

# Synthesis Report



## **MARGINALIZATION OF VULNERABLE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THAILAND**

Supported by





X ล้ามใจที่เป็นชนเผ่าเมียน X (ลัวะ)

KMU Solidarity

Idea

เรา รักชนเผ่า ลาว ครั้ง  
ชาวลา อุตามัน  
มีมด ฆ่ากษัตริย์

กลีบเกล็ดเค  
เอดาวอ  
ซงเพ่วเคื่อง

WE ALL BILLY

Chaiyapum

เอกลักซง

มี 1 ๖๕๕๐



ล้ามใจที่เป็นกะเหรี่ยง

the Gang

WIMON

เอกลัก

LISUHW.

ล้ามใจที่เป็นกะเหรี่ยง

A collaborative artwork by indigenous peoples in Thailand on the 9th August 2019 in the occasion of World Indigenous Peoples Day.



Mokan Indigenous Woman at Kho Lao Island, Ranong.

# SYNTHESIS REPORT ON MARGINALIZATION OF VULNERABLE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THAILAND

Project on Development of community knowledge-based database system (CKBDS) for empowering the most marginalized and vulnerable indigenous groups in Thailand

**Supported by**  
European Union (EU)  
International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)



Khum-khiew, Moklen people at Taptawan gather crabs, and fishes from this place.

## Synthesis Report

ON MARGINALIZATION OF VULNERABLE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THAILAND

### Prepared by

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment (IPF) and Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples Foundation (IKAP) in collaboration with Center for Ethnic Study and Development, Chiangmai University (CESD), Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CU-SRI) and Council of Indigenous Peoples' in Thailand (CIPT).

### Editors

Mr. Kittisak Rattanakrajangri  
Mr. Nakharin Damrongphakhasakul  
Prof. Chupinit Ketmanee

### Advisors

Dr. Narumon	Arunothai
Dr. Prasit	Leepreecha
Dr. Ken	Campe
Mr. Sakda	Saenmi

### Photographers

Tpat	Maneerat	R-fu	Bracher	Kittisak Rattanakrajangri
Kanjana	Maran	Chaiyuth	Boonnui	Phnom Thano

### Supported by

European Union (EU) and International Working Group fo Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)


**Disclaimer:** the views expressed in this publication do not necessarily to reflect the views of European Union Commission and IWGIA.



A Mani boy enjoys climbing tree and lives freely in the jungle.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Definition and Interpretation of Marginalization and Vulnerability.....	3
Means for Marginalization and Vulnerability Analysis for Indigenous Peoples in Thailand.....	6
Contextual Description of Indigenous People in Thailand.....	8
Vulnerability and Concerns of Indigenous Peoples in Thailand.....	10
- Population or demographic aspect.....	12
- Social aspect.....	16
- Economic aspect.....	20
- Political aspect.....	24
Recommendations of Guidelines for Self-management.....	28
Reference.....	32



Rice harvesting season, photo taken from Bisu community, Chiangrai.

## INTRODUCTION

This synthesis report of marginalized and vulnerable indigenous peoples in Thailand represents the cases of 10 indigenous groups who are targets of the Project on Development of community knowledge-based database system (CKBDS) for empowering the most marginalized and vulnerable indigenous groups in Thailand. These 10 indigenous groups comprise of Mlabri, Kow (Umpi), Bisu, Chong, Yakoor, Saek, Moken, Moklen, Urak-Lawoy, and Mani. The 10 target groups are encountering the problems of rights to nationality, land and access to natural resources, including the recognition of their identity. Their problems stem from two major causes:

1. The weakness of indigenous traditional institution in using and maintaining indigenous knowledge;
2. Impact from the enforcement of State authority and the influence of development efforts in relation to fundamental rights and access to natural resources.

These two root-causes are inter-related and linked together making the complicated nature and creating vulnerability and marginalization, thus for the profiling and defining the indigenous peoples with vulnerability and marginalization, it shall take into account with diversity and reflection towards clear evidences contextualizing to historical and multi dimensions, reflecting movement backgrounds and correlations of each groups of indigenous peoples.

One of the Project's major objectives is to develop the information system that can support the capacity building of indigenous leaders in communicating, campaigning and negotiating to ensure the effective results of problem solving. The synthesis of data to produce "solid information" as the main body of knowledge that is crucial for the capacity building of indigenous leaders. There exists the interrelationship between problems, causes and management direction that can reduce inequality of marginalization and vulnerability. To provide better understanding among the public and also to enable the ten indigenous groups to demonstrate their effective self-managing ability, it is to formulate the strategic plan for the movement of indigenous peoples in Thailand with active information system as an efficient mechanism for the movement.

This report received support from the European Union (EU) and the International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) for both preparation and printing. The Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment (IPF) and its partner organizations would like to extend its sincere appreciation for such kind support and contribution. In addition, we also would like to thank all volunteers and leaders of each vulnerable indigenous group for their valuable contributions and tirelessly work to make the 'Geo-cultural centre' materialized.

To get more information about each vulnerable indigenous group, please visit this website [www.thaiportal.info](http://www.thaiportal.info)



Moklen men made a boat from the banana trees for their annual ritual ceremony, Phuket.

## DEFINITION AND INTERPRETATION

Since there is not yet clear criteria with definitions of marginalization and vulnerability of indigenous peoples designed, this analysis would undertake comprehensive and overall reviews of definitions of both marginalization and vulnerability and then formulate the indicators with explanation for marginalization and vulnerability for data compiled and synthesized from all 10 targeted ethnic groups. These preliminary reviews shall explain the definitions of marginalization and vulnerability as follows:

### 1. Marginalization

This term has been defined by interdisciplinary scholars; and this includes the meaning of marginalization and ethnicity. Anan Ganjanaphan (2004) provides explanation that can be summarized as, “an interaction between men and nature through systematic interpretation in various forms in order to define humanity and mutual communication”. Thus, as a terminology, marginalization must be analyzed in a multilayer dimension where the context and content are drawn to link with each other to create new idea. Actually, marginalization takes place when some people are pushed to the edge of the society. It is the process comprising of dimension, context, content and their association to produce new ideas that can be developed further. Thus, the meaning of marginal

society and marginalization is so important because the term, “marginalized people” implies the situation when people are pushed to the edge of society. It is the thinking process of “binary opposition” that requires some struggle. Marginalization occurs when (i) people are excluded, power degraded, forceful driven, or alienated from the society; and (ii) people are drawn into the process that makes them marginalized, meaning, the more they participate, the more they become marginalized. In conclusion, marginalization can occur from both directions, “exclusion and inclusion”. This requires further analysis from what condition that exclusion and inclusion can create marginalization; the ten cases of vulnerable indigenous groups in this project can be analyzed by this approach.



## 2. Vulnerability

This term is widely mentioned and used in academic and policy schemes with creating of levels of vulnerability with comprehensive statistical analysis, covering population, incomes and gains, outcomes and expenses, sources of foods, health and sanitation, and other including accessibility to political rights. The Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) (2006) compiled and summarized the definition of vulnerability that it is the condition that any person could not help themselves after such incidents incurred, since there is none of preparation in prior or even they prepared but could not manage such

risks incurred. The vulnerability would somehow link to risk and once there is risk with incident incurred, any person could not do self-help or manage such incident, they would be “vulnerable persons”, while for those who could help themselves after the incident incurred. And for those being able to help and manage themselves after the incident incurred, they would be considered as persons with life securities, but these would be somehow inconsistent with changeability corresponding to self-helped and manageable capacities towards risks incurred, as the illustration No. 1

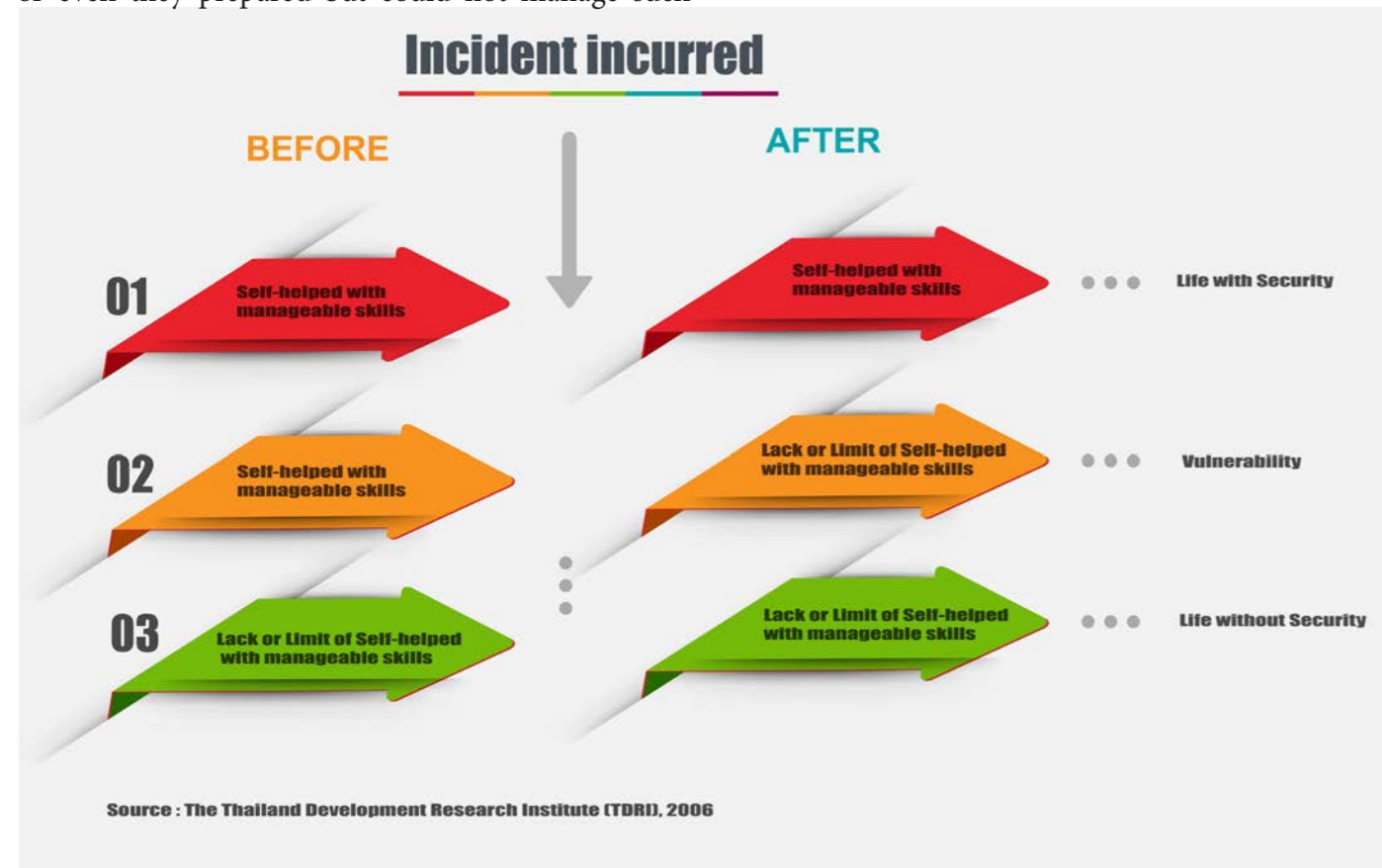


Illustration No.1 : the Classification of Person with and without Vulnerability

For the general perspective with overview of social vulnerability in Thailand, the TDRI (2006) had analyzed that the economic development without clear plan designed should cause impacts to vulnerability of communities, as: the urbanization development without certain comprehensive plan for development, causing the widespread of developed housing with eviction and destruction of urban poor communities and enlarging the gaps between the poor priority living and those newcomers. These all are reflecting to the economic and social changes causing the immediate shocks with declining of livelihood and life security of individuals or households (including communities and societies). The level of vulnerability would then indicate and reflect to risk induced with certain affect made from such change.

In case of the indigenous peoples impacted from the policy-induced changes in the country with economic and social development, their vulnerability could be indicated through the designed and modified indicators towards vulnerability with poverty of the TDRI (2006) with assessment to opportunities of indigenous peoples with vulnerability in 3 principal issues as follows:

1. To what extent can the promotion of economic growth in Thailand provide social protection through basic assurance for the people, e.g., relocation plan has already prepared shelter and cultivable land for the target people?
2. To what extent does the social protection policy in Thailand provide welfare coverage for indigenous people, e.g., health care and family benefits?
3. To what extent have the indigenous people created their risk management for the maintenance of their livelihood, e.g., using customary practices and social norms of indigenous people that provide welfare and security appropriately?

## MEANS FOR MARGINALIZATION AND VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THAILAND

The marginalization and vulnerability analysis for indigenous peoples in Thailand is a mean to indicating vulnerability of ten ethnic groups of indigenous peoples living in Thailand, as a pilot project, consisting of : (i) Mlabri; (ii) Kaw (Umpi); (iii) Bisu; (iv) Chong; (v) Yakoor; (vi) Thai Saek; (vii) Moken; (viii) Moklen; (ix) Urak Lawoy; and (x) Mani.

The analysis of vulnerability and marginalization of all 10 ethnic groups of indigenous peoples living in Thailand hereby was made with data compiled through the Participation Learning and Action (PLA), conducted by all 10 trained volunteers whom are members of ethnic groups, with filling-up of or following-up of data-gathering means as:

- 1) Survey form for all indigenous households in the community;
- 2) Survey form for basic information at community level;
- 3) Interview form for knowledgeable persons in the community;
- 4) Survey form for kinship mapping; and,
- 5) Manual map making.

All information would be encoded and kept in data-base system with computerization, processing and analysis with link to historical background, movement, economic and social status, existing cultural practices and present situation, for making of final report of each ethnic group.

### The design of criteria and indicators for vulnerability

The indication towards vulnerabilities of all 10 ethnic groups – indigenous peoples has been conducted through the analysis and comparison of quantitative statistic and interpretation of qualitative data, pertaining to history, culture and livelihood, customary and traditional practices and multi-dimensional mappings of information with analysis and link of change induced and adaptation of indigenous peoples, extracted and synthesized from numeric data with statistics and percentage of indigenous households with marking of vulnerability, in 3 dimensions as:

- Economic aspect: this covers the details of land and arable areas occupancy; of sources of incomes or life earning sources; rice paddy fields and no movement of workforce;
- Social aspect: this covers the details of indigenous populations residing in a community, comparing with overall population in the village;
- Political aspect: this covers the using of information with participation towards cultural and traditional activities of indigenous peoples.

### The design of criteria with indicators toward marginalization

The term “vulnerability” of indigenous peoples in this project would be analyzed with detailed information of vulnerable components, the root-causes affecting to effectiveness with adaptation for merging with flexibility or possibility for living with changes of indigenous peoples in each ethnic group.

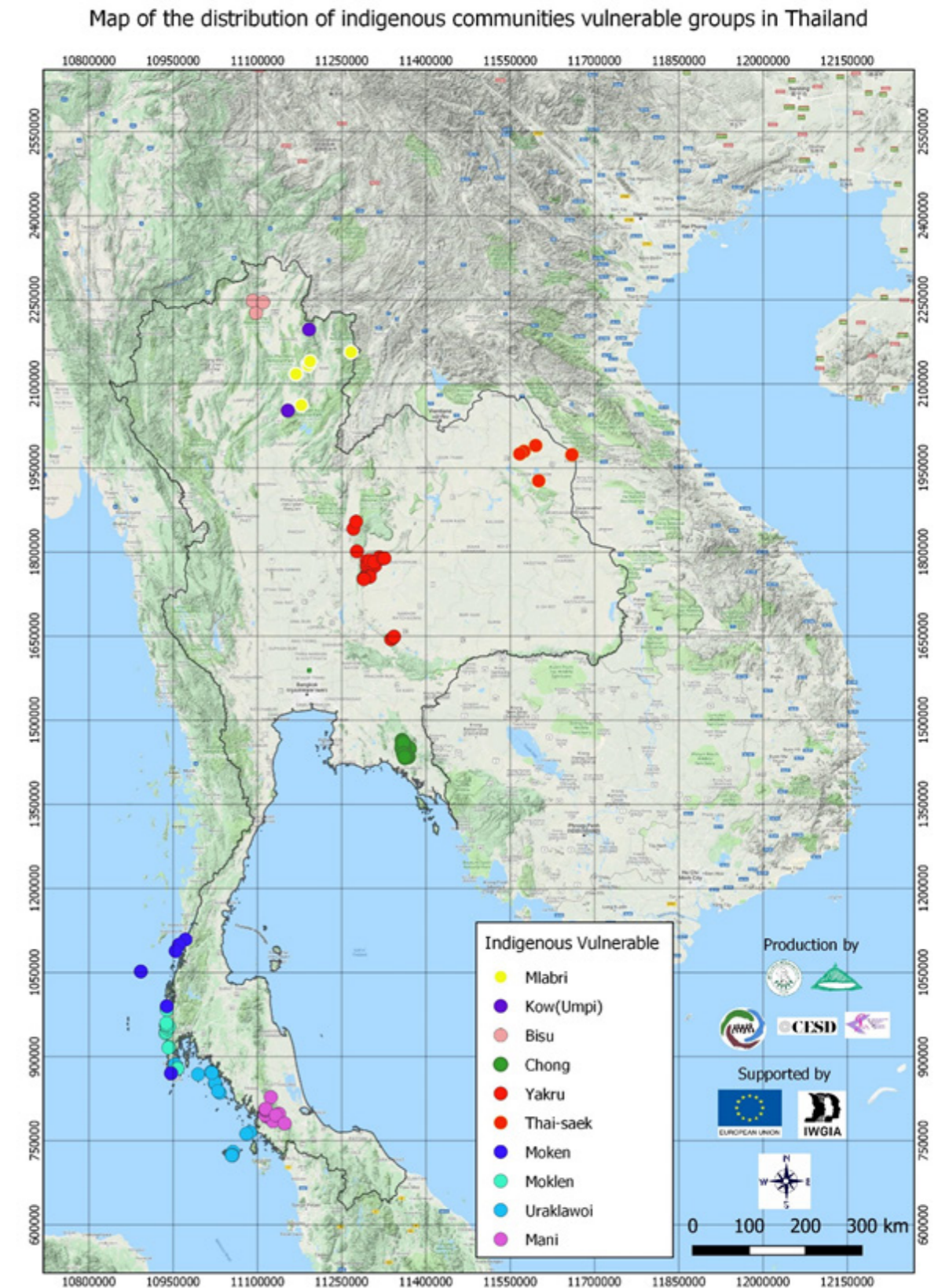


## CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THAILAND

By nature, the indigenous peoples in Thailand are generally found with communities located on high-land and/or remote forest area including those with offshore islands. Meanwhile there is none of actual number confirmed of their population since there is none of slot made for racial classification or profiling within the household survey and registration in Thailand, in addition, some of them have been left under statelessness or lack of nationality with inaccessible to all basic social services provided by the government. These also limit to the exercise of their rights to work and freedom of movement. Thus for the criteria with selection of marginalized and vulnerable indigenous groups within this project, it would be focusing on small size of population, in number of 200 to 6,000 persons, while some groups are also facing the extinction with life threat or dissolution of their culture, statelessness (not being civil members), landless and the loss of livelihood and their customary practices with dilution of cultures and identities.

The ten indigenous target groups in this Project are distributed mainly in remote rural areas in the high-land, islands, and coastal areas that cause difficulty for communication. For instance, it takes no less than two hours to travel to Mlabri community from the capital city of Nan province; the Mani who live in the

Bantad mountain range in the South can only be reached on foot more than two hours to their established huts and about at least one hour more to the mobile unit of their group; the Moken are sea people who live in the area of Andaman islands and it takes at least one hour on engine boat to reach their community. For those indigenous groups who live in the progressive city or in the city promoting tourism, such as, Umpi of Ban Dong in Phrae district that their settlement is very difficult to access and even not easy to find. This can also apply to Chong people that many tourists may know about Kitchakood hill, but very few visitors know of Chong indigenous people in the area. Moklen people live along the coastal lines and Urak Lawoy people live in the islands that most of these locations have become popular tourist attractions, but hardly any tourist take notice of these indigenous peoples. Yakoor people settle down in the highland (of Petchabun and Chaiyaphum) and also in the area of tourist city (Pakthongchai) and Thai Saek people live in the area of tourist promotion along the Mekong river where transportation is convenient, but these peoples are beyond recognition (please, refer to Picture 1).



Picture 1: Map of ten indigenous groups distribution

## VULNERABILITY AND CONCERNS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THAILAND

The direction and policies for country development with assimilation and unity of populations and races in Thailand is overarching in various master plans developed with country stability and integrity, but on side of the mechanisms and tools for supporting the life quality development, e.g. for the education, it is mainstreamed with monopolized and uniformed curriculum; and for the healthcare system, public healthcare and welfare schemes provided are also supervised within only one-standardized scheme nationwide. These all have created impacts with threats to national security and challenges, as: the emerging of aged society with minimizing of household size; the poor or limited quality of healthcare system; and the declining of learning and studying on morality and goodness. And these all are also threats to indigenous peoples in Thailand too, as their livelihood and cultural identities would be marred or diluted, by the mainstream development somehow, as : the land dispute with exploitation of natural resources; the lack or poor of participation of folk communities towards natural resource management; the inaccessible to residential and arable areas, even they are occupying as ancestral

domain lands but without title deeds; the problems of civil rights and personal legal status; the limits of livelihood and constraints to all folk communities residing on border of the country; and the ambiguity of status of groups with nomadic lifestyle, including those practicing hunting and gathering in forest or marine coastal areas with suspiciously illegal entries. These all cause the prejudice or bias towards ethnic diversity and once they have been repeatedly replicated through communications, narratives and discourses, the in-depth understandings with shaping-up of “the other within” concept has been made through making of identities of highlanders, hill tribes, marginalized persons, forest people or any other ethnic groups. The strong foundation of distinction between groups has been made with bias against and causing some of them falling into statelessness and nationality-lessness, while they have been exiting in Thailand for generations. The ten ethnic groups have been analyzed through sets of information and data compiled within this project, in details, as follows:



Mlabri indigenous woman, Nan province.

## 1. Population or Demographic Aspect

After the establishment of official villages, in accordance with the Local Administration Act, B.E. 2457 (1914), all ten groups of indigenous peoples are becoming ethnic minorities within their villages, as the ruling system appoints the village headman and also merges all group of houses into one village with clear demarcation of ruling area, most of indigenous communities were then becoming a part of village unavoidably and then corresponding to various incidents, as : the Yakoor, in the past they were major population in Baan Rai sub-district, Thep Satit district, Chaiyapoom province and once the Khao Hin Ngam national park was announced and established

as a tourism area, the influx of outsiders were moving to stay there and causing the Yakoor becoming the ethnic minority, as they were not more than 20 percent of all populations from 27 villages; likewise the Kaw (Umpi) within three folk communities, whom becoming 78 percent of all living there; and the Mlabri as prolonged practicing nomadic lifestyle in the forest in similarity with the Mani, during 1982-1996 after the clear policies with actions to relocate and settle-down certain communities for them, they are becoming clusters of houses within other ethnic group village, now they are only 8.13 percent left.



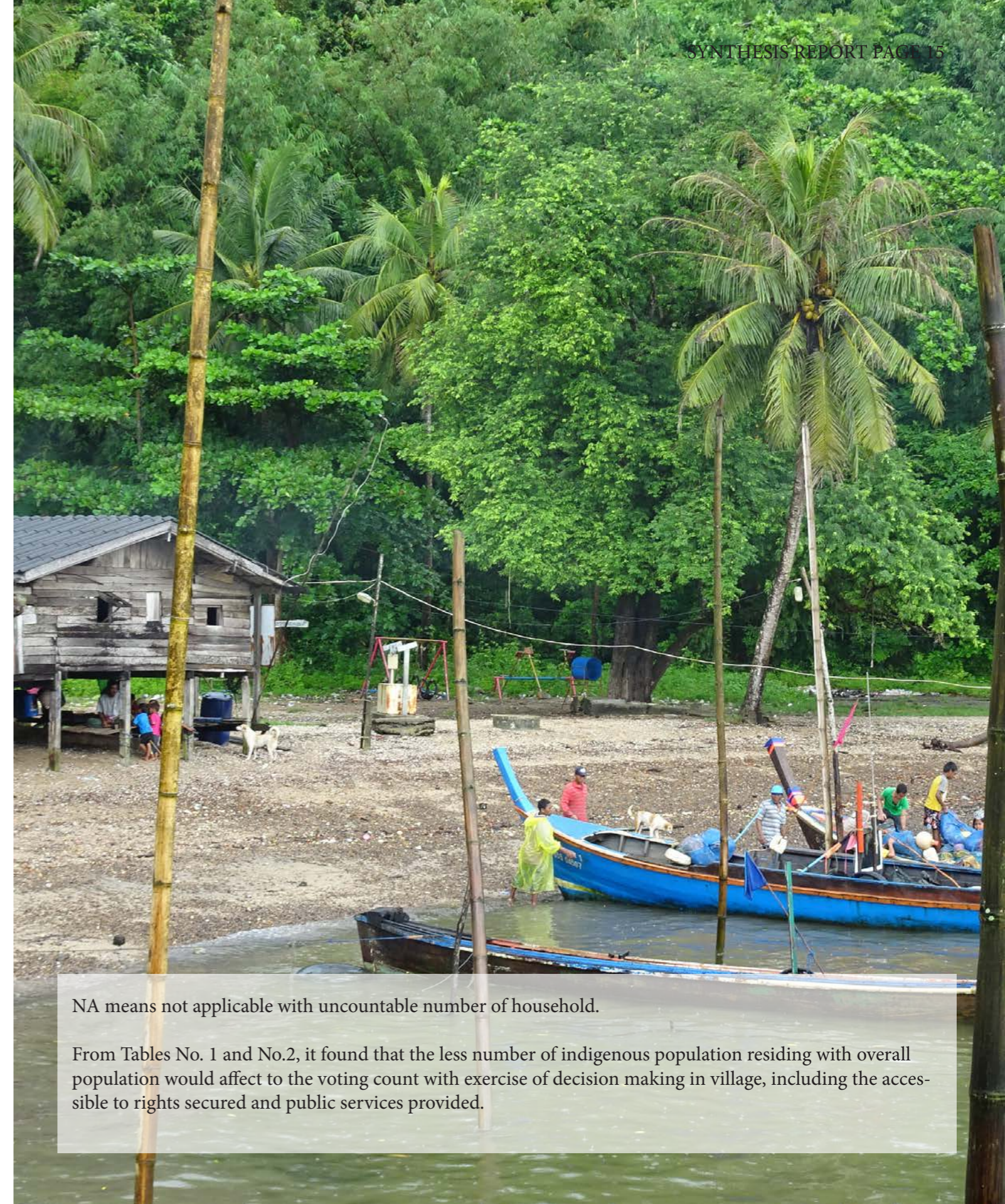
Bisu indigenous villagers helped each other to process the rice after harvested from the field.

**Table 1 : Number of villages, population and ratio of indigenous and overall populations**

Indigenous peoples	Number of villages	Populations		% of indigenous population
		Overall	Indigenous Peoples	
Mani	12	20,692	364	1.76
Mlabri	5	4,873	396	8.13
Moken	5	5,826	953	16.36
Moklen	27	10,093	1,867	18.50
Yakoor	16	24,885	4,837	19.44
Chong	13	8,233	2,089	25.37
Bisu	19	1,399	406	29.02
Urak Lawoy	3	14,133	4,986	35.28
Thai Saek	9	5,458	3,547	64.99
Kaw (Umpi)	3	1,652	1,287	77.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>97,244</b>	<b>20,732</b>	<b>21.32</b>

**Table 2 : Number of villages, households and ratio of indigenous and overall households**

Indigenous peoples	Number of villages	Households		% of indigenous population
		Overall	Indigenous Peoples	
Mani	12	8,066	NA	-
Mlabri	5	3,456	206	5.96
Moken	5	1,064	87	8.18
Moklen	27	8,642	980	11.34
Yakoor	16	7,525	1,025	13.62
Chong	13	3,263	471	14.43
Bisu	19	5,776	859	14.87
Urak Lawoy	3	460	128	27.83
Thai Saek	9	1,635	954	58.35
Kaw (Umpi)	3	593	441	74.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>40,480</b>	<b>5,151</b>	<b>12.72</b>



NA means not applicable with uncountable number of household.

From Tables No. 1 and No.2, it found that the less number of indigenous population residing with overall population would affect to the voting count with exercise of decision making in village, including the accessible to rights secured and public services provided.

## 2. Social Aspect

Social change simply means the social system, process, pattern, and form, such as, tradition, family system, and politic have been changed. This social change can be progressive or regressive, temporary or permanently. This change is either spontaneous or planned and it can be beneficial or harmful (office of the Royal Society: on-line).

The ten indigenous groups have their own mother languages. At present, at least, four indigenous groups can communicate fully in their own languages (only Thai Saek 97%); and another four indigenous groups

can converse in their mother languages more than 50%, namely, Kaw (Umpi), Bisu, Yakoor, and Urak Lawoy. Only two indigenous groups, Moklen and Chong, can communicate in their own languages less than 50%. Currently, it seems difficult to identify traditional costumes of these ten indigenous groups. Bisu people, for example, have recently recreated symbolic costume of their own from observing Bisu's costume in the Southern part of China. All the sea peoples, including Mlabri and Mani cannot identify their traditional costumes.

Morken family



A Morken family, mostly men are going out for fishery. Women and kids are left alone at home.

**Table 2: Traditional culture and ritual shared by family or its representative**

Indigenous Group	Traditional Culture and Ritual		
	Verbal Dialect*	Costume	Ritual**
Mlabri	100 %	NA	100 %
Kaw (Umpi)	69 %	NA	90 %
Bisu	77 %	NA	70 %
Chong	49 %	NA	70 %
Yakoor	60 %	NA	70 %
Thai Saek	97 %	NA	90 %
Moken	100 %	NA	90 %
Moklen	43 %	NA	90 %
Urak Lawoy	73 %	NA	80 %
Mani	100 %	NA	100 %

**NB:** \*Verbal dialect was taken from the number of households with their members capable of speaking mother language.

\*\*Ritual indicates the number of household familiarized with their own tradition/rituals.

Ritual and traditional practices are known by the majority in these groups. However, in terms of participation in important rituals depends on the circumstance in each area. According to the knowledgeable persons in each group, ritualistic performances tend to decrease at the household level and the participation of community members is also lessened. Nevertheless, Kaw (Umpi) can maintain ritual practices mostly.

Family and kinship system of indigenous people in relation to members from the outside as in-law, there are rules prohibiting the participation of the couple in certain ritual among some indigenous groups. This may imply about an effort of indigenous people to maintain ethnic identity within their group.

### Concern for Social Aspect

Concern for social aspect among these ten indigenous groups is mainly about losing cultural identity with mother language in particular. Although efforts were made to revitalize indigenous languages through, for example, the production of writing scripts and dictionary, the pulling factor of the mainstream culture is too strong to resist specially among the young generation who have already neglected their own traditional culture. Thus, it requires more awareness raising activities among and within indigenous groups, including how to use the information center to promote the revitalization of indigenous culture.



Mlabri girls are documenting their own stories and situations.



### 3. Economic Aspect

Economic change as a result of government policy through the implementation of National Economic and Social Development Plan emphasizing the distribution of growth to the rural sector leads to responsive changes of land use from time to time. This economic land use and way of living are related to the livelihood of these ten indigenous groups.

Because of the change in the national economic direction, land becomes more important as well as individual property for individual gain. Land with no individual ownership is regarded as state property. Thus, land law and policy following such rationale render considerable impact on the lives of at least 8 out of 10 indigenous groups concerning land and coastal areas where they live and earn their living.

Information drawn from the history of ten indigenous groups' settlements confirms the importance of forest to their lives that the people can benefit in different ways. For instance, in the past, Chong villagers earned their income from non-timber forest products, such as, cardamom that they sent to Chantaburi province for sale. Many indigenous groups have converted forest land into farm land; even food gatherers and hunters like Mlabri and Mani once practiced paddy field. The well-known sea people, Urak Lawoy in

Lanta Island have developed dried rice, paddy field, and orchard since the time of their ancestors. However, when new settlers came in to indigenous community, they eventually claimed the land with official land title. Urak Lawoy were compelled to move further to Ban Sang Ka-u at the end of the island. In the area of PP Island at Ban Laem Tong, in the past the flat land around the headland of this island was residential ground of Urak Lawoy's ancestors with rice and dry crop cultivation, but at present, this piece of land belongs to Hotel investors, only just a little over two rai is the location of the sea people densely community. Unfortunately, the indigenous people do not know when and where they have to move out.

Information about the present day livelihood of indigenous people involving the land and economic land use should refer to history of ancestor land and its ownership lost. In addition, the more stringent measures the government announces in relation to the Reserve Forest and other protected forests together with the harsh operation of local official, all these render negative impact on the livelihood of indigenous people (Please, refer to Table 3 and Illustration 2).

- The effect from stringent measures on the protection of protected areas:
  - 1) It causes serious impact more than 60% on the mobile Mani indigenous population who normally move according to the sources of their food around the Wildlife Sanctuary in the Banthad mountain range.
  - 2) Seasonal food gathering among the Mlabri people in the area between Phrae and Nan provinces is under pressure from the expansion of protected area.
- The policy of negative support on farm commodities that destroy natural resources and the forest has direct impact on Bisu, Kaw/Umpi that they grow commercial corn, sugar cane, and manioc on the land with no title.
- Policy for the marine resource conservation has impacted on the lives of Moken indigenous people who have made use of their knowledge and skill in deep sea fishing to earn income for their families; at present, these sea people have to work as hired laborers in bigger fishing boats.
- The promotion of tourism with no limit has considerable impact on the three indigenous groups of fisher-folks (Moken, Moklen, and Urak Lawoy) that many of them have to adjust themselves to work as seasonal hired workers with no welfare benefit and loss of income when they encountered work suspension.

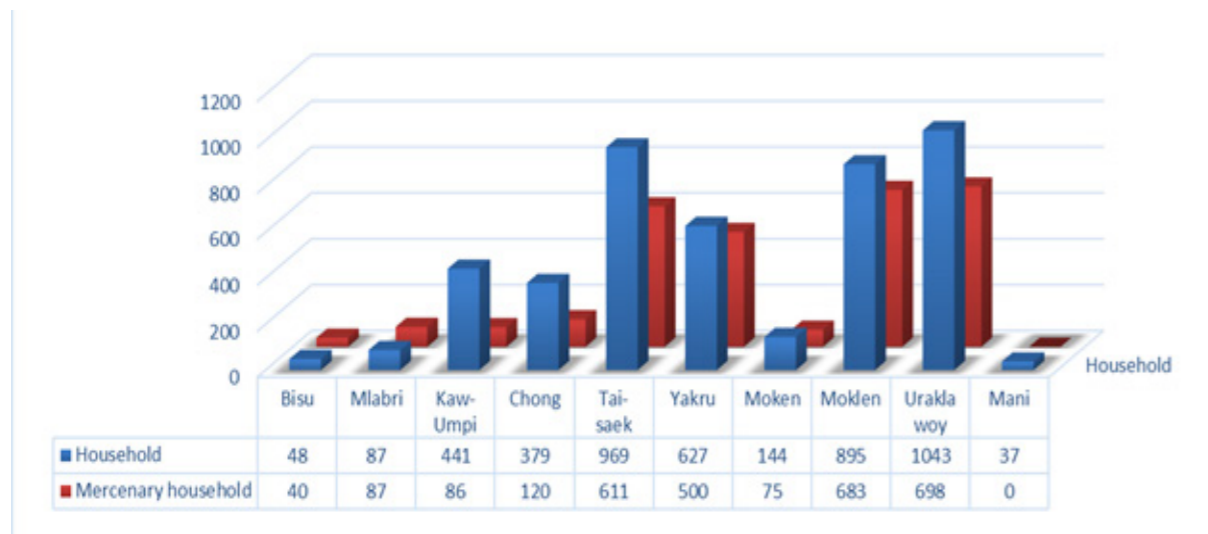
**Table 3: Land holding among 10 indigenous groups**

Indigenous Group	Land Holding		
	Occupied Land	Land Title	State Property
Mlabri	-	-	100 %
Kaw (Umpi)	100 %	70 %	30 %
Bisu	100 %	10 %	90 %
Chong	100 %	100 %	-
Yakoor	100 %	30 %	70 %
Thai Saek	100 %	100 %	-
Moken	-	-	100 %
Moklen	50 %	-	50 %
Urak Lawoy	70 %	50 %	50 %
Mani	20 %	-	100 %

**Concern for Economic Aspect**

In terms of economic security, it poses crucial problem to the ten indigenous groups in their quality livelihood in the mid of policy change and uncertain operation in the field and lack of clarity; it also creates more problems than solution. In Illustration 3, it shows household comparison of all indigenous groups with income from wage working. All indigenous groups in the Project earn their income from wage work. Although in the data-base, it does not show that there is any Mani household doing wage work, in reality, Mani people also earn from wage work, such as, tapping resin from rubber trees, gathering herbal plants, coconut, and palm fruits. Searching for hired-labor work away from home implies insecurity in traditional way of living among these ten indigenous groups.

Thus, the concern of ten indigenous groups includes insecurity of land use and inability to access or to manage natural resources. To solve the problems they are confronting with, indigenous people have chosen wage work as their primary alternative and subsequently they become vulnerable. This begs for immediate action from the government in order to restore the livelihood as well as identity of these vulnerable indigenous groups.



**Illustration 3: Household comparison on income from wage work among 10 indigenous groups in Thailand**

Source: Survey conducted in 2016, KPEMIC Project



Moken - a little girl assists her mother work. It is their daily routine.

## 4. Political Aspect

The political aspect is directly related to power, the use of power, and the maintenance of power with righteousness. Being indigenous people may not be recognized in Thai society despite the fact that the United Nations has made its effort for the recognition of its Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP) for more than 10 years. Whatever the case may be, the existence and recognition of these 10 indigenous groups as Thai citizens simply mean their basic human rights and fundamental freedom within the democratic society of the country.

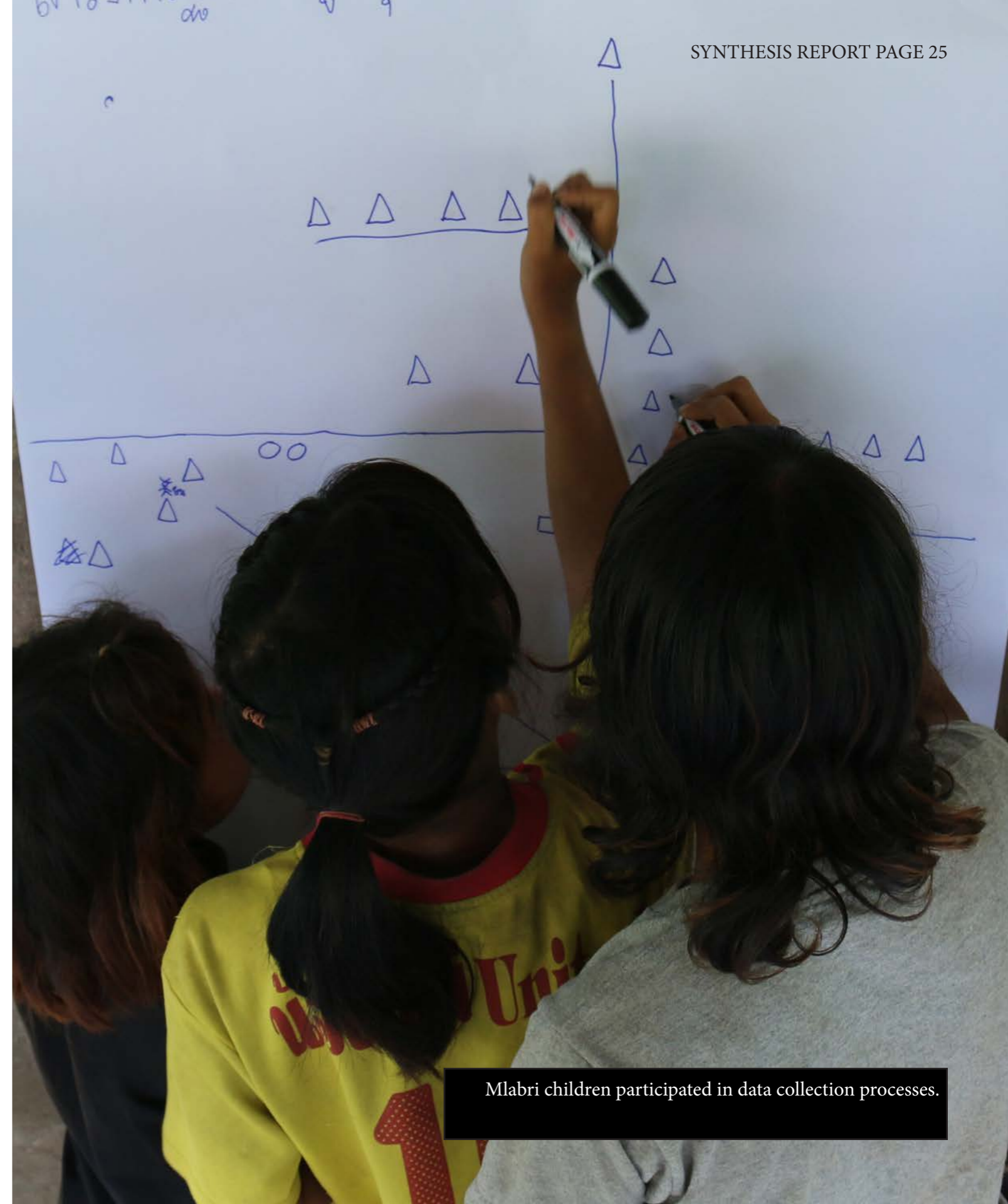
In principle, the 10 vulnerable indigenous groups are recognized as Thai citizens, but a number of Mani, Moken, Urak Lawoy and others have not been granted Thai citizenship yet with the implication that they are excluded from government's basic welfare services.

### Concern for Political Aspect

In political aspect, the concern of 10 indigenous groups involves the roles of indigenous leaders of each and all groups as the ones who are empowered to maintain their indigenous identities as well as to demand for their concrete political rights. For instance, the demand for cultural protection responsive to the development of indigenous identity and the self-identification of being indigenous people with the ability to persuade other people's acceptance, meaning, acceptance of indigenous culture. It is believed that with the acceptance of the public, indigenous people can play their role in political participation more efficiently.

At present, most of the indigenous leaders of the 10 groups are mainly representing elderly people who possess intangible cultural heritage of their own groups and transmit to younger generation, but these traditional leaders have very limited power relationship with the government and other authorities; hence, when negative impact occurs, these traditional leaders hardly play their part in decision making. For example, Urak Lawoy of PP island who have been in the area and tilling several hundred rai of land during monsoon season for a very long time, but eventually, larger pieces of land have fallen into the hands of tour business investors. The native Urak Lawoy of Ban Laem Tong in that island are left with only over two rai of their residential area for the whole community; and in the future no one can anticipate the lives of these indigenous people.

The movement of indigenous peoples through the Council of Indigenous Peoples of Thailand (CIPT) is expected to regain political power to indigenous leaders with the aim for self-governance, self-determination, and self-identification.



Mlabri children participated in data collection processes.



Indigenous women are prearing materials for ritual ceremony.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF GUIDELINES FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT

From all aspects of economic, social, and political concerns of the 10 vulnerable indigenous groups, one can see the vulnerability of these peoples as a result of impact from the changing situation that leads them to the marginalized sector of development. Thus, recommendations are offered as follow:

### **Guideline I: Self-governance of each indigenous group**

Self-governance is first and foremost important recommendation to empower indigenous communities. The existing indigenous leaders can neither bring positive change, nor take control of any change in their own communities, of traditional land use and cultural way of life in particular. In the past, indigenous leaders, for example, Bisu, Yakoor, Chong, and even Mlabri and Mani, played important role in the management of land and natural resources in their own way. The demand for the “protection of cultural zone” that many indigenous groups express their need urges the State to provide supportive environment, such as, law and policy, together with financial allocation to all related stakeholders, both government and non-government sectors hoping that indigenous leaders and their social institution would be empowered to achieve trust from and security of indigenous peoples in parallel to the State sovereignty.

This guideline for self-governance requires an establishment of indigenous leadership and social institution to be restored and developed to get along

well with current situation. At present, however, local leaders, such as, village headmen and sub-district chief, are drawn into the central political power rather than being representatives of communities and local people. Actually, in the past, traditional leaders were appointed either through hereditary, or ceremonial selection; and this traditional leadership system can incorporate the new and useful process of “Free, Prior, and Informed Consent” (FPIC) and the principle of the “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (UNDRIP) into it. Chong community has already demonstrated its self-governance and reviewed the lessons-learned as an attractive model.

As part of the Project activities, from the gathering of data to their analysis, each and all indigenous groups have formulated their own plan with detail activities for capacity building.

### **Guideline II: Cooperation and networking**

Experiences from cooperation and networking among members of the Network of Indigenous Peoples of Thailand (NIPT) and the Council of Indigenous Peoples of Thailand (CIPT) can contribute to the new way of indigenous movement more concretely and systematically.

It is the movement toward “indigenous people’s rights” within the broader context and content of experiences drawn from cooperation and networking that can be used as an important management strategy for sustainable solution and also as a crucial assumption for the movement. CIPT is expected to act as a driving mechanism to support the self-governance according to Guideline I. The Council has its role to create confidence in the generation to come to be more professional, or the role to facilitate the work within the context of existing indigenous people’s rights in Thailand. Empowerment of indigenous people is so important in the mid of controversial argument on the rights over natural resource and its complication.

UNDRIP and FPIC become important tools of CIPT to be used in various occasions of each indigenous group.

Both Guidelines are challenging recommendations for the movement of indigenous people’s rights in Thailand basing on the data archive initiated by the Project on the development of indigenous peoples’ data-based system.



Mlabri community researcher documenting their stories and situations at Hauy Yuak - Nan province.

## REFERENCE

Anan Kanchanaphan. 2003. "The Research Network of Thai Studies Master Degree Program, on issue of Society and Culture of Marginal Groups", knowledge-based compilation. Chiang Mai : Faculty of Social Science, Chiang Mai University.

Anan Kanchanaphan. 2004. Identities of Marginal Persons. Chiang Mai : Faculty of Social Science, Chiang Mai University.

Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI). 2006. The Assessment towards Social Risks and Vulnerability to Practical Guidance and Manageable Actions undertaken in Thailand. Bangkok: the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Kaw (Umpi)". source, <https://kaw-empi.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Chong". source, <https://chong.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Yakoor". source, <https://yakru.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Thai Saek". source, <https://tai-saek.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Mlabri". source, <https://mlabri.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Mani". source, <https://mani.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Moken". source, <https://moken.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Moklen". source, <https://moklen.thaiportal.info>

Indigenous Peoples' Foundation for Education and Environment. 2018. "Urak Rawoy". source, <https://uraklawoy.thaiportal.info>

