

“Mangrove Afforestation Project at the Chanthaburi Province in Thailand”

(Case study provided by OISCA BANGKOK)

Introduction of OISCA:

OISCA International (The Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement-International: OISCA with head office in Sugunami, Tokyo) was established in 1961 as the first organization to assist international cooperation among Asian people. Currently OISCA activities cover the broad area of 28 nations in Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Africa. Its activities are mainly rural development works in developing countries with a focus on agricultural and human resource development to aid the self-support and self-sustenance efforts of developing countries, and environmental conservation works emphasizing afforestation projects.

OISCA's international cooperation activities are based on the principles of mutual recognition and respects to the differences in traditions, religions, cultures, and values in the world. Its philosophy and concept emphasize the “harmony between the materialistic and spiritual aspects of civilization.” Such principle is the very reason why the broader range of countries with vastly different political backgrounds readily accept and appreciate OISCA activities.

As demonstrated in the fact that OISCA was awarded the “Category I status (currently called the General Category status)” to advise the United Nations Economic and Social Council, OISCA's achievement in the past has been valued highly in an international community, enabling its expansion of activities to 28 countries today. Furthermore, OISCA has dispatched development technology instructors totaling 2081 people to 16 countries, held 21 international training centers in 9 countries and trained 10279 people there, as of the end of March, 1999.

To get more information about OISCA, please contact the OISCA web site <http://oisca.org/english/index.htm> .

Mangrove afforestation project in Thailand

The coastline of Thailand's Chanthaburi Province was once thickly covered with

mangrove forests, which functioned as the protecting forests against typhoon waves and winds, and as the nursery of fishes and other coastal biome. Since the start of shrimp farming, however, mangrove forests were cut down to allow the passage of shrimp export vessels. The loss of mangrove eventually led to a considerable increase in typhoon damages and to a loss of many fish stocks. Increasingly conscious of the significance and values of mangrove forests, local residents especially fishermen actively cooperate in the planting of mangrove with the international aids led by Japan's OISCA. Up to now, about 190,000 mangrove trees were planted in two planting practices (as of September 1999). In September of 1999, OISCA's project won the award in the "mangrove" section of the second afforestation contest to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the coronation of reigning King Bhumibol.

1. Background/history:

- (1) The coasts of Chanthaburi Province in Thailand used to be covered with mangrove forests and were well known for its rich population of shrimps, crabs, and birds. When the shrimp farming was established, much of mangrove forests were cut down to allow the passage of vessels that would ship out shrimps.
- (2) The loss of mangrove forests caused significant increase in frequency and magnitude of damages from typhoons as their winds and high tides hit the coastline. Moreover, the diminishing population of fishes and birds nurtured and supported by mangrove forests led not only to the reduction of fishermen's income, but also to the destruction of naturally variant ecosystems.
- (3) Many local residents had a strong sense of needs for the recovery and re-planting of mangrove forests.
- (4) From the initial stage of this project, OISCA acted as a coordinator to promote mangrove re-planting among local residents, and performed the first planting of mangroves in July 1998 with local NGOs (Rotary Club of the Chanthaburi Province, etc.), villagers, their children, and the members of the Yamanashi Rotary Club in Japan.
- (5) The second planting done in July to August 1999 had 57 people participated from Japan in cooperation with about 700 locals to plant 115,000 mangroves in the area.
- (6) In recognition of such achievement, OISCA earned the award in the "mangrove" section of the second afforestation contest to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the coronation of reigning King Bhumibol.
- (7) For two years following the replanting, it would be necessary to continue rigorous

maintenance activities in order to prevent the growth of barnacles, which feeds on young mangrove plants, and OISCA's Bangkok office staff instructs and cooperates with the villagers for this.

- (8) The Forest Ministry of Thailand has made a promise to villagers that after 3 years afforestation period, they will donate the mangrove forests to villagers, provided that they will continue maintenance works on mangroves for the next two years.

2. Purposes:

- (1) Re-plant mangroves and recover mangrove forest ecosystem to prevent the damages from natural disasters and to nurtur school of fishes.
- (2) The replant project will be for 3 years from 1998, planting 280,000 mangrove seedlings in an area of 150 ha.



3. The factors of success:

- (1) Villagers strongly sensed the needs of recovering mangrove forests.
- (2) OISCA succeeded to coordinate and secure international cooperation such as sponsorship by No. 2620 region of International Rotary Club and by Tokyo Marine and Fire Insurance Co. earned by OISCA Yamanashi Branch. Also, OISCA was able to obtain the consent and cooperation of local residents for the afforestation in the Chanthaburi Province.
- (3) OISCA created the system to continue the forest preservation works following the afforestation with cooperation of local residents.

4. What we learned, and felt:

- (1) We must avoid the development that will disturb the natural balance of ecosystem, so we must make full and thorough assessment of environment.
- (2) We need to reconsider Japanese food culture of mass consumption and mass wastes, which may result in the monopoly of shrimp trade and market with Tokyo metropolitan area making 40% of the shrimp market in the world.
- (3) We need to review poverty alleviation of agricultural and fishing villages in developing countries.

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