



PHOTO & CAPTION

Volunteering for the Greater Good



Photo: USAID/Suzanne Ross

Ambassador Boyce presents village extension volunteers with symbolic gifts — fish seed for aquaculture and tree seedlings for mangrove rehabilitation — to help communities restore their livelihoods and reduce vulnerability.

Victims of the tsunami in Thailand are staking a claim on decisions that affect their future, with the support of USAID. Five tsunami-struck coastal villages elected gender-balanced volunteer extension teams that are working together to set up long-term plans that promote sound, sustainable development. The volunteers ensure that information is shared among citizens, local authorities, organizations and businesses and, in the process, bring out concrete and interesting ideas. USAID guided residents to develop a shared vision and action plan for their villages' future, and through this participatory approach, they were able to establish trust and assert influence on decisions that impact society as a whole. USAID-sponsored cash-for-work projects have helped these communities rebuild their livelihoods and reduce their vulnerability to coastal hazards.

One village extension volunteer, Samran Laonumao, commented, "We are learning to think logically through our problems, assess our resources and leverage possible solutions. We couldn't have done this without this process."

Telling Our Story

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