



ABOUT SO-IN CAMP#1

Mitigating Human Elephant Conflicts

On August 11-16, 2022, Thai and international SUT students travelled on an 8-hour journey to participate in the 1st Social Innovation Camp at the scenic Ruam Thai Village at Prachuap Khiri Khan, in the beautiful southern region of Thailand. The camp was organized by SEDA and the Center of Excellence for Entrepreneurship at SUT as part of the new social innovation development course.

The camp brings the students to empathize with local human elephant conflicts that arise in the village, which is adjacent to the Kuiburi National Park. The park is home to at least 350 wild Asian elephants with around 50 elephants living along the border and frequently entering the village land, especially the widely grown pineapple plantations.



"Every time I hear the elephants near, I expect the worse. I prepare my mind and heart for the damage afterwards..."

P Bill -- A local farmer



UM STUDENTS JOIN SO-IN CAMP



Six students from University of Malaya, Malaysia, invited for a short visit by SUT's School of Physics, Institute of Science, also joined SUT students in the SO-IN Camp#1 adding a wonderful lifetime experiential learning for them.



An estimated 36,000 pineapple plants were destroyed last year, in addition to hundreds of rubber trees and other plantations were destroyed by crop raids. The villagers suffered the raids for generations and have been receiving support from Kuiburi National Park, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), non-charitable organizations such as Human Elephant Voice and Bring The Elephant Home (BTEH) to help find ways to mitigate the conflicts.

The camp allows students and researchers to empathize and help understand community problems in order to develop social innovation to help mitigate the conflicts and improve livelihood of the community.



Students talked to local stakeholders such as villagers, park rangers, BTEH Project Manager Khun Phum and Human Elephant Voice expert Dr. Bhichet Noonto, to understand the problems and needs. Based on their problems of interest, they will design and conceptualize social innovations and eventually present their solution to the stakeholders later on. They also took the human elephant coexistence walk, joined an elephant sight ecotour in the park, and enjoyed good splashes at the Sam Roi Yod beach and refreshing dips in the sparkling stream in the village.



Upon their return to SUT, students were committed to help Ruam Thai villagers. Finally on September 11, 2022, they pitched their proposed solutions online to a panel of international judges. With solutions ranging from smelly and sound deterrents, sensor modules for sound sleeps, a guided tour and holiday booking website, means to increase livelihood of bee hive farmers, these solutions may hold promises to help both the elephants and community thrive together peacefully one day.

