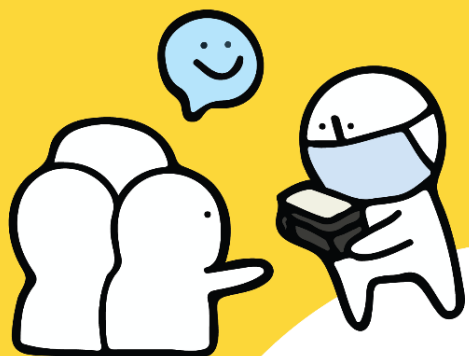
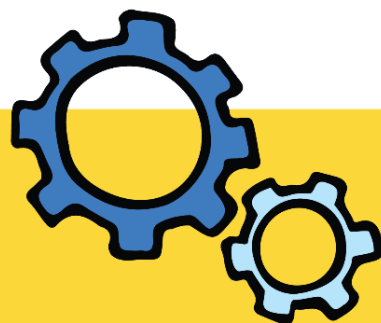




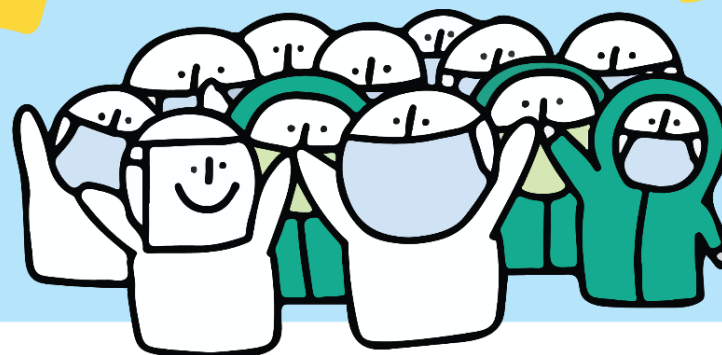
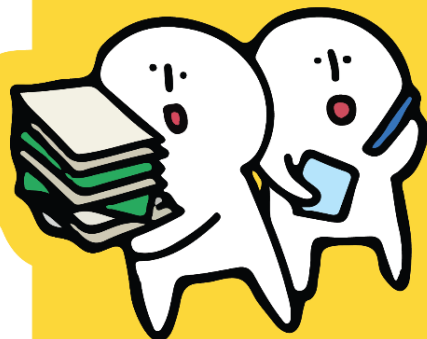
UN  
DIP

accelerator  
labs  
.....



# Civic Networks and Innovation in the delivery of public services during COVID-19

Key reflections  
from civic networks  
on their role in  
crisis response  
in Thailand





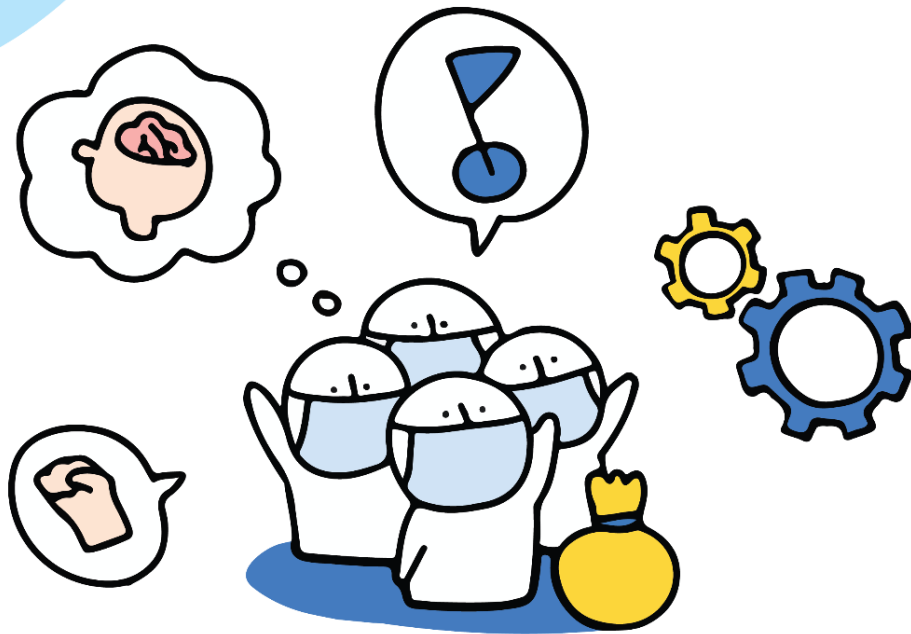
January, 2022  
Copyright © UNDP 2022  
All Rights Reserved

United Nations Development Programme  
12th floor, United Nations Building  
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue,  
Bangkok 10200 Thailand  
Tel. (66) 2 304 9191

Disclaimer: The views, designations and recommendations presented in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official position of UNDP.

# COVID-19 / Civic Networks / Innovation in Public Services Delivery

## Key reflections from civic networks on their role in crisis response in Thailand



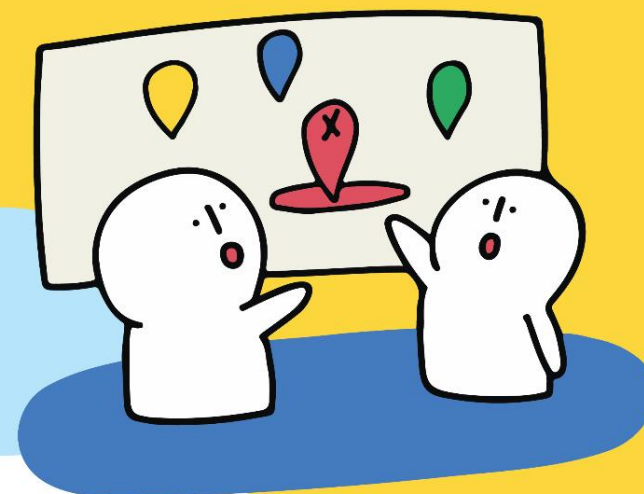
Around the world, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has pushed vulnerable groups to become more vulnerable, the poor falling into extreme poverty, and the marginalized facing difficulties in accessing healthcare supports and other assistance. In 2020, the Thai economy contracted by 6.1% (NESDC, 2021) while poverty rate reached 6.4% with an additional 200,000 people falling into poverty (World Bank, 2021). The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security also estimates that the homeless population of the country is likely to increase by approximately 30% due to COVID-19. Given the severity of the situation, the pandemic is calling for innovation and new ways of doing things to cope with the increasingly complex challenges in every sector. It is thus not surprising to see innovation accelerating over the past 2 years.

The case of COVID-19 response in Thailand has also demonstrated the criticality of a whole-of-society approach in developing social innovation for effective crisis response and recovery. Public services delivery in a business-as-usual manner is no longer sufficient; innovative methods are required to provide assistance

While the Thai government has launched a series of public health and socio-economic measures to support its citizens, the private sector, academia, and civic networks also play an important role in combatting the pandemic and assisting vulnerable groups throughout the crisis. Innovation in diverse forms has been created by both the public and the private sectors.

The UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand seeks to tap into local innovations and collective intelligence to address today's complex development challenges, so the Lab is eager to learn from this crisis and social innovation that stems from it. When considering the innovation landscape in Thailand, the Lab does not only look at technological innovations but also innovative grassroots solutions and social processes that allow our society to overcome challenges. More importantly, one can argue that the way we work together can be in itself a form of social innovation. Fostering civic engagement and leveraging the expertise and resources of every sector of the society can be our pathway towards a more resilient future.

## Crisis response and social innovation in public services delivery



The COVID-19 has accelerated our innovation process. The Thai government has been driving the country towards digital transformation with its Thailand 4.0 policy. However, it is during the pandemic that we witness the transformation taking place at an unprecedented rate. Today, even street vendors find their ways to digital platforms as the government introduced the 'Pao Tang' mobile application, an e-wallet through which citizens can receive government subsidies under various economic stimulus packages. With the 'Half-Half' co-payment scheme, people receive 50% subsidy (up to 150 Baht daily) on food and general goods purchased when they use the Pao Tang application. This initiative has brought many new users to e-payment systems and driven the country towards a cashless society.



©UNDP

On the public health front, the government also developed the 'Mor Prom' mobile application and LINE account to facilitate COVID-19 vaccination process and all communication related to the pandemic situation.

The private sector adds to the government's effort by leveraging their expertise and business operations. Taking the case of COVID-19 vaccination registration, leading telecommunication companies like TRUE, AIS, and DTAC provided additional channels for the registration.



©UNDP

Meanwhile, CP All offered their three-thousand 7-Eleven outlets in Bangkok to make the registration more accessible for people without digital devices. Furthermore, with the establishment of field hospitals around the country, SCG Packaging utilized their expertise to design and produce numerous “SCGP Paper Field Hospital Bed” from recycle paper and donated them to the field hospitals. This innovative solution is lightweight and space-efficient for logistics and storage. At the same time, it also promoted the recycling of paper boxes and a circular economy principle.



© SCG Foundation  
scgfoundation.org

In addition to the efforts by the government and large-scale entities, we have also witnessed the power of civic networks in supporting fellow citizens and vulnerable groups including low-income households, slum dwellers, migrant workers, and homeless people. One could argue that civic network is nothing new and Thai society has been fortunate to have the cultural capital that promotes empathy and altruism, so ‘helping others’ has been an integral of Thai people’s mindset. However, the scope of work by civic networks and their contribution in overcoming the crisis are unprecedented, not to mention the duration of their



Mr. Chalermpong Klakayan  
*Senior Innovation Developer  
National Innovation Agency (NIA)*

“The crisis has accelerated social innovation process. While the government provides policy frameworks and support, it is the private sector in collaboration with the civil society that spreadheads social innovation initiatives to support crisis response as well as post-crisis economic recovery. We also see cultural changes with the new generation becoming very active in contributing to social causes.”

work which extend from a matter of months into nearly 2 years at the time of this publication. With an insider perspective of the affected populations, civic networks help to close the gaps by applying innovative and human-centered approaches to public services delivery. They have carried out a wide range of operations from setting up hotlines and providing coordination supports for COVID-19 patients, proactive COVID-19 testing, distributing food and supplies for home and community isolation, transporting patients as well as the bodies of the deceased, supporting insurance claim processes, launching economic recovery initiatives, and many other initiatives. These are a result of collective efforts by both existing and newborn groups which form an expanding ecosystem of civic movements.

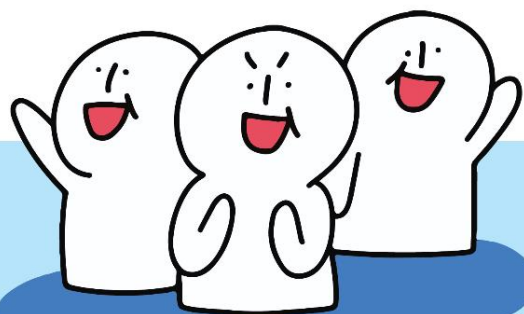
# Key reflections from civic networks on their role in crisis response in Thailand



© ZENDAI

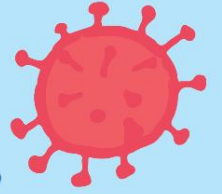
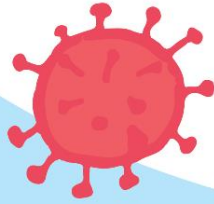
© Food For Fighters

Recognizing their success and society-wide contributions, the UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand joined hands with civic network groups and stakeholders from beneficiary communities as well as the private sector to reflect on what we can learn from civic network's crisis response. To turn the crisis into an opportunity, we hope to capture good practices which can help up build forward stronger.



Ms. Panchana Vatanasathien  
Founder of Food For Fighters  
(civic network group)

"The most important thing is, don't stop working. Do it in the capacity that you can but do it continuously. Taking action is the best communication strategy. If you're creating an image, it will only work for a short time. Yet, along with your actions, it is necessary to be strategic and use marketing skills to engage sponsors to drive social impacts. We need to understand the nature and culture of the donors and serve their needs in order to secure their long-term support."

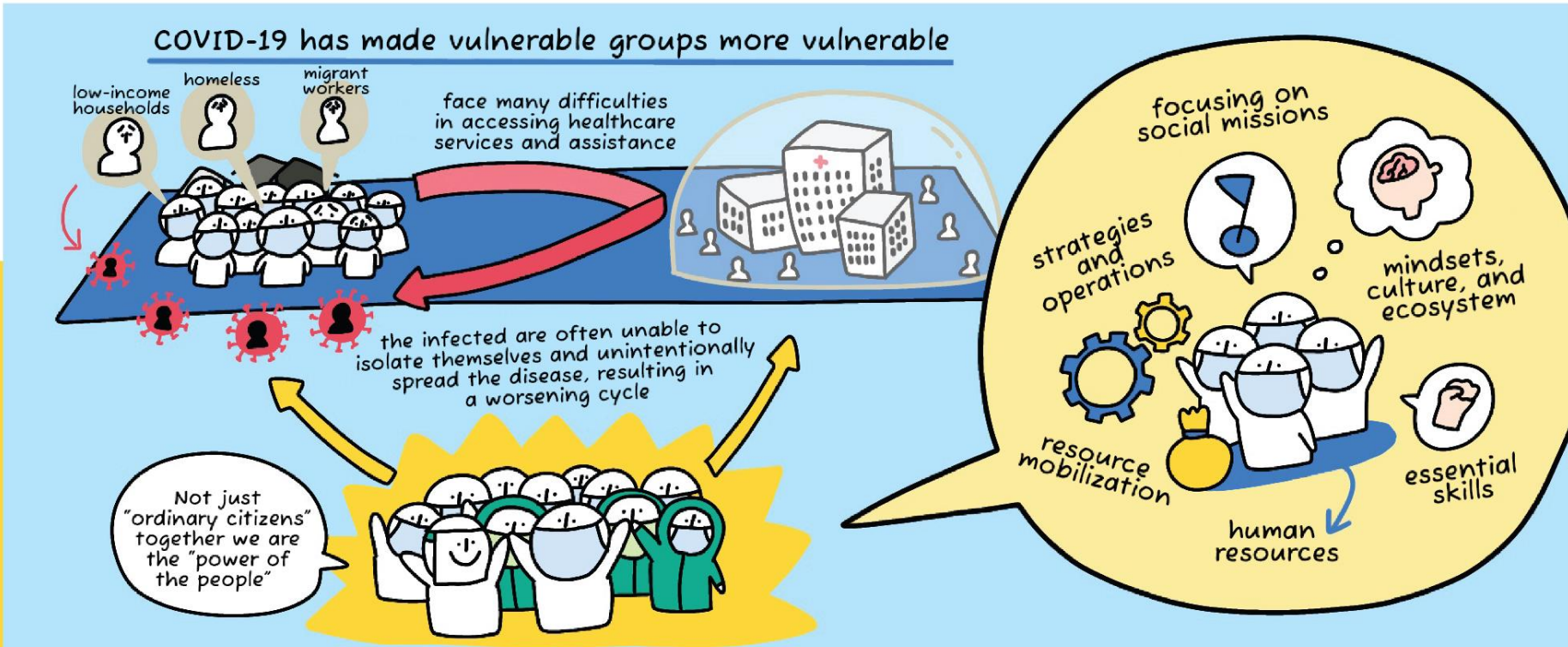


# Key Reflections from Civic Network's Crisis Response and Efforts in Supporting Vulnerable Groups

## The Case Study of COVID-19



### Power of Civic Networks in the COVID-19 crisis

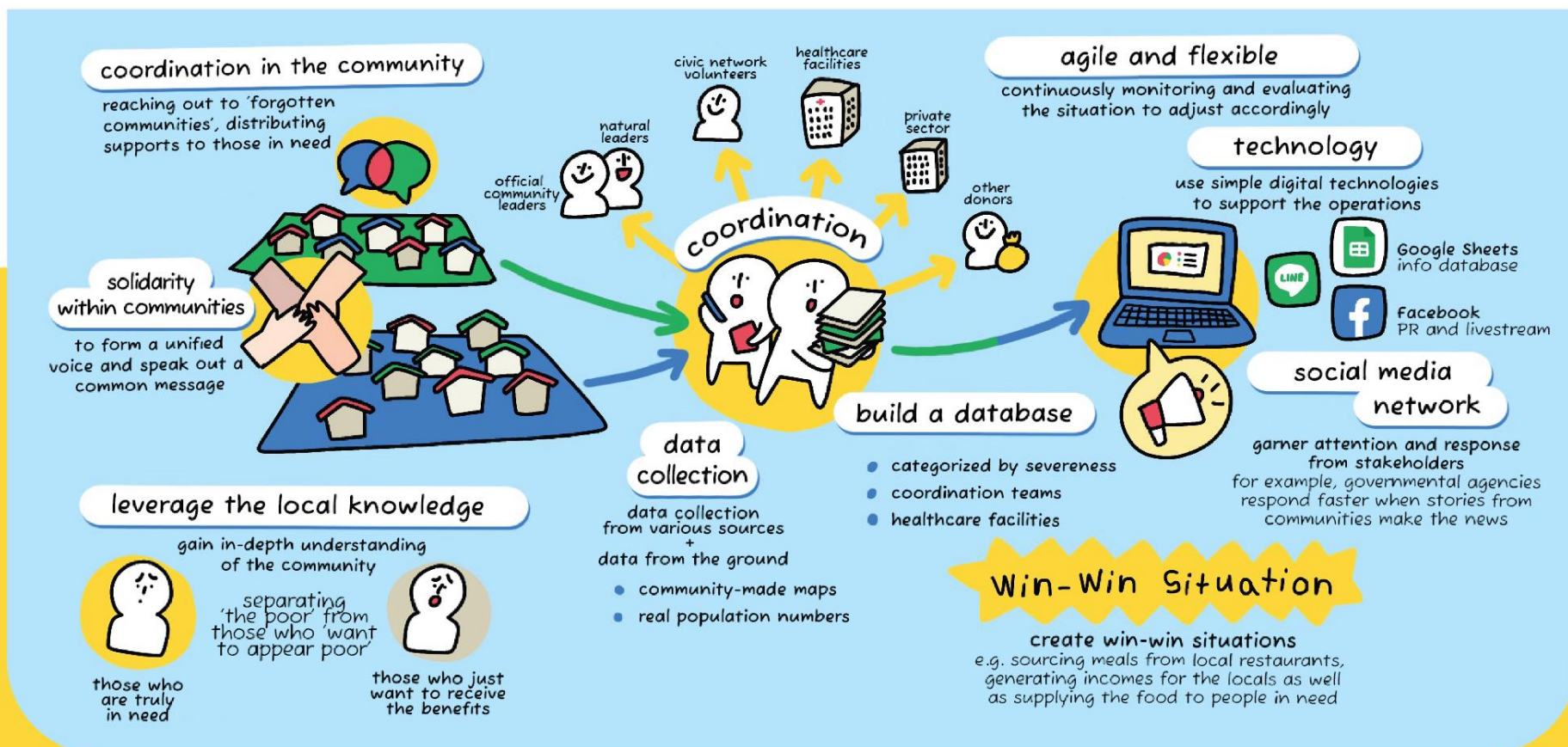


Civic networks see the gaps and rise up to support fellow citizens and vulnerable groups, leading to the birth of many new civic network groups

## Focusing on Social Missions

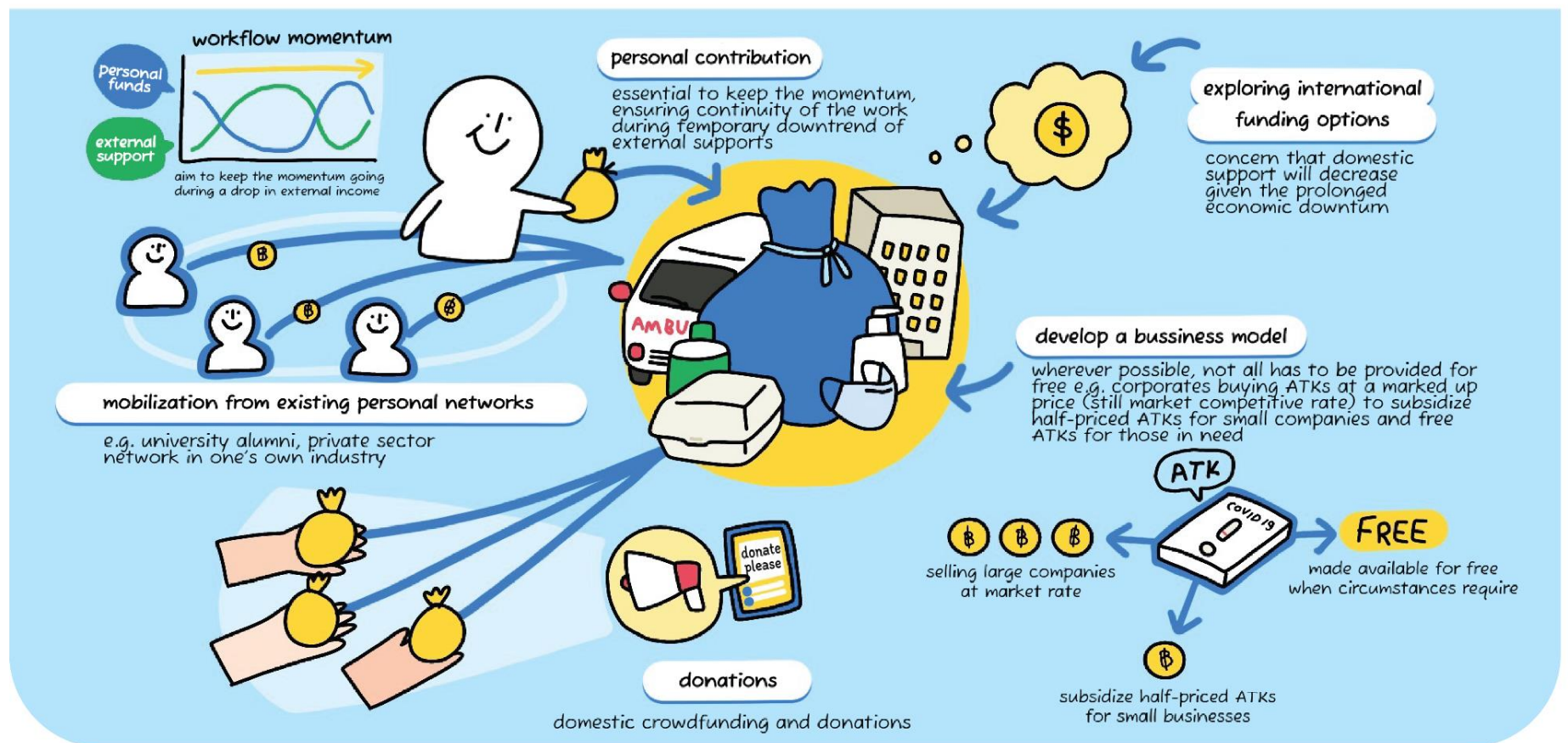


## Strategies and Operation

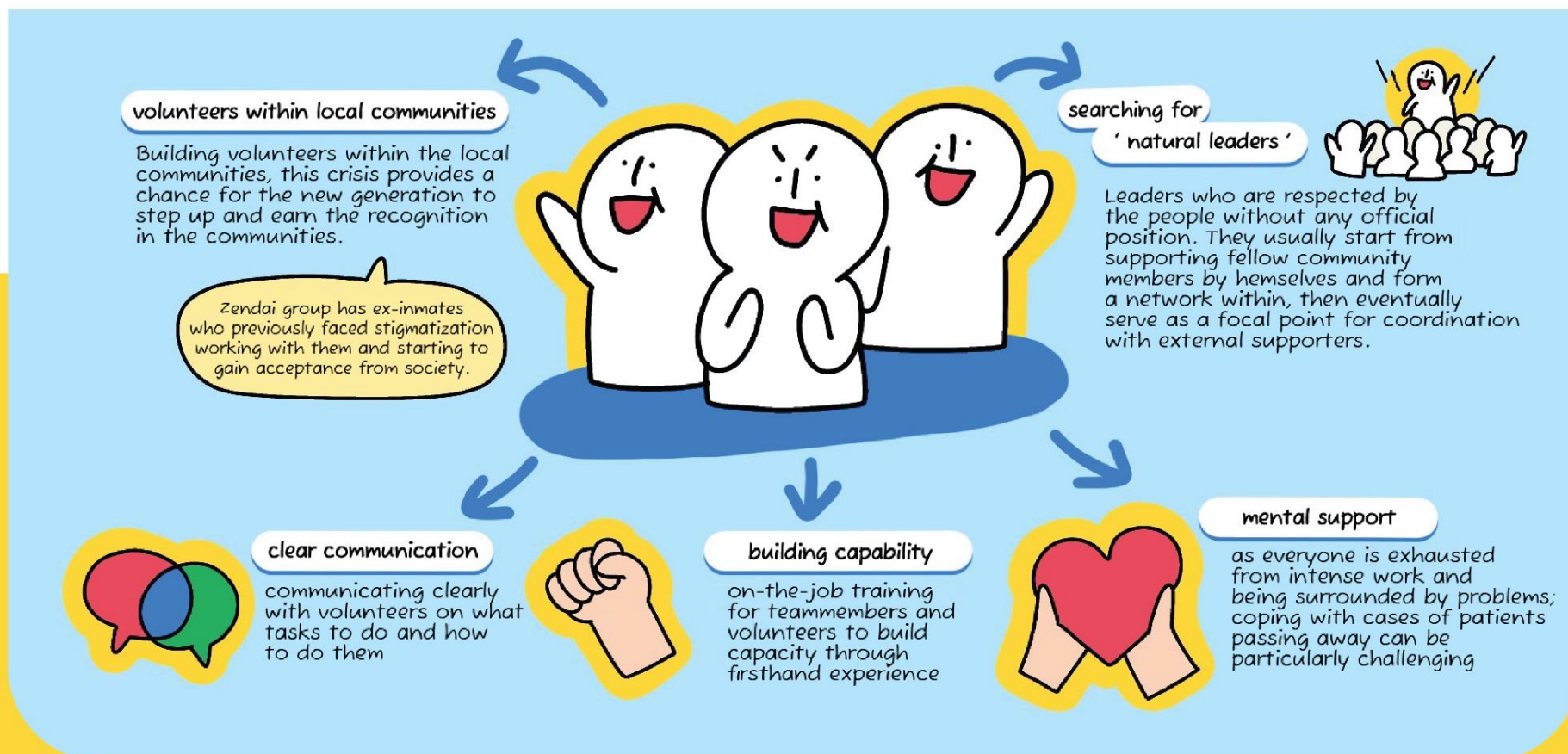




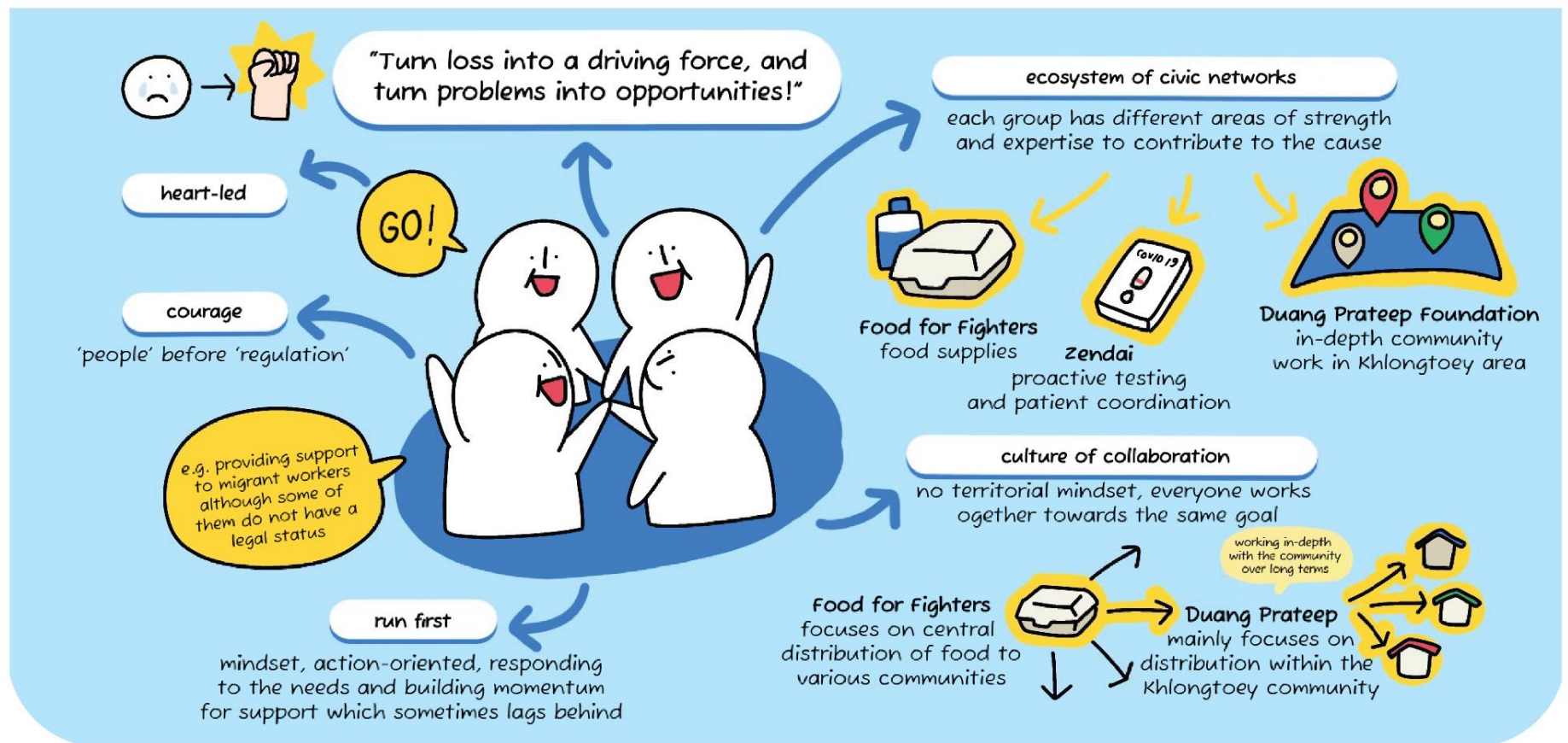
# Resource Mobilization



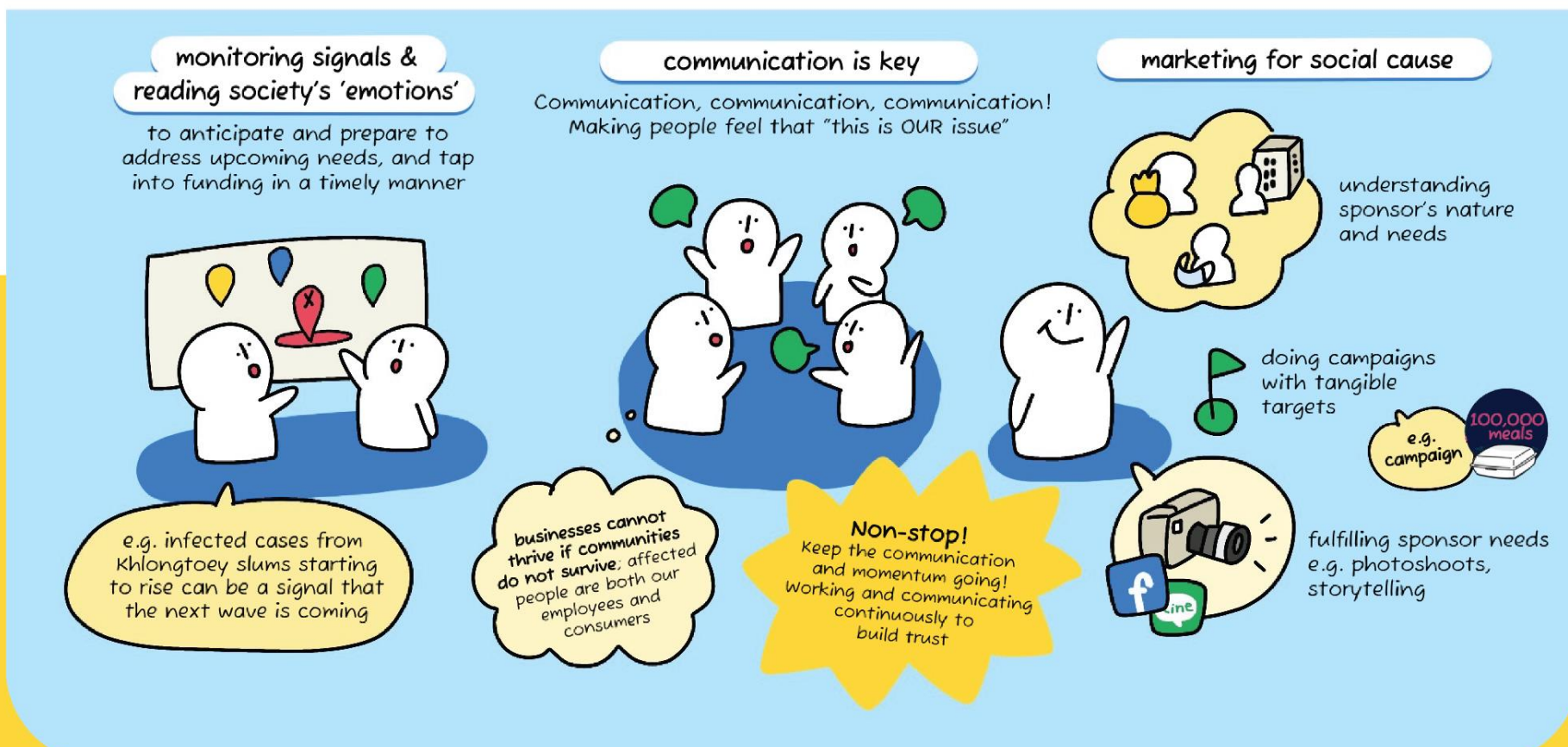
# Human Resources



# Mindset, Culture, & Ecosystem



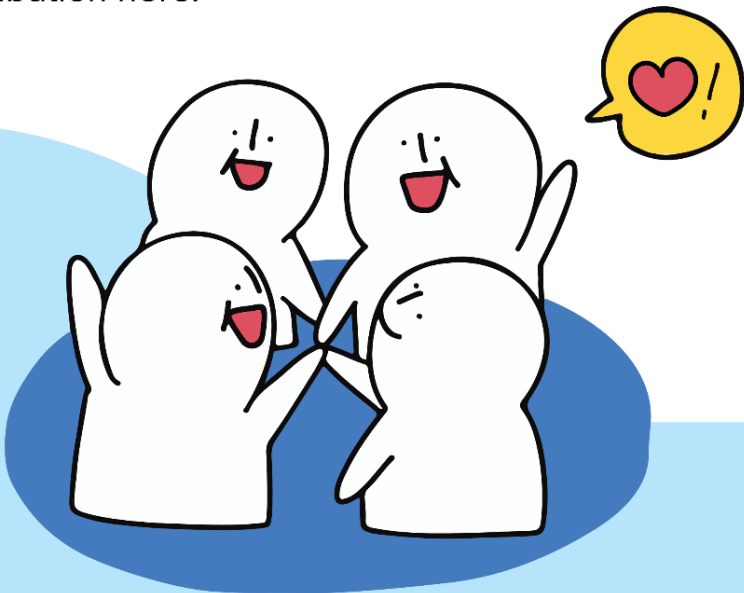
# Essential Skills



## Civic engagement and public services delivery, challenges and opportunities



Unbounded by institutionalized constraints, civic networks are able to work in a more agile and flexible manner, complementing existing public services delivery. Adhering to human-centered principles, the scope of civic network's assistance grows organically corresponding to the needs of the beneficiaries and the nature of the situation at the time. However, the price of this is the fluctuating funding and limited scalability. Civic networks often rely on public donations which prove to be challenging for dealing with long-term crisis like COVID-19. When donations and crowdfunding become insufficient, some groups seek to find alternative financing models such as engaging and mobilizing private sector's support or applying a social enterprise model. The trend of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the country is a wonderful contribution here.



Well-organized civic network groups attract various forms of support from the private sector. For example, Food For Fighters group receives not only funding support from many companies. Their logistics and delivery tasks are supported by Banpu Next and Government Savings Bank which assigned electric vehicles under their CSR programme for the group to utilize on a daily basis. Food For Fighters is also exploring a collaboration to tap into non-fungible token (NFT) market as a new stream of funding. Overall, innovative resource mobilization model for human-centered, agile, and flexible public service delivery remains a challenge which many civic groups are still exploring and experimenting solutions for.

Zooming out, civic networks are also situated in the broader context of their locality. Socio-political set up is certainly a factor which determines the degree of contribution that civic networks can make. For instance, there are multiple cases of fruitful civic engagement in Northern Thailand where local authorities work hand in hand with civic networks to leverage each other's resources to support vulnerable populations.



© Chiangmai Urban Farm, Jaibaan Studio, and Friends

One initiative is by a group of local architects in Chiang Mai city who surveyed and turned an unused plot of land into an urban farm with the support of Chiang Mai municipality. Aiming to address the issue of food security, this organic urban farm provides free food for those affected by pandemic, including homeless people and slum dwellers.

The farm also serves as a space for civic engagement activities and learning center for organic agriculture.

Meanwhile, the socio-political climate in the Southern border provinces is far less conducive for civic movements. The issue of security has fostered a sense of mistrust between local authorities and local actors,

so support from civic movements can be viewed as a means to gain momentum against the state. Indeed, mutual trust between stakeholders and the focus on common good form the very foundation for a fruitful civic engagement.

*"In the southern border provinces, poverty is already a problem and on top of that, there is the security issue. Then, COVID-19 adds a third layer to this complex situation. As we have seen in many countries, we will be living in the cycle of outbreaks, so COVID-19 is becoming part of everyone's life. The question is how do we all take part in managing this crisis and engage communities in the process. This can be challenging, yet very important for our future."*

Ms. Thitinob Komalnimi  
Advisor and Communication Specialist  
The Active / Thai PBS



Challenges and opportunities are, in a way, two sides of the same coin. Through the reflections from civic network's COVID-19 response, we see a tremendous potential which can be unleashed by civic engagement. Like other grassroots innovations, these

efforts by ordinary citizens shine the light on real needs of the society and present so many potential solutions despite all the limitations. It is also where social innovation initiatives are forged as actors of diverse expertise join hands to find new ways of tackling social issues. The crisis has shown us the opportunities in public services delivery and the extra layer of social safety net which civic networks can bring, especially with conducive policy frameworks and support from the government.

More importantly, fostering civic engagement drives changes at a deeper level. The engagement does not only create positive impact for the target beneficiaries but also installs the sense of 'agency' within the individuals in the civic networks. Instead of waiting for someone to offer help, individuals realize that their action can make a difference, no matter how small; and when we have a collection of small actions, that can become an unstoppable force. This mindset applies to the COVID-19 and crisis response as well as our sustainable development agenda as a whole. After all, sustainable development is about everyone and so it will take collective actions by every single one of us to reach the goals. The journey of civic network's crisis response is merely a small piece in the bigger picture of the whole-of-society approach and our learning from this case study can help us advance on our path toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

# Development By All > Development For All

# Thank you

## for the contributions from:

- National Innovation Agency (NIA)
- The Active, Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS)
- Food For Fighters
- Zendai
- Duang Prateep Foundation
- Thai Volunteer Service Foundation
- Ar-Sa-Song by Government Savings Bank
- Thongpoon Wanglee Foundation
- The Siam Heritage Hotel
- HSBC
- Klong Wat Saphan community
- Wat Khae Nang Loeng community
- Cheua Plerng 2 community
- Wat Tri Rattanaram community



accelerator  
labs  
.....

Developed by UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Accelerator Labs is the world's largest and fastest learning network on sustainable development challenges. As a joint venture with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany and the Qatar Fund for Development as founding investors, and support from UNDP core donors, the Network covers 115 countries, and tap into local innovations to create actionable insights, test solutions and reimagine sustainable development for the 21st century to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Learn more about us at [acceleratorlabs.undp.org](https://acceleratorlabs.undp.org) or follow us on Twitter at [@UNDPAccLabs](https://twitter.com/UNDPAccLabs)