

**“International conference ‘We have a right to know and to speak’”**

Langhans Galerie, Vodičkova 37, 110 00 Prague, Czech Republic

Thursday, December 10, 2015

# **Establishing the Pollution Monitoring Volunteer Network in Thailand**

*By*

*Penchom Saetang*

*Director, Ecological Alert and Recovery – Thailand (EARTH)*



# Ecological Alert and Recovery - Thailand (EARTH)

What we do:

- Policy and scientific research to support community demands for industrial pollution management, and national advocacy for policy reform
- Toxic Chemical Campaign Committee (TCCC), in response to the 1991 chemical explosion at Klong Toey Port warehouses in Bangkok
- Informal network since 1998, known as Campaign for Alternative Industry Network (CAIN)
- Registered as non-profit organization under Thai law since 2009



Klong Toey Chemical Explosion 1991





**Population:**  
**67,741,401 Million (July 2014)**

**BANGKOK (capital):**  
**8.426 million**

**Sources:**  
[http://www.indexmundi.com/thailand/demographics\\_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/thailand/demographics_profile.html)

# Problems & Situation

Over 40 years of economic and industrial development led by the World Bank since 1960 and influenced by the economic super power from U.S.A., Europe, and Japan, Thailand has faced with worsen situation of environmental deterioration, human right violation, health damages, chemical accidents, and local economic destruction caused by industrial pollution and hazardous substances contaminated in environment and ecological system.

Since 1994, communities started their fighting with the government's industrial investment projects in the eastern, northern, northeaster regions. This situation has prompted growing conflicts and clashes between communities and the government, meanwhile the polluters have been enjoying their privileges of investment and making profits in the country.

# Damages of environment and local economic



Khon Kaen, Pong River, June 2014: Ban Huey Jode,  
Gud Nam Sai subdistrict.

Water pollution causes the canel fish farming losses more  
than 9 million THB



Losses of local fish  
farming at Lam Takong  
River, Nakornrachasima



Source: [http://thainews.prd.go.th/centerweb/news/NewsDetail?NT01\\_NewsID=TNECO5706110010005](http://thainews.prd.go.th/centerweb/news/NewsDetail?NT01_NewsID=TNECO5706110010005); NNT public relation department, 11 June 2014

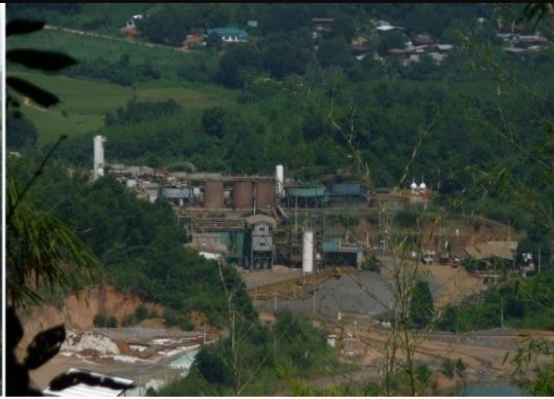
<http://www.dailynews.co.th/Content/regional/83729/ผะปกกว่า3ตันถุกสารพิษลอยตายเป็นแพล่าตะคอง> เดลินิวส์ออนไลน์ วันเสาร์ 14 กรกฎาคม 255

# Air pollution and health problems

Thailand has no enforceable regulatory standards to control flare gas emission. Nowadays, flare stack is a major source of invisible toxic chemicals released into environment in Rayong province where is the largest house of petrochemical complex



Increasing numbers of local people who live neighboring with petrochemical and chemicals factories in Rayong province become ill with respiratory-related system diseases and cancer diseases



ภาพมุมสูงโดย จามร ศรเพชรนรินทร์ และสันติ ศรีมันตะ

# Soil and water contamination



ภาพมุมสูงโดย จามร ศรเพชรนรินทร์ และสันติ ศรีมันตะ

Mining operations in many provinces of the country have destroyed huge areas of farmland, paddy fields, rivers, underground water that also destroyed local health and livelihood.



ภาพโดย นิชา รักษาภิรมย์/ดาว์ลัย จันทระหัสดี

Photo: gold mines in Loei province, 2014

# Toxic waste dumping and contamination

Many farm lands and water sources in the eastern region, where is the largest industrial development area of the country, have been contaminated because of illegal hazardous waste dumping :

Photos show (left) illegal dumping of industrial waste Chachoengsao province, January 2012, (middle) Prachinburi, 2013, (right) Rayong, 2014.





# Growing conflicts and clashes

As Thailand promotes uncontrolled industrial growth and industrial pollution becomes more severe, affected communities organized themselves to protect their environment and communities livelihood. Growing clashes between communities, state authorities, and investors are increasing in several provinces, e.g. Rayong, Chachoensao, Loei, Prachuab Kirikan, Songkhla, Udonthani, etc.

Photos show community solidarity in protesting against the gold mining in Loei province, between 2013 - 2014



*เอื้อเพื่อภาพโดย กลุ่มคนรักบ้านเกิด*



Photos: villagers in Bangsaphan district, Prachuab Kirikhan, protested against the iron & steel project between 2007-2010



ขอบคุณภาพจากกลุ่มอนุรักษ์แม่รำพึง และเครือข่ายประชาชนภาคตะวันออก



Above: A sit-in protest in front of the government house of local residents in Rayong province against the coal power plant in September 2007

# Killing and threats:

Though several local communities are high alert and strong in their fighting with unsustainable development policies of the government, there are a growing fear among residents to speak out against polluters due to state authority corruption and threats against community leaders.

From 1974 – 2013, 33 environmentalists were killed and 17 out of them were industrial pollution and mining campaigners.

Charoen Wataksorn, coal power fighter, killed 21/062004



Samnao Srisongkram, pulp&paper's waste water campaign, killed 25/05/2003 4 10 2003



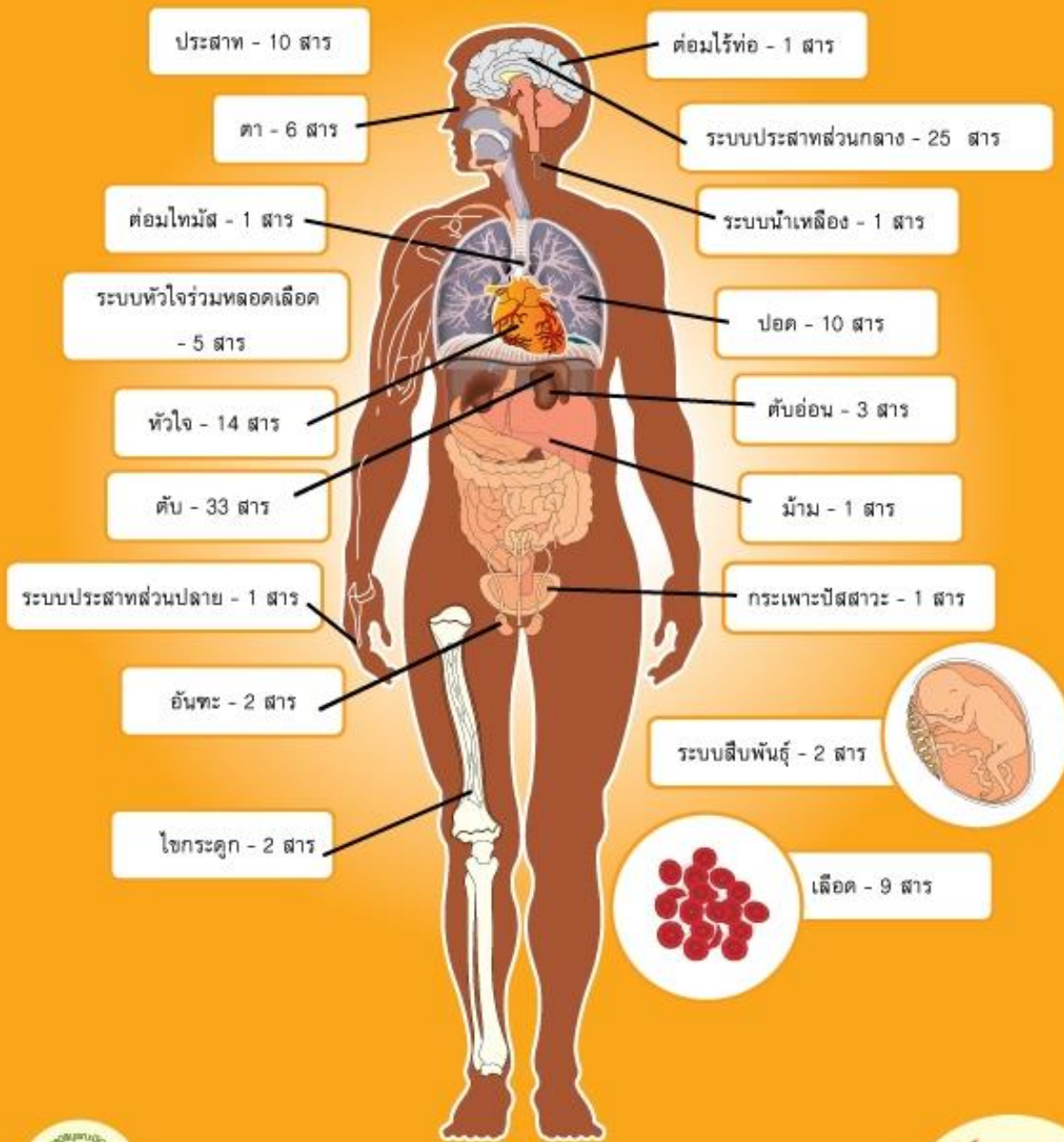
# EARTH and Pollution Monitoring in Thailand

EARTH started linking affected communities with one another to create a loose network of industrial pollution monitoring and established cooperation with international expert organizations to provide environmental monitoring since 2003.

We also conducted scientific researches to address pollution impact on environmental and human health as well as to back up campaigns in advocating for law and policy improvement.



Bucket Brigade and air pollution real time training in order to monitor air pollution released by petrochemical factories, with a collaboration with GCM, U.S.A between 2003 to 2009



มูลนิธิบูรณะนิเวศ โทรศัพท์ : 02-952-5061 email : toxiccampaign.earth@gmail.com



Body map shows the potential points of human body that are fragile and risk to be harmed by VOCs and compounds of sulfur detected from 6 air samples grasped by bucket device between 2004-2007 which totally 55 compounds

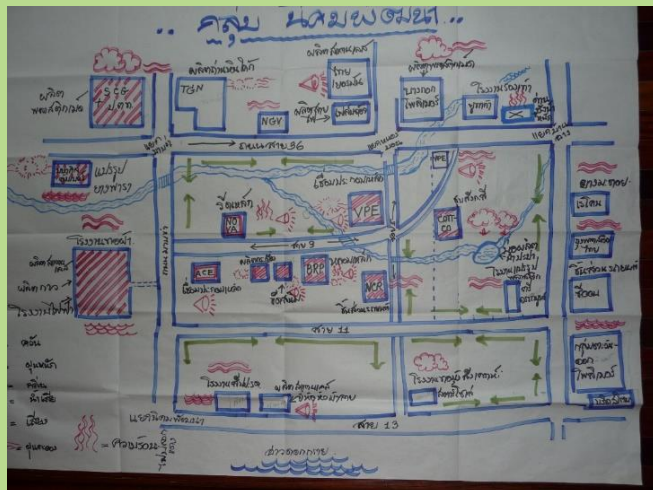


The VOCs study report had influence to the official formulation of VOCs standard in 2007



# Conducting scientific studies

We conducted studies on heavy metal contamination in well-water at Map Ta Phut industrial area, water quality monitoring and training in Rayong province, with collaboration with Thai and Japanese academics and local communities between 2004 to 2011





Working with communities and academics from the Open Research Center for Minamata Studies, Japan to assess environmental contamination and health impact caused by the gold mining in Loei province between 2012 to present.

The study is a powerful support to community negotiation with the mining corporation and government's relevant solution processes.

# Community empowerment

EARTH is now working with community in the central region, Chiang Rak Yai, Prathum Thani province, who are fighting against a waste-to-energy project, to protect their livelihood and water sources. Community leaders have active role in negotiation with all relevant agencies both local and central authorities and consulting companies.





# Strategic consultancy

EARTH has provided communities in various cases regarding to their strategic movement, litigation and negotiation, e.g. city planning, waste management, sustainable alternative development, environmental impact assessment.



# Pollution Monitoring Volunteer Network, 2015 to 2019

A cooperation on implementation of the project Increasing Transparency in Industrial Pollution Management through Citizen Science between Arnika – Toxics and Waste Programme (Arnika) and EARTH started from February 2015 with the support of EU



# Target group and activities

At least 200 people will be trained and 40 active people will become the volunteers

Target community leaders and active citizens living and working in areas contaminated by industrial pollution, power plants, mining, hazardous waste dumping. They would be rural farmers, fishers, factory workers, young generation and local governmental officers.

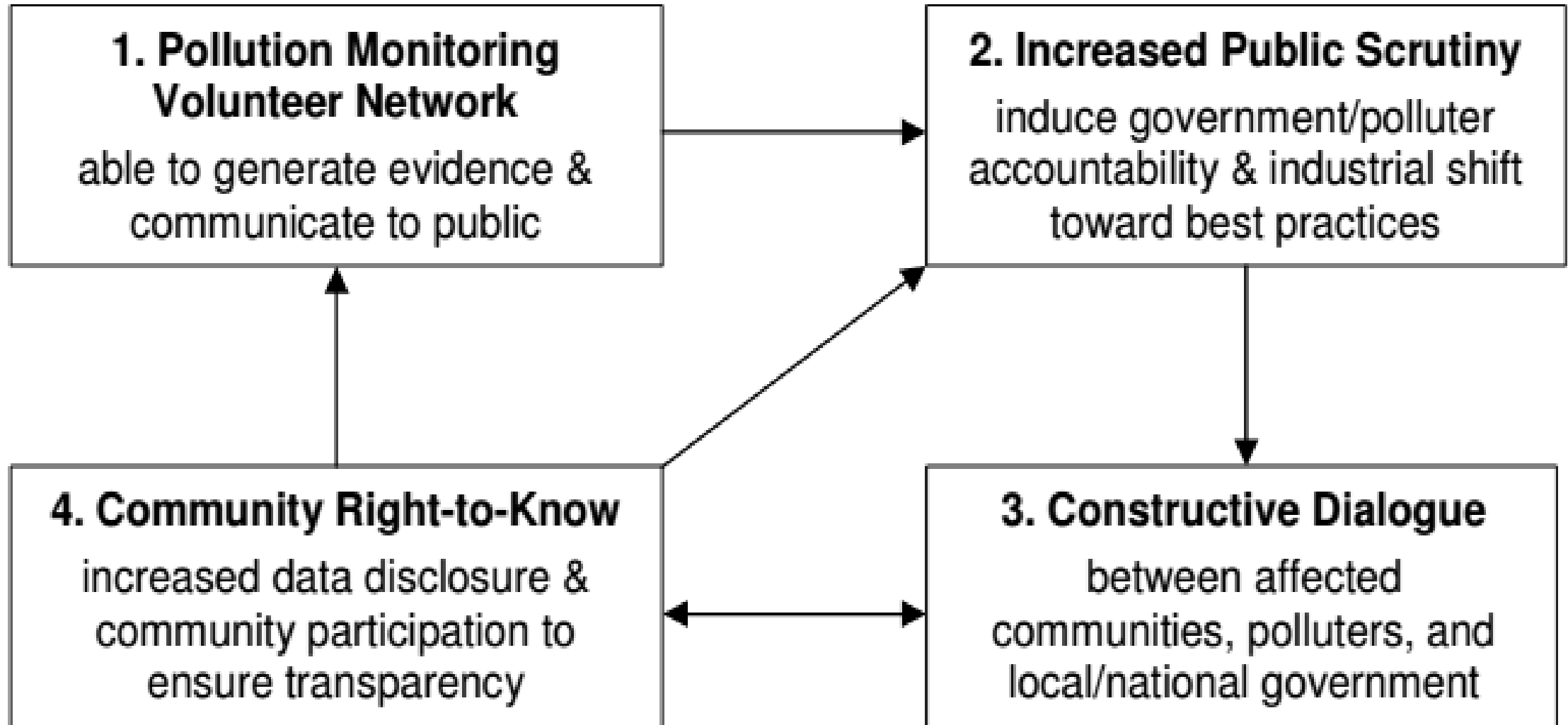
## Areas in target

- (1) a growing clash between rural livelihood and unregulated industrial growth,
- (2) an emergence of serious environmental and health damage to local residents,
- (3) a growing fear among residents to speak out against polluters due to corruption and threats against community leaders.



## Pollution Monitoring Volunteer Network

# Supporting roles, action and results



# Support public disclosure of pollutant information in Thailand and ASEAN



Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand: EARTH

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Burananives.EARTHailand](http://www.facebook.com/Burananives.EARTHailand)

Website: <http://ThaiEcoAlert.org>; [www.EarthThailand.org](http://www.EarthThailand.org)