

Among the hill tribes of Northern Thailand, in the Golden Triangle, many marginalised communities are struggling. Taking a participatory approach, the UHDP aims to offer contextually relevant and sustainable development options that empower communities to overcome serious threats, including poverty, lack of citizenship and related rights and the loss of access to natural resources.



Struggling to survive in an increasingly degraded environment, the hill tribes of the Golden Triangle region have less freedom to practice traditional agriculture as once lush tropical forests are dwindling. Additionally, access to land that is adequate to support rotational farming is increasingly restricted.



UHDP is partnering with hill tribe farmers to determine viable options needed to attain a more sustainable approach to upland farming where land, forest and water resources are in short supply. Appropriate responses include soil conservation and improvement as well as crop diversification.



Water & Sanitation

One of UHDP's primary objectives is to assist upland communities to develop their water resources for consumption, sanitation and hygiene as well as for backyard agriculture.

Backyard Agriculture

UHDP is helping "landless farmers" supplement family food and income through backyard agriculture which includes small-scale livestock production (mainly pigs and native chickens), catfish production in tanks, mushroom farming and gardening.

Gender Issues & Citizenship

UHDP is partnering with upland communities to broaden gender understanding and to strengthen the participation of women in all levels of society. In the UHDP focus area of 18 hilltribe communities, an estimated 2/3 of the residents still lack Thai citizenship. Poverty and lack of citizenship make both hilltribe women and children particularly vulnerable to exploitation.



Micro-enterprise

With limited farmland and without many other viable options for employment, upland people must maximize income opportunities from backyard agriculture and other cottage industry. Micro-finance, managed by community members, can provide a needed financial boost towards establishing small family enterprises such as village stores and markets, livestock feed cooperatives and other backyard sources of supplemental income.



Day 1	Depart Australia for Chang Mai, Thailand. Arrive, go to accommodation.
Days 2 - 3	Cultural orientation days. Meet project personnel. Activities related to getting to know Thai culture and basic language. Explore Chiang Mai. Touristy options.
Day 4	Travel north to UHDP centre near the town of Fang. 4 hours. Project orientation with UHDP personnel.
Day 5 - 8	<p>Engage in UHDP activities in small groups. You will participate in a number of activities over the next few days including a tree nursery, working with staff in an agro-forestry plot, working with staff with small scale livestock, helping at the seed bank.</p> <p>The purpose of this time is to build an understanding of the challenges faced by Hills Tribe people in northern Thailand. This will include issues of gender rights, citizenship and day to day subsistence activities.</p> <p>There is an option for participants to stay in a village context for a night or two. Examples of village based projects are building water tanks, constructing a village meeting place or painting a day care centre. Various other options can be discussed and arranged to suit the group.</p>
Day 9	Travel back to Chiang Mai. Participate in a celebration event.
Day 10	Depart Chiang Mai for Australia.