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The Healing Family Foundation

An Inclusive Society for All



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Joy of life is something we all wish for. It is even more so with people with disabilities. That is why our workshop is named *Baan Sanook* (literally 'the house of joy'). It is run by 'The Healing Family Foundation' founded in 2005 by a group of parents. Its working principle is simple and straightforward: it aims to provide a space for people with disabilities (mainly intellectual) to enjoy themselves. However to carry it out in an effective way requires certain considerations.

First, what kind of work can they do best? Thanks to a Japanese design, we are equipped with the disable-person-friendly handloom. Each piece of their woven clothes is unique and, we would like to think, beautiful.

Secondly, what can we do with their clothes? Again thanks to some artistically-minded Japanese volunteers, we are able to make them into a variety of products, e.g., t-shirt, tablecloth, necktie, button,



greeting card, coaster, picture frame, etc. Thanks to the designs and a high quality of making, we believe that they are of marketable value.

Thirdly, the marketing aspect: for whom are we to make our products? The majority of our customers are visitors: people who, by words of mouth, directly come to *Baan Sanook*. It is gratifying that with the strength of their good will, we have been able to meet some expenses. We are well aware that our future is determined by our financial well-being. We therefore need other sources of income as well. Fortunately from time to time we have supports from individuals and organizations (Thai as well as non-Thai), which have significantly contributed to sustain our efforts throughout the last few years.

Fourthly, what contributions can we make to the society in return? Though our capacities (the area, the supporting staff, the management skills, etc.) are limited, we believe that there are some things one can learn about from our activities. Our Foundation could serve as a starting point from which one can work out their own ways to serve people with disabilities. The advocacy work for the rights of people with disabilities has recently become our new field of work.

Additionally, taking advantages of the central location of *Baan Sanook*, it has served as a focal point of cloth collection for the needy in the hills. All these activities, which we try to work on behalf the community, are to be continued and intensified in Chiang Mai and elsewhere.

Fifthly, the recreational aspect: what, besides regular work, could make lives of the disabled people more colorful? Dancing and eating together are common among other activities. Occasionally, we make trips to the country and other provinces.

Finally the vision aspect: what are we to do in the next decades or so? It is a question often asked, but no definite answers as yet. However our dream is to have a kind of group home or independent living. This idea still looms at the horizon. But it will become urgent when their parents are to face their mortality.

On the road to fulfill these aspects so far we have some success as well as failures. Both hopefully will help us go ahead with more accomplishments. Aren't we all disabled in one way or another? It is true that disabilities can mean handicaps, but they also could bring the unity of minds and actions to enjoy what life can give us all.

