



Croatian  
International  
Relations  
Review

CIRR

XXVIII (89) 2022,  
90-101

DOI 10.2478/  
CIRR-2022-0005

UDC 327 (4-6  
EU:73:55)

# Non-Violence Approach In The Southern Area In Thailand: Problem And Increasing Of Operational Efficiency

**Weriphan Srithep**

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Mahidol University, Thailand*

*Email: [suneekanjajit@gmail.com](mailto:suneekanjajit@gmail.com)*

*<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0295-8007>*

**Suppakorn Poonyarith**

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Mahidol University, Thailand*

*Email: [Suppakorn2519@gmail.com](mailto:Suppakorn2519@gmail.com)*

*<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3100-0663>*

**Sunee Kanyajit**

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Mahidol University, Thailand*

*Email: [suneeKanyajit@gmail.com](mailto:suneeKanyajit@gmail.com)*

*<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3413-0570>*

**Veenunkarn Rujipark**

*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Mahidol University, Thailand*

*<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2220-1500>*

**Apasiri Suwannanon**

*Suan Dusit University, Thailand*

*Email: [apadrphd@gmail.com](mailto:apadrphd@gmail.com)*

*<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8583-5768>*

**Key words:**

*Taking Home Project, Royal Thai Army, Insurgency, Strategy, Thailand's southern border provinces*

**Abstract**

*This research aimed to examine a non-violent approach to settling the conflict in Thailand's southern region. Taking Home Project was chosen to analyse issues and challenges to design policies, strategies, tactics, processes, and guidelines for improving operational efficiency. This was qualitative research in which data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 17 samples from main agencies and supporting agencies at the administrative and operational levels and from the people sector in specific places. The findings suggested that the Taking Home Project adhered to the concept of nonviolence and national security policy. They lacked effectiveness and efficiency, however, due to the following issues: 1) execution of the policy 2) a personnel shortage 3) a lack of engagement on the part of supporting agencies and the private sector; and 4) the fund was spent largely, but the outcome's cost-effectiveness cannot be quantified. Additionally, the Taking Home Project encountered obstacles and difficulties resulting from the dispute in the historical component of secession, religious and cultural divides, and communication to foster understanding. The study concluded that the government should strengthen the project's employees and promote good governance in its management. Collaboration between the public and private sectors and the community will be bolstered.*

**Introduction**

The insurgency in southern border provinces is a result of long-standing historical disputes. The causes are rooted in the many viewpoints and attitudes of persons who see the issues, including education, religion, culture, and occupation. As a result, individuals develop a new perspective on the issue (Jermittiparsert et al., 2017; Tieojaroenkit, 2020). Solving a problem by violence is regarded as inciting broad conflict that may be linked to other sensitive subjects such as religion and human rights. Later on, the authorities recognised the value of a peaceful resolution. This leads to the security policy of employing a peaceful solution to the situation. This is regarded as a novel in Thailand (Tieojaroenkit, 2020).

"Taking Home Project" is a project dedicated to peacefully resolving conflicts. The project is an operation to provide justice and remedy for affected people initiated by the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC Region 4 Front) on September 11, 2012. It was to provide an opportunity for dissidents against the government who wish to end violence, as well as for people who are afraid and flee areas of the country, to fight peacefully by facilitating their entry into the legal justice system and readjusting their attitudes and beliefs (Nararattanawong, 2021; Srimuengkanchana, 2019; Thairuth, 2018; Tieojaroenkit, 2020). However, numerous stakeholders debate whether the Taking Home Project is genuinely successful. This is because the number of violent occurrences did not reduce and some project participants re-offend, and also because a considerable portion of the budget was spent on this initiative (chakthom, 2020; Srimuengkanchana, 2019; Tieojaroenkit, 2020). Additionally, how

do victims of violence or their family and residents in communities respond to this project? And in what way should this project be improved to maximise efficiency and accomplish the project's objectives?

As a result, the researcher concluded that the study of problems and difficulties encountered during the operation of the Taking Home Project, as well as the enhancement of operational efficiency toward the Taking Home Project following the Royal Thai Army strategy, is a challenge for all sectors to emphasise and pay attention to resolving the issue. The research findings can be used to build and improve policy or strategy to strengthen the operational efficiency of the Taking Home Project, thereby tangibly achieving the objective and bringing sustainable peace to southern border provinces.

## Literature Review

### Non-Violence Concepts for Solving Conflict

The non-violent approach responds to violent events without resorting to physical force to resolve a problem. Thus, a non-violent approach does not imply passivity or inaction, but rather actions or expressions in any non-violent manner, such as demonstrations, symbols, tearing ballot paper for political declaration, hunger strike, economic sanction, or refusing to cooperate with activities or negotiations with the opposition, and so on. Those with a non-violent stance are opposed to violence and do not wish to injure or kill anyone. Certainly, these individuals must be courageous to exercise self-control, patience, self-control, and an understanding of humanity (Chaijaroenwatana et al., 2017). According to the preceding definition, the following features of non-violent problem-solving are present:

- 1) To entirely abstain from violence; this is because violence destroys both relationships and situations and alters the direction of conflict in negative ways.
- 2) Establishing a trust-based connection is a top priority when resolving disputes through a non-violent approach. This is because, before entering the stage of peaceful discourse, the parties' relationship must be healed. Because if the parties' good relationship is not cured, the parties will be suspicious of each other's remarks rather than receptive to hearing the different viewpoint. Eventually, both parties become unable of understanding one another and refuse to accept one another's proposals.
- 3) Not to defeat one another but to foster cooperation; the parties must not be based on a winner-take-all game in which there is a winner and a loser. If this concept is used as a foundation, the parties are likely to use violence to falsify information and betray one another. These activities mentioned above will only serve to exacerbate a quarrel. On the other hand, if the parties abandon such a gaming concept and collaborate to discover a

creative solution, they will be able to fully accomplish the aim jointly (Chaijaroenwatana et al., 2017).

4) To address the requirements of each side, most conflicts end in violence as a result of the parties' basic needs not being met. As a result, the fundamental needs of each side must be satisfied before resolving a problem through cooperation (Chaijaroenwatana et al., 2017).

### **Taking Home Project**

The Taking Home Project, considered the Royal Thai Army's strategy, is managed by the Internal Security Operations Command Region 4 Front (ISOC Region 4 Front). It is responsible for supervising policy management, conducting attitude adjustment training, appointing the district operation centre as the project's primary agency, and the Provincial Internal Security Operation Command as the unit monitoring the district operation centre. Additionally, the project emphasises coordination and integration of all essential government sectors, public agencies and local leaders, religious leaders, and spiritual leaders to maximise the project's operational efficiency and uniformity across all dimensions. (Pisansitthiwat, 2018).

The Taking Home Project aims to enable dissidents against the government or those who fight the government with violence to return and resolve the issue peacefully by self-reporting, while the government is also willing to assist with justice concerns. The target population consists of group 1 individuals who are fearful and suspicious of being issued an arrest warrant or blocked. Group 2 individuals are issued an arrest warrant on emergency decree charges, and group 3 individuals are issued an arrest warrant under the Criminal Procedure Code. How the Taking Home Project participants are screened are as follows: 1) To certify good deeds (the project of doing good deeds for the country) with a group of people who are fearful and suspicious, 2) To dismiss a warrant with a group of people who have been issued a warrant under an emergency decree, and 3) The justice provision committee is responsible for screening people following the Criminal Procedure Code and providing convenience and justice to project participants. Participating in a home project entails the following six phases.

According to statistics on the number of dissidents who participated in the project from its inception on September 11, 2012, to February 5, 2017. There were 4,432 participants, divided into those who committed an offence under the Criminal Procedure Code's emergency decree and those who were afraid. At the time of writing (October 2, 2017), 4,535 persons have registered to engage in the project, 4,403 have reentered society (set zero), and 132 are currently in the process. Additionally, there is an activity to foster trust based on the concept of 'closing gaps and fostering understandings' by providing 'Thai nation development cooperators' (who previously belonged to the Communist Party of Thailand – CPT) with the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences comparable to those of

the Taking Home Project (chakthom, 2020; Srimuengkanchana, 2019; Thairuth, 2018; Tieojaroenkit, 2020). The procedure of taking home project is discussed in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** The procedure of Taking Home Project

Step	Procedure
1	To build the understanding that all public must implement those local leaders and religious leader must participate in the process
2	To receive reports and adjust attitudes
3	To dismiss legal obligations and facilitate the justice system
4	To propel the Taking Home Association that 37 associations have been established with 1 association per district.
5	To promote vocation and vocational training for improving the quality of life to be able to live normally
6	When returning to the homeland, participants will be monitored and assigned to cooperate in leading society forward

### Relevant Research

The previous study indicates that the public sector has similar expectations for Taking Home Project participants. The Taking Home Project is intended to enable dissidents against the government or those who fight the government with violence, as well as those who have escaped from home, to return and resolve the conflict peacefully by increasing understanding and restoring trust between the government and the people, as well as among the people themselves, to foster greater cooperation in resolving the conflict and sustainably eliminating the structure of insecurity (Chealae; Samathi, 2017).

However, ideas and efforts promoting a peaceful solution to the situation in three southern border provinces are sometimes fraught with difficulties (Agency, 2019; chakthom, 2020; Fuakaew, 2019; Srimuengkanchana, 2019). Previous research found that the peaceful approach concept's proponents in three southern border provinces are inconsistent among governmental officials, the military, and the civilian sector (Chaiyakul, 2017; Monkongpitukkul, 2016; Srimuengkanchana, 2019; Tieojaroenkit, 2020). Additionally, government programmes and activities affect how individuals live (Srimuengkanchana, 2019; Tieojaroenkit, 2020). The Taking Home Project is a non-violent strategy to resolve the violence problem associated with dissidents against the government being classified as past wrongdoers. This project's objective is to reintegrate these individuals into society. The government uses the term "reform into a good person," which has been criticised as dehumanizing (chakthom, 2020; Tieojaroenkit, 2020), rather than human equality, as is the case with the peace dialogue, which focuses on discussion and increasing understanding between the government and the general public (Tieojaroenkit, 2020). Additionally, it is questioned if those recruited to engage in the project are genuine or are imposters gathered by the

government to meet the required number (Srimuengkanchana, 2019; Tieojaroenkit, 2020).

## **Methodology**

This was a qualitative study that included document review and an in-depth interview. Key informants were 17 individuals who were qualified for the research and willing to contribute information and individuals with direct experience in the security sector, justice system sector, administrative sector, and project participants and people sector. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

The researcher divided the interview structure into three groups: group 1 questions for public officers regarding performance problems and difficulties, group 2 questions for project assessment in five dimensions, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability; and group 3 guidelines for developing and increasing operational efficiency toward the Taking Home Project; group 2 questions for project participants regarding performance problems and difficulties; and group 3 suggestions for guidelines for developing and increasing operational efficiency toward the Taking Home Project. The information gained through qualitative research was used to establish an approach for analysing and classifying data in the same direction, following the research's conceptual framework, and presented in descriptive form.

## **Result**

### **Problems and difficulties in the Taking Home Project**

#### **The situation in the implementation of the policy into practice**

The investigation established that the Taking Home Project's policies and objectives are sound. However, in practice, it is challenging due to the involvement of numerous agencies. Additionally, special laws, the Criminal Procedure Code, and security legislation are involved; these laws govern the mainstream court system and are aimed at punishing through a retributive manner. On the other hand, the Bring People Home Project's purpose is to allow dissidents to return to society through an alternative justice system, resulting in an inconsistency in terms of inefficiency resulting from such legal discrepancy.

“Taking Home Project in the perception of villagers or former wrongdoers who do not understand the law is that they will not be punished if participating in this project” (Interview, May 25, 2021).

#### **The Problem in Integration Between the Major Agency and Supporting Agency**

The general issue and difficulties in implementing the Bring People Home Project are due to a lack of coordination amongst institutions, including the

military, police, administrative sector, public prosecutor, and court. Since the Royal Thai Army is in charge of this project, it aims to give offenders a chance to enter the justice system by diverting their case away from the mainstream justice system and ordering non-prosecution under Section 21 of the Public Prosecution Organization and Public Prosecutors Act (2010). As a result, dissidents will undergo training. In practice, however, police personnel charged with the enforcement of the law are responsible for detaining offenders according to an arrest warrant according to the Criminal Procedure Code. Nonetheless, specific facts about such a project, such as the responsibilities of each agency concerning the initiative, are unknown.

“I have no idea of project’s details.” (May 8, 2021).

Additionally, certain informants close to certain persons, such as sub-district headmen/village leaders, indicated that such a project still lacks proactive public relations and information clarity and is difficult to reach or understand the objective.

#### **The Problem in Personnel of Strategic or Operation Unit**

The strategic or operational unit faces a problem with staff transfers within its mandated territories, resulting in a lapse in creating trust with the target and the local populace in three southern border provinces. “The strategic framework is constantly developed, unlike personnel or strategic unit that has been transferred that is restriction. When the team changes or people change, it is like setting to zero. It may take some time to get used to new people.” (May 25, 2021)

Additionally, there are only 15 operational officers in the Taking Home Project in the main agency.

#### **The Problem in the Transparency if Budget Management**

The project's budget has been audited on a quarterly, six-monthly, or annual basis by agencies inside the Royal Thai Army and an external agency, the Office of the Auditor General of Thailand (OAG). Currently, any operations or projects are obliged to enter data into the government's central system known as E-Penser for clarification. However, a personal security budget cannot be divulged. As stated by the informant, “On the budget issue, there has been audited by both internal and external agencies. The internal agencies are various commissions, and the external agency is the OAG. Anyone can access it. But if it is a personal project, it may not be accessible. I am not sure if the general public can access, but Parliament members can access it all.” (May 25, 2021)

#### **Guidelines for Developing and Increasing Operational Efficiency Toward Taking Home Project**

According to key informants, the foundation for developing and increasing operational efficiency toward the Taking Home Project can be found in 1) improving administration within relevant public agencies and integration between relevant public agencies and supporting agencies, and 2) increasing public-private cooperation.

To improve administration in relevant public agencies, it shall train personnel to be competent and knowledgeable about the three southern border provinces' identities and provide officers to serve as permanent supervisors in areas to foster trust and ensure that the government does not abandon project participants. Additionally, the project's administration shall be based on sound governance and transparency in all aspects, which both internal and external auditors can audit. Further, it shall facilitate collaboration between key agencies and supporting agencies in suppression, attitude adjustment, justice, and economic, social, political, and religious development.

Additionally, the project will foster greater collaboration between government entities and the community. Community leaders, religious leaders, and community members shall be involved in the initiative, with the public sector monitoring participation upon their return to the community.

## **Discussion**

The Taking Home Project's policy is primarily about fostering good relations and understanding between the government and its adversary. Additionally, the government assists opponents in various ways, including vocational training. This is congruent with the non-violence philosophy of resolving conflict by a peaceful approach and mutual understanding. However, the issue is ineffective policy execution, as there are various issues, such as legal inconsistencies. In addition to regular criminal law, three southern border provinces are governed by three specific laws: the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations (2005), the Internal Security Act (2008), and the Martial Law Act (1914). These three statutes emphasise suppression and deterrent by authorising officials to investigate, arrest, and inquire without going through the traditional legal system. This is consistent with Crime Control Theory, which holds that officers' discretion should be used to presume a suspect is guilty. This type of law is used in situations requiring a swift, severe, and certain response to or control serious and widespread crimes. This is because a universal due process cannot be carried out on time.

Additionally, such special laws are adopted based on the Conflict Theory, which assumes that the authority or government enacts the legislation to advance social goals or the interests of their group. Under these statutes, a suspect is frequently handled more harshly than the bulk of society in the legal system. As a result of such laws, other chasms and suspicions between the government and the general public are created ([Chambliss et al., 1971](#)).

However, the Bring People Home Project seeks to enable and pardon dissidents or felons to change and reenter the court system through the law. Additionally, according to the Order of the Prime Minister dated May 15, 2015, on the implementation of Section 21 of the Public Prosecution Organization and Public Prosecutors Act (2010), if a non-prosecution order is not in the public interest or adversely affects national safety or security, it must be submitted to the Attorneys general, who has the authority to order non-prosecution. Additionally, Section 21 of the Internal Security Act (2008) requires that individuals get attitude modification training rather than face prosecution. In practice, however, this results in legal consistency, as three southern border provinces remain under the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations (2005), which states that Section 21 of the Internal Security Act (2008) cannot be applied to an accused of security offence involving training rather than criminal prosecution. Due to section 21's inapplicability to such objectives, most criminals who are served with a warrant under the Criminal Procedure Code or the Security Act decline to participate non the project. They will be prosecuted regardless of whether they engage in the project.

Additionally, the analysis found that the Taking Home Project faces an integration challenge between the major and supporting agencies. This is consistent with a prior study indicating that another factor contributing to the failure of peaceful problem-solving in three southern border provinces is a lack of coordination and integrated planning amongst key agencies ([Chaiyakul, 2017](#); [Monkongpitukkul, 2016](#); [Srimuengkanchana, 2019](#); [Tiejaroenkit, 2020](#)). Successful policy implementation involves the collaboration of relevant agencies, consistency, and the ability to interact with each agency ([Monkongpitukkul, 2016](#)).

Personnel operations is another indicator of a project's success. Each year, the project's personnel or strategic unit is transferred, resulting in a lack of continuity. The problem of three southern border provinces must be resolved psychologically, which will require some time spent visiting localities to create trust gradually. As a result of frequent employee transfers, it is necessary to restart each time. Additionally, the size of the workforce affects the project's success. The investigation discovered that the number of operational officers assigned to the Taking Home Project inside the major agency is out of step with the number of duties assigned to specific areas. When millions of people in three southern border provinces are compared to tens of officers, the operation cannot be considered thorough. A limited workforce makes it impossible to anticipate national performance. As a result, the researcher believes that project success cannot be determined just by the number of project participants if operational workers can also attest to the project's success.

According to the study of the guideline for increasing operational efficiency toward the Taking Home Project following the Royal Army Strategy, another factor contributing to the successful increase in operational

efficiency toward the Taking Home Project is the guideline for tangibly developing an integrated working system among agencies at all levels, whether policy, strategic, or tactical, through the establishment of a specific and reasonable mutual practice. Thus, this is congruent with the research on insurgency solutions in three southern border provinces that every agency should incorporate to bring about peace (Chaiyakul, 2017; Deelee, 2007; Monkongpitukkul, 2016; Srimuengkanchana, 2019; Tieojaroenkit, 2020). Additionally, increasing the Taking Home Project's operational efficiency serves as a guideline for strengthening social control in areas through the participation of community leaders, religious leaders, volunteers, and community members to increase knowledge and understanding, adjust attitudes and environments conducive to sharing opinions about cultures and religions, and ensure trust between the government and community as a pillar of not committing an offence. This is consistent with research findings indicating that in the knowledge management of the justice system in a multicultural society in three southern border provinces, community leaders, religious leaders, and the general public should take an active role in resolving problems in areas by promoting democracy in the community in addition to development and politics (Seedum, 2013; Waba, 2017).

## Conclusion

This research aims to examine the results of the Taking Home Project operation following the Royal Thai Army Strategy, as well as the associated problems and difficulties, to develop policies, strategies, tactics, processes, and guidelines for increasing operational efficiency following the Royal Thai Army Strategy. This is a qualitative study that employs in-depth interviews to elicit data from 17 samples drawn from main agencies and supporting agencies at the administrative and operational levels and from the people sector in specific areas.

The findings show that challenges and obstacles to the Taking Home Project include a shortage of personnel, a lack of integration between the primary agency, supporting agency, and the private sector, and a lack of transparency in budget management. As a result, the government should strengthen laws, operational processes, and follow-up evaluation to ensure constant transparency in project participants' welfare, social position, and rights and liberties upon reintroduction into society. Nonetheless, human rights must be upheld, and impacted communities and residents must not be forgotten.

## References

Agency, I. (2019). Renewal of the Emergency Decree for 14 years!, the outcome of Southern Border Provinces sound good, but still not calm. Retrieved from <https://www.isranews.org/south-news/stat-history/79718-years-79718.html>

- Chaijaroenwatana, B., & Renumat, M. (2017). Non-Violence and Conflict Management by Non-Violence. *Peace Studies Journal*, 5(2), 1-16. Retrieved from <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/journal-peace/article/view/92232>
- Chaiyakul, A. (2017). The assistance of remedies and rehabilitation service of the affected people by the conflict in southern border provinces: a case study of those detainees in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure [Unpublished master thesis, Yala Rajabhat University, Thailand].
- chakthom, P. w. p. (2020). Can taking home project close the gap and create understanding? *Thailand Information Center for Civil Rights and Investigative Journalism*. Retrieved. Retrieved from <https://www.tcijthai.com/news/2018/20/scoop/8164>
- Chambliss, W. J., & Seidman, R. B. (1971). *Law, order, and power*: Addison-Wesley Reading, MA.
- Chealae, S. a. S., W. (n.d.). The expectation of the civil society among participants in the coming home project. Retrieved from [http://www2.huso.tsu.ac.th/bill\\_20181520494](http://www2.huso.tsu.ac.th/bill_20181520494)
- Deelee, S. (2007). Guidelines for solving problems of three southern border provinces insurgency. [Unpublished master thesis, Thammasat University, Thailand].
- Fuakaew, Y., Luxchaigul, N. and Srisuk, W. (2019). The process of bringing Buddhists back home: a case study of BaanTadan, Talo Kapo Sub-District, Yaring District, Pattani Province. *KMITL Prince of Chumphon Journal*, 1(2), 53-62. Retrieved from <https://www.pcc.kmitl.ac.th/journal/schu/schucurrent.html>
- Jermisittiparsert, K., & Ruangsilp, A. (2017). Fear of Crimes among the People in the Southern Border of Thailand. *Asian Political Science Review*, 1(1), 32-40. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3072373>
- Monkongpitukkul, S. (2016). Conflict resolution in the 3 southern border provinces of Thailand: policy process and outcomes. *Al-HIKMAH Journal, Fatoni University* 6(12), 35-53. Retrieved from <https://repository.nida.ac.th/handle/662723737/5069>
- Nararattanawong, C. (2021). The Project of Taking Home. Retrieved from <https://siamrath.co.th/n/35463>
- Pisansitthiwat, T. (2018). Individual study on Taking Home Project by the Internal Security Operations Command Region 4 front with the solution of the problem of three southern border provinces and 4 districts of Songkhla Province. *Bangkok: Army War College*.
- Samathi, A. (2017). Stability problems in Thailand's Southern Provinces: case study Kampongtagwa and Taking Home Project. *Songkhla: Thaksin University*.
- Seedum, I. (2013). Factors affecting the implementation of the peace building process insouthern border provinces of Thailand policy: a case study of Pattani Province *Parichart Journal* 25(2), 86-109.
- Srimuengkanchana, C. (2019). Set Zero, taking home, reducing gap and increasing understand. Retrieved from

- <https://library2.parliament.go.th/ebook/content-issue/2560/hi2560-085.pdf>
- Thairuth. (2018). Internal Security Operations Command Reginal 4 confirming that 412 participants were attended to the Project of Taking home in. Retrieved from <https://www.thairath.co.th/news/local/south/1248732>
- Tieojaroenkit, T. (2020). Peaceful Means in Thai National Security Policies for the Southern Border. *Governance Journal*, 9(1), 45-59. Retrieved from <https://so01.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/gjournal-ksu/article/view/242514>
- Waba, N. (2017). Achievement-oriented strategy of management for national security in the three southern border provinces. *Journal of Rangsit Graduate Studies in Business and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 102-114.