

Advocacy for inclusive street vendors policy

HomeNet Thailand

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Summary of the presentation

- General situation
- Challenges have been facing
- Organizing Bangkok street vendors
- Collective negotiation
- Build alliances
- Communicate with the society
- Way forward

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General situation

- Rural people migrated to seek employment in urban area, in particular Bangkok as well as results from economic crisis increased numbers of street vendors
- Bangkok Governor said, there are more than 240, 000 street vendors in Bangkok
- No specific law on street vending, street vendors in Bangkok regulated under traffic and cleaning act which allows local officers to designate vending policies.

General situation



- Bangkok Metropolitan Authority(BMA) issued ordinances to establish a licensing system, restrict the size of stalls, prohibit vending in certain areas (e.g. close to public transit stops, pedestrian bridges, cross walks, etc.), and set fines for violations.
- The local government can easily grant permission for vendors to operate, but can just as easily—and suddenly—revoke it. Previously, the city has tried to reduce vending. However, the waves of evictions since 2014 are the most extreme and far-reaching that the city has ever experienced.

Challenges have been facing

- Since 2014, BMA has led a campaign to reduce the number of vendors under the motto “Return the footpath to pedestrians.”
- It has removed more than 488 of over 683 designated vending areas, and plans to remove the remaining over 230 areas
- The city has reduced the number of licensed vendors by more than 12,000, with only a few thousand licensed vendors remaining.
- The policy has also destroyed many of the city’s iconic markets popular with locals and tourists such as Pratunam and Klongthom Market.

Reacted from street vendors

- Submitted their appeals to related government agencies (BMA, Tourism Authority of Thailand, MoC, MoSDHS)
- Submit their petition to the Government House
- Lobby politicians to support them
- Sue in the Administrative Court
- Formed loosely network to help each others
- But no positive result.



Organizing Bangkok street vendors

- With supported by the Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (HomeNet Thailand) about 7,500 street vendors organized as a network called “Network of Thai Street Vendors for Sustainable Development-NEST ” in 2018, currently about 10,000 join with NEST
- NEST members are current and former street vendors affected by citywide vendor evictions. They located in 35 trading areas from 25 districts in Bangkok. Members include food, clothing and dry goods, and souvenir vendors. The Network’s objective is to provide support and solidarity to vendors and to protect their rights.

“Network of Thai Street Vendors for Sustainable Development - NEST ”



Collective negotiation

- NETs developed their organizational bylaws and nominated leaders.
- Leaders received training on policy advocacy and collective negotiation.
- 1,200 members rallied to the Government House in September 4th, 2018 and negotiate with the government to stop banding street vendors policy, set up a committee to solve problems with participation from street vendor representatives, and issue the street vending law
- The government set up the committee reducing social impact from regulation policy in September 10th, 2018. However up to now nothing has moved.

1,200 members rallied to the Government House in September 4th





Build alliances

- In order to increase public support NEST build alliances with academic person who support their struggle.
- Academicians formed the network called “Academics Network for Inclusive Cities” and collected 115 signatures from academicians across the country to remind the government to review and revise the policy. In addition, the network also educated about contribution from street vending to the country to the society.

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Communicated with the society

- NEST tried to communicate with the society on the current situation they are facing, impact from banding policy and their contribution to the society through social media and mass media.
- Involved in debate regarding street vending issue.





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Way forward

- NEST is trying to strengthen their members' groups as well as expand to cover new members.
- Develop rules for their members to perform, if they have opportunity to vend again.
- Continue to push pressure to government to bring the issue to discuss on the table.
- Allies with other civil society groups such as trade union, sustainable agricultural groups, community and small business in trading area.
- Keep advocate on inclusive and sustainable development as well as rights to the city.

Conclusion

- The working poor have **rights to live** in the city and **earn** on the street. They can enjoy the development of the city as others.
- Street vendors are also an **economic agent** to develop **local economy**, so they have rights **to work** and **to demand** for **inclusion** in the development policy.
- We can't talk about **inequality** without talking about employment, in particular **decent employment**.
- Co-creation of public policy** should be a good solution, and to get public policy, **social dialogue** is needed.
- A progressive **transition from informal to formal economy** should be developed and promoted.
- We aim for **social solidarity economy** that the working poor, their allies, people in the society, local authorities and the government work together to ensure **Sustainable Development for All**.

