

Case on Lemon Farm and Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation’s Fisherfolk Enterprise. Change Fusion PROSE Research Team. December 2016. Bangkok, Thailand.

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List of Abbreviations/ Acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATFF	Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation
ISEA	Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia
IUU	Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated
GRAISEA	Gender Transformative and Responsible Agriculture Investments in Southeast Asia
MFP	Marine Fisheries Management Plan
PROSE	Promoting the Role of Social Enterprise
SEAVCs	Social Enterprise in Agricultural Value Chains
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TWSA	Thai Sea Watch Association

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I. Brief History and Profile of the Social Enterprise System Created by Fisherfolk Enterprise and Lemon Farm

Thailand thrived as one of the major global fish exporters. The small-scale fishers dominated this sector until the introduction of fishing trawlers in the 1960s that shifted fishing practices to destructive and illegal fishing methods (Jone, 2010; FAO, 2005). The bottom trawlers, often utilized by large-scale and commercial operations, are large nets dragged across the seafloor to catch everything in its path. This resulted to a significant decline in the average seafood catch of the Thai fishing boats. In 1961, Thai fishing boats' average catch is 300 kg of seafood per hour that drastically declined to 19 kg per hour in 2010 (Salforest, 2013). Further, around 63% of the total catch makes up what they call as "trash fish" or the undesirable and unpalatable fish. It also includes fish and other sea life creatures that are too small and are often being used as fish feeds. The remaining percentage (37%) only accounts to seafood produce that is suitable for commercial purposes. The damage of overfishing practices, especially along the coastal waters of Thailand, has become a critical issue and has led to the depletion of the fisheries resources and damage of the marine ecosystem (WWF, 2016).

In addition, large-scale fishery operations often use toxic chemicals to extend the shelf life of sea products. Results of the regular monitoring of the Ministry of Public Health show that market samples of seafood products contain formaldehyde, a carcinogenic substance usually used to preserve corpses. This and other harmful chemicals are used and are often sold in processed forms (Ronnarongpaire, 2016).

Historically, the small-scale fishers suffered intensively from the impacts of overfishing and unequal market systems monopolized by middlemen and large corporations. The small-scale fishing communities in the southern part of Thailand are one of the most marginalized communities. Various factors contribute to the uncertainty in their household income and daily sustenance such as constraints in fishing capacity, manpower, and equipment.

Moreover, the marginalized fishing communities have long been held in a system locally termed as "kiew". It is a system where small-scale fishers rely heavily on a small group of businessmen who have full control of the fishing boats, loan systems, and trade. This system enabled the middlemen to monopolize the market pricing, leaving the small-scale fishers with no or little bargaining power (Karnjanatawe, 2016).

Findings of a study of the small-scale fishers at the Prachuab Khiri Khan community show that the "kiew" system is magnified by the destruction of the marine ecosystem. Even actors who were not previously involved in the "kiew" system are struggling to make ends meet. As expressed by one of the local fishers, *"Since the depletion of the fish, we lost a significant amount in our income. We are working harder and earning less. My husband stopped hiring helpers on the boat that I have to accompany and help him in fishing. We would spend 6-7 hours out in the sea because we have to sail further, compared to the just 3 hours before the destruction of the marine system. I am still responsible in selling the fish which means I was working twice as hard. Our income continued to drop because the fishes continued to disappear."*

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Aside from the increased working hours, the fishers also experienced a significant decrease in their income, *“Before the destruction of the fishery resources, I am able to sell around THB 1,000 worth of squid per day. With the diminished volume of the squid catch, I have to work twice as hard, and my son has to go fishing for as long 7-8 hours a day to make the catch. I am only earning around THB 300-500 a day,”* says one of the respondents.

To cope up with the lost household income, members of the household are exerting additional effort to earn, sacrificing time allotted for rest and leisure, *“My son would already be exhausted from fishing 7 hours a day. But he would also do part-time jobs in the afternoon from fishing corporations in the market like delivering products.”*

As a way of adapting to the present situation, men focused joining national advocacy campaigns for community-based conservation in efforts to reverse the impacts of illegal fishing. They have also invested in various kinds of sustainable fishing tools and equipment and are forced to take extra jobs for additional income.

Women, on the other hand, have to cope with the situation. Some have taken on supplementary livelihoods to supplement the household income. Others have spent more time processing dried squid so they could sell it a higher value. Most have to sacrifice and cut on some household and personal expenses to cope up with the lost household monthly income.

These situations prompted the marginalized fishing communities to organize themselves to defend their community rights through the restoration of marine resources that are vital for their livelihood. They have started the empowerment process by linking all local community-based associations of traditional fishing communities to form the Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation (ATFF). Currently, the federation has more than 5,000 local fishermen members from the four provinces of Prachuab Khiri Khan, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Satoon, and Songkla.

The key lead actors that initiated the drive for change towards sustainable fishing practices are Oxfam International and Thai Sea Watch Association. Their partnership spearheaded the EU-funded project Promotion of Community Rights on Coastal Resource Management for Sustainable Livelihoods of Coastal Communities (2012-2014). The project aims to promote coastal rehabilitation, to include the small-scale fishers in the Fisheries Act drafting committee, and to pilot community enterprise business models in small-scale fishery communities.

Oxfam Thailand played a key role in the incubation and development of the Fisherfolk Enterprise. It also raised the awareness of the consumers for the Fisherfolk Brand on responsible seafood consumption. Through collaboration with experts, Oxfam also developed codes of standardization under the Blue Brand Standard to ensure the utilization of safe and responsible fishery methods for the seafood products.

The Fisherfolk Enterprise and the Lemon Farm Cooperative, on the other hand, are the two actors that provided the interventions on the supply and market side, respectively. Their social enterprise strategic partnership developed and empowered the small-scale fisheries sector in the value chain. Both cooperated along a single value chain with a central mission of establishing a profit generating social enterprise model that will ensure a community-based sustainable fishery value chain.

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- **The Fisherfolk Enterprise**

Under the mentorship of Thai Sea Watch Association and Oxfam Thailand, the Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation (ATFF) established the Fisherfolk Enterprise in June 2014. The establishment of the Fisherfolk Enterprise offered a specific and practical market solution for the fishery communities. With the vision to empower and to improve the quality of life of the small-scale fishery community members and to promote sustainable fishing methods, the enterprise allowed local communities to participate in the fishing industry and provided formalin-free seafood products sourced out responsibly for the consumers.

As a community-owned enterprise, the Fisherfolk Enterprise aims to strengthen the capabilities of the local community members of the Prachuab Khiri Khan Province to become active change agents for sustainability. Despite previous achievements in various interventions to restore the marine ecosystem in the area, there are still opportunities for improvement in the living conditions and engagement from targeted community members.

The first Fisherfolk Shop was registered as a community enterprise and is a joint venture among the 60 fishers, the Thai Sea Watch Association, and Oxfam Thailand. It was set up in Prachuab Khiri Khan Province, followed by shops in Srithammarat, Satun, and Patthalung provinces. (Karnjanatawe, 2016).

The Fisherfolk Shops operate under three primary objectives: a) to create a benefit sharing system for fisherfolks who are participating in the marine ecosystem restoration and practicing safe and sustainable fishing methods; b) to provide fresh, clean, and safe seafood products to consumers; and c) to redistribute the profit to invest in marine life restoration initiatives.

Five full-time staff members usually man a Fisherfolk Enterprise shop. They are assigned with the following designations with inevitable overlapping of roles and functions due to a lean organizational structure: a store manager who is in-charge of the production and supply for the weekly orders and sales; two general managers; two officers; and a seafood processing officer.

Aside from the Fisherfolk Shop, the Fisherfolk Enterprise also introduced two other innovations for the formation of a stronger value chain. These are the Fisherfolk Brand and the Blue Brand product standard certification. All Fisherfolk products follow the philosophy of promoting environmentally friendly fishing practices and methods, where destructive tools and fishing practices are prohibited.

The enterprise sells toxic-free fresh catch of king mackerel, sea bass, grouper, and banana prawn. All products sold go through a mandatory formaldehyde test check before they are permitted for sale to consumers as part of its standardization and quality control of its products.

Products that pass the required tests will be given a Blue Brand Certification, a guarantee that the seafood is formaldehyde-free. The certification is not only used for food safety purposes but also as an assurance for environmental and labor standard.

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The standard is a joint project of the Thai Sea Watch Association, Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation (ATFF), and a group of environmental experts.

As a community-based social enterprise, Fisherfolk is using a community shareholder model that is directed towards community members taking ownership of the enterprise, which will give the members a sense of ownership and accountability for its success.

The enterprise is envisioned to be financially self-sustaining. The profit-generating system would enable the community members to manage and run the enterprise. Currently, there are around 160 fisherfolk members of the ATFF, 60% of which are women (Oxfam Thailand, 2016). In the Fisherfolk Enterprise, more than 80% of the operators are women. The membership and participation of women helped them improve their business skills and economic role in their respective communities. Each member owns an enterprise share value between THB 100-10,000 to ensure active membership in the community.

As for the work division, men are generally responsible in the fishing activities. The women take the lead in the other operations within the value chain, specifically in the product preparation, shop management, sales and marketing, and the over-all financial management of the shops.

With the branding and success in the marketing of the enterprise, Fisherfolk branded seafood products were marketed at a 20% premium above market prices valued at TBH 227, 369 (Oxfam Thailand, 2016).

Aside from its economic benefits, the enterprise has also become an avenue to tackle and address issues of the marginalized fishing communities in Thailand. The more than 5,000 members of the ATFF are taking the lead in pushing for a fair and equitable system for the marginalized fisherfolk communities.

At present, there is a high demand for the products of the enterprise that they are now experiencing operation and management constraints. These can be addressed by both financial capital and capacity building efforts with the support of the government in the development of sustainable fishery schemes.

- **Lemon Farm Cooperative**

Established in 1999, the Lemon Farm is a joint venture of Mongkol Chaipattana, Bangchak Petroleum Company, and the Crown Property Bureau. It is operating under the Health Society Company Limited under the supervision of its Founder and Managing Director, Ms. Suwanna Langnamsank.

It serves as an outlet for selected organic products from rural agricultural communities in Thailand (Gonzales, 2004). Its primary objective is to educate and offer access to consumers for healthy food. The business model of Lemon Farm also provides the small local farmers an avenue where they can market their produce and create demand for their products. The first pilot organic supermarket was established at Bangchal's gas station.

The organization is set up as a social enterprise with 32% of consumers and producers owning shares. There are 28,000 households registered in its membership

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program and is carrying around 3,000 retail products. Currently, around 80% of its products are organic, a big improvement from the initial 10% when it started.

The remaining 20% are also chemical-free but these have not yet passed the organic certification. All retail products sourced out and sold at Lemon Farm must pass the Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), a method used by Lemon Farm to certify small-scale organic farmers.

Aside from ensuring the quality of its products, Lemon Farm promotes the welfare of small-scale rural farmers who are engaged in organic farming. At present, Lemon Farm Cooperative is considered as a social enterprise retail model because it is the only entity classified in the “health supermarket” category that directly supports rural producers.

The Lemon Farm is also providing trainings on chemical-free agricultural practices and sanitary products made out of herbs to the small-scale producers. It also launched the “eat right-eat organic” campaign where it disseminated information about the benefits of organic products to urban consumers through newsletters and pamphlets.

In terms of its financial status, Lemon Farm’s annual revenue for the 2015 fiscal year is recorded at THB 400 million, a far cry from its humble beginnings almost two decades ago.

Lemon Farm Cooperative operates like a typical business organization of 200 employees. Among the 200 employees, 2 staff members, the marketing and the fishery-product procurement staff, are assigned as key officers to deal directly with sustainable small-scale fisher products.

Table 1. Chronology of Lemon Farm’s Activities

1999	Opened its first Lemon Farm Shop in Pracha Chuen
1999-2003	Held workshops for organic vegetables planting
2004	Started the annual tree planting activity at Sukhato Forest temple in Chaiyaphum
2005	Stopped the sale of soft drinks
2006	Launched macrobiotic diet workshops; Suwanna received Family Values Award from the Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
2009	Opened Be Organic Restaurant; Suwanna received Outstanding Woman Award from the Social Development and Human Security Ministry
2010	Awarded Ongkorn Sang Suk (Happiness Promoting Organization) by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation
2011	Worked with the Commerce Ministry to launch the "Go Organic Community" forum to educate people about the benefits of organic food
2015-present	Collaborated with Thai Health Promotion Foundation and Department of Internal Trade for the "Eat Right-Eat Organic" campaign

The partnership of the Lemon Farm and the Fisherfolk Enterprise started on June 2015, with eleven (11) Lemon Farm outlets carrying the products of the fifty (50) small-scale fisher groups, including products of the Thai Sea Watch Association and the Federation of the Thai Fisherfolk Association (ATFF).

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The Lemon Farm serves as the distribution and market outlet for the “fresh, clean, and formaldehyde-free seafood products” (Karnjanatawe, 2016). The outlets also serve as the link to small-scale fishers to the consumers. The cooperative has also played an important role as an indispensable partner of the growing market brand of Fisherfolk Enterprise.

Lemon Farm has instituted flexible terms that are convenient for the small-scale players. It gives cash payments for every purchase order regardless of the quantity and types of fish supplied by the enterprise. It also allows fifteen (15) days delivery period from the day the order was posted.

It also works as a support system to various small-scale fishers and promote a more sustainable fishery value chain, such as its donation of THB 50,000 to the Prachuab Khiri Khan community for its marine life restoration efforts.



Figure 1. Sample Information Materials distributed to the public in Thailand

II. Outcomes and Impacts on Small Scale Producers and Women’s Economic Empowerment

The partnership of Fisherfolk Enterprise and Lemon Farm Cooperatives has created impacts of various levels and addressed the issues on the environment, small-scale fishers, and on the women’s social and economic empowerment.

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Pin’s Empowerment through the Fisherfolk Intervention

Pin is currently the most skilled fish processor in the enterprise at the Prachuab Khiri Khan Province. Prior to the intervention, she was working with her mother to sell the daily catch of seafood at the local market. Pin is the only child and doesn’t have her own family. Her mother took care of the household management while she is responsible for the daily income. When her mother passed away, Pin continued to sell fish at the market while juggling it with household management. She grabbed the opportunity when representatives of Thai Sea Watch Association introduced the concept of the Fisherfolk Enterprise venture. She was motivated by the notion of being part of a collective ownership of the Prachuab community’s products and with her desire to join efforts to conserve the marine ecosystem of her community.

Further, the Fisherfolk brand also offered her an alternative for her source of livelihood. Through the community enterprise, locals have the power to build a community brand that is of superior quality and of reasonable price. The brand also creates a central employment center for community engagement. In Pin’s case, the enterprise maximized her skills beyond just the selling and marketing of fish. Her skills also contributed for the upgrade of the seafood products to a higher value. Pin’s case depicted a transformation with her newly found leadership and empowerment through the value chain intervention. She has gained a role as a key influence for women in the community with her knowledge and skills in fish processing. As one of the key leaders of the Fisherfolk Enterprise in her community, Pin has taken on more responsibility and management skills at the shop. She has also been empowered with her capacity on business development of the enterprise.

Pin’s case may be considered an exception to the norm. Without her own family and children, she has less burden and responsibilities compared to the typical in a community. However, it is vital to note that the intervention provided her significant satisfaction and lessened her work time allocation. Her more stable and fixed source of income also enabled her to help her extended family members financially, especially in taking care of her nephew and nieces. Aside from its economic impact, the community enterprise has become an informal community where the youngsters, mostly boys, in the village can hang out. Pin is able to influence them not only values related to the restoration of the marine ecosystem but also of life’s lessons.

In general, Pin is satisfied with the impact of Fisherfolk Enterprise on their community’s coastal marine ecosystem. She has long been an active member of promoting sustainable fishery practices but she lacked the needed platform to advance change. She feels grateful that the restoration of the their community’s marine ecosystem helped the community revive their source of income.

- **Impact on the Environment and Fishing Practices**

Prior to the implementation of Oxfam’s GRAISEA project and social enterprise system intervention, the European Union funded a project on the “Promotion of Community Rights on Coastal Resource Management for Sustainable Livelihoods of Coastal Communities Project implemented from 2012-2014 has helped improve the condition of the coastal marine ecosystem in Prachuab Khiri Khan Province, which is also the pilot area of the Fisherfolk Enterprise.

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Further, the partnership of Oxfam Thailand and Thai Sea Watch Association with the members of the ATFF facilitated the rehabilitation of the coastal areas in the province.

As observed by Ruam, part-time officer of the Fisherfolk Enterprise, “Because of the restoration efforts and implementation of the Fisheries Code, the volume of the fish increased within 6 months.”

There is no specific and available data recorded on the specific species and the volume of fish that were restored as a result of the community enterprise. But as observed by the local community members, the quantity of average daily catch is sufficient to prove the effectiveness of the restoration efforts.

In terms of the ecological aspect, community members have also organized themselves to establish sustainable fishing practices and utilize safe fishing equipment. It has also banned illegal and large-scale fishing industries in the coastal areas and empowered members of the community to have a unified representative voice in decision-making bodies to advocate changes in developmental policies and governmental legislations related to the fisheries sector in Thailand.

- **Impact on the Social Enterprise System**

The ATFF has increased significantly the capacity level of local members in the small fishing community in the four provinces where it is operating.

The Fisherfolk Enterprise, on the other hand, contributed to a higher level of capacity building and empowerment of individuals in the community, especially to women. It wasn’t only the first social and economical intervention but it is also an indication of the social and economic empowerment of members within the community. The created social enterprise system intervention on the agricultural value chain affected both the control of resources and the level of the member’s household income.

A Fisherfolk Enterprise employee narrated the difference in the household income of the small-scale fishers practicing sustainable fishing, “Before the intervention of the Fisherfolk Association, it was very difficult for me to earn with the few fish products sustainably caught. My brother, who is practicing the system of large boats using trawlers, was making triple the amount I am making on a daily basis.

In the ten months, from June 2015- March 2016, a total of 8 tons amounting to TBH 1,501, 074 of seafood was sold to urban consumers, mostly through a supermarket chain and three Fisherfolk Shop outlets.

Eighty percent (80%) of its supply or 7 tons is sold through Lemon Farm shops and the remaining percentage is sold to directly to consumers with a corresponding value of more than THB 1,330,000.

- **Impact on the Economic Situation of Fishers**

The intervention has empowered local small-scale fishers where they have moved up the value chain from mere fish catcher to become traders. In the kieu system, they did not have any negotiating powers in terms of price and product flexibility. The

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intervention of Fisherfolk Enterprise provided them with better terms on the buying price and negotiations.

Taking the case of the Prachuab Khiri Khan Fisherfolk as an example, they purchase seafood products on a daily basis from five (5) responsible middlemen and twenty (20) individual fishers. The enterprise offers a rate of 20% above the market rate or the average price offered by the typical middleman for every kilo of seafood.

A Fisherfolk Shop Manager at the Prachuab Khiri Khan branch explained the extent of flexibility of the terms, *“With the case of king mackerel fish, local fishers would sell it to a middleman for a fixed price of between THB 160- 180/ kilo. This is non-negotiable. The Fisherfolk Enterprise, on the other hand, will offer to buy it at THB 220 per kilo, giving them a significant increase for the same volume. The only downside is that we have to pay in credit with 5-7 days processing while the middlemen pay in cash on a day-to-day basis. We are working with the fishers to help them understand the difference in the earned profit.”* The fishers gain the negotiating ability with the enterprise based on the volume of fish they can supply.

The enterprise also empowered the entire community by improving the economic state of the actors in the value chain. It facilitated the cooperation among the fishers and sellers to be under one group of producers. This gave them a higher bargaining power with buyers for higher buying prices.

The “fresh, formalin-free, and responsibly-fished seafood” product branding added value to the seafood products. The introduction of the sliced, sun-dried, sweetened, and other forms of processing of products also helped generate a significantly higher source of income.

Individual households were basically responsible for their own income, without any support from a community enterprise. The intervention of the Fisherfolk Enterprise at the community level, contributed to the branding and marketing of the products that resulted to additional 20% premium above the market price.

Community local fishers from the Prachuab Khiri Khan community have gained a 40% increase in income from THB 171,492 to THB 241,092 within the period of June 13-August 7, 2014. This resulted in an overall increase in income of THB 69,600 among all members of the Fisherfolk Enterprise (Oxfam Thailand, 2016).

To monitor the impact of the Fisherfolk Enterprise intervention, the enterprise holds community meetings every 3-6 months. Part of the agenda includes a summary of the financial improvements of the local fisher’s households derived from the daily purchasing order bought from each middleman or local fishers that participate in the sustainable fishery practice code of the Fisherfolk Enterprise within each region.

- **Impact on Women’s Social and Economic Empowerment**

The community, prior to the intervention of the Fisherfolk Enterprise and the Lemon Farm Cooperatives, the community is focused on reforms to reverse the impact of unsustainable fisheries practice. Previous efforts on reforms have a direct benefit on the men as the primary fishers.

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With the intervention of Fisherfolk Enterprise and the establishment of a viable alternative channel to market and sell seafood such as the Lemon Farm, women have become important economic actors in the community. This is translated to higher level of participation and capacities of women in the small-scale fishing communities.

Ms. Pin, a product processor at the Fisherfolk Enterprise, narrated how the previous value chains discredited the skills of women, *“I used to just wait for my brother to come back to the shore and take whatever he had caught and sell it at the pier. I have skills in cleaning and preparing the fish but I have never used the skills because there is no contribution in the value of the product.”*

The establishment of the Fisherfolk Enterprise facilitated the processing, selling, marketing, and customer relation side of the value chain. Further, more than 80% of the beneficiaries of the enterprise are women.

The social enterprise value chain intervention developed the women’s business skills in product development, fish preparation techniques, marketing and communication skills.

Ruam (Member of the Fisherfolk Enterprise who joined recently)

Compared to Pin who were one of the pioneer members of the Fisherfolk Enterprise, Ruam joined the enterprise much later. She is a 55-year old retiree prior to joining the enterprise. Her skills are no longer valued by the community that most of her time is devoted to taking care of her children. She is also responsible for managing the household while her daughter is at work.

Ruam is in-charge of the fish processing and has joined the enterprise on a day-to-day hire basis. She has the accumulated knowledge and skills from her years of working in the fishery sector.

She would come in for work on days where the enterprise needed extra people due to large bulk of orders or large volume of catch. She decided to join the enterprise for the extra income as there is no available alternative employment for the elderly within the Prachuap Khiri Khan community. By rejoining the workforce, she is able to interact with other community members and is enjoying her renewed social life within the enterprise.

Prior to her life with the enterprise, most of her time is spent at home doing the chores and waiting for her niece to come home. She has lived her life in relative isolation prior to the intervention. She would spend eight hours a day managing the house.

The enterprise enabled Ruam to help her daughter earn extra income for their family of three. Her extra income is spent mostly on the needs of her niece and for the food of the family.

On the personal level, Ruam feels now a higher sense of value. From being an elderly in the community that is perceived of someone who couldn’t contribute financially to her family and the society, she has now become an economic actor in her family and in the community. Her daily rate of TBH 300 for three times a week is a significant contribution to the family.

With all the economic and social changes observed with her alternative livelihood, Ruam has not yet gained the full benefit of participating in the community enterprise compared to Pin. However, this opportunity for the elderly is beyond the empowerment of those marginalized small-scale fishers.

Although Ruam’s function in the enterprise is considered minor, Ruam is contented to be part of an effort in promoting safe and sustainable fisheries practice while providing seafood products of superior quality to consumers.

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Women enterprise members received trainings related to these skills from Oxfam Thailand and the Thai Sea Watch Association. Specific caselets show that these trainings have helped boost the confidence among the women for them to take on important roles in the value chain.

Though the enterprise is still in its beginning phase, initial findings manifests transformative changes in the women’s lives. Majority of the employees of the Fisherfolk Enterprise are women because of their special skills in processing, curating, refining, packaging, and marketing and selling of products. The enterprise reduced their hours of workload of accompanying their husband in fishing and gave them vital roles in the decision-making process of the business.

Further, results of the gender analysis study are in line with the findings of the qualitative research study. Both theorized that there is a clear increase in the capacity of women as a result of the interventions in the value chain. Women demonstrated their capacity to become actors in their own development, not just as producer and traders but also as individual members of the community.

Below are 24-hour clock study of Pin and Ruam before and after the intervention of the Fisherfolk Enterprise.

Table 2. Pin’s 24-hour clock study before and after the Intervention of Fisherfolk Enterprise

Before the intervention		After the intervention	
5:00 AM	Gets up to go to the fishing pier to get the daily catch of fish	8:00 AM	Gets up to go to work
5:30 AM	Starts cleaning and packing the fish		
6:00 AM	Arrives at the local market to sell the fish		
		9:00 AM- 10:00 AM	Starts work at the Fisherfolk Enterprise (depending on the work load)
3:30 PM	Packs up from the market and arrives home	6:00 PM	Finishes work at the Fisherfolk Enterprise Shop (on a regular day)
4:00 PM	Starts processing left over seafood products to lengthen the shelf life	6:00 PM-11:00 PM	Hangs out with the children (nephew and nieces) at the Fisherfolk Enterprise shop
7:00 PM	Dinner with her mother	6:00 PM - 11:00 PM	Finished refining the seafood products and

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			goes to bed immediately; She has a sleeping quarters at the Fisherfolk Enterprise shop (On a heavy load day, occasional)
8:00-11:00 PM	Relaxes and goes to bed	11:00 PM	Goes to bed

*Table 3. Ruam’s 24-hour clock study
Before and after the intervention of the Fisherfolk Enterprise*

Before the intervention (before retiring)		After the intervention	
5:00 AM	Wake up to make breakfast for the family & perform household chores	6:00 AM	Wake up to make breakfast for the family & perform household chores
6:00 AM	Arrive at the fishing pier to pack the fish	8:00 AM	Arrives to work at the Fisherfolk Shop
8:00 AM	Sell fish at the local market		
3:00 PM	Goes home to prepare meal for son and equipment fishing boat. Occasionally, if there is left over squid, she will marinate and dry them to make dried squid to be sold in the next few days	5:00 PM	Get off work at the Fisherfolk shop
4:00 PM	Continues to perform household chores	5:15 PM	Prepares dinner for her family and finishes household chores
6:00 PM	Makes dinner for the family & continues to finish household chores	7:00 PM	Put her niece to bed; Relaxation time
8:30 PM	Put her niece to bed; Relaxation time	9:30 PM	Goes to bed
9:30 PM	Goes to bed		

- **Women’s Debt & Loan**

Traditionally, women take on the role of finance managers in a household. When circumstances arise and loans need to be made, women carry the burden of taking on the loans and debts. Usual debt arrangements are flexible in terms of the payback timeline and do not charge interest rates.

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However, if the borrower is unable to pay back the loan in time, he/she must compensate in return by selling the daily catch at the price dictated by the lender, which is often set at significantly lower price than the market rate. This cycle often put the borrowers at a disadvantaged cycle of debt. After the intervention, five (5) households in the Prachuab Kiri Khan Province were able to free themselves from debt by paying back the THB 10,000 they each owed. They were able to aggregate the sum through community effort. With their liberation from debt, they are now able position themselves with bargaining power to sell their daily catch at a more competitive price.

- **Women’s Decision-Making Power**

The men still hold the access and responsibility of decision-making in a household, even if the women have the control on the financial management. As one of the respondents puts it, “Wives have the duties to keep the money while the husbands spend.” This is backed up by results of a survey where women from the Prachuab Khiri Khan had significantly lower decision-making power when it comes to spending and purchases of high-value items for the household. However, it is vital to note that compared to the women in Nakhon Si Thammarat, which was just intervened recently, women in Prachuab Khiri Khan expressed that they do not need to ask for permission of opinion of their husbands in purchasing personal needs and items.

- **Women’s Time Allocation**

The decrease in marine life resource directly affected the work time allocation of both men and women. While men took more adaptive approach to the economic situation, women are geared towards coping mechanisms.

Prior to the intervention, men would engage in community-based marine conservation efforts, join national advocacies, and invest in more sustainable fishing equipment and tools. Women, on the other hand, had to cope to augment the loss household income by taking on extra jobs, reducing their personal expenses, and on emergency situations take on debts to cover for the family’s daily needs and expenses.

Men and women from the small fishing villages spend hours in labour for approximately 10-12 hours on an average, depending on the weather and quantity of catch daily. Men’s task is to go fishing, while women sort the fish and sell them at the local market or piers. On some cases, women also go out fishing with their husbands to save on cost for hired help.

If the income from their primary source of livelihood is not sufficient, women are forced to take on extra jobs while also managing the household chores.

III. Critical Factors that Contributed Positively or Negatively to the Outcomes and Impacts

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The primary objective of the intervention to set-up a self-sustaining enterprise in order to facilitate employment and an alternative channel where the small-scale fishers can market their seafood products.

The first year of the intervention was focused on community development and standardization of the quality of seafood products. Efforts include recruitment of community members who are aware and will practice safe fishing methods. The community-owned business also allots part of their profits in the projects to restore the coastal marine life.

Several factors contributed both positively and negatively to the outcomes and impacts discussed in the previous section. These include role of key social entrepreneurs and introduced innovations, enabling and disabling government policies, and the role of external stakeholders in the program and processes.

- **Role of Key Social Entrepreneurs**

- a. Wichoksak Ronnarongpairee (Federation of Thai Fisher Folk Association)*

Wichoksak Ronnarongpairee is one of key leaders of the ATFF. He plays a key role in the development and success of small-scale fisheries agricultural value chain of the enterprise.

He created a powerful union of the small-scale fisherfolks while instilling the values of sustainable fisheries. As a result, he was able to bridge the ties between sustainable marine conservation and the economic survival of small-scale fishers, both of which are vital for the success of the program.

Further, he lead the establishment of Thailand's first national trade association of small-scale fishing communities, ATFF in 2010 (Ashoka, Thailand). The federation represents a total of 3,400 fishing villages in 17 provinces.

The federation succeeded in securing a seat, with Wichoksak as the representative, in the National Fishing Policy Planning Board. It paved the way for the recognition of the voice of the small-scale fishers at the legal and policy-making level. This gave the small-scale fishers bargaining power in negotiations without the need to pass through other stakeholders (ibid).

Wichoksak has been present in the community since the establishment of the Fisherfolk Enterprise. Specifically, he brought in the technical know-hows from the private sector to strengthen the business and operation of the Fisherfolk Enterprise. He also introduced and integrated the best practices of private food businesses for the enterprise to replicate.

Wichoksak played an important actor in the unity and upliftment of the small- scale fisherfolks from being marginalized members of the fishing industry to become economic actors in their communities.

- b. Saowalak Prathumthong (Thai Sea Watch Association)*

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Saowalak Prathumthong is a manager of the Thai Sea Watch Association, an NGO working towards the conservation of marine and coastal waters. She is also a central figure in the set-up of the first Fisherfolk community enterprise in Prachuab Khiri Khan Province.

The Thai Sea Watch Association has worked with local fishing communities in Prachuab Khiri Khan for eight (8) years before forming the pilot Fisherfolk Enterprise.

Although Fisherfolk Enterprise is mainly an organization consisting of local fisherfolks, Saowalak played an instrumental role in the set-up of the enterprise. She is the main force in the establishment of the first central operating unit and the Fisherfolk Shop in Prachuab Khiri Khan Province. She also established a new buying system within the community where the Fisherfolk shop will pay local fishers above market rate for safe and seafood products that are fished sustainably. This system offers a stable source of employment and provides an avenue for engagement for the women in the community.

Through this model and her collaboration with Oxfam Thailand, the Fisherfolk Enterprise was able to establish the Blue Brand Standard, the first sustainable seafood labeling system.

Access to new markets was opened within the private sector such as the Lemon Farm Supermarkets to sell the fish of higher quality at a premium price. For the first time, members of the community were able to set their own competitive pricing.

- **Introduction of Technological Innovations**

The introduction of innovative technology of the Fisherfolk Enterprise contributed to the increase of efficiency and reduction of the cost of fish products. A central processing unit and other appropriate technologies utilized in the Fisherfolk Enterprise increased the efficiency and lessened the working hours of the women. The Fisherfolk Enterprise's facility constructed at the Prachuab Khiri Khan Province is the pilot model.

Prior to the intervention, women are focused on the role of fish selling directly at the pier and at the market. They do not process and package the fish, both of which add value to the product. This is one of the reasons why the price of their products is always below the market rate. Aside from the low buying price, women should also dispose the daily catch within the day, as the unprocessed fish will rot easily. These were the crucial conditions that were addressed by the introduced technological innovations.

The Fisherfolk Enterprise established a systematic processing system that ensures the extension of the shelf life of fish without the use of preservatives. An important technological innovation introduced was the insulated coolers. Four (4) coolers were installed at the Prachuab Khiri Khan central operating center. It has helped reduce cost for the locals by extending the shelf life of fresh products for up to eight (8) days after the catch. Before the introduction of the technology, sellers would

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lose profit if they weren’t able to sell daily catch the within the day. This limitation adds pressure to the women in their day-to-day management of work chores.

With the help of the technology of coolers, women who work in the enterprise were able to better plan out their daily tasks and manage their work because they could preserve the fishery products and be ensured of the product quality.

Aside from the coolers, a fill seal machine made the products look more presentable that it can be sold at a higher value. Before the intervention, women in the local fishing community had awareness of the value of aesthetics, hygiene, and packaging. Packaging technology helped extend the shelf life of the products so it can also be transported and sold in other areas, while ensuring hygiene and safety. Realizations on the importance of packaging and presentation of the products and its translation to increase in income motivated the women to further improve their fish processing skills.

- **Enabling and Disabling Government/Industry/Market Policies/ Programs/Practices**

Ineffective governance of the fishing industry in Thailand in the past has lead to cases of unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, overfishing, and illegal fishing. An example is the unreliable registration of fishing vessels as they are done autonomously (Poonachit-Korsieporn, 2000).

There is also low development in fisheries sub-sector in Thailand, as most policies tend to favor the large industrial fishing industry over the small-scale fishers. With the needed volume of seafood products for export, national law and policies of the country in the past have allowed the practice of illegal fishing.

However, after recognizing the negative impacts of these policies, the Thai government has taken a nationwide initiative to promote safer and more sustainable methods of fishing. Specifically, the Marine Fisheries Management Plan (MFP) 2015-2019 are amendments made to the existing laws for the proper management of the fishery resources in Thailand. With overfishing and illegal fishing as a core issue of the industry, the FMP 2015-2019 is linked to the National Plan of action “to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU) in 2015 (Department of Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, 2015).

According to the plan, commercial fleets will be put under a tighter surveillance through additional personnel and stricter measures. This measure is aimed to remove illegal fishing vehicles. At present, relevant agencies have started implementing these measures such as the registration of small-scale fishing vessels and licenses.

Further, European Union has instituted a market policy that has a profound effect on the development of sustainable fishing practices and policies in Thailand. EU has imposed restrictions on products imported by third-party countries to deter any illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing among state members. EU gave Thailand a “Yellow Card” on February 2015 over the IUU seafood products, banning fishery products from the country. According to the Thai Department of Fisheries, Thailand

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exported in 2004 seafood products to the EU of approximately 167 tons, valued at THB 27.6 million (Department of Fisheries, 2015).

This seriousness and urgency of the situation forced the Thai government to make it a top national agenda, which has to be addressed within six months. It has developed policies and regulations targeted to manage and monitor the large fishing vessels. The Thai government established the Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF) to deal on resolving the issues of IUU fishing in Thailand (Yeemin et al). Since then, the Royal Ordinance on Fisheries B.E. 2558 (2015) approved on November 14, 2015, replacing the amended Fisheries Act B.E. 2558 (2015) (Thai Embassy to Belgium and Luxembourg Mission of Thailand to the European Union). Most of the policies and regulations are aimed at directly rectifying issues of the EU on the country’s export of fishery products benefitting the large-scale seafood corporations.

The issue of advancement and benefit of the small-scale fishers wasn’t tackled extensively. Moreover, the emergency decree was drafted without public participation or engagement with small-scale fishers. As a consequence, these policies and legislations created additional problematic effects to the small-scale fishers.

The new Fisheries Emergency Decree is a strict set of laws that addresses the loopholes in the previous Fisheries Act of 2015. An amendment in the decree that directly affected the livelihood of the small-scale fishers is on the Article 24 that prohibits local fishing vessels go beyond three (3) nautical miles from the shore. The decree largely favored the big-scale fishing industry by allowing them the regular marine space, while restricting the small fishing vessels.

Banjong Nansae of the Thai Sea Watch Association described the unequal implications of the decree, “With this decree, majority of local fishermen can only fish within only less than 5% of the coastal areas of the country, while opening up opportunities for more than 90 per cent of the areas to the big operators (Rutjivanarom and Jitraporn 2015).”

Oftentimes, national policies enacted to promote a more sustainable and safe fishery practices end up marginalizing the small-scale fishing communities. Most policies are designed with a top-down approach intended to improve the interest of the big-scale seafood businesses.

- **External Stakeholders/Partnerships that Contributed Significant Impact**

Oxfam Thailand

Oxfam has long been working with the communities prior to the establishment of the Fisherfolk Enterprise. Its intervention is aimed primarily to restore the country’s marine resources. From the years 2012-2015, Oxfam and Thai Sea Watch strengthened formally the network of fisherfolk communities in various provinces in the form of the ATFF. The association was used to influence the government to amend and include the rights and a representation of the small-scale fishers in the Fisheries Act.

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Aside from the environmental restoration efforts and advancement of the welfare of small-scale fishers, Oxfam Thailand also played a key role in the incubation and development of the Fisherfolk Enterprise and the “Blue Brand” standard certification. Oxfam brought in a pool of technical experts to help formulate the standardization and legalization process of the certification.

The inherent potential for women empowerment and the high-level of women participation in the fisheries sector reaching around 60% triggered a gender conscious intervention of Oxfam. The project titled “Gender Transformation Enterprise Development” which runs from April 2015-March 2018 aims to empower women to become strong producers and successful social entrepreneurs.

In the case of Fisherfolk Enterprise, the high percentage (89%) of women participation shows a strong potential to empower the communities socially and economically.

Oxfam Thailand had initiated a gender baseline study for the women of the Prachuab Khiri Khan fishing community after securing a stable self-financing enterprise. It also plans to develop and improve further their gender program intervention within the fishing communities.

IV. Lessons and Insights Useful for Benchmarking Interventions in Agricultural Value Chains that Transform the Lives of Small Producers and Bring About Women’s Economic Empowerment

- **Strategic Partnerships in a Social Enterprise System**

The intervention of Fisherfolk Enterprise and Lemon Farm Cooperative strategic partnership facilitated the empowerment of the local fishers and women in the value chain. In detail, the Fisherfolk Enterprise helped empower women in terms of technical skills. The enterprise also facilitated the transformation of the small-scale fishers as vital economic actors in the supply side of the value chain. The Lemon Farm, on the other hand, played a key role in the market side intervention. It opened up access to new markets and assisted in consumer education on the various marine life resource issues. The Lemon Farm advertised the superiority of Fisherfolk Enterprise’s products in terms of ensuring safe human consumption and its environmental efforts to safeguard the marine ecosystems.

The partnership from this case study reveals that in sustaining the impacts of the intervention in small-scale fishery sectors requires a cooperative and a working system of partnership that will aid in strengthening the value chain.

- **Potentials of a Gender Program Intervention for Economic Empowerment**

The key learning from the 24-hour clock study reveals that though 90% of the management and workers in the Fisherfolk shop are women, the potentials empower women have not been maximized. While women have become empowered through the value chain intervention, there are rooms for improvement to drive women’s economic empowerment.

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Women dominate membership and participation in the Fisherfolk Enterprise. Women who are employed in the enterprise are able to bring in a major and stable source of income. In the case of retired women, the enterprise provided for a part-time employment and alternative to the usual household chores. This model engaged the elderly members in the community on the daily needs of the enterprise and are paid on a day-to-day basis. The extra income of the elderly women helps in both their personal and family expenses, while also developing a sense of community with the other women in the enterprise.

With the high level of participation of women in the small-scale fishery sector and in the Fisherfolk Enterprise, the potentials to develop a women's empowerment program is high. Oxfam Thailand conducted a Gender Baseline Study that yields out results that would back stronger gender program intervention. This is possible after ensuring a more stabilized business and standardized program of the enterprise. This will further help women to become significant economic and social actors in their communities.

- **Empowerment for Collective Advocacy**

Another key learning is the strength of a collective advocacy from the communities. The Fisherfolk Federation played an important role in uniting community members in the four (4) provinces for collective advocacy on restoring coastal marine life. With the implemented changes in the government policies through advocacy, the communities are able to monitor large-scale fishing industries using illegal tools and methods in their respective water areas. Further, the Fisherfolk Enterprise intervention empowered the social and economic status of the members in the community. It provided an avenue for the improved capacity development of women in the community. With the increased economic and civic presence of the small-scale fishers, the Thai government has moved towards a paradigm shift to the direction of coastal resource management policies that would prevent the use of destructive fishing equipment. As a result, the local government was able to exercise power and declare coastal preservation zones for sustainable fishery. The created bond among the marine conservation activist gave out a clearer and a more unified message on the conservation of the sea. As one of the key leaders of Fisherfolk Enterprise Pin puts it, "This sea has been our source of livelihood for generations. With these efforts, I can have peace of mind that younger generations will be able to continue this practice and protect the sea for the benefit of the generations to come."