

## **Community Approach to Encourage Men's Participation in the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children**

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Friends of Women (FOW) Foundation conducted 2 research studies: Impact of Alcohol Drinking on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), and The Correlation of the Decrease in Alcohol Consumption and VAWC in 2002 and 2004 respectively. These 2 projects were funded by Thai Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth). All four regional networks of women across Thailand participated in the studies: Amnartcharoen Center, Thai Kriang Center, Samut Prakarn province, Fa-mai Community and ChiangMai Center, Chiang Mai, and Chumporn Center.

### **Research I: Impact of Drinking on VAWC**

The research found that;

- 70-80% of the sampled male who drink alcohol have had committed violence against women and children. They feel it is acceptable for them to scold and beat their spouse considering that they are the head of household. Their violent acts include beating, raping, brawling, cursing, and causing accidents.
- Minors adopt the drinking behavior from adults in the family.
- Men falsely believe that “a real man must drink alcohol heavily”.
- Most women are afraid to talk about her plights as a victim of a domestic violence. This leads to worsen health in both physically and psychologically.

This finding led to the next step of measures to reduce and stop alcohol drinking.

### **Research II: The Correlation of the Decrease in Alcohol Consumption and VAWC**

After 18 months of launching the project, the four networks have done the following activities.

- Promoting group formation to reduce or stop drinking alcohol to lessen VAWC.
- Collecting data to be used in campaign and dissemination to other areas.

- Campaigning for new values, changing patriarchal attitude to reduce VAWC.
- Planning and evaluating the overall achievement.
- Evaluating the project.

## **Results**

The results are concrete at all levels: individual, community leadership, community organizations, and policy.

- **At the individual and community leadership level**, victims found the way to vent their plights, exchange their experiences, and begin to feel psychologically improved.
- Women have transformed from passive victims to active agencies offering advices to others.
- Men quitted drinking alcohol. They realized such drinking behaviors only ruin the family relations. As a result, their social and economical status have improved.
- After men who quit drinking joined the campaign, community and family situation improved; VAWC problems decreased.
- **At the network level**, the shift of victims advocating both men and women has strengthened the campaigns. They become agencies to educate others in communities.
- **At the community level**, the participation of the survivors and converters adds weight to the campaign at the community level.
- **At the policy level**, people organizations are representatives of those who directly affected by drinking and violence. As a group, they could give concrete suggestions to policy makers at the national level to control sale and consumption of alcohol.