel: +66 2 298 0682-92 Fax: +66 2 298 0012-13 E-mail: [adpc@adpc.net](mailto:adpc@adpc.net) Website: <http://www.adpc.net>

management and targeted representatives from organizations within the flood-prone provinces in the Chao Phraya River Basin. The community-level activities in the subdistrict and its villages are integrated into the project that also includes support to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) and other technical government agencies related to flood management as well as establishing links between the technical agencies and practitioners at the local level.

## Community members prepared to act

Two years after launching this program, “We know where water comes to and now have maps as to where it’s going,” stated Dr. Bhichit Rattakul, Special Advisor ADPC.

In regard to the past two years of notable progress, Mayulee Jhangpardit, Chief of the Village #2 of Tha Luang subdistrict said, “I am thankful for the project because it has helped our community a lot during rainy season. In 2010, no one knew how to properly deal with flooding situations. Floodwater built up at night. We tried to work with youth and elders but it was unsuccessful. ADPC came in and helped, now our villages have a better understanding of what to do.”

Mayulee Jhangardit is a powerful woman in leadership and has guided her community throughout the duration of this program.

“I’m pleased to see people proud of what they have done,” Brian Heidel remarked.

Mayulee Jhangpardit explained the two elements of early warning systems, “[the first is] the warning board accompanied by the water level gauge and [the second is]



Senior project coordinator, Ms. Warritha Wanathong and senior program administrative coordinator, display the Tha Luang Subdistrict flood map.

the 50 trained people who monitor the gauge. The gauge has three colors which allow community members to know if they are safe (green), getting ready (yellow) or in an emergency state (red).”

The benefits of the new gauge excited the community. “The easy thing about the new gauge,” Mayulee Jhangpardit continued, “is the color-coding—the old gauge with numbers was difficult to read. In extreme cases, this gauge can’t be checked so we have implemented a back up gauge located closer to the temples which allows for the monks to help monitor it.”

“I hope to spread the word about the program throughout both villages [that are participating in the program]. In the future, I would like to extend the program to other nearby villages that don’t have the gauge,” said Mayulee Jhangpardit.

By Christa DeLorenzo



Mr. Brian Heidel, Mr. Shane Wright and Dr. Bhichit Rattakul stand with Mr. Nuttee Borsuwan, Vice Governor of Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province and other community leaders at the handover ceremony.



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