

Mae Poon Luang Royal Project Development Center

Background

When His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great visited the villagers at Baan Mae Poon Luang in 1978, His Majesty learned the problem of poverty of the Red Lahu hill tribe who earned their living by tea leaf picking and opium poppy growing. During the walk along the mountain slope, His Majesty said to the villagers, *“Express your gratitude to the land you live by stopping*



growing opium poppy and not destroying the forest. I'll find you vegetable and fruit varieties as well as well-bred chickens for farming to enable you to have higher income that could replace opium poppy.”

After that Mae Poon Luang Royal Project Development Center was set up by the Royal Project Foundation where its office is located at Baa Mae Poon Luang Moo 8, Wiang Sub-district, Wiang Pa Pao District, Chiang Rai. In collaboration with Mae Jo University, the areas of approximately 1,000 rai has been changed from opium poppy cultivation to temperate fruit orchards, vegetable and animal farms.

In 1983, the office of Mae Poon Luang Royal Project Development Center was moved to Baan Khun Jae moo 8, Mae Wan Sub-district, Prao District, Chiang Mai.

General information

Geography

The area is complex mountainous terrain at 1,000 - 1,400 meters above sea level with small valleys sloping down to Mae Ngad and Mae Nam Lao river basins.

Climate

The average temperature is 22 °C or 71.6 °F.

Population

More than 3,953 Lisu, Lahu, Haw and Akha live in 5 villages and 7 communities.

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At present, Mae Poon Luang Royal Project Development Center has set up field demonstration plots and supported local farmers to cultivate varieties of crops under Food Safety Standard like Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in order to generate their sustainable income and improve their livelihood. Furthermore, the center has organized and developed various activities related to education, society and public health to support strengths-based community

engagement. Hill tribe handicraft preservation, Cooperative Saving Group, Homestay Group, Young Farmer Group, reforestation project known as “Three Forests, Four Benefits”, soil and water conservation by vetiver grass growing, chemical use reduction campaign, and environmental contamination monitoring campaign are also supported by the center. Today the center becomes a learning center on highland agriculture for students, farmers and other interested people.

Main produces of the center

Spinach, bunching onion, broccoli, celery, red cabbage, leek, radish, cauliflower, kohlrabi green, parsley, peach, persimmon, Japanese plum, Japanese apricot, tea and coffee.

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