

## **A Reflection on Fishing from SOP 2008**

I got a great deal of very good experience from the School of Peace (SOP). This program gave me many things. Actually, I am one who can accept and understand people who are different from me; but during and after this program, I can accept those people more and more than before. If I use a very small space here to explain, it is not enough, but I will still try to reflect on at least one thing that I got from this program.

There is, for instance, a story about fishing. I often share this story with my friends, and also I put it on my blog, but in Thai, because it is a very good example for helping people.

The story starts with the notion that we want to help people, but what method should we use?

First, we give them fish, but they can eat that in a very short time; and if the fish are gone, they will come back to us again. Second, we give them knowledge about how to fish, and they can use this knowledge to fish forever. Many people, or most people, think like this second option, but our facilitator Max Ediger asked us a very important question: "Do they need fish?" We never thought about this very important question before.

After this question was raised, we discussed a lot at SOP about the lessons of this story, and we attached three words to each part of it.

When we give them fish, we thought this concept was like "welfare." When we give them knowledge or teach them how to fish, we compared this with "development." Lastly, the issue raised in the important question above we associated with "transformation."

I usually share this story with my colleagues, who are also my friends, because it is a very good story and easy to understand, that is, if we want to help someone, we have to ask them first: "Do you need this?" This will help us help them with the right things that *they* need. It is very important for social workers, especially for government officials, to design a state policy to support their people have a better life by keeping this question in mind.

This is one story on which I reflected from SOP in 2008. Thank you so much to everyone who ran this program. It was very helpful, not only during the program, but also after the program, and not only for participants, but also for people around us.

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