



Does Advocacy Matter?

Women's Advocacy Campaigns in Thailand

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Initiated by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), this study aims to analyse the current status of the women's movement in Thailand and to present suggestions to key stakeholders for their further advocacy work. FES would like to express its gratitude to Darunee Tantiwiranond and Shashi Ranjan Pandey for their efforts in conducting this study. We do hope that the content will be useful for all stakeholders working on and for women empowerment and gender equality.

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Abstract

Since the political upheavals in the early 1990s, Thai women have been active and have achieved several successes in various advocacy campaigns. This paper provides an account of the role of women's activism in four main campaigns—equal participation in decision making, constitutional amendment and draft, an end to violence against women, and 90-day maternity leave. It discusses the roles and activities of various groups/actors and their specific campaign strategies that brought about women-friendly legislative and policy changes. By examining the outcomes of the campaigns and remaining challenges, suggestions are made to overcome the barriers. The aim of this paper is for further collective reflection—learning from the past—to find strategies that women's groups could use to combine forces and work together for a gender-equal society in the fast changing world.

I. Context and Background

Women have played an important role in the Thai economy but are still largely excluded from political and public decision-making roles. As a result, women's interests are often overlooked. The success of women's advocacy campaigns in inserting the clause "Men and women are equal" into the 1997 Constitution brought a glimmer of hope. The clause became an important legal step for women's rights activists to press for further changes at the policy level. The devolution of governing power to the local level in the decade of the 1990s coincided with an increase in women's education, the initiation of women's studies programs, the expansion of non-governmental organisations (NGO) activities and the increased networking among women's organisations. At the international level, the increased promotion and donor support of women's rights issues corresponded to a series of UN-World Conferences on such themes as the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), Reproductive Rights (Cairo, 1994), Social Summit (Copenhagen, 1995), and Women (Beijing, 1995). All contributed to fostering and supporting a gender-sensitive social change in Thailand.

The increased activities of the women's advocacy movement in the 1990s brought about significant policy changes to redress gender inequality. Besides the inclusion of gender equality in the constitution, other successes are the 90-day paid maternity leave, inclusion of clauses that guarantee gender equality, the amendment of the Prostitution Prevention and Suppression Act, and the Anti-trafficking Act. The momentum of the

activism led to further ground breaking in legal changes in 2007 on such laws as domestic violence and marital rape; a married woman now enjoys the right to retain her family name and the unmarried title (nangsao, or Miss). However, many bills related to women's rights are still on the waiting list. They include the amendment of articles related to family laws and criminal laws, reproductive health rights demanded by women-focused NGOs, day-care centres and equal labour protection for workers in the informal sector and migrant labour, gender quotas in political participation, and gender sensitivity and enforcement in domestic violence and trafficking laws.

The recent swift success at the end of 2007, however, was an outcome of the hard work of women's campaigns in the past two decades. But the work has not yet finished.

Women's campaigns have been somewhat successful in changing laws. But that is only in the written form. How can we ensure that women will be able to access the legal system so that these new laws can be used to protect women's rights?

Thus, now is a period to pause—How far has Thai women's advocacy movement travelled? And what lies ahead? A systematic assessment of the situation facing the women's advocacy movement in Thailand is necessary to help analyse the problems and set the stage for future strategic planning.

This discussion paper is prepared as a background note with two objectives in mind: to document the steps taken by women's advocacy movements in four areas, and to identify their strengths/weaknesses so as to make recommendations for more effective advocacy. The paper provides a brief background on various actors and agencies involved in the movement. It discusses the growth and history of the four campaigns. After analysing the internal and external strengths and weaknesses of women's collective activism, it makes recommendations for future strategies.

To prepare this document, both primary and secondary resources were consulted. First, for writing the preliminary draft, secondary information was obtained from the internet and published documents of various groups. Second, an interview consultation was carried out during January-February 2008 with 16 women activists and experts to better understand the personal experiences and reflections of key groups. We hope that this document will provide a better understanding of the activism of Thai women's rights in the past two decades and will lead to further dialogue and mutual exchange of experiences to enhance the action for lobbying and advocacy work.

II. Actors and Agencies: GOs, NGOs and Women's Studies Centres

Thai women have organised themselves to demand women's rights throughout the 20th century, although their efforts have not always been recognised or unified. Today, there are numerous NGOs and some governmental organisations (GOs) working on the protection of women's rights in Thailand. These organisations address a wide range of issues such as domestic violence, legal rights, gender equality, political participation, education and awareness, economic development, and labour protection. Their tactics vary from conducting research and lobbying for political reform to holding educational seminars, providing support of counselling/shelter, and organising public protests. The prime movers in such campaigns are invariably individual key women in the government, bureaucracy, women NGOs, or academic institutions. The momentum of the movement, however, has been kept alive by some women NGOs who play crucial roles in persistently lobbying with the government not only to recognise the problems but also to make necessary legal amendments. Most women's organisations tend to work separately focusing on specific areas of their interests. But whenever they could identify a common issue, they formed a coalition or network to campaign and collectively pressure the government for policy change. The main actors in advocacy movements may be classified as governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations, and university-based women's studies centres.

A. Governmental and Quasi-governmental Organisations

At least four units within the state structure have played direct or indirect supportive role in women's rights issues today. The first one is the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD), who plays the national commission function. The other two are transient channels—the Parliamentary Standing Committees on Children, Women, Youth and Elderly in both Houses, and the Thai Women's Parliamentarian Caucus. The fourth is an autonomous state agency, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

OWAFD

OWAFD was established in 2003 and is currently under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. It is the re-structured form of the National Commission on Women's Affairs (NCWA) that was institutionalised in 1989 under the Prime Minister's Office. OWAFD has continued the mission of the NCWA to coordinate programs for women's advancement in Thailand in relation to the UN framework defined

in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). OWAFD's mandate is to promote mainstreaming gender in the bureaucracy by playing a coordinating and supporting role between different ministries mainly via respective gender focal point offices. It also serves as an interface between the state legislation mechanism and the NGO sector. This includes programs to mobilise collaboration with NGOs and the private sectors to empower the majority of women so that they can participate actively for their own development and for national development.

In this regard, OWAFD has the responsibility to support a women's campaign in three ways: by sponsoring the drafting of women-related bills, by guiding and monitoring the integration of gender in the master plans of different governmental ministries, and by organising public forums for debates on women's or gender policies.

Parliamentary Standing Committees on Children, Women, Youth and Elderly

The 2007 Constitution widens the channel for the public to participate directly in the legislation process by reducing the required number of signatures from 50,000 (as in the 1997 Constitution) to 10,000 to support a petition for legal amendment or a draft of a new law. The petition can be submitted to the Standing Committee in either Houses—the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Thai Women's Parliamentarian Caucus

Established in 1992, the Thai Women's Parliamentarian Caucus is not a formal caucus like in most countries but an informal gathering of women legislators of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Initially, its role was mostly to provide encouragement and support to each other as well as for the efforts they made on behalf of women. The effectiveness and vitality of the caucus depends on the leadership of the caucus's president. For example, during 2003-05 a strong president took active interest in working with women's organisations by jointly sponsoring a public hearing on the draft legislation on Domestic Violence and Reproductive Health.¹

Without a strong and determined leadership, the majority of women legislators are infrequently involved in the activities of the caucus even though it is the only collective space for women legislators. In addition, women legislators tend to follow their party line of command rather than having a collective sense of caucus membership. Iwanaga,

after his study tour in 2002, reports that the core membership was small, only about twenty. Also, in the absence of a feminist identity or orientation among Thai parliamentarians, the caucus lacked unity.²

NHRC

NHRC is a semi-governmental, autonomous entity.³ The Commission (2001-06)⁴ consisted of eleven private citizens (six men and five women) selected by the senate based on their merit of being publicly recognised as human rights experts or practitioners. Its responsibilities are to submit an annual evaluation of the human rights situation, propose policies and recommendations to the National Assembly for amending laws, promote measures to educate citizens on human rights, and investigate human rights abuses. The commission has generated a wealth of knowledge on human rights in Thailand by sponsoring publication and documentation.

Even though NHRC did not have a specific mandate on women's rights, the five women commissioners are strong advocates of women's rights (namely, Khunying Ambhorn Meesook, Khunying Chantanee Santabutr, Naiyana Supapeung, and Sunee Chaiyaros). Their presence as commissioners helped mainstream gender in NHRC though not without obstacles. They supported activities of women at all levels and sectors, including transgender, handicapped and battered women. An annual celebration of 8 March has been held under NHRC banner. While awards are presented to exemplary ordinary women on 8 March, they insist human rights awards on 10 December (Human Rights Day) should also recognise the contribution of women as well. Thanks to these women/gender advocates, NHRC's publication stock has many useful books (in Thai) on women and gender issues.⁵

NHRC, however, is not an implementation agency. The continuity of its activist role, especially on women's issues, depends on the selection of new commissioners. The 2007 Constitution has reduced the number of the commission to seven members.

B. Non-Governmental Women's Organisations

Among various civil society organisations, founded at different times before and during the past two decades, there are over a dozen Bangkok-based progressive women's organisations or NGOs (Appendix) who share the common goal of promoting gender

equality and women's emancipation. This study is limited to Bangkok-based women's groups. Following are women's groups that have been at the forefront of advocacy movement.⁶

Association for the Promotion of Status of Women (APSW) was founded in 1970 to study the rights, duties, and treatment of women in Bangkok. The organisation is concerned with the promotion of women's abilities to earn their own living, to receive equal treatment and justice, and to participate in development. It currently runs three emergency homes and provides emergency accommodation and telephone counselling to women victims of VAW (Violence Against Women). To promote men's participation in uplifting women's status, APSW has started conferring the First Man Award (เอนกบุรุษ) to one man each year on 8 March since 2001, after having presented the Super Woman Award (ยอดหญิง) to six outstanding women since 1995.

Gender and Development Research Institute (GDRI) was established in 1990 as a research arm of APSW. It has focused on promoting equal representation of women in decision making, especially in electoral politics, through leadership training, research and dissemination/publication. At the national level, it campaigned with political parties, especially during election time. At the grassroots level, it offered training on leadership and capacity building for local women leaders. The result was the formation of a network called Gender Watch Group (GWG) in the north, northeast, central and southern regions. The network was kept active through the GWG newsletter (in Thai). At the middle level, it launched a 50,000-signature campaign to support a petition demanding the insertion of a quota system in the law. To promote women's visibility in society, GDRI initiated an annual photo contest on the theme "Women at Work." Later it added many awards for outstanding women.

Association of Women Lawyers of Thailand (AWLT), founded in 1947, has supported legal changes in personal, occupational and anti-violence laws. Most of its presidents, such as Khunying Chanthanee Santabutr and Prof. Wimolsiri Jamnarnwej, have been avid advocates of women's rights. Some past presidents were appointed ministers, senators or advisors to the government at different times. AWLT pioneered in setting up a Legal Aid unit to provide free legal assistance to low-income people throughout the country. Striving to promote broader women's participation in the field of law, both as lawyers and educators, AWLT has established relations and an information exchange with organisations in other countries with similar purposes.

Women and Politics Institute (WPI), founded in 1993 by women politicians and activists, is under the umbrella of the Women for Democratic Development Foundation (WDDF). Although WPI is now inactive, its initial mission was to support and promote women's political participation as voters, supporters and electoral candidates at all levels through training. It also aimed to raise political awareness and consciousness among the general public, and particularly among women and youth. WPI programs and services included training in conducting campaigns, information dissemination on social and political issues, strengthening local women's organisations in areas of politics, and networking with women's groups.⁷ WDDF has continued playing an advisory role to OWAFD as well as conducting advocacy research.

Women and Constitution Network (WCN), now defunct, was established in November 1996 as an urgent response to the government announcement to launch the Constitution drafting process. The network soon expanded to cover 50 organisations including women NGOs, grassroots women's groups, university-based groups, and other civil society groups/networks throughout the country. WCN produced training manuals and trained a wide range of trainers throughout the country as a means to disseminate the 1997 Constitution as well as to enable people to protect their civil rights.

Women's Movement in Thai Political Reform (We-Move) is a new group, founded in the mid 2006 by a number of well known activists and politicians to replace WCN. One differentiating feature of the two is in the membership. We-Move's members are individuals while WCN's are organisations. We-Move carried out similar activities like earlier WCN did such as civic-education and training programs throughout Thailand. It also lobbied with constitution drafters in CDA and members of National Legislative Assembly (NLA, an equivalent to parliament) that were set up after the coup d'état on 19 September 2006. The President of WDDF was appointed to the National Legislative Assembly, and also presided over the Standing Commission on Women, Youth and Elderly. Thus she was able to actively support the bills that submitted by OWAFD and by We-Move along with other women's groups.

Thai Women's Watch Foundation (TW2) was founded after the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in Thailand and produced the first and second alternative CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) reports. It also hosted two regional Asia Pacific conferences on Beijing+5 (2000) and Beijing+10 (2005) in Bangkok.

National Council of Women of Thailand (NCWT) was founded in 1957 and has acted as a focal point for coordinating, promoting and supporting activities of various local women's organisations in Thailand. The Council studies and collects information and exchanges ideas among women's organisations, domestically and internationally. NCWT attempts to find ways to raise the status and quality of the lives of Thai women largely in tandem with the government, rather than challenging its policy. NCWT along with NCSW (National Council of Social Welfare) has been one of the two NGOs who have been regular committee members of NCWA.

Friends of Women Foundation (FOW) was founded in the early 1980s. Initially, it focused on providing assistance to factory workers and victims of violence. Later, it spearheaded the campaign to eliminate VAW. FOW's objectives are to protect and promote women's rights and equal opportunities in social, economic and political aspects. Its major activities are monitoring issues of violence against women and working to improve the quality of life of women workers, especially on occupational health and safety and on reproductive rights. FOW also provides legal aid, consultation, and education and training services in addition to publication and dissemination.

Foundation For Women (FFW) has offered services and assistance to women victims of domestic violence and trafficking since 1984. Its activities include using information to prevent trafficking in women, educating young people about equality in sexual relations, training rural women to be para-social development workers, and developing educational/training materials about sexual exploitation of young women. In 2007, FFW set up a separate unit from its main office, called "soon khao yo-ying" (or "Women's Information Centre," which follows the concept of "**Women's Café**"). This unit is more easily accessible and thus serves as a "neighbourhood facility" for all women to walk in to learn about FFW and from each other even though its primary purpose is for women contemplating job/marriage abroad.

In July 2000, eleven groups of women⁸ jointly founded a new network called Alliance for Advancement of Women (AAW). This was an outcome of a seminar on "Women's Movement Strategy in the 21st Century" on 28-29 July 2000⁹ to serve as a women's collective outreach to link with other civic groups in order to strengthen their advocacy role on women and development issues and to be a mechanism to mobilise, monitor, and evaluate women's development work of the State. Since 2007, AAW membership has expanded to 48 with FFW as its current secretariat. AAW also began to produce its first newsletter and changed its name to Women Network for Advancement and Peace

(WNAP). WNAP has been commissioned by UNIFEM to write the next shadow report for CEDAW (2009).

The Hotline Center Foundation, founded in 1985, offers telephone counselling to people of all ages on problems of interpersonal relations, especially sexual relations. It has also used TV programs to campaign to reduce VAW.

Women's Health Advocacy Foundation (WHAF) focuses on reproductive health issues. It produces documents on the health of Thai women and other useful research for campaigns to ensure the reproductive rights of women and to enable women to make informed decision on their own reproductive health needs. Recently, WHAF sponsored the first annual conference on "Sexuality Studies in Thai Society," which highlighted issues of sexual needs and transgender.

Women Workers' Unity Group (WWUG) was founded in 1992. Frustrated by the indifference of the formal structure of trade unions (being dominated by men) toward the maternity leave issue, the then president, a woman, and a few women trade unionists formed WWUG with primary support from FES. This shift in strategy and timely support enabled women trade unionists to mobilise women workers effectively to the streets. Eventually, the government passed the law to increase paid maternity leave to 90 days. Today, WWUG continues to serve as the focal point and commits to the causes of women workers. It has become its tradition to lead a parade of women workers from various trade unions to submit an open letter to the government on International Women's Day (8 March).

EMPOWER, founded in 1980, has since been working specifically with women in the commercial sex sector through its Centre for the Protection of the Rights of Women in the Sex Business. The aim is to promote social opportunities and assist needy sex workers. Besides offering information on safe sex, other services include giving advice on basic and non-formal education and to provide social welfare to destitute women and their families.

In addition to the above local Thai women's groups, there are a few significant regional organisations based in Bangkok or Chiang Mai, for example, Committee for Asian Women (CAW), Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) and Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD). They have provided useful support in terms of information and regional/global linkages.

C. Women's Studies Programs

University-based women's studies centers have also meaningfully contributed to the movements for women's rights issues. Thammasat University has a Women and Youth Studies Program, chaired by Assoc. Prof. Malee Pruekphongsawalee. It has organised several workshops and trainings for women workers. Its Master Degree program on women's studies has helped strengthen the theoretical framework of some key gender advocates in their advocacy work in various public positions, for example, NHRC, politicians, news media, lawyers, activists, and some staff of OWAFD. The master degree program is self-funded mainly from the tuition fees of the students.

Women's Studies Center of Chiang Mai University was established by Assoc. Prof. Virada Somswadi to encourage the study, research, and collection of information relating to women, with special emphasis on northern Thailand. The centre also offers a master degree program, which has been largely funded by external scholarships raised by the centre to support its master students. The director has also worked with other governmental and non-governmental organisations such as APWLD and FORWARD (Foundation for Women, Law and Rural Development) that carry out legal literacy training in Thailand.

Chulalongkorn University has a Women's Studies Program under the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI). The program used to be active in research and publication but not in teaching.

Other state universities in provincial areas such as Khon Kaen, Songkhla and Pattani also have some women's studies programs even though currently they are not as active as during the 1990s when enthusiasm was high.¹⁰

Mahidol University does not have an explicit women's studies program, but it has two programs with strong gender elements, i.e., Institute of Population Research Center (IPRC) and an international Master Degree program on human rights. Dr. Kritaya Achavanitkul of IPRC is a strong advocate on reproductive rights and is linked to WHAF.

III. Case Studies

Under the broader areas of economic, political and social rights, the women's advocacy movement in Thailand has focused on specific issues within various sectors during the 1990s. The women's labour movement has campaigned for 90-day paid maternity leave and other rights for women workers in both formal and informal sectors. Recently, it has extended its activities to cover the rights of migrant workers from the neighbouring countries. In political reform, women campaigned for equal representation and participation in the electoral process. At another level, they campaigned for constitutional guarantee of women's rights protection in both processes of constitution drafting, in 1996/7 and in 2007. The success in both constitution campaigns, however, was an outcome of various earlier longer campaigns. The campaign to amend the family laws related to marriage, divorce and property rights was started in the 1940s. The campaign to end VAW has included issues of reproductive rights, domestic violence, trafficking, and sexual exploitation of women and began in the early 1990s. Recently, new campaigns (based on women's rights over their own bodies) have emerged to advocate the rights of people of different sexual orientations and identities. Physically challenged women have also begun to join and speak up in different women's forums. The following section reviews four high profile campaigns, namely, equal participation in decision making, constitutional reform, end of violence against women, and 90-day maternity leave.

A. Campaign for Equal Participation at Decision-making Level

Prior to the 1990s, AWLT and APSW had already been active in lobbying for equal opportunity for women, especially in the decision making of public affairs and personal property. Their success in lobbying for the insertion of the clause "men and women are equal" into the 1974 Constitution has become a stepping stone for them to redress gender discriminative laws. As Thai politics moved out of the military shadow in the early 1990s, women's strategy gradually shifted to increasing the number of women in electoral politics. The campaign started at the local level and then moved up to the national level.

The two groups have been persistently pushing for greater decentralisation and representation of women in state agencies, especially at the local level. Since 1982, women have been allowed to hold local administrative offices of village heads (phu yai ban) and sub-district chiefs (kamnan), but not deputy district chiefs (palad amphur). The

main obstacle was the 1978 Cabinet Resolution that barred women from the said position, which effectively prohibited women to become district chief and therefore provincial governor. APSW and AWLT started campaigning in 1990, which eventually led to the removal of the ban in early 1993. Two weeks later, two women were promoted to the positions of governor and deputy governor.

The political decentralisation process, after the failed attempt of military return in 1992 (Black May), led to the passing of the “Tambon Council and Tambon Administration Organisation Act” (TAO Act) in 1994. Women’s groups started campaigning when the drafting of the bill began. Besides GDRI and WPI, there were many other groups—academics, NGOs and GOs—involved. Their major activity was to offer training to community women leaders across the country. The common aim was to equip local women leaders with knowledge on democracy and decentralisation as well as encouraging and preparing them to run for upcoming TAO election.

GDRI, however, has more specific goals, that is, to push for the quota system and a guarantee for equal gender representation. To achieve this, GDRI sought to amend Article 45 of the TAO Act so that it specified gender quota for TAO members. The strategy was two-pronged—to mobilise women in general and to lobby policy makers. A series of seminars and training was given to women in urban and rural settings. As it turned out, rural women were more responsive and supportive to the idea than their urban sisters. Without adequate pressure from all women, the attempt with the legislators and policy makers was not successful.

The results of “diplomatic” reaching out to policy makers at the national level, however, were slow and less successful. The first step was to urge political parties to include policies on women, particularly the promotion of women to decision making levels. One of the earlier efforts was in March 1998, when WCN and GDRI took the initiative in questioning various political parties on their policies on supporting women candidates. In October 1998, they organised a forum for political parties to state their views on how to increase the number of women MPs and their views on the inclusion of female party members on the party lists alternately with men for the 2000 election. In all forums, no party offered any commitment to any special measures such as quota. The only assurance was that the door to higher positions was wide open for women members.

After the 2000 election, the advocacy campaign continued to pressure the new government to pursue clear policies on women. They submitted letters identifying

women's concerns and asking for the increased participation of women in decision making. The letters were sent to all party leaders in the coalition of the government and to those responsible for formulating state policies. Subsequent governments have begun to support women's participation in making decisions about the direction and process of national development.

Besides the above indirect approaches, GDRI attempted to make use of the constitutional channel by collecting 10,000 signatures on a petition to demand legalisation of a quota system. The petition has been submitted and is now pending in the legislative process.

GDRI has played a crucial role in linking the activism between grassroots and national levels because of its small size but large social capital and network. Besides GDRI, there are other organisations, as listed above, who also contributed to the continuity in the campaign for equal political participation. In spite of this, "There are still very few women engaged in politics and holding senior government positions in Thailand. In fact, their number is smaller than in many other countries in Asia," said Joana Merlin-Scholtes, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Thailand. This comment was supported by the 2006 fact that women made up only 8.7%¹¹ of the NLA appointed by CNS. Only two ministers in Surayud's cabinet were women (holding the portfolios of Office of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Culture), and only one provincial governor was a woman. In the bureaucracy, one quarter of senior positions were occupied by women, while women make up more than two-thirds of lower level positions. In the 2005 general elections, only 12.4% of MP candidates were women. In early 2008, there were four female ministers among 35 cabinet members. Their portfolios were Labour, Energy, Finance, and Natural Resource. It should be noted that some of these women are also wives of the Thai Rak Thai politicians who are banned from politics.

B. Campaign for Constitutional Reform

The constitutional campaign in the 1990s had two phases: one was for the insertion of gender equality clauses in the 1991 constitution, and the other concerned the drafting of the 1997 Constitution.

1991 Constitution

As soon as the military-led government submitted its new charter in 1991, women's groups used the CEDAW that Thailand signed in 1985 to push for changes in the constitution. Women's groups and academics came together, and a movement formed where WPI and GDRI were among the key actors. The coalition demanded the amendment of Section 24, which stated "Persons are equal before the law and shall be granted equal protection under the law." The proposed additional sentences were "Women and men have equal rights. Any action limiting equal rights and freedoms is unconstitutional and not permissible." To create public awareness and pressure, different groups carried out different kinds of activities with their own networks. For example, GDRI co-organised various conferences in July 1993 with GWG and the Women Parliamentarian Club. At the national level, they invited the chairperson of the Constitutional Amendment Committee to their conferences. At the local level, GWG used its grassroots bases to organise public meetings with local MPs. A petition was also launched and signed by about 3,100 prominent citizens, amongst them were 90 MPs. Since 316 votes were needed in the Parliament, GDRI added a postcard-writing campaign using the network of women it had contacted since it began working on the local government issues. The then Minister of Interior admitted that many MPs had never previously received such requests and were, therefore, worried about women's support in the coming election. The amendment was eventually passed unanimously in October 1994.

1997 Constitution

Later, when the Banharn administration decided on 17 May 1996, to amend Section 211 of the constitution to allow the drafting of a new charter, the coalition of women's groups had already developed into an effective movement that could directly reach the grassroots level and capture the attention of the national media, while also having close contact with high-powered socialites and bureaucrats. With the support of the Asia Foundation, women's organisations led by WPI and GDRI along with over 20 women's organisations created the Women and Constitution Network (WCN), in which Teeranat Karnjana-aksorn¹² played a central role in influencing more efficiently the new charter drafting process (see members of WCN in Appendix). The first goal of the network was to get as many women as possible to apply for candidacy to serve in the Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA).

WCN used multiple tactics through its networks to reach all levels of people. For the general public, it produced different kinds of publicity materials, for example, brochures introducing WCN and explaining the important role of CDA and radio spots for different radio stations to air. It approached various TV talk-shows to invite its core leaders to speak about the necessity of having women CDA. For grassroots women, it mobilised women's studies programs in different universities to reach out to excite village women about the constitutional drafting process by setting up a local discussion forum. To establish a good relationship with public figures and institutional authority, it sent out letters with the signature of Thanphuying Sumalee Jaticavanich, a reputable socialite, to different presidents of banking and lawyer associations and to governors, rectors and the Prime Minister. As a result, 35% of the candidates were women from across the country. But only 63 women from 42 provinces passed the first stage of provincial election.

WCN then shifted its strategy to feed information about the 63 women candidates to the 600 MPs, who were the next screeners. They had only 10 days to work. First, it solicited the addresses from the governors and then sent a congratulatory letter to individual women. The letter explained the objectives of WCN and invited them to participate by sending their personal information so that WCN could include it in the introductory brochures for MP and the media. The sincere, non-partisan approach received a good response. WCN working team was in high spirit and eventually produced a meaningful, eye-catching logo for WCN. The logo became an easy public identity of WCN. The introductory brochures were distributed to each MP. Before the decisive day, some members would wait at the parliament gates to hand out the letter and brochures. WCN perseverance hit the headlines of local media and TV. In spite of such efforts, only six women were chosen among the 76 candidates. Instead of lamenting on the output as a defeat, WCN members eventually came to term with it as the reality of Thai society at that time. They reminded themselves that the ultimate goal of WCN was to insert women's concerns in the substance of the constitution. At least, WCN got six women in. They began to see the positive side of the outcome of their hard work in past campaigns—the friendships and linkages with organisations and individuals throughout the country to monitor the CDA and participation in public hearings.

After the CDA was established, many seminars were held in various provinces with the help of WCN, and the information gathered was passed on to CDA, MPs, and various NGOs. The coalition used the two-pronged strategy: direct pressure on CDA and indirect

influence through educating and mobilising the public. WCN directly presented each drafting member with a “handbook,” suggesting what to add or change in the constitution. WCN had developed a close relationship with the drafting members, especially the six women in CDA (one was a vice president of CDA, and one was on the academic committee responsible for conceptualising and putting together the first draft). The sole female member of the academic committee was constantly briefed by the working team of WCN, who also passed on important information, such as research findings, for her use when entering into deliberations.

To generate indirect influence, WCN working team actively engaged with the public at large throughout the process. Public hearings and seminars were organised in various provinces across the country while a training program on political institutions and processes organised by WCN reached several thousand women. To reach a wider audience, the working team organised press conferences to explain the benefits of the proposed changes. WCN's members took up different responsibilities. For example, WPI organised a Master Trainers program to develop a network of women responsible for educating local women on the constitutional drafting process and on the possibilities of participation. AWLT distributed a free set of five booklets on the constitution and issues related to women in politics. WCN believed that lobbying would not be enough and, thus, dedicated a great deal of time to informing the population that it should both participate in public hearings and continue to pressure CDA and the parliament to integrate their demands into the new constitution. In the process, the media, in collaboration with non-state organisations, contributed to the political normalisation of these discursive tools.

Eventually, many specific points requested by WCN were written into the new constitution. They are Section 30 (men and women enjoy equal rights), Section 53 (youth and family members are protected and cared for by the State), Section 78 (decentralisation) and Section 80 (the State shall promote equality between women and men).

2007 Constitution

The coup d'état on 19 September 2006, led to another round of drafting the constitution. By then WCN had become inactive, but some of WCN's activists started a similar coalition called We Move. These women found some allies with the legislatures, which were predominantly men, especially those who became charter drafters.¹³

Soon after the coup leaders (CNS, Council of National Security) had set up an interim government, a National Legislative Assembly (NLA) was appointed to draft a new constitution. As in 1997, NLA had the responsibility of gathering member of public opinion in various forums nationwide. Also, as in 1997, GDRI held a congratulatory meeting for the female NLA where other women's group leaders were also introduced. The purpose was to personalise the relationship for future cooperation in the drafting process. Meanwhile different women's groups held meetings with their constituencies to collect opinions before coming together. With sponsorship of UNDP, GDRI together with numerous women's groups under the banner of We-Move organised a national meeting on "Women and the 2007 Constitution". The meeting was attended by about 1,000 representatives of women's groups from across the country to present their concerns to be included in the constitution.¹⁴ We-Move remained active in monitoring the drafting process, and later in educating people of different regions about the draft constitution before the referendum in August 2007.

Although the constitution was criticised as being a compromise of the judiciary to the undemocratic power of the junta and for its many clauses contradicting democratic principles (for example, amnesty for coup makers), one positive change was that it has widened the door for people's participation by reducing the number of signatures from 50,000 to 10,000 to submit a petition to the legislature. On women's concerns, the 2007 constitution does not make many changes as compared to the 1997 version but includes some demands submitted by We-Move/women's groups to specify gender equality in many clauses.

C. Campaign to End Violence Against Women

The campaign ERAW (End Violence against Women) has been regarded as one of the most successful, given that gender violence has been pervasive and rapidly increasing in Thai society. Thai women NGOs such as FFW and FOW have been tackling various forms of VAW covering such issues as domestic violence, rape, and trafficking. But little progress, however, was made in the government for a long time until 2007.

After the Beijing conference in 1995, ten NGOs working on women's and children's rights (including FFW and FOW) and feminist academics came together to form an ERAW network. The network established a task force to plan for the campaign based on advocacy and education.

For public education, a one-day exhibition and panel discussion was held annually in Bangkok and other provinces to raise public awareness on the breadth and depth of VAW. By 2001, the network expanded to 60 organisations from different provinces, and the activities lasted one month. For advocacy, they pushed for legislative amendment, which resulted in the 1996 Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act and the 2000 Investigation of Child Witnesses Act. To improve the investigation procedure, they demanded that female police investigators to deal with VAW cases. In addition, they demanded a range of services and provisions for the victims such as shelters, relationship-counselling within families, counselling by phone and in person concerning the civil and criminal justice system, and lawyer referrals. APSW led a campaign to demand that police stations be safe places for women and children.

At the same time, members of the network also carried out legal education training at the community level. AWLT in collaboration with FOW ran a legal literacy program for urban communities; Women's Studies Centre at Chiang Mai University offered a paralegal training program for rural women; FFW had a capacity building project for community-based women volunteers to provide protection and support for women and children. Research was carried out and statistics and information on issues relating to VAW were compiled for public dissemination in both Thai and English.

Besides raising awareness among victims of violence to exercise their rights, it called on the authorities to enforce relevant laws to punish offenders. In 1998, on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the task force presented an eight-point petition to the Thai government.

The continuous campaign of the ERAW network in the public and lobby with sympathetic politicians such as Khunying Supatra eventually made a dent. She passed on the petition to NCWA, under Dr. Saisuree, who then appointed a drafting committee on the ERAW bill and submitted it to the Legislature in 1998. Khunying Supatra then proposed the bill to the Cabinet who eventually approved it on 29 June 1999. The ERAW Act designated November as the national month and the 25th of November as the national day for ERAW.¹⁵ NCWA took a leadership role in requesting relevant agencies to participate in the campaign: all state hospitals should set up a crisis centre for women and children while the police should organise training to enhance their capacity to investigate and deal with VAW cases more efficiently.

From 1996-9, the NCWA and the Commission on Women, Youth and Elderly Affairs (CWYEA) of both the House of Representatives and the Senate proposed an amendment to the criminal code and a criminal procedure act calling for inclusion of "men, boys and wives" in the definition of "sexually offended victims." These individuals, if proven to have suffered from sexual violence, should be eligible for legal protection. The criminal code also redefined "an act of rape" to include the use of any object or organ to forcibly penetrate another person's sexual organs or the use of a sexual organ penetrating another person's mouth. These anti-violence and rape laws went through many readings and several debates. They were eventually passed in late 2007.

The campaign has a long history. On violence, women started campaigning for change in Section 53 twelve years ago, and only in late 2007 did the National Legislative Assembly pass it into law. The campaign for violence issues has covered domestic violence (DV), violence against women (VAW), reproductive health (RH), and trafficking. FFW has worked on DV by focusing on Section 276 and trafficking by launching a campaign to collect 50,000 signatures. Change eventually happened. For example, the criminal law increases the age of girls who are eligible for legal protection from 13 to 15. In the 1996 Protection and Suppression of Prostitution Act, procurers, seducers, male clients, owners of prostitution businesses and others who are known to be associated with prostitution of children under 18 years old shall be subject to criminal punishment. Parents who connive in the prostitution of the person under their parental control are liable to imprisonment, fines and revocation of parental authority. Besides, the Act gives rights to the arrested prostitutes to choose a place for admission to occupational training, either under Primary Admittance protection or the Occupational Development Centre.

The 1997 Protection and Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children Act extended legal protection to female and male minors under 18 years old. It indicates explicitly the scope of offences in a more inclusive manner regardless of the consent of the minor. In addition, it provides assurance of rights protection for trafficked people while they are being detained and brought into the judicial process. Also, included in the 1998 Labour Protection Act is the protection of female workers from sexual harassment at the workplace. The latest human-trafficking law that took effect on 5 June 2008 imposes a maximum jail term of 20 years on politicians and state officials convicted of buying or having sex with minors. Those who abduct a maim under under-15s for street begging now face up to 15 years in jail and/or a fine of up to 300,000 baht. Politicians and state officials convicted of underage sex offences will now go to jail for twice as long.

In general, the long battle has finally received positive responses from the government. But enforcement needs more than promise or new rules. It needs attitude change in society—of both law users and law enforcers—in addition to legal knowledge. Meanwhile, violence has been escalating and the causes more complex.

D. Campaign for 90-Day Paid Maternity Leave

After more than four decades of campaigns demanding better welfare and protection for workers in the formal sector, the government finally passed the social security bill in 1990. FOW having worked alongside labour unions since 1989 by focusing on the issues of sick leave and maternity leave, however, was not satisfied with the legal provision for maternity leave. So, in 1991, FOW, with the help of CAW, conducted an Asia-wide (including Thailand) comparative study on the rights to maternity leave. The study found Thailand lagged behind other neighbouring countries that have successfully provided 90-day maternity leave to their women. The (appointed) minister overseeing NCWA was invited to a seminar where the report was presented. It was hoped that the minister would use the information to push for a 90-day maternity leave for all working women. In late 1991, the Cabinet, appointed by the military coup leaders, granted a 90-day paid maternity leave but only to women civil servants. This ignited a campaign launched by women workers to demand the same right. At that time, women workers in the private sector were entitled to only 60-day maternity leave, with 30 days of paid leave. Most women workers took leave for only 30 days, and often returned to work before fully regaining their health.

Since the male-dominated trade union did not take much interest in maternity leave issues, even though Arunee Srito was the president, a few women leaders established the Women Workers' Unity Group (WWUG) in 1992 with the help of FES and collected more basic data on maternity leave to educate the public. WWUG demonstrated its effectiveness in mobilising factory women to march on the streets. Gradually, other NGOs concerned with human rights, labour federations and labour networks joined in and formed the 90-day Maternity Leave Campaign Committee. Arunee Srito, as president of WWUG, became like "a general of a big army".

On 7 March 1993, a mass rally marched to the house of the then Prime Minister, Chuan Leekpai, and submitted an open letter to him. One month later (25 April), a rally was staged at Sanam Luang, it became the biggest rally ever attended by many NGOs and civic groups. The rally proceeded to the Government House and submitted another

letter. Two days later, Arunee Srito went as the movement's representative to negotiate with the government, which led to the Cabinet concession on the same day. Women workers were granted the right to take maternity leave for 90 days with 45 days fully paid through the Social Security Fund, and the other 45 days is supposed to be paid by the employers (but not enforced). The order was passed on 28 April 1993, for implementation from 1 May 1993.

The campaign for the 90-day paid maternity leave served as a platform for women workers to gain confidence in organising and mobilising for a just cause. It was a milestone achievement. However, other later campaigns such as establishing an Institute for Workers' Occupational Health, Safety and Security and for having more and better equipped childcare centres in industrial areas have not received the same level of success. This campaign was remarkable in its smooth and swift success within two years. Several factors were responsible—public appeal for the maternity issue and public support from the medical professionals. The media was also helpful. A few informants recalled the scenario at that time.

We launched the campaign in 1991. In 1992-93 our team expanded, women NGOs formed a coalition, the media helped in chalking out strategies and plans. At that time, Arunee was the president of WWUG and also the president of Textile Federation of Thailand. She played a key role in forming a working committee. Each member was responsible for mobilising the workers according to his or her line. While NGOs collaborated in providing information, the media helped spread the reason behind the campaign by raising public awareness and sympathy, while labour groups mobilised the labour body. This created a continuous and coherent wave of movement.

Another important factor was that there were international organisations, for example, CAW, ICFTU, GUF and FES, that provided another link between countries. They provided information to the campaign and pressured the Thai government to pass this maternity law. But the death nail was the labour movement. Through WWUG mobilisation, the workers threat prolonged the strike. They sat in front of the government house for 1 week. Thai Phatraphorn and Thai Kriang, two factories from Phra Padaeng, were the main stay because they already stopped working. Other factory workers joined in after their work shift; they came on a rotational basis.

We also lobbied various public figures/organisations, e.g., federations, politicians (members of Women Parliamentarian Club such as Paveena Hongsakul), Ministry of Public Health (with Dr. Udomsilp for data showing that the first three months of nursing with mother's milk was important, mother milk would improve quality of life of the baby, etc.). We also contacted the Division of Labour on Women and Children (under Department of Labour, Ministry of Interior).

The rally for children's welfare brought tremendous public sentiment and support. But the success could not hold the coalition together for too long. After 3-4 years, problems became more complex and numerous. This time, it was difficult to form a coalition to fight together as on the issue of maternity leave.

Now we don't have bargaining power like that time. In sum, the state power has increased in recent years while people power has decreased. Even such strong trade unions like that of state enterprises, they also could not win. Capitalists have gained control of the state power.

NGOs have returned to focus on their own self-struggle. Recently, some NGOs began to carry out some action-research work with women workers on such issues as sexuality, legal abortion and transgender. The information is supposed to be used for future campaigns on free abortion and transgender's rights, etc. Compared to the past experience of the maternity leave campaign, some activists are rather pessimistic with this controversial campaign.

Abortion is a controversial issue that will further divide the labour movement, even among women. Therefore this campaign will weaken the women's movement, too.

While labour issues have diversified and women's problems have become more complicated, WWUG has continued to campaign on gender equality policies. One annual campaign that gains publicity is the celebration of 8 March by organising worker representatives from different trade unions to walk-the-talk on the streets. This 8 March, WWUG led the parade to walk from the UN building (ILO office) to the government house. There they staged a rally that repeated the two demands of women workers, that is, decent day-care centres and gender equality in representing the labour in the tripartite committee. Other general demands such as schools, workplace safety and occupational

health and an increase in the minimum wage were added by other participating groups. At the end, a representative of the government came to receive the open letter submitted by WWUG's president.

IV. Analysis

A. Facilitating Factors

In the past 17 years, the above-mentioned five campaigns have been concerned with the political agenda and human rights of women. The amendment of many laws is key evidence of the striking success of the women's movement at that time. There were four facilitating factors, namely, the changing socio-political environment in Thailand the support of foreign development agencies, the strategies of various campaigns and the role of governmental organisations.

Socio-political Context

The signing of CEDAW (1985) has become a vital tool for women activists by which to demand accountability from the Thai government in promoting gender equality as the country slowly moved away from Military Rule to Rule of Law. The civil resistance against the return of the military rule in May 1992 brought many activist groups together and sparked hopes for a real change. The public, led by a handful of urban academics, intellectuals and activists, began to demand decentralisation, which led to the stipulation of the TAO Act in 1994. The following year was highlighted by the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing, where grassroots women brought home the high spirit and hope from their first time exposure to the global women forum. As the civil society was growing, the civilian government was weak, plagued with corruption and burdened with past mal-development. Eventually, the Thai bubble economy burst into the regional Asian Financial Crisis in 1997.

Meanwhile, the government launched an unprecedented constitution drafting process that gave space for people's participation nationwide and aimed for an efficient governing structure. The economic crisis put pressure on the government to approve the so-called "people-constitution" of 1997. The time was ripe; diverse women's groups and activists were able to coalesce under the banner of WCN and influence the formulation of the new charter.

Key Actors

Three actors play key roles in negotiating better policies, especially for women.

1. Foreign Development Agencies

Along with the trends generated by the 4th World Women's Conference (1995), international funding for women/gender projects was easily available in the decade of the 1990s. International development agencies supported almost all well-established women's organisations. Major campaigns such as elimination of violence against women (EVAW), constitution reform, and equal political participation, enjoyed easily accessible financial support from a range of international agencies such as FES, TAF, AusAID, CIDA, and UNIFEM. These funds were mostly utilised to cover the high cost of organising meetings, transportation, allowances, honorarium, training, campaign materials/equipment, research, and documentation. This financial availability was a boon to help generate quick awareness in Thai society.

2. Governmental Organisations

OWAFD has the mandate to "help" the government to comply with BPFA and CEDAW and to promote gender equality in society; therefore, it has to be responsive to the pressure of women's campaigns, academics and international funding agencies. In the past, NCWA/OWAFD had played both direct and indirect roles in pushing for many legal changes on women-related laws. The restructuring was intended to make OWAFD more powerful in administering its gender task.

NHRC has become a pivotal public organisation or channel for filing public grievances. Some of the commissioners at NHRC, especially Naiyana Supapeung and Sunee Chaiyarose, are former activists. They gave their personal attention to gender issues and recognition of civil society.

3. Thai Civil Society

Thai civil society has grown since the time of the student uprisings from 1973-76. A large number of former student activists, including women, have occupied different key positions in the academics, NGOs, business and the media. Many women took a dual role of being university lecturers and NGO activists. Others became administrators in either international development agencies or bureaucracy. Their common experiences,

directly or indirectly, during those student/democratic heydays, are social capital for them when lobbying policy makers or launching public campaigns. Even though most women NGOs are largely urban and of middle-class origin, they have gradually developed some linkages with women leaders of community-based organisations at the grassroots level during the 1990s. This linkage could add weight to urban-based groups in pressuring or negotiating with policy makers or state authority.

B. Advocacy Strategies

The four campaigns mentioned above vary in their style of public expression and negotiation. Only those in fourth case, maternity leave, took their demands to the street and showed defiance, refusing to disband the sit-in protest. Otherwise, most women leaders conform to, or exercise their wit amicably within the expected (feminine) actions of Thai behaviour to gain approval from the public and state authority.

While working toward collective pressure, women used two parallel approaches. Horizontally, they broadened their base by networking, forming alliances generating public pressure through public education and information dissemination and raising specific consciousness and awareness through focused training. They also efficiently used the mass media to articulate their demands. Vertically, they lobbied with national decision/policy makers by either requesting a person-to-person meeting or holding a seminar where a high ranking official was invited to preside. Both approaches were publicised by the media. The following extracts some specific examples from the four cases.

Lobbying with Authority

8 March celebration has been used by different women's groups as an annual "official" platform not only to raise public awareness but also to put pressure on the responsible ministry. Respective ministers or high-ranking officials (or a sympathetic man or woman bureaucrat/politician) were invited to preside over their functions, where an open letter summarised the demands presented to them.

Access to Information

In the 90-day maternity leave campaign, FOW was able to conduct a comparative research which easily captured bureaucratic attention, that is, Thailand was "underdeveloped" as compared to its neighbouring country in this issue. It provoked the

self-esteem of the government to take quick action. This information was shared in a public seminar where Saisuree (then in charge of Prime Minister's Office that hosted NCWA) was invited. The given information might have strengthened Saisuree's proposal for change in state policy. The declaration of granting women in civil services 90-day maternity leave might not have directly benefited the private sector, but it gave justification for starting the campaign by women trade unionists.

Communication: Within Organisation and to the Public

Part of the success of the maternity leave campaign was due to the formation of WWUG, that donors could directly fund a small team to administer the rally, rather than wading through the massive redtape of trade union/labour federation structure. The small configuration allowed fast communication and action, from the strategy table of WWUG down to the assembly line of the factory women workers.

WWUG then communicated their specific grievance to the public on a humanistic note of mother and child. The marching of 10 pregnant women on the street invoked public sympathy fast and far for the plight of pregnant working women. The footage was shown around the world. The need for the mother to have adequate maternity leave was supported by disseminating concrete medical information on the needs of the unborn and newly born babies. The basic need of mother and child was non controversial and captured public emotion through straight forward and clear communication.

Networking

The success of WCN was mainly due to efficient networking among women's groups and outreaching to form an alliance with other civil society groups. The coordinator at that time, Teeranart, was an excellent communicator who could talk amicably with anyone at all levels.¹⁶ She was able to nurture a warm relationship, especially needed for orchestrating various networks under WCN to move in the same direction during the constitution drafting period.

FOW played a coordinating role for women workers until they formed WWUG to execute the campaign for maternity leave. On behalf of women workers, FOW formed a network with two key organisations—CAW (international) and Arom Pongpa-ngan Foundation (domestic labour research group)—and sent messages to other women's groups. Using clear communication in a non-controversial issue, the campaign task force could

mobilise various networks of different civic groups to stage a large protest to support its demand.

GDRl maintained its connection with the local women trainees to form GWG, which was useful during the constitution drafting time. This network with local communities also enabled GDRl to make visible the role of local women leaders by selecting and presenting them token awards as “outstanding women” during 8 March celebration each year.

The success of campaign for legal amendment was attributed to the networks of law school graduates and professionals. AWLT is an effort of early female law graduates to build up their negotiating power vis-à-vis males, but in Thai style like sisters and brothers. Later, its members branched off to widen the network as APSW so that it could recruit like-minded male professionals including those outside the legal field. APSW subsequently built up a research arm of GDRl focusing on promoting women for public leadership positions. Recently, it expanded its umbrella to cover Buddhist nuns by building a university for nuns.

Although many groups participated in the three campaigns on constitution drafting, law changes and political participation, different groups or clusters of groups would assume a lead role depending on the situation, or would act as the focal point in communicating to the public as well as monitoring the impact on policy makers. They would maintain a good relationship with publicly influential individuals such as female ministers, academics, high ranking civil servants, and high-level judges. One way was to include these people on their advisory board. Such links made it easier to raise funds, which in turn made it easier to obtain sufficient human resources to collect essential information for the movement. The advantage of GDRl over most other organisations is that it has allocated its resources to maintain a unit of publications, where past activities and research work are well documented and publicly disseminated systematically.

In the campaign against violence, FFW appeared to be the leading advocate. Since its inception, FFW's founder has established an international network with many women's organisations working on issues of violence and trafficking. It has access to international women's studies, academics, and theories. In 1993, the findings from its action research project on trafficking pathways in Thailand (a joint project with a Dutch university) contributed to its success in the campaigns for the laws on trafficking and on prostitution. The project built on the community based networks of local women leaders in selected

villages in certain provinces in the North and Northeast. The tsunami disaster brought FFW down to the deep South, where it began to network with destitute women from both national disaster and armed conflict.

C. Achievements

After almost two decades of advocacy campaigns, women NGOs have gained a certain level of success in influencing Thai society. In the process, many groups have become experts in certain areas, for example, FFW on trafficking issues, FOW on labour issues, and GDRI on the issues of political participation and a quota system. Their contributions may be identified as increasing women's self confidence and public awareness, increasing participation, networking, and legal change.

Self-confidence and Public Awareness

By sharing experiences in different meetings or participating in campaigns, women's self-confidence has increased. New role models showing that an ordinary woman could also become a public leader have been created through public recognition of outstanding women at various public functions held annually to celebrate the International Women's Day.

Women's campaigns also became a venue for public education that in effect won over some friends in the establishment, including judges and attorneys. Campaigns concerning political participation with an insistence on the quota system have slowly increased the number of women in decision-making positions, such as MPs and policy makers in the bureaucracy.

Participation

Advocacy efforts led to wider exposure and understanding of women's issues. The participation of women from all walks of life in large gatherings at various seminars and meetings, especially during the time of the 1995 Beijing Conference or during the campaigns for constitutional change or political participation, has helped increase understanding among urban and rural women. These events have exposed grassroots women to wider women's issues.

Networking

While a few charismatic women leaders have good connections with politicians and journalists, most long established women's organisations have also begun to form networks with grassroots women and community-based groups in rural areas.

Legal Change

Recent successes in amending several personal laws (divorce, rape, domestic violence) have contributed to rising status for women. Media reports on women's campaigns helped demystify such sensitive and controversial issues as domestic violence, prostitution, trafficking, and reproductive health. These issues have now become legitimate topics for public debate and discourse in wider society.

In summary, women have significantly challenged the subordinate position of womanhood. Even though Thai society still expects women to fulfil their wife and mother roles, through NGO activism, women's public leadership and contribution are recognised. Women's perseverance in the first three campaigns has led to some modifications of the rules that have kept the public a male-dominating realm. More women have entered electoral politics at both the national and grassroots level, even though not all were representing women's voices or were sensitive/ responsive to the needs of less privileged women. Many gender-sensitive laws have passed though some controversies remain to be amended, and enforcement is still a problem. Issues of violence against women (domestic abuse, trafficking, and sexual harassment in workplaces, for example) are no longer a personal shame. Because gender violence is also a result of the increasing violence and conflict everywhere, from high in the North to the border in the deep South, the efforts of women NGOs have to be extended to cover the practical gender needs of the target groups, too.

The fourth case on maternity leave fulfilled the practical gender needs of working women. Though women workers in the industrial sector struggled for this right, the enforcement and benefit did not reach evenly to all working women, especially to factory women labourers. As women at the base—in rural farms or urban poor—are still “stick to the floor” of economic scarcity, it is difficult for them to fully participate in advocacy campaigns led by urban women. The struggle of urban middle-class women to “break the glass ceiling” was sometimes seen as irrelevant to their immediate needs or problems.¹⁷

D. Challenges

While various campaigns had several positive outcomes and responses, women NGOs and women's organisations continue to face problems of human resource and networking.

Weak Capacity

Though women's campaigns have contributed to wider awareness on women's problems, the number of women's organisations dedicated to campaigning is still small. Individual women leaders might have matured in their campaign skills and articulation, but as an institution, the capacity to handle women and gender issues is still weak. The following looks into each key actor.

1. *OWAFD*

Major restructuring of OWAFD could not solve its weak capacity.¹⁸ Most bureaucrats tend to work at a routine job as defined by their superior. There may be some individuals who are committed to women's causes, but most take the job as an organisational responsibility rather than a personal mission. One staff expressed uneasiness at a women's studies class that the frequent usage of the term "struggle" would make her work difficult at her office. This reflects the burden of bureaucratic structure, which is loaded with seniority rather than merit. It tends to dwarf creativity. The restructuring in principle gave a larger budget and more human resource. But poor management and incoherent patching of different units (from social welfare and some from labour departments) with NCWA does not make the office more efficient in working with civil society. In fact, it may have to compete with civil society, partly due to complex regulations, in implementing projects.

Two recent major functions, celebration of 8 March and launching of the 1st women's studies conference (8 August), show OWAFD is moving in the right direction. But the process did not seem to have the participation of other key actors (feminist academia or NGO activists). The appearance of the latter key actors at the grand celebration on 8 March seemed to be for decoration rather than for making a significant contribution the performance on the stage.

2. Women's Studies Programmes

Although some universities have been able to offer a Masters Degree program, they are generally underfunded and understaffed. The shortage of lecturers in women's studies and the time-consuming administrative duties (to raise external funds and to recruit enough students) diluted the contribution of the faculty toward nurturing student scholarship or imparting new knowledge.

While the program at Thammasat University has generated an increasing number of theses on Thai women, they need additional effort to process, synthesise and publish so that they are easily accessible to the public. On the contrary, the founder of the women's studies centre at Chiang Mai University has been a prolific writer and was able to create an impressive virtual space that contains a wide range of useful information on women in Thailand. Enrolment in its Masters Degree program, however, has been much lower than at Thammasat University.

It is not clear how much both women's studies programs have addressed the problem of preparing the new generation to staff women's advocacy campaigns.

3. Women's Organisations

Women leaders of various campaign-oriented NGOs have demonstrated their courage and commitment while developing their negotiation skills over the years. The pace of living was much slower 20 years ago as compared to today. So, there was a longer time interval to learn or attend the then many well-funded workshops to train new leadership. These acquired skills could not be transmitted automatically to the new generation of young staff. Unlike large business corporations that have a human resource development unit to re-train and equip their new employees with needed skills, most women NGOs are too small to do so. Moreover, most women NGOs are not self-sustaining; they survive largely on external funds. Their accountability toward funding agencies therefore is not less than toward the women beneficiaries. NGO workers need to have both skills in implementing a project and also in writing reports and proposals. The skills of working as a team in a project cycle including planning, analysing, and evaluating are not always taught in the formal education system. Thai students are not encouraged to think critically as an active independent citizen. A new recruit or volunteer has to learn quickly enough on the job to keep up with the experienced staff that are often too busy in keeping track of various programmes. This polarity of skills could lead

to high turnover as well as disillusion with NGO work. Or NGO work is taken as a spring board during an unemployed period.

On the other hand, senior/experienced staff are not as young or agile as 20-30 years ago before. When an NGO could not solve this skill bridging problem, the workload would not be evenly distributed, therefore slowing progress. To survive the neo-liberal climate today, most women NGOs tend to move inward, to deepen their own speciality, which is the credential to ensure the sustainability of financial support. Or NGOs are forced to move up to the level of consultancy for international development agencies and also national agencies, such as OWAFD.

The links with men and other NGOs are weak. Although there have been some success in building alliances with male legislatures, in general, women NGOs have been women-focused and have little involvement with men. Many women's issues are actually men's issues.

“Culture gives men wrong ideas that they can hurt their wives, beat or rape them. How can they change this idea? How can we involve them?” And “We have to have programs not only for women but also for men, too.”

The links of women NGOs and politicians seem to be weakest with politicians and the media. The media also faces a structural problem in that it is a commercial venture and male dominated. Young women reporters often encounter sanctions from male (or sometimes female) bosses. Stories are not gender sensitive.

“Journalists often forget that the public is made up of men and women.”

“A lot need to be done to make the media sensitive to gender issues.”

The women NGO sector is still not fully prepared for emerging demands resulting from globalisation. The problems are manifested in the forms of reduced international funds and increased privatisation. At the same time, VAW becomes more complex as it is complicated by the state violence in the name of suppressing terrorism and fundamentalism. Free Trade Agreements, global warming and new diseases are all interrelated so much that only having more women in parliament and holding decision making positions cannot automatically solve these imminent problems.

As part of globalisation, liberalisation is expanding worldwide, and foreign development funds are decreasing. Most women NGOs have not become self-reliant.¹⁹ They depend on external or foreign funds to run their projects and campaigns. Financial assistance from international development agencies and the new Thailand's Health Promotion Fund has played an important role in supporting women's advocacy work, but in the form of time-bound projects. Once the project ends, they invariably cannot nurture or keep an active link with grassroots women. Depending on the availability of funds to cover the high cost of transportation, selected grassroots women are only occasionally invited to attend meetings in Bangkok. Lacking financial security is one important reason that each group is forced to struggle for its own survival rather than sharing resources to work together for the common causes.

V. Suggestions

The following presents some suggestions for different key actors to consider in order to strengthen women's advocacy roles.

A. OWAFD: Capacity and Structure

When the government initiated restructuring of the bureaucracy, activists, academics and specialists working with NCWA staff proposed an autonomous structure for the new National Machinery for Women's Advancement. But political interference led to the current structure of OWAFD. The office has become the implementing unit of the other two structures, that is, the Committee on Promotion and Coordination of Affairs of Women and Family and the Standing Committee on Women, Youth and Elderly of the Parliament—who set policy. This new structure is not a real improvement as compared to former NCWA even though OWAFD has been slowly constructing a useful website.

It may be a point for women engaged in advocacy movement to revise their old proposal and carry out a study on the experience of NHRC, an autonomous state-funded agency. Another exercise could be to compare the efficiency and effectiveness of the current National Machinery on Women's Advancement and NHRC in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and Human Rights Conventions. This exercise should lead to further dialogue to help unlock the potential of the National Machinery as well as OWFAD.

B. Women's Studies Programmes

Creation of a Research Wing

The teaching part is separated from the research part. The teaching is part of the university, and the research has an independent secretariat office to develop proposals and apply for research grants. International scholars or post-graduate Thais could be hosted as fellows or readers to make use of the existing wealth of new empirical information in the theses. The research section could keep track of community activism as well as doing consultancy work to enrich the program. This would enable teaching lecturers to have time to work with students though teaching faculty should not be discouraged from research. With in-house scholars, a routine of colloquiums on campus would contribute in focusing a discussion and exchange of ideas on various contemporary women's issues. At least it would create a niche for the like-minded to exchange ideas. Occasionally, NGOs could be invited to share their experience with young students and the faculty.

Encouragement of More Research on Women's Struggle

Besides using western feminist textbooks, the proposed research wing as well as Master students could be instrumental in documenting "herstory" of women leaders, especially those who are now ageing. Their thoughts and insights would be an inspiration to the younger generation. Then a comparative study on the interaction of local "feminists" and international women's movements could be made to shed light on the past and future direction that Thai women trek.

Addition of a Practicum Requirement into the Master Degree Curriculum

The experience of former Thai Voluntary Service (TVS) that trains and facilitates placement of new graduates to various NGO can be considered. This may be helpful in creating a supply of NGOs.

Women's Studies Conference

Thammasat University has been carrying out annual women's studies conference on its Bangkok campus since 2001. This year, OWAFD has launched its 1st national women's studies conference by itself. The two conferences, if combined with full participation of all parties involved in planning, would add strength to it. Foreign scholars doing research in

Thailand could be invited to participate. This would add vigour to the event. Nevertheless, the function needs trust and mutual recognition in working together as a team and with competency and commitment. Funding is a good support, but not a determinant. Bureaucratic protocol is an obstacle to dynamic team work and cooperation.

C. Women's Organisations

Capacity Building

Women's organisations, and also most other GOs and NGOs, need to pay attention to human resources and skill development inside their own organisations. Such skills include organisation management campaigning and advocacy fund raising leadership, and communications and presentation skills (reading, writing and analysis). Since this is a widespread problem, a "bridging program" may be jointly sponsored by various NGOs with funding support, if possible from OWAFD and women's studies programs on their expertise to develop curriculum in consultation with NGOs.

Documentation

Women NGOs could contribute to building up the knowledge base by systematising their past collective experiences. The documents of GDRI, website and publications of FFW, and project reports of FOW are useful resources for synthesising knowledge.

This documentation and analysis could be presented within the Thai context or on a comparative regional or international level to keep up with rapid change worldwide and increasing regionalism. It can also be in the form of video and music. Since it has a non-formal educational element, the Ministry of Education should be an additional source of support.

Publicity and Exhibition

Instead of passively waiting for a pick up, there should be an annual event. For example, 8 March could be celebrated with "show, tell and sale" of these experiences. While such an event would help women activists to keep abreast of each other activities, it will also be a public service for women's issues and what can be, or has been, done on these matters.

Networking

Women NGOs could strengthen their horizontal links with other civic NGO groups including men's groups, as well as the younger generation by inviting them to participate in occasional seminars or workshops. The experience of FFW in reaching school children by producing two cartoon books on trafficking could be a good example of how-to, in order to consider, what's next. 8 March could also be an opportunity to invite other NGOs, for example, those active in FTA, to give their perspective on women: Where do women stand in their FTA campaign?

Self-reflection

Perhaps women's groups who have played crucial roles in advocacy movements could first hold a meeting to assess each other's situations and help to create a level ground while retaining each one's specialty. Frequent dialogue will help remove redundancy, and promote sharing resources and strengthening rather than dissipating each other's energy. At the same time, frequent analysis of their activism and the changing world would help generate a new vision and solution in order to cope with the ever-increasing complexity of gender problems. Gender responsive politicians—men and women—and media personnel may be part of this dialogue after women find their own ground. International agencies such as FES or local ones such as the Health Promotion Foundation or Thai Research Fund may be interested in funding such an event. It should also provide to a full-time coordinator who would plan, coordinate and facilitate the event, as well as synthesise the output. First, dialogue should be between different women's organisations working on advocacy to identify priorities and strategic plans together. It is possible that the discussion may lead to the setting up of a national centre on advocacy or a women's lobby group.

Not Neglecting the Mass Base

As shown in the four cases in this study, most advocacy campaigns were focused on strategic gender needs, or isolated from practical gender needs. The continuing political conflicts and transformation of world economy has pushed working-class and rural/agricultural-based women to the extreme. Women could move beyond personal or family law to touch on development policy such as poverty eradication to link with gender. A UNIFEM sponsored project on studies on the impact of such policy as FTA,

though incomplete, should not be given up. Learning from past experiences, even not very successful ones, is also important in finding new strategies.

New Directory

The landscape of women's organisations has changed along with the complexity and varieties of women/gender issues. The appendix in this paper is only a small attempt to offer and update that includes new groups such as the Family Network Foundation that is working on such issues as single parenting or the Southeast Asian Consortium on Gender, Sexuality, and Health at Mahidol University. With women having made an inroad into the power structure wider, more concrete and down-to-earth information should be gathered. To ensure that women who broke the glass ceiling in politics would also be representing women's interests, women outside the power structure need to gear up their knowledge base—not only to support and supply those in the legislative structure but also to monitor their performance. Because some women activists/scholars felt frustrated with the non-committal behaviour of some elected women to their campaigns, they have been talking about forming a “women-only party.” It needs to be made clear that biology does not determine gender commitment. It is information, knowledge and ethical leverage. The task of women's advocacy movements is to nurture the kind of new citizenship, who will continue on the path they have blazed.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The Thai government has signed treaties such as CEDAW and BPFA. Women advocacy campaigns have affected many legislation processes. They are being changed to comply with international discourse and standards. But there is a gap between theory and practice. Also, these changes are not matched by resources. Neglect of gender issues results costly services, both directly and indirectly, in terms of loss of production, well being and sustainable development. There is a need for strong civil society participation (both men and women) as well as multisector agents and agencies. After legal changes, there are the challenges of healing society and dealing with this change.

“Three things need to be done: popularising these legal changes as most women are still not aware of these changes; empowering women so that they can participate more, and bringing women into the decision making level, from politics to trade unions.”

The progress the women's advocacy movement has made in the past 20 years is significant given the fact that, in Thailand, civil society is a new phenomenon and, traditionally, women's leadership has not been encouraged. Over this period, women as ordinary people have gained confidence and have begun to rise up to demand equal treatment and equal opportunity. The success shows the high potential of the women's advocacy movement and that women can be the loci of change for a better society. But the weakness of the women's movement lies in its weak capacity, weak links and weak cooperation across classes and regions.

Thai women today have contributed to and influenced changes in social policies, especially in the areas of wage labour, health, living conditions and quality of life. However, they still face institutionalised gender discrimination and are currently still fighting for equal rights in the areas of marriage, abortion, labour protection, politics and religion. New educational and network opportunities, if provided, will aid women in building better social networks, self-confidence and respectability. It is perhaps women's entry into formal politics and civil society, especially their work in NGOs, that is making the most significant changes in women's lives and the lives of their fellow citizens.

Appendix

List of Women's Organisations (GO and NGO) and Women's Studies Centres

I. GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (GO)

Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD)

(สำนักงานกิจการสตรีและสถาบันครอบครัว (สสค))

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

255 Baan Rajvithi, Thung Phyathai, Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400

Tel: (66) 2306-8757; Fax: (66) 2306-8739

Contact: Ms. Jitrapa Sunthornphiphit

E-mail: women.family@m-society.go.th; <http://www.women-family.go.th>

National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRC)

(คณะกรรมการสิทธิมนุษยชน กสม)

422 AMLO Building Phya Thai Rd., Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330

Tel : (66) 2-2219-2980, Fax : (66) 2-2219-2940, Hotline : 1377

E-mail : interhr@nhrc.or.th; <http://www.nhrc.or.th>

II. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO)

Association for the Promotion of Status of Women (APSW)

(สมาคมส่งเสริมสถานภาพสตรี)

501/1 moo 3 Dechatungkha Road, Sikan, Donmuang, Bangkok 10210

Tel: (66) 2 929-2301 to 5; Fax: (66) 2 929-2300, -2090

Contact: Ms. Maythinee Bhongsvej

E-mail : admin@apsw-thailand.org;

<http://www.apsw-thailand.org>; www.we-train.linethai.co.th

Association of Women Lawyers of Thailand (AWLT)

(สมาคมบัณฑิตสตรีทางกฎหมาย)

6 Sukhothai Rd., Dusit, Bangkok 10400

Tel: (66) 2241-0737; Fax: (66) 2243-9050

Contact: Ms. Suthinee Meteeprapa

EMPOWER Foundation

ศูนย์พิทักษ์สิทธิหญิงบริการ

PO Box 1065, Silom, Bangkok 10504

Tel: (66) 2 236-9272; Fax: (66) 2 632-7902

Contact: Ms. Surang Janyarn

E-mail: empower_foundation@thai.com, empower@mozart.inet.co.th

Fight Against Child Exploitation Foundation (FACE)

มูลนิธิเพื่อการพัฒนาการคุ้มครองเด็ก

P.O. Box 178, Klong Chan Post Office, Bangkok 12040

Tel: 02-509-5782, 947-7307; Fax: 02-519-2794

Contact: Sudarat Sereewat
Email: face@facefoundation.or.th, facefoundation.or.th/th/

Foundation for Women (FFW)

(มูลนิธิผู้หญิง)

295 Jaransanitwong Road, Soi 62
(or P.O.Box 47, Bangkoknoi), Bangplad, Bangkok 10700
Tel: (66) 2-433-5149, (66) 2 435-1246; Fax: (66) 2 434-6774
Contact: Ms. Usa Lerdsrisantad
E-mail: ffw@mozart.inet.co.th; <http://www.womenthai.org>

Friends of Women Foundation (FOW)

(มูลนิธิเพื่อนหญิง)

386/61-62 Soi. Ratchadapisek 44 (Chalermsook),
Ratchadapisek Rd.
Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900
Tel: (66) 2 513-2708, -1001; Fax: (66) 2 513-1929
Contact: Ms. Thanavadee Thajeen
E-mail: FOW@mozart.inet.co.th

Gender and Development Research Institute (GDRI)

(สถาบันวิจัยบทบาทหญิงชายและการพัฒนา)

501/1 moo 3 Dechatungkha Road, Sikan, Donmuang, Bangkok 10210
Tel: (66) 2929-2088 to 9; Fax: (66) 2929-2300, -2090
Contact: Dr. Suteera Vichitranont
E-mail: suteera@sala.net, gdri@cscoms.com; www.gdrif.org

Hotline Centre Foundation

(มูลนิธิฮอตไลน์)

14526-7 Viphawadee Rangsit Road, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900
Tel: (66) 2-276-2950, -277-8811, -277-7699; Fax: (66) 2-691-4057
Contact: Ms. Orn-anong Intarajit
E-mail: hotlinecenter@hotmail.com; <http://www.hotline.or.th>

National Council of Women of Thailand (NCWT)

(สภาสตรีแห่งชาติ)

Manungkasila House, Larn Luang Rd., Bangkok 10300
Tel: 281-0081; Fax: 281-2189
Contact: President
E-mail: ncwt@mozart.inet.co.th

Thai Women Community Leader Association (TWCLA)

(สมาคมผู้นำสตรีพัฒนาชุมชนไทย)

c/o Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior
Tel: 081-727-7633
Contact: Ms. Tuenjai Burapharat

Thai Women Watch Association (TW2)

2234 New Phechburi Road, Bangkapi, Huaykwang, Bangkok 10320

Tel: (66) 2 314 4316, (66) 2 314 5076; Fax: (66) 2 718 0372

Contact: Thanpuying Sumalee Chartikavanij

E-mail: tw2a@asianet.co.th

Women for Democratic Development Foundation (WDDF) / Women and Politics Institute (WPI)

(มูลนิธิผู้หญิงเพื่อการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตย / สถาบันผู้หญิงกับการเมือง)

Center of Public Philanthropy and Civil Society (ศูนย์สาธารณประโยชน์และประชาสังคม)

National Institute of Public Administration (NIDA)

Bangkapi, Bangkok 10240

Tel: 02-277-7206, 378-1284; Fax: 02-374-7399

Contact: Dr. Juree Vichitvatakarn

Women Network for Advancement and Peace (WNAP)

(เครือข่ายผู้หญิงเพื่อความก้าวหน้าและสันติภาพ)

295 Jaransanitwong Road, Soi 62, Bangplad, Bangkok 10700

Tel: (66) 2-433-5149, (66) 2 435-1246; Fax: (66) 2 434-6774

Contact: Ms. Pimtham Eurfeur

Women Workers' Unity Group (WWUG)

(กลุ่มบูรณาการแรงงานสตรี)

503/20 Thai Labour Museum, Nikhom Rodfai Makkasan Rd.,
Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400

Tel/Fax: (66) 2251-3173

Contact: Ms. Phleunphit Srisiri

Women's Health Advocacy Foundation (WHAF)

(มูลนิธิสร้างความเข้าใจเรื่องสุขภาพผู้หญิง สกส)

12/22 Thesaban Songkhrao Rd., Ladyao, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900

Tel: (66) 2591-1224 to 5; Fax: (66) 2591-1224 to 5 ext 11

Contact: Natthaya Bunphakdee

E-mail: contact@whaf.or.th; <http://www.whaf.or.th>

Women's News Center (WNC)

(ศูนย์ข่าว วญ)

937/1 Arunamarin Rd., Siriraj, Bangkoknoi Bangkok 10700

Tel/Fax: (66) 2866-1081

Contact: Ms. Usa Lerdsrisantad

Women's Action & Resource Initiative (WARI)

(ศูนย์วิจัยวาริ)

55/12 Muang Ake, Rangsit, Lak-hok, Pathumthani 12000

Tel: (66) 2997-7279

E-mail: wari9@yahoo.com

III. WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTERS

Women and Youth's Studies Program Thammasat University (TU)

(โครงการสตรีและเยาวชนศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์)

College of Innovative Education, 2 Prachan Rd., Bangkok 10200

Tel: (66) 2613-2860 to 1; Fax: (66) 2613-3609

Contact: Asst. Prof. Malee Pruekpongsawalee

E-mail : women@tu.ac.th, women_tu@yahoo.com; <http://www.ci.tu.ac.th>

Women's Studies Center, Chiang Mai University (CMU)

(ศูนย์สตรีศึกษา มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่)

Faculty of Social Sciences, Maung District, Chiang Mai 50200

Tel: (66) 53-943-572, 53-943-592 to 3; Fax: (66) 53-219-245

Contact: Assoc. Prof. Virada Somsavad

E-mail: wsc@chiangmai.ac.th; <http://www.soc.cmu.ac.th/~wsc>

Women in Public Decision-making Positions: National and Local Levels

A. As Elected Members of Parliament and Cabinet, 2000-2006

Year	Representatives		Senate		Cabinet	
	F (Total)	%	F (Total)	%	F (Total)	%
2000	na	na	23 (222)	10.4	na	na
2001	39 (418)	9.3	na	na	2 (38)	5.3
2005	46 (405)	11.4	na	na	2 (36)	5.6
2006*	21 (242)	8.7	na	na	3 (35)	8.6

* By appointment to the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) after September 2006 coup d'tat

B. As Political Party Executives, 2005 and 2007

Party	2005		2007	
	F	%	F	%
Thai Rak Thai	8	6.7	na	na
People Power	na	na	6	16.7
Democrat	5	10.2	5	10.2
Chart Thai	6	10.9	6	10.9
Mahachon	1	7.1	1	7.1
Puea Pandin	na	na	0	0.0
Total	20	8.4	18	11.32

C. As Executives in Civil Service, 2002 to 2006

Position	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Permanent Secretary C 11	na	na	na	na	2	10.5	4	12.9	2	10.5
Secretary-Gen'l /Director C11	na	na	na	na	1	8.3	2	16.7	2	18.2
Dep. Permanent Secretary C 10	na	na	na	na	4	7.5	8	14.3	12	21.4
Dep. Sec.-Gen'l/ Dep. Dir. C 10	na	na	na	na	14	31.8	17	40.5	15	34.9
Dir.-Gen'l, Dir., Sec.-Gen'l C10	na	na	na	na	16	14.5	20	17.9	19	17.1
Dep. Dir-Gen'l/ Dep. Sec. Gen'l/ Dep. Dir. C 9	na	na	na	na	63	24.4	62	23.2	68	25.3
Total	81	17.8	102	20.9	100	20.2	111	21.8	118	23.1

D. As Executives in Local Governance, 2002 and 2006

Level	2002		2006	
	F	%	F	%
BMA	61	14.6	72	17.4
Other local admin. (except BMA)	na	na	18,273	11.3
<i>Village+Subdistrict</i>			3,001	4.1
Sub-district Head	na	na	228	2.9
Village Head, Assist. Vill. Head	na	na	2,773	4.3
Total	61	14.6	21,346	9.1

E. As Members of Parliamentary Standing Committees on Children, Women, Youth and Elderly of both Houses (Representatives and Senate), 2000-2006

Year	Representatives		Senate	
	F	%	F	%
2000	na	na	7	46.7
2001	10	62.5	na	na
2005	6	35.3	na	na
2006	6	50.0	na	na

Source: *Report on Thailand Gender-disaggregated Statistics, 2008*. Bangkok: UNDP. 2008

Chronology of Women's Advancement

Year	Advancement of Thai women's status
1974	1974 const: "men and women have equal rights", and review all laws within 2 years to remove all discriminatory clauses against women [1976 coup removed these two clauses.]
1976	Thanphuying Lersak and Prof. Wimolsiri Jammanvej were appointed as two first female ministers
1979	1 st Long-term plan for women and development (1979-2001)
1985	-Signed CEDAW with 7 reservations
1989	NCWA was established under Prime Minister's Office
1990	-CEDAW, removed 2 reservations
1991	*Cabinet: Equal opportunity for women in all positions in the bureaucracy except those related to national security *90-day paid maternity leave for civil servants
1992	*Cabinet: "Year of Thai Women" – Queen 60 th Birth anniversary *CEDAW: removed 1 reservation—In cross cultural marriage, a Thai mother can transmit her Thai citizenship to her children, same as (previously) a Thai father does. *1 st time govt. (Chuan) had urgent policy on prevention and suppression of prostitution, eliminating child prostitution, and equal employment opportunity for women T. Sumalee Jatikanvit → Asia Pacific regional coordinator of NGOs for Beijing Conf.
1993	K. Supatra Masdit → Convenor of NGOs meeting, a parallel session with the 4 th World Women Conference in Beijing held in 1995 *Cabinet: Women can become deputy district chief
1995	*Amended constitution: "men and women have equal rights", but no time limit for revoking old laws. *CEDAW: removed 2 reservations—equal opportunity in education, political participation and other public activities *Signed Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)
1996	*Cabinet: Policy and action on prevention and solution of sex business *After 10 yr campaign, 1995-prevention and suppression of prostitution was validated. It protects sex workers, punishes clients and traffickers *Civil servants and state employees gain 90-day paid maternity leave in addition to normal leave days *Signed: Anti-child prostitution *Cabinet: Prohibit universities to set limit in number of men and women at the entrance admission
1997	*1997 const.: "men and women have equal rights" (#30) and "the state is responsible for gender equality" (#80) *NCWA became a department [earlier a division] *Law on anti trafficking came into effect, including protection of boys
1999	*Amended criminal law related to child victims of violence: investigation process must consider the psychological condition of the victims
2000	*Min. Education: In basic education, girls must be not less than 2/3 of boys
2001	*Cabinet: CEO on Gender at all levels (ministry to department), and GFP as coordinating centers in these offices *National Fund for Village and Urban Community (Village Fund): "proportional ratio of men and women in the committee", and replaced "household heads" with "representative of household" *Civil Servants Commission sent letter to all state offices to enforce gender equality measures
2002	*Bureaucratic structural reform: ONCWA merged with parts of Departments of Social Welfare and of Community Development, and elevated to department level, under Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
2003	*A married woman can use her own maiden name or her husband's family name
2007	NLA passed domestic violence law, rape law, name title law

Abbreviations

AAW	Alliance for Advancement of Women
APSW	Association for the Promotion of Status of Women
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
AWLT	Association of Women Lawyers of Thailand
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAW	Committee for Asian Women
CDA	Constitutional Drafting Assembly
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CNS	Council of National Security
CWYEA	Commission on Women Youth and Elderly Affairs
FFW	Foundation For Women
FORWARD	Foundation for Women, Law and Rural Development
FOW	Friends of Women Foundation
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women
GDRI	Gender and Development Research Institute
GWG	Gender Watch Group
IPRC	Institute of Population Research Center
NCSW	National Council of Social Welfare
NCWA	National Commission on Women's Affairs
NCWT	National Council of Women of Thailand
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NLA	National Legislative Assembly
OWAFD	Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development
TW2	Thai Women's Watch Foundation
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WARI	Women's Action and Resource Initiative
WCN	Women and Constitution Network
WDDF	Women for Democratic Development Foundation
We-Move	Women's Movement in Thai Political Reform
WHAF	Women's Health Advocacy Foundation
WPI	Women and Politics Institute
WWUG	Women Workers' Unity Group

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¹http://www.maleerat.net/04_press_2.htm

²Kazuki Iwanaga. 2005. Women in Politics in Thailand Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden (www.ace.lu.se)

³NHRC is one of the new independent semi-governmental agencies established after the 1997 Constitution to ensure accountability of the state. The Office is operated by about 150 bureaucrats, transferred from various ministries. NHRC is funded by the government.

⁴Each commission has a 6-year term. The selection process of the new commissioners, however, was disrupted by the 19 September coup in 2006. The term of the first commissioners should be expired after the parliamentary system is reinstated and is stable enough to launch and complete the selection process. The 2007 Constitution reduced the number of commissioners to 7.

⁵For example, “Women’s Human Rights” (2007), “Human Rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgender and Intersex People” (2007), “Reproductive Rights: The key to women’s health” (2007), “Manual for Protection of Rights and Liberty” (2007), “Question-Answer: Gender aspect of power devolution” (2006), and others.

⁶We apologise for not being able to include all the groups, especially those formed recently.

⁷<http://www.isiswomen.org/wia/wia199/pol00001.html>. 1999

⁸Four local groups from outside Bangkok (Nakhon Nayok, Amnartcharoen, Lanna, Dong Mae Phaed-Roi Et), six NGOs from Bangkok (Catholic Committee, EMPOWER, FFW, FOW, GAD and WCN) and LTU Trade Union.

⁹The seminar concluded that their work to redress women’s problems had been limited, lacking coordination with other aspects of social movements. Consequently, there was no common front or alliance with civil society movement, and no power to monitor the work of the state on a continuous basis.

¹⁰As the UN Women’s Decades progressed into its third decade at that time, there was a surge of international funds to support women/gender and development projects. A project on development of women’s studies curriculum was launched by NCWA, the official/governmental recipient of various bilateral grants. The project invited various state universities both urban and provincial to participate. A set of women’s studies textbooks was produced. But only Thammasat and Chiang Mai universities were successful in institutionalising a women’s studies program in their university structure. Nevertheless, the exercise was a ground for building a personal relationship between participating faculty members, which grew into networks. These networks were instrumental in empowering and mobilising rural women to participate in the new election at the subdistrict (*Tambon*) level and in the 1997 Constitution drafting process.

¹¹Bangkok Post, Saturday 16 December 2006

¹²Teeranart was a faculty member of Economics Department of Chulalongkorn University.

¹³For example, Charan Pakdeethanakul, Vicha Mahakun, and Jirmsak Pinthong.

¹⁴Female members of NLA and Social Development and Human Security Minister were invited. Women's groups made a statement that four of the articles in the 1997 constitution, namely, Section 30 pertaining to betterment of gender equality, Section 53 on the protection of family member against domestic violence and injustice, Section 80 on promotion of gender equality and family unity, Section 86 on fair compensation for female labourers, must be inserted in the new constitution. They considered these articles as the min pillars that guaranteed the basic rights of women.

¹⁵Since then, an annual public consciousness raising event has been held on the International Day for the Elimination of VAW on 25 November.

¹⁶From the interviews, many talked about Teeranat's warmth and care, particularly referring to her late night calls to different women activists/friends—from bureaucrats to trade unionists. They would chat on issues of mutual interests.

¹⁷After the recent hard-won victory battle to change the law to allow a woman to retain her name title and family name after marriage, some women workers felt estranged as if this change has no direct benefit for them.

¹⁸Recent "sex-graft" scandal alleging against the permanent secretary, the highest post of the new ministry overseeing OWAFD, confirmed the limit of this office in its present structure.

¹⁹Most NGOs have registered as "foundation" enabling them to receive donations from general public. But unlike in Japan or South Korea, where public consciousness as active citizenship, especially among the middle class, is high enough to voluntarily pay membership fees or render other support in kind, the concept of giving money to an NGO is still uncommon.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) was founded in 1925 as a political legacy of Germany's first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert. He rose to the highest political office in Germany as a Social Democrat of working class background, and in response to his own painful experience in political confrontation, Ebert proposed the establishment of a foundation to serve the following aims:

- Furthering the political and social education of individuals from all walks of life in the spirit of democracy and pluralism;
- Facilitating university access and research for gifted young people through scholarships; and
- Contributing to international understanding and cooperation.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, banned by the Nazi Regime in 1933 and re-established after World War II in 1947, continues to pursue these aims in all its' extensive activities to this day. A private, cultural and non-profit institution, it is committed to the ideals and basic values of social democracy and the labour movement. Currently, the activities of FES in Germany and in more than 100 other countries focus on the key topics of social cohesion, democratic culture, innovation and participation, and globalisation with solidarity.

In Asia, the focus of the foundation's work since its beginnings in the 1960's has been in the promotion of democratic development and in social dimensions of economic development. FES has been contributing to peaceful, just and stable development for over 40 years in the region and has been working to expand the understanding between Asia, Germany and subsequently Europe in reflection of how global, regional and local political and social issues are closely interrelated. Since the 1990's, the foundation has emphasised international dialogue both within Asia and between Europe and Asia, as well as has worked on issues related to international crisis prevention.

With a wide range of local partners from governmental and civil society institutions, FES has been active in Thailand since the 1970's as a "think-and-do-tank" working towards peace, democracy and social justice. Every year, 60-70 seminars, workshops, meetings and publications are organised in order to contribute to aims jointly identified with partners. The target groups of the project work include women and men decision makers and leaders from non-governmental organisations, ministries, political institutions, trade unions, universities, media, civic groups and others. Since 2005, supporting peace building in and for the South of Thailand has been an important effort of the project work.