



Kick-off community waste management project in Koh Libong sub-district, Trang province, Thailand

As part of the project **“Enhancing circular economy model at the local level and improving municipal waste management practices and policies”** implemented by IUCN Thailand in Koh Libong sub-district, Trang province, with supports from the European Union (EU), Expertise France, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and GIZ. Sixteen representatives from IUCN Thailand, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR), GIZ and the observers from Second Life and Wongpanich Nuerklong visited Koh Libong communities and other key stakeholders, such as the Save Andaman Network Foundation (SAN), Trang Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment (Trang PONRE), Kantang District Administration Office and Koh Libong sub-district Administrative Organization (Koh Libong SAO) to introduce the working group, project content and exchange experience on waste management in different areas.

Sixteen representatives from six international and national organizations visited key stakeholders in Trang province during 15-16 March 2021 where they could introduce and exchange lessons with Trang PONRE officers on the marine debris issue. Trang PONRE has referred to the messages from UN that “total amount of garbage, uncollected and/or disposed improperly, from coastal provinces of Thailand was estimated at 2.83 million tons in the year 2016, of which 12% was plastic. The approximate fraction of 15% mismanaged plastic wastes, around 51,000 tons, ended up in Thai waters each year. At this point, Thailand has emphasized the need to address marine plastic debris by declaring comprehensive and integrated actions both in terms of policy and practice, with full participation of all concerned stakeholders.”

Mr. Wuttichai Pirunsuntorn, Director of Trang Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment shared the current situation of waste and waste management system in Trang city and gave the team a guideline on how to work with the National Solid Waste Management Master Plan 2016-2021 and the roadmap of plastic waste management plan 2018-2030 as well as the integrated of plastic waste management plan 2017-2021 with context and the environment of the working area.

After Trang PONRE, the group headed towards Kantang District Administrative Office to meet Mr. Jakapong Ratchaneekun, Kantang Sheriff to get permission on working at Koh Libong and to introduce the project. The Kantang Sheriff has mentioned Baan Modtanoi, which is an example of role model of good waste management practice in the community, where will be one of the next destinations to visit.

At Baan Modtanoi, we met Mr. Somchok Sakulsongboonsiri, Director of Baan Modtanoi Sub-district Health Promotion Hospital with a group of Village Health Volunteers (VHV) and the community’s waste management committee who gave us a very warm welcome then sharing the team about the background of the success so far. It began from banning foam food packaging that contains carcinogens in food shops and restaurants until the community’s waste management



committee was setup to respond in different sub-areas then step up to other stakeholders, such as students, fisherfolks, etc.

Currently, the villagers turn food waste into chicken feed and organic fertilizers. Hazardous waste goes to a drop-off point at the headman's house before being properly managed by the sub-district administrative organization. The recyclable waste like plastic bottles and glass bottles, are given to the elderly to help them generate extra income from selling plastic waste. The unrecyclable materials will be turned into decorations or utensils. Hopefully, these practices could be applied to the other similar context communities in Koh Libong as well.

At the last destination, we met Mr. Sitthiporn Jilao, Chairman of Koh Libong Sub-district Administrative Organization (Koh Libong SAO) and Mr. Abdonrohim Koonraksa, Head of Koh Libong sub-district including the representatives from 4 communities. We found that the villagers have a strong intention to tackle the waste issues in their own communities. One of the main reasons is the story of baby dugong who was separated from her family, Marium which washed up in waters off southern Andaman has died from a stomach infection caused by swallowing bits of plastic in the ocean. This story inspired the communities to make differences to save the life of marine creatures and their future generations.

"I really hope that the project's outputs in Koh Libong's community can change local behaviors and create more effective waste management policies at the sub-district level that can reduce plastic waste leakage which will impact to the community livelihood and those prestige dugongs and sea turtles living around this Islands," said **Mr. Abdonrohim Koonraksa, Head of Koh Libong sub-district.**

The "Enhancing circular economy model at the local level and improving municipal waste management practices and policies" project aims to replicate and further develop circular economy model and enhance waste management at coastal community on the municipal level and small island scale by promoting 3R s Strategy in the household level to reduce the amount of general waste and recirculate the recyclable plastic materials back to the system. This strategy will help reduce the plastic waste leakage to nature, and decreases negative impacts to marine ecosystems. The project will also look at scaling-up stakeholders' collaboration and promote a circular economy model for the small scale recycle business at local level and establish a connection with the potential recycle businesses on the mainland for more sustainable practices.

"Circular economy and solid waste management on the specific islands would be successful by integrating both education and cooperation from related stakeholders and the community itself by initiating garbage sorting with the 3Rs principle at the household level," said **Mr. Wuttichai Pirunsuntorn, Director of Trang Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment.**



