

SPD ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR 2025



EMPOWERING STUDENTS, INSPIRING CHANGE

B.A in Social Policy and Development (SPD)
International Program
Faculty of Social Administration
Thammasat University (Tha Prachan Campus)

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INTRODUCTION OF NEW PROFESSORS

DR. HAO SHENG DUAN



Academic Background

- Ph.D. in International Development Studies (Mekong Studies), Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University.
- M.A. in Southeast Asian Studies (Regional History and Religion), Chulalongkorn University.
- BSc. in Geography (cultural tourism), Sichuan Normal University.

Academic Interest

- Development Studies
- Southeast Asian Studies
- International Relations

A HUGE AND WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW LECTURER

The Faculty of Social Administration at Thammasat University proudly welcomes Dr. Duan Haosheng (known to students as Ajarn Duan) to the Social Policy and Development (SPD) program. Originally from Yunnan, China—where the Lancang-Mekong River begins its journey—Dr. Duan’s academic vision has been shaped by this “Mother River” and the interconnected societies along its course. Viewing the Mekong as both a lived environment and a regional system, he understands development as a shared, cross-border process rather than an abstract policy concept.

This perspective directly informs his teaching philosophy. With an interdisciplinary background, Ajarn Duan advocates a “classroom without walls,” where rigorous theoretical foundations are integrated with field-based learning, comparative regional analysis, and engagement with practitioners. His courses encourage students to connect Asian experiences with international standards while critically examining real-world policy challenges. Deeply committed to SPD’s diverse and international learning community, Ajarn Duan mentors students toward meaningful pathways in public service, international organizations, social entrepreneurship, and grassroots development—preparing them to become reflective, adaptive, and globally minded development professionals.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW PROFESSORS

DR. SIYUAN LIU



Academic Background

- Ph.D. in Social Innovation and Sustainability
Thammasat University Bangkok, Thailand
- Master of Social Science in Sustainable Tourism,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Hong Kong, China
- Bachelor of Arts in Sustainable Tourism Management
(First Class Honors), Srinakharinwirot University
Bangkok, Thailand

Teaching Areas

- Sustainable Tourism
- Social Innovation and Sustainability
- Sex Workers and Sex Tourism
- Communication for Social Changes
- Communication for Social Business

A HUGE AND WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW LECTURER

The Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, is pleased to formally announce the appointment of Siyuan Liu (known to students as Ajarn Andy) as a Lecturer in the Bachelor of Arts Program in Social Policy and Development (International Program).

Ajarn Andy joins us as a dedicated Ph.D. researcher in Social Innovation and Sustainability, with a distinguished academic focus on gender studies, community-based tourism, social policy, and the dynamics of everyday power, particularly pertaining to marginalized communities.

His professional expertise, which strategically bridges academia and applied work across the tourism, education, and social development sectors, aligns seamlessly with our program's commitment to integrating rigorous policy analysis with critical field-based engagement and ethical practice.

We are confident that Ajarn Andy's presence will significantly enrich our academic community and curriculum. He will contribute to key courses such as Communication for Social Change, Gender and Social Diversity, and Special Topics in Social Policy, fostering an intellectually rigorous and inclusive learning environment for our students.

MESSAGE FROM SPD DIRECTOR

Assistant Professor Dr. Watchara Pechdin



Advancing Innovation, Leadership, and Social Engagement at SPD Building on 2025, Moving Forward to 2026

As we welcome the New Year, it is both timely and meaningful to reflect on a year of transformation and collective achievement at the Social Policy and Development program (SPD). Over the past year 2025, SPD has moved decisively from planning to implementation, translating its academic vision into concrete institutional practices that strengthen research capacity, leadership development, international engagement, and social responsibility.

A major milestone has been the full establishment of two complementary platforms: the **SPD Research Lab** and the **SPD Social Lab**. The Research Lab serves as a dedicated space for advancing social inquiry, supporting research design, publication development, and participation in academic conferences to SPD students. It reinforces a research culture that values methodological rigor and international visibility. In parallel, the Social Lab focuses on applied learning, project design, and policy implementation, enabling SPD students to engage directly with real-world social and policy challenges. Together, these labs bridge theory and practice, ensuring that knowledge production at SPD remains both academically robust and socially relevant.

SPD has also placed strong emphasis on international academic exposure, actively encouraging students to participate in conferences and academic events across the region, including in China, Lao PDR and Vietnam. These experiences have expanded students' perspectives beyond national boundaries, strengthened regional academic networks, and enhanced their ability to engage in comparative policy dialogue. Such exposure is essential for preparing graduates who can operate confidently in increasingly interconnected social and policy environments.

Equally significant has been the development of a new learning module focused on leadership development, which moves beyond conventional classroom instruction. Central to this module is a structured role-play approach, where students are required to assume the role of leaders in dynamic scenarios and subsequently transition into follower roles as conditions and contexts change. This pedagogical design allows students to experience leadership as a relational and adaptive process rather than a fixed position of authority. By learning when to lead and when to follow, students develop critical skills in decision-making, empathy, accountability, and collective action—competencies that are indispensable in complex social systems.

In reinforcing SPD's commitment to diversity and experiential learning, we have also successfully organized an International Food Fair, providing a platform for cultural exchange and mutual understanding among students and staff from diverse backgrounds. This event underscored the importance of inclusivity and intercultural competence as foundational elements of social policy education.

Finally, SPD has completed the SPD ARSA, marking the school's first voluntary camp dedicated to understanding social issues through direct community engagement. This initiative offered students hands-on exposure to social realities, fostering civic responsibility, ethical awareness, and a deeper appreciation of the structural dimensions of social problems. The success of SPD ARSA represents a significant step in embedding service learning and social engagement within SPD's academic identity.

Collectively, these achievements reflect SPD's steady progress toward becoming a leading institution in social policy education. As we enter the New Year 2026, SPD remains committed to deepening these efforts and expanding our impact for the benefit of students, communities, and society at large. We will expand our SPD student participation in international conferences and foster cross-border academic collaboration. Through the SPD Research Lab and Social Lab, classroom learning will be systematically synchronized with social activities and applied policy work. These labs will serve as integrative spaces linking theory, research, and practice. Thematic priorities will focus on artificial intelligence, population ageing, and climate change, enabling SPD students to address emerging social challenges through evidence-based, innovative, and socially responsive approaches.

With best wishes for a meaningful and productive New Year,

Letters from SPD Alumni



Thorfan Dechachainimit

Year of Admission: 2020

Project Coordinator at Disability Inclusive Employment and Business, Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), in collaboration with UNESCAP and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEP)

1. What is your current professional role and why you chose this path?

I am a project coordinator in the Disability Inclusive Employment and Business, which aims to promote employment for persons with disabilities through policy paper and practical guide for private sector. The SPD professor introduced me to the project and I believe that this role will enable me to gain more insight into social policy and policymaking process in practice. I can also allow me to apply the knowledge gained from my studies to support the development of inclusive employment policy.

2. Which skill was the most critical in your first year after graduation?

I have gained valuable skills from studying and participating in various activities, including **resources management, time management, writing, and critical thinking**. I can effectively apply the skills to my work to help me to manage tasks, communicate, and tackle challenges effectively. SPD had also encouraged my understanding on diverse sectors of the society and how they function and collaborate with each other. The knowledge allows me to recognize the role of each sector and how to involve them in the policymaking process.

3. What do you advice to a current student preparing for graduation?

One piece of advice I always give everyone is to **enjoy studying while also take time to participate in diverse activities**. Learning both inside and outside the classroom allows students to gain essential skills that can be applied in the workplace, while also broadening one's perspectives. Engaging in different experience will encourage self-discovery, helping individuals understand what they enjoy, what they do not, and what they may want to pursue in the future.



Tan Hongsyok

Year of Admission: 2020

Student at The London School of Economics, Political Economy of Late Development Master's Program

1. What is your current professional role and why you chose this path?

I am currently studying for a master's in political economy of Late Development at The London School of Economics. I chose to pursue further study because SPD has broadened by perspective on the matters of development which although seems simple on the surface, the ideas and motivations for the current stream of academic consensus are created through the vast literature that is drawn on experiences of professionals in the field.

2. Which skill was the most critical in your first year after graduation?

The skill that has proven most important to me after graduation is **the ability to write academically**. It doesn't just mean citation and crediting work, but **being able to enunciate and substantiate your ideas, and support it in a methodical way**. As for important concepts, I think that there is no one concept that is important to understand, but that there is no single narrative that the world operates under. All perspective is subject to real-world conditions, and some may be better than others in a certain way, but it doesn't by any means degrade the importance of having an open mind.

3. What do you advice to a current student preparing for graduation?

Though it may seem counterintuitive, **take the time to break, relax, and self-reflect**. See if your interests have evolved over the course of the program, ask yourself what you really want to do, and try to chart a path forward. **Take risks and do something that is uncomfortable or difficult**, sometimes the things that are important are what you learn somewhere along the way, not at the end. Know yourself, what you are okay with, and what you are not, you are born a human, not an animal.



Lhachen Wangmo Dorji

Year of Admission: 2020

UNDP intern at Bhutan Innovation Lab

1. What is your current professional role and why you chose this path?

I'm currently a UNDP intern at the Bhutan Innovation Lab (BIL), a collaboration between the Prime Minister's Office and UNDP Bhutan. BIL is an initiative that uses design thinking and innovative methods to address Bhutan's development challenges and policy ambitions like tourism and human capital development.

I was motivated to work at BIL as it focused on issues that I found interesting, allowed me to apply what I learnt in SPD, and gave me opportunities to further my knowledge and learn new skills. It is also uniquely placed between a government agency and an international agency, giving me experience working in both environments with a wide range of partners.

2. Which skill was the most critical in your first year after graduation?

The various courses I studied have proved to be valuable assets in the past few months, giving me a stronger foundation in both knowledge and skills, such as evidence-based social policy, negotiation and social entrepreneurship.

Delivering repeated **presentations** over my time at university has also helped me improve my confidence and public speaking skills, which are critical not only in what I currently do, but will continue to be important in all my future endeavors.

My **internship period was also especially valuable** as it prepared me for my current responsibilities, while also making me more confident in my skills and guiding me towards areas I would like to work in the future.

3. What do you advice to a current student preparing for graduation?

A piece of advice I would offer would be to **try many new things and gain different experiences**. University is a good time to learn about issues or areas you might be interested to work in or feel passionate about, and the resources and help provided can greatly benefit you at this time. Don't be afraid to try out various things and make use of opportunities offered to you. Internships are especially beneficial to prepare you for entering the workforce, or to confirm what you would like to study further.

Keep working hard but also **make sure to enjoy the time you have in university**. Build relationships, gain experiences and make memories that stay with you for life.

SPD Field Trips



FRESHY TRIP 2025

Before the start of the first semester of 2025, SPD organized a two-day field trip to Pattaya Beach for first-year students, together with professors, senior students, and faculty staff.

The trip was designed to warmly welcome new students and help them feel part of the SPD community.

PATTAYA BEACH

On the first day, students took part in ice-breaking games and group activities that encouraged friendship, teamwork, and connection.

These activities helped students get to know one another, interact with seniors and professors, and feel more comfortable as they began their university journey.



TAKE CARE KIDS ONLUS

On the second day, students visited Take Care Kids Onlus, a non-profit organization supporting children affected by abuse and exploitation. Through discussions and shared learning, students gained deeper insight into issues affecting children in the local community and the importance of protecting and supporting victims and their families.

SPD Field Trips

SWING FOUNDATION



Students on the SPD217 course (Gender Diversity), led by lecturer Siyuan Liu, visited the SWING Foundation to explore and learn about the lives and challenges faced by service workers in Thailand. During the visit, students learned about the foundation's health and education programs that support and empower service workers.

MAE FAH LUANG FOUNDATION

Students on the Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation course, led by Dr. Pred Evans, explored the Social Enterprise Thailand at Mae Fah Luang Foundation, to learn about enterprise work in Thailand.



UNESCO AND SEAMEO



SPD Students from the "Thailand, ASEAN and the World" course, led by Dr. Pred Evans and Dr. Duan Haosheng, visited UNESCO and SEAMEO in Bangkok to learn about the role of international organisations in promoting sustainable development through education, including SEAMEO's projects based on the sufficiency economy philosophy of King Rama IX and UNESCO's work on the SDGs.

SPD Field Trips

MAE SOT, TAK



On 12 September, 2024, SPD organized the International Conference on Sustainable Development and Youth Participation in Conflict Resolution, partnership with Minmahaw Higher Education Program (MEHP), Youth Champion, Love and Care, at Centara Life Hotel Mae Sot, including student paper presentations, panel discussions on national security, and youth workshops. Participants included experts, youth representatives, students from Thailand and Myanmar, and local stakeholders in Mae Sot.

The International Conference focused on social and sustainable development in conflict-affected areas, with the participation of government, military, INGOs, and academic institutions.

Additionally, SPD organized a Cultural Learning Activity on Pakakayo (Karen) food in Uhu village, and learned traditional cooking and cultural practices with Pakakayo host families; focusing on ethnic diversity, community-based learning, and cross-cultural exchange.



This conference will not only provide academic value but also serve as an important step forward in advancing studies on social policy and sustainable development within the context of conflict-affected areas.

SPD Field Trips

Field Trips are an important part of SPD and designed to connect classroom learning with real-world social issues through hands-on experience and community engagement.

LAOS

On 10-12 August 2025, SPD collaborated with the at National University of Laos (Faculty of Environmental Science) and organized the workshop “Climate - Induced Migration and Social Development in the Mekong Subregion”. Students visited the 1st Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge and Vang Vieng to learn about cross-border migration processes, community challenges, and tourism impacts.



MAE HONG SON

On 14-20 December 2025, SPD held the ARSA Voluntary Camp at Luk Pha Kow Primary School, organized by the Social Project Lab. In the camp, SPD students conducted interactive learning activities in academic subjects such as English, Mathematics, Science, Art, and Sports, and also helped paint and improve school facilities to create a more welcoming learning environment. The camp strengthened students' practical skills, community understanding, and sense of social responsibility.

KANCHANABURI

After the midterm examinations, SPD organized a one-day trip to Kanchanaburi on October 13, offering students a well-deserved break from academic routines. The trip included a range of adventure activities, allowing participants to relax, enjoy sightseeing, and experience the natural beauty of the area.



International Collaborations

SPD Dual Degree with The University of York - Signing Ceremony

On 24 April 2025, a dual degree 2+2 programme between the Social Policy and Development International Programme at the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University and the University of York's School for Business and Society in the UK was signed by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Administration, Assoc Prof Auschala Chalayonnavin and the Dean of the School for Business and Society, Prof Bob Doherty.

Students from SPD will now be given the valuable and life-changing opportunity to broaden their horizons by studying the latter part of their degree, with discounted tuition and accommodation fees, at the York campus, earning a dual degree from both Thammasat University and the University of York.



SPD Program Collaboration with Public and Private Sector in Japan

On Thursday 24 July 2025, Dr Pred Evans, Assistant Dean for International Affairs, and Dr Duan Haosheng, met with the CEO of With The World, Mr Shunta Igarashi, and Ms Thanittaya Igarashi (Khun Amm) to discuss further collaboration.

Following on from our MoU signing, this year 3 students from SPD International joined an online student exchange project administered by the government of Japan in partnership with major Japanese companies and will present at the Osaka Expo on September 4th.

With The World is a Japanese education exchange company who focus on global high school student exchange, with a network of 67 countries and almost 300 schools in Japan. It was agreed that we will promote SPD to these 300 high schools in Japan and explore the establishing of links and quota agreements with specific schools for student recruitment



OUR PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

- Cotabato State University, The Philippines
- De La Salle University, The Philippines
- General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka
- Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
- Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law, Bhutan
- Kempten University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- National Taiwan University, Taiwan
- National University of Singapore, Singapore
- Shukutoku University, Japan
- Sogang University, Korea
- Tilburg University, The Netherlands
- Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
- Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia
- Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia
- University of California, USA
- University of Malaya, Malaysia
- University of North Carolina Greensboro, USA
- University of Seville, Spain
- University of York, UK

We have cultivated strategic partnerships and robust networks with prominent international organizations, including the ILO, IOM, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNDP. Furthermore, we collaborate closely with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the Labour Rights Promotion Network (LPN), and an extensive array of NGOs and social enterprises—both globally focused and locally based in Bangkok.

Exchange Program Experience at NUS

FROM THAMMASAT TO NUS: A DIARY OF CHALLENGE AND GROWTH

In a memorable highlight from 2025, SPD students Chloe and Mint shared their transformative exchange experience at the National University of Singapore (NUS). They described a rigorous academic environment that pushed them to adapt to new learning styles and a vibrant, multicultural campus life. From navigating challenging tutorials to building community in their dormitories and exploring Singapore's rich culture, they emphasized how the experience fostered significant personal and academic growth. Both highly recommend the journey, noting that the profound educational rewards are well worth the challenge.



Scan to
watch the
full video

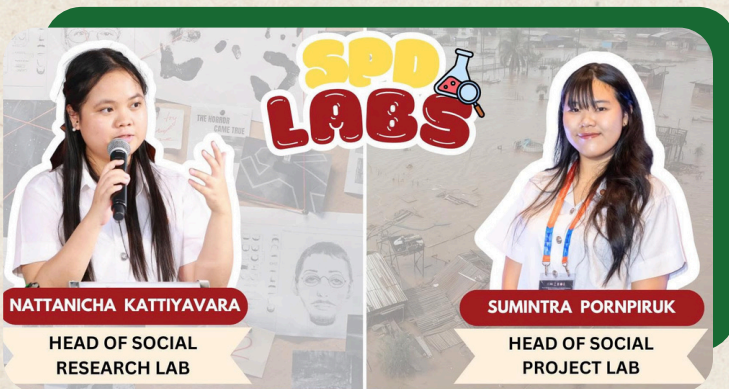


Recent News of SPD

SPD Student Council “Serendipity”



The new SPD Student Council, Serendipity, has been established with the aim of bringing fresh energy, creative ideas, and meaningful impact to the SPD community. The council has proposed a wide range of policy initiatives covering student activities, sports, academic affairs, welfare, public relations, and student representation, strengthening student engagement across the program.



Nattanicha Kattiyavara (3rd Year Student) has been appointed Head of the Social Research Lab. The lab focuses on developing a complete research cycle with a strong emphasis on academic writing. It supports students in producing research papers, reviews, letters, and perspectives, while encouraging participation in international conferences and publication in Scopus-indexed journals. Students also gain exposure through interactions with global scholars and editors from leading publishers such as Elsevier, Springer Nature, and Oxford University Press.

SPD Social Research Lab and Social Project Lab

Sumintra Pornpiruk (3rd Year Student) has been appointed as the Head of the Social Project Lab, focusing on the complete social project cycle from problem identification to evaluation. The lab aims to strengthen interdisciplinary teamwork under the guidance of faculty mentors and experienced project leads, while fostering collaboration with diverse stakeholders. These include UN agencies, Thai government bodies, and international NGOs, alongside opportunities for project pitching, showcases, and start-up development at both domestic and international levels.

SPD International Food Fair 2025

On 17 September, the SPD program organized the first “SPD International Food Fair 2025”. Our students and staff proudly prepared dishes from their home countries, representing China, Myanmar, Japan, and Thailand, fostering cultural exchange and community spirit within the program.



RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS BY OUR STUDENTS & FACULTY MEMBERS



Research Presentation at the Student Research Forum 2025 in Strategic Futures of an Emerging World Order

Our SPD students: Ma Esther Kyaw (4th Year Student), Naw Si Blut Moo (4th Year Student), and Nattanicha Kattiyavara (3rd Year Student) successfully presented their research papers at the Student Research Forum 2025 on "Strategic Futures of an Emerging World Order, organized by the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka.

The 8th International Conference on Gender and Sexuality 2025

Our Assistant Professor, Dr. Mahesh Chogule, was invited as a panelist at the 8th International Conference on Gender and Sexuality 2025, organized through the collaboration between the International Institute of Knowledge Management (TIKM), Sri Lanka, and the University of Johannesburg, South Africa, from 21 to 22 October. Ajarn Mahesh delivered an insightful presentation on "Gender-Sensitive Social Policies: Towards Equality and Inclusion", emphasizing the role of policy frameworks in addressing gender disparities and promoting sustainable social development.



Research Presentation at the 2025 Academic Annual Meeting and the 20th International Forum on Social Policy

Our First Year SPD students, Zhuorui Ouyang and Tingting Deng, showcased their research papers at the 2025 Academic Annual Meeting and the 20th International Forum on Social Policy, held at Nankai University, Tianjin, China.

Research Presentation at the 2025 International Conference "ASEAN's Economic and Business Landscape: Emerging Opportunities and Strategic Challenges

Our SOCWORK and SPD students: Haseem Thaowan (SOCWORK), Aranyaporn Sukcharoen (SOCWORK), Tonnam Rattanaoraphin (SPD), and Krittin Saisuk (SPD) have been accepted to present their research papers at the 2025 International Conference "ASEAN's Economic and Business Landscape: Emerging Opportunities and Strategic Challenges" (AEBL 2025) in Vinh Long, Vietnam, on 19 November.



RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS BY OUR STUDENTS & FACULTY MEMBERS

Research Presentation at the 4th International Symposium on Disaster Resilience and Sustainable Development 2025

Our SPD students: Rawipapha Kaewchangwat (3rd Year Student), Han Kexu (3rd Year Student), Pimvimon Viriyajan (2nd Year Student), and Nattanicha Kattiyavara (3rd Year Student) have been accepted to present a research paper at the 4th International Symposium on Disaster Resilience and Sustainable Development (DRSD 2025), organized by the Asian Institute of Technology, from 24 to 26 November.



Dec 11-12,
2025

Research Presentation at the 1st Conference on Environment and Development 2025

Our SPD students: Khu Benjamin Takae (1st Year Student), Thet Hmue Han (1st Year Student), Kaung Khant Kyaw (1st Year Student), and Nattanicha Kattiyavara (3rd Year Student) successfully presented their research papers at the 1st Conference on Environment and Development, held at the Faculty of Environmental Sciences, National University of Laos, from 11 to 12 December.

SPD Students Participate in the Inclusive Employment Policy Project

On December 11, Ajarn Kevin Cook, our SPD students, Thitichon Thanawong (4th Year Student), and Samara Chhetri (1st Year Student) attended the Disability Inclusive Employment Policy Project, which was a collaboration between United Nations ESCAP, Thailand's Department of Empowerment for Persons with Disabilities, and Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability.



Asst. Prof. Mahesh Chougule, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor Dr. Mahesh Chougule, has been elected as the Secretary General of the International Consortium for Social Development (ICSD), representing the Faculty of Social Administration and Thammasat University at the international level on 12 December.

Dr. Siyuan Liu, published his article, "Island Community-Based Tourism and Gendered Power: How Respectability and Paperwork Organize Women's Everyday Authority in Phuket, Thailand" in *Tourism and Hospitality*, Volume 6, Issue 5, Article 281 on Scopus (Q1, Social Sciences – Miscellaneous).



Siyuan Liu, Ph.D

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE SHARING

MY INTERNSHIP JOURNEY WITH ONE SKY FOUNDATION



Naw Si Blut Moo **SPD 4th year Student**

My eight-week internship at One Sky Foundation (OSF) in Sangkhlaburi was a meaningful journey that allowed me to turn classroom learning into real community action. From June to July 2025, I worked mainly with the Alternative Care Sangkhlaburi (ACS) team, while also supporting the Family Strengthening Team (FST), Early Childhood Development (ECD), Child Protection (CP), and Income Generation programs.

Through home visits, foster and kinship care support, and foster care assessments, I gained first-hand experience in community-based child protection. I learned how case management works in real life and how different departments collaborate to ensure children grow up safe, healthy, and cared for. One of the most impactful experiences for me was assisting with birth certificate applications for children without legal identity. This showed me how small but consistent advocacy efforts can create long-term change by opening access to education, healthcare, and legal protection.

Beyond technical skills like documentation and observation, this internship strengthened my empathy, patience, and cross-cultural communication skills. Working with Thai, Burmese, Mon, and Karen communities helped me better understand the human side of social policy and development.

Overall, my internship with OSF deepened my commitment to child advocacy and community development, and it confirmed my desire to continue working to protect and support vulnerable children and families.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE SHARING

LEARNING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FROM THE BORDER: MY INTERNSHIP AT INED



**Esther Kyaw,
SPD 4th year Student**

From June to July 2025, I completed a two-month internship at the Inclusive Education Foundation (InEd) in Mae Sot, a border town with a large migrant population from Myanmar. As a Social Policy and Development (SPD) student, this experience allowed me to apply classroom theories to real-world challenges in education and development.

InEd is a Thai non-profit organization working to promote inclusive, accessible, and equitable education for migrant and marginalized children along the Thai–Myanmar border. I was drawn to InEd because its mission closely aligns with my background as a former migrant student and my academic interest in education policy and community-based development.

During my internship, I supported both the research and program teams. My tasks included transcribing Political Economy Analysis (PEA) interviews in Burmese and English, formatting education research reports, assisting with Community-Based Research (CBR) training preparation, and helping with data collection for youth and child protection programs. These responsibilities strengthened my research, academic writing, and professional communication skills.

One of the most meaningful experiences was participating in school observations and fieldwork. I visited six migrant schools as part of a collaborative research project with Mahidol University and local NGOs, focusing on Child Protection and Child Safeguarding. Engaging directly with teachers and students gave me valuable insight into the everyday realities of migrant education and highlighted the importance of community voices in development work.

A key accomplishment during my internship was contributing to the transcription of interviews with educators and activists involved in Myanmar's federal democracy education movement. This work required careful translation, cultural sensitivity, and ethical awareness, allowing me to apply concepts from SPD courses such as Research Methods, Development Ethics, and Policy Advocacy.

Overall, my internship at InEd was both professionally and personally transformative. It deepened my understanding of inclusive education, strengthened my interest in community engagement, and reaffirmed my commitment to advocating for education access for migrant children. I encourage fellow SPD students to pursue internships that challenge them and connect theory with meaningful social impact.

MESSAGE FROM SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS



Maw Byar Myar,
SPD 1st year student,
Child's Dream Scholarship
Winner 2025

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

My journey into the field of Social Policy and Development (SPD) was not sparked by a single event, but by a lifetime of witnessing systemic injustice in Karenni State. Growing up in a conflict-affected region, I saw firsthand how armed violence and displacement shaped everyday life, leaving women to endure gender-based violence in silence and children to struggle for an education under the threat of airstrikes. These experiences taught me that social instability is not accidental; it is deeply rooted in weak institutions and exclusionary systems. Driven by a desire to transform these injustices, I chose SPD because it addresses structural inequality directly. While fields like Political Science and Sociology provided valuable theoretical frameworks, SPD stood out as the most practical and people-centered choice because it asks a crucial question: "How can policies improve people's lived realities?". My goal is to bridge the gap between analysis and solutions, turning my lived experience into policy-driven change for marginalized communities.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

Throughout my studies, my vision for the future has evolved from an abstract desire to "help" into a clear professional path involving policy research, advocacy, and program design. One of the most challenging realizations was discovering that even well-intentioned policies can reinforce inequality if they ignore local contexts or suffer from power asymmetries. This underscored the vital importance of participatory policy design. A defining moment in my education was creating an SDG magazine, which allowed me to examine how legal frameworks and social norms intersect—and often fail—survivors in Karenni State. To address these complexities, I have developed a toolkit of essential skills, including stakeholder analysis, community assessment, and the ability to translate complex social realities into clear policy recommendations. By constantly linking academic theory to my ongoing community engagement, I ensure that my work remains both critically reflective and practically responsive.

THE THIRD-PARTY SCHOLARSHIP: MERIT & ALIGNMENT

The support of this scholarship has been a pivotal investment in my future and the future of the communities I represent. My background as a member of a displaced community resonates with the scholarship's mission of fostering leadership and social impact. The application process itself was deeply introspective, helping me realize that my history of displacement was not an obstacle, but a foundation for my leadership in policy work. I believe my selection was due to a demonstrated resilience and a strategic commitment to creating evidence-based change for women and marginalized groups. Beyond easing financial pressure, this scholarship has instilled in me a profound sense of responsibility to use my education ethically and impactfully. To those following in my footsteps, I emphasize that your story matters; academic excellence is important, but scholarships are ultimately about your potential and your commitment to making a difference.

HEARTFELT MESSAGE

To juniors and future scholarship applicants,

'your story matters'. Do not underestimate the power of your lived experience. Be honest, reflective, and clear about your purpose. Scholarships are not only about academic excellence, they are about potential, resilience, and commitment to making a difference.

- Maw Byar Myar

MESSAGE FROM SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS



Mann Moe Min Oo,
SPD 1st year student,
Child's Dream Scholarship
Winner 2025

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

Growing up in Myanmar and working as a community facilitator and health educator, I witnessed how poorly structured policies shaped people's access to education, healthcare, and livelihoods. I realized that community struggles stem not from lack of effort, but from systemic gaps between policy and people's actual needs. This drove me to choose Social Policy and Development, as it integrates multiple perspectives while maintaining a strong focus on real-world solutions and marginalized communities. My vision has evolved from wanting to help communities in hands, to shaping the policies that affect them sustainably.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

The most challenging concept I encountered was understanding how well-intentioned policies can still produce unintended negative outcomes due to power dynamics and political constraints. A particularly impactful assignment involved analyzing a real-world social protection policy — examining who benefited, who was excluded, and why implementation challenges occurred in developing contexts. Policy analysis, academic writing, and research methods have been my most crucial skills, though I wish greater emphasis was placed on applied data skills and monitoring and evaluation tools.

THE THIRD-PARTY SCHOLARSHIP: MERIT & ALIGNMENT

My community-based work experience and dedication to social development strongly aligned with the Child's Dream Scholarship's mission. Coming from a conflict-affected context, I have firsthand experience with the challenges the scholarship seeks to address. Through my essays and interviews, I demonstrated over five years of community-level work, resilience, and a realistic vision for greater impact. Receiving the scholarship relieved financial pressure while creating a strong sense of responsibility to honor the trust placed in me. To future applicants — be authentic, simple, passionate, and purposeful. Your background and commitment genuinely matter.

HEARTFELT MESSAGE

Be authentic and purposeful. The Child's Dream scholarship seeks more than perfect grades; it looks for clear values, a distinct vision, and the potential to create impact. Take time to understand your story. Ask yourself who you are, what you truly care about, and how you will give back to your community. Your challenges are not weaknesses—they are evidence of your resilience, discipline, and growth. Above all, believe that your background matters. If you stay committed and passionate, opportunities will follow. Even a setback is simply a chance to improve and start again.

- Mann Moe Min Oo

MESSAGE FROM SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS



Sarah Mai,
SPD 1st year student,
ASEAN Maybank Scholarship
Winner 2025

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

Growing up in a small town and engaging with marginalized communities made me aware of how unequal systems limit people's opportunities, especially in education and social protection. These lived experiences pushed me to understand not just social problems, but how policies can address them at a structural level. I chose Social Policy and Development because it felt more practical and impact-oriented than related fields like Sociology, Political Science, or Economics — it connects analysis directly to decision-making and implementation, allowing me to focus on designing solutions rather than only studying social dynamics. Initially I saw myself working in NGOs or international organizations, but since starting the program, my vision has broadened to include policy research, regional development, and cross-sector collaboration within ASEAN.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

One challenging concept I encountered was understanding how policies with good intentions can still reinforce inequality. I addressed this by critically engaging with case studies and reflecting on real-world trade-offs in policy design. A particularly impactful assignment was a case study on education inequality across urban, rural, and border regions — closely reflecting ongoing challenges in Southeast Asia that I have personally witnessed. Policy analysis and evidence-based writing have been my most crucial skills, though I wish there were more emphasis on participatory community assessment and field-based learning. I constantly relate theories back to my own community work and lived experiences to critically assess whether frameworks truly reflect realities on the ground.

THE THIRD-PARTY SCHOLARSHIP: MERIT & ALIGNMENT

My long-term commitment to inclusive development and youth empowerment in ASEAN strongly aligns with the scholarship's mission. Writing the application helped me see how my experiences connect into a coherent purpose, clarifying my motivation to pursue policy work that is both people-centered and regionally focused. Through my essays and interviews, I demonstrated resilience, leadership, and a strong sense of responsibility toward social impact, showing how I plan to use this opportunity to contribute beyond myself. Receiving the scholarship reduced financial pressure and allowed me to focus fully on my studies and community engagement, while strengthening my sense of responsibility to contribute meaningfully to ASEAN development. To future applicants — be honest about your journey and do not underestimate the value of your lived experiences. Show how your goals align with the scholarship's mission, and trust that your commitment to impact matters as much as your achievements.

HEARTFELT MESSAGE

Be honest about your journey and do not underestimate the value of your lived experiences. Show how your goals align with the scholarship's mission, and trust that your commitment to impact matters as much as your achievements.

– Sarah Mai

MESSAGE FROM SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS



Sous Samphors,
SPD 1st year student,
Child's Dream Scholarship
Winner 2025

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

Growing up in a developing country, I witnessed firsthand how inadequate policies affected workers' health, income stability, and life expectancy, often trapping families in cycles of vulnerability. These observations made me realize that economic growth alone is not sufficient without inclusive and effective social policies. I chose Social Policy and Development because unlike Sociology, Political Science, or Economics, this field focuses on translating knowledge into actionable solutions — bridging theory and practice by turning academic understanding into practical knowledge that reduces poverty, promotes equality, and ensures sustainable development. When I applied, I envisioned a career as a policymaker, policy analyst, or researcher within public institutions or development organizations, and that vision has only become more concrete since starting the program.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

The most challenging aspect of my studies has been moving beyond descriptive learning toward critical, evidence-based analysis of complex theoretical frameworks. A standout experience was a group research project on civic engagement and gender equality in the Chinese context, which deepened my understanding of inequality, human rights, and policy challenges while strengthening my research and teamwork skills. Data analysis and academic writing have been my most crucial skills, as they enable me to support policy arguments with evidence. I balance theory and practice by consistently linking academic frameworks to real-world cases through group projects, case studies, and classroom discussions — always questioning how theories translate into actual policy outcomes.

THE THIRD-PARTY SCHOLARSHIP: MERIT & ALIGNMENT

My background growing up in a developing country strongly aligns with the Child's Dream Scholarship's mission of empowering individuals to create positive societal change. Through my application, I articulated my personal journey, values of social responsibility and equity, and commitment to improving human well-being — demonstrating leadership, resilience, and a clear sense of purpose. Receiving the scholarship has eased financial pressure and enabled my enrollment at Thammasat University, where exposure to diverse academic and professional perspectives has enriched my personal development. As a recipient, I feel a strong sense of obligation to maintain strong academic performance and contribute meaningfully in alignment with the donor's mission. To future applicants — believe in yourself and your potential, write your essay clearly and honestly, share your life journey and future goals, stay determined, and never give up.

HEARTFELT MESSAGE

My message to junior candidates applying for the Child's Dream Scholarship is to first believe in yourself and your potential. Hard work, resilience, and self-reflection are essential throughout the process. I encourage you to reach out to current scholarship recipients for guidance and advice.

Most importantly, write your essay clearly and honestly, share your life journey, experiences, volunteer work, and future goals in a way that reflects your personal values and commitment to social impact. Try your best, stay determined, and never give up.

– Sous Samphors

MESSAGE FROM SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS



Hana Shirai,
SPD 3rd year student,
Faculty Scholarship Winner
2023

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

I chose SPD specifically for its intimate, focused learning environment, which I viewed as the ideal gateway to immersing myself in local Thai communities. Having long been attracted by Southeast Asian lifestyles, I looked for a program where I could combine political and sociological study with genuine cultural integration. Reflecting on the deep trust built within my small cohort and the guidance of the staff, I am certain it was the right decision, as it allowed me to achieve a truly immersive experience.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

The best thing I am glad to join SPD is that it allows me to explore social issues from both theoretical and practical perspectives. For instance, not only learning theories and concepts in the classroom, but I am also engaging in community visit experiences inside and outside Thailand, which were unique opportunities for an international student like me. Repeated practices of research and project-making further allowed me to find the intertwined connections between academic and field learning.

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

My commitment to social policy was not born in a classroom, but in the heart of Myanmar's struggle. As a youth educator, I have stood where crisis meets courage—teaching in communities where opportunity is scarce and justice feels distant. I chose Thammasat University's Social Policy and Development program because it embodies more than study; it embodies action. Guided by the motto "Where we learn to love the people," the program aligns with my mission to turn empathy into policy, and advocacy into institutional change. Here, I am not just learning about development—I am preparing to lead it.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

From day one, I have thrived at the intersection of learning and impact. While maintaining strong academic standing, I have launched initiatives that extend beyond campus such as representing my cohort as Second-Year Representative. Each role has honed my ability to translate insight into action—whether mediating student dialogues, or teaching GED courses to marginalized learners. This is more than a degree; it's a launchpad for lifelong leadership.



Soe Thiha Zan,
SPD 2nd year student,
Faculty Scholarship Winner
2024

HEARTFELT MESSAGE

To the bright minds who will shape tomorrow: Your passion is your power, and your empathy is your compass. Walk this path with courage—you are already the change you wish to see.

– Soe Thiha Zan

MESSAGE FROM SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS



Chaw Su Thazin,
SPD 2nd year student,
TISR Winner 2024

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

My commitment to Social Policy and Development (SPD) stems from witnessing urban poverty, gender inequality, and the lack of child rights in my own community. These experiences taught me that societal issues are often the result of structural gaps. I chose SPD because it is uniquely interdisciplinary—merging sociology, political science, and economics—to turn social analysis into concrete policies. My vision has evolved from a dream of foreign affairs to a focused ambition: finding practical, policy-based solutions within INGOs to restore dignity and social cohesion in our nation.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

The program has moved me beyond theory to understand the "how" of social change. I aim to use this degree to influence policy and advocate for vulnerable groups, specifically children, through research and hands-on development work. I have found that skills in policy writing, research, and community assessment are the most crucial tools for this field. By engaging with real-world problems, I have learned that the most impactful work comes from bridging the gap between high-level academic frameworks and the practical, on-the-ground needs of the communities we serve.

CHOOSING THE PROGRAM: MOTIVATION & BACKGROUND

I chose this program because I was really interested in it. I've always been curious about topics like feminism and social equality. When I had the chance to do a short internship at a disability supporting organization, I started to see how meaningful this field can be in real life. So that made me want to learn more in this area.

THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE: LEARNING & APPLICATION

What I learned from this program is not limited to academic knowledge. Besides learning about social policy, I also gained hands-on experience in planning activities, designing posters, and creating magazines. These practical tasks helped me develop creativity, teamwork and communication skills, which I find even more meaningful than learning theories alone.



Zhuorui Ouyang,
SPD 1st year student,
Faculty Scholarship Winner
2025



B.A. in SOCIAL POLICY & DEVELOPMENT



EMPOWERING STUDENTS, INSPIRING CHANGE

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