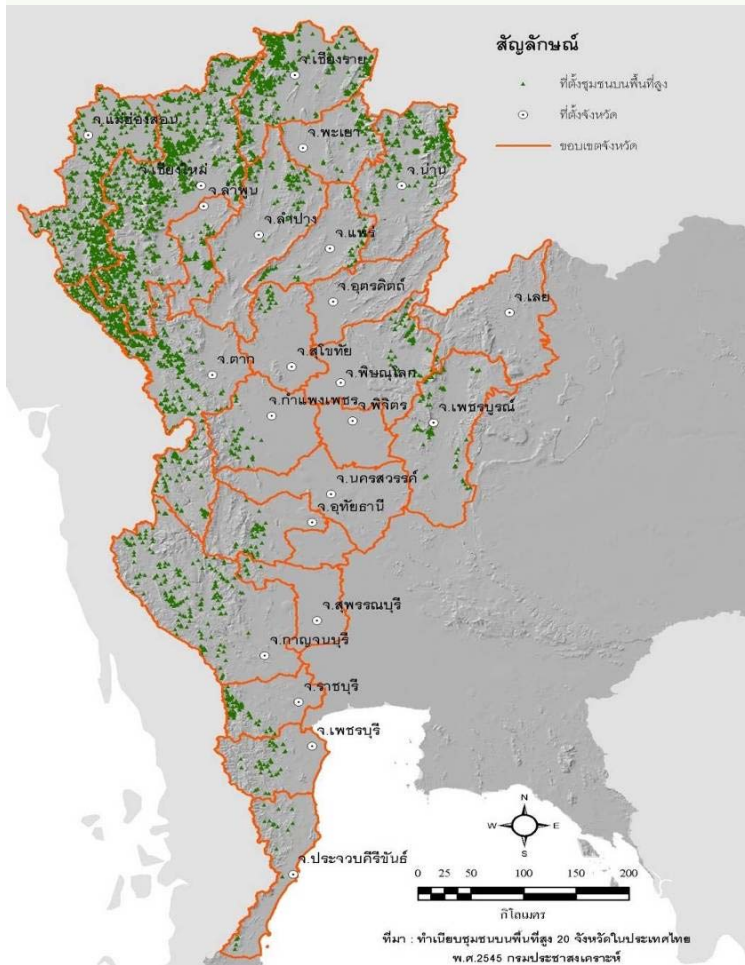




# **Sustainable Highland Development: Four Decades of Thailand's Royal Project**



# Thai Highlands in 1960s



## Areas:

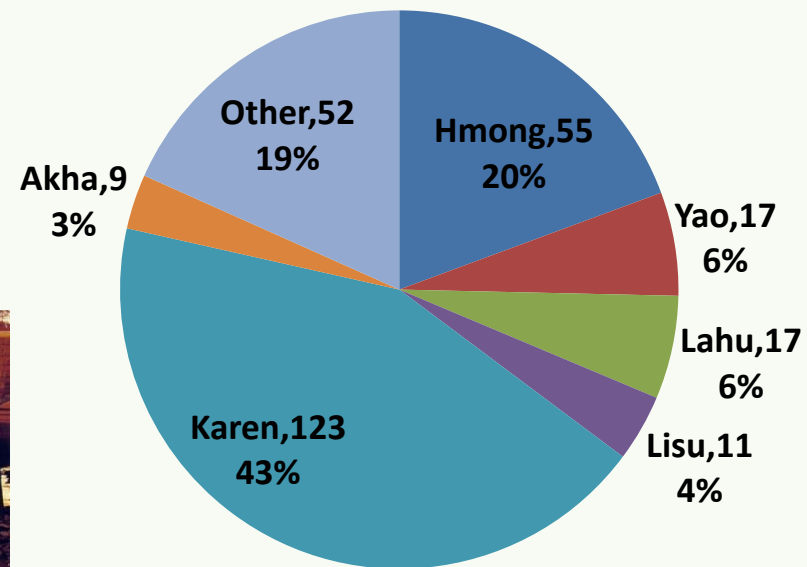
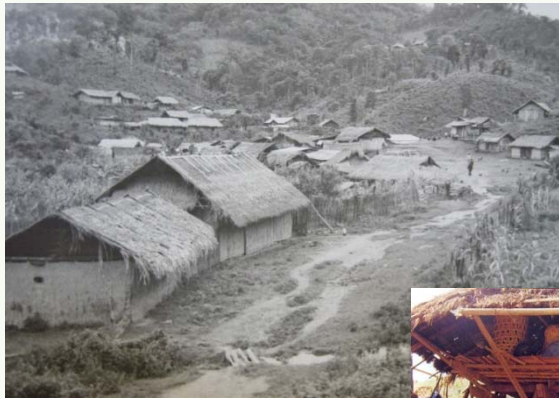
- **Total country area: 51 million ha**
- **North of Thailand: 17 million ha**
  - Lowland: 3 million ha
  - Upland: 5 million ha
  - Highland: 9 million ha (52% of the north area, above 500 msl)

## Climatic conditions :

- **Heavy monsoon rainfall**
- **Low temperature (winter season)**

# Thai Highlands in 1960s

## Thai Hill-tribe Population



Unit : People, Thousands

- Hill-tribe population at 275,000 majority were Karen and Hmong
- Living in 20 provinces of northern and western part of Thailand

(UN Survey 1965 – 1966)



# Thai Highlands in 1960s

## Problems

### 1. Poverty

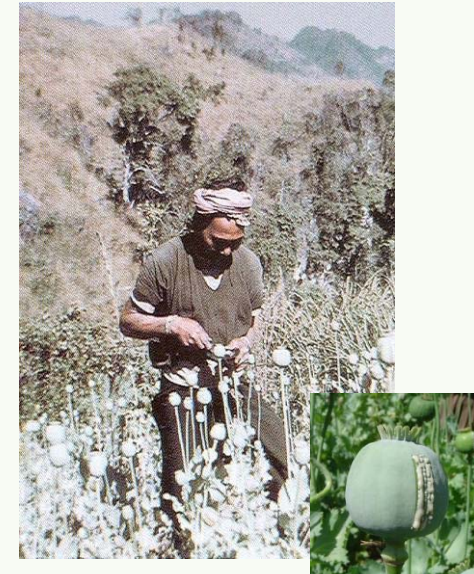
- No other crops grown in the highlands
- Farmers grew rice and maize with low yield

### 2. Deforestation

- Slash and burn cultivation
- Farming in the area 1,000-1,400 msl

### 3. Opium poppy cultivation

- Cultivated area 17,920 ha
  - Yield 10 kg/ha
  - Farm gate price 20-30 \$US/kg
- (UN Survey, 1967)



# Thai Highlands in 1960s

## Problems Faced by Highland Farmers

### Farm Productivity

Low yields, low total food production, opium only cash crop

### Environment

Soil erosion, decrease soil fertility (slash and burn cultivation)

### Farmer's welfare

- Food/cash shortage, poverty , poor health
- High population growth

# The Royal Project



**1969 H.M. the King visited hill - tribe village**

*"I asked the Hmong how much a family earned from selling of opium.*

*The answer was 3,000 to 5,000 baht.*



*When asked how much a family selling of peaches, the reply was 4,000 to 12,000 baht."*

# **The Royal Project**

## **Objectives**

- **Improve living conditions of highland farmers**
- **Solving problem of opium poppy growing**
- **Watershed rehabilitation**

## **The RP Volunteers**

**Throughout the history of the Royal Project, hundreds or indeed thousands of volunteers from universities, government agencies and individual experts have engaged in the Royal Project activities together with young staff in carrying the works initiated by the King.**

# The Royal Project Activities

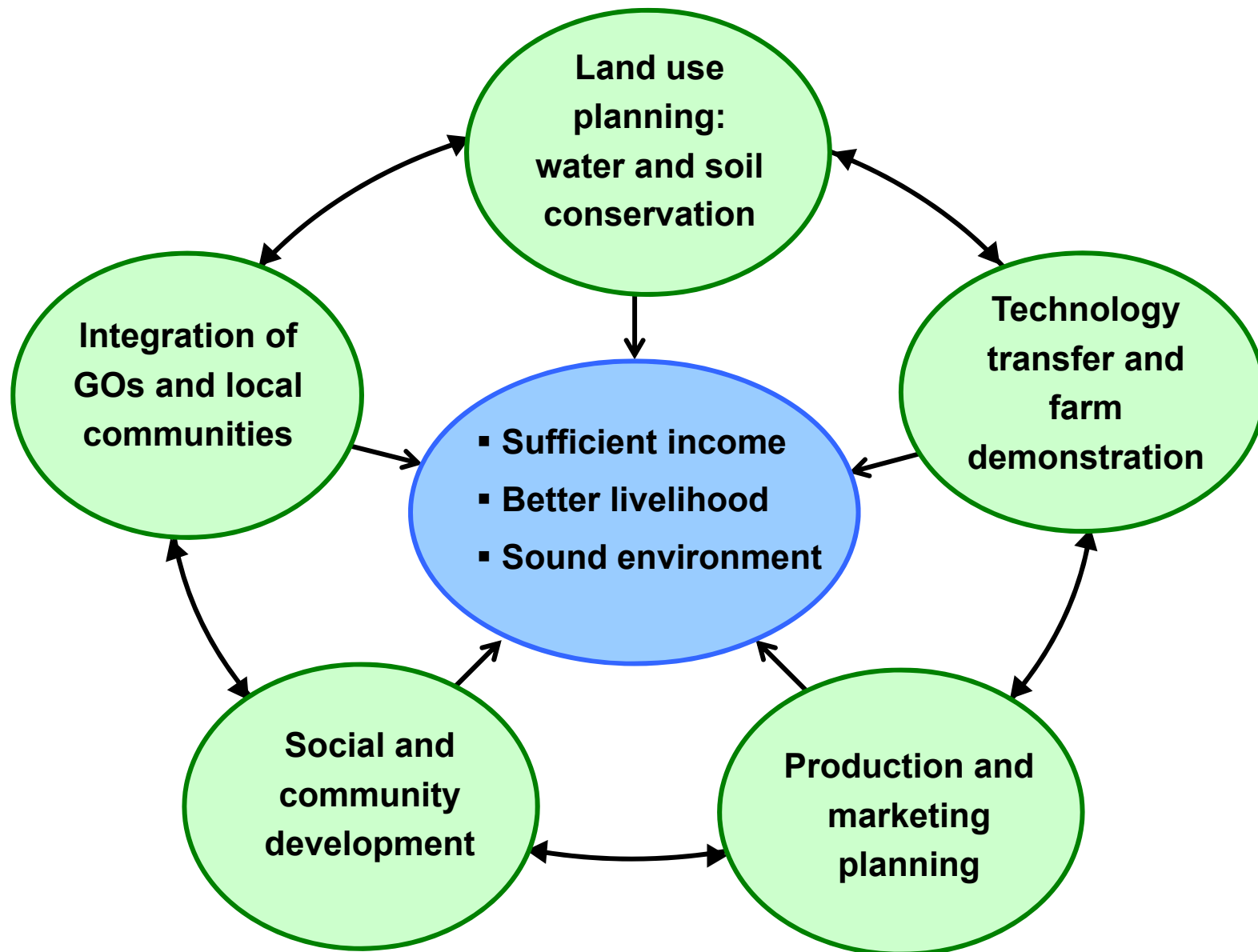
## Development Program



- Early period development services focused on visiting by the RP volunteers to provide trainings on farming methods as well as humanitarian relief.
- Development centers were established in 1978 to provide demonstrations of new crops and their cultivation practices, postharvest handling services as well as motivate community development activities and environment conservation
- Development centers also coordinate different agencies working on the same area. This includes supervision and coordination of farmers and Bank of Agriculture and Cooperatives to provide farm inputs
- Today there are 38 development centres in the 5 northern provinces supporting over 140,000 beneficiaries



# Development Model



# The Royal Project Activities

## Marketing



- RP established the marketing operation to promote demand for hill produces and protect farmers from being disadvantages and sell farm produces to major customers in urban area under the '*Royal Project*' and '*Doi Kham*' brand
- The farm produces from development centers, with GAP or organic standard are delivered to the Royal Project Packing House in Chiang Mai. They are mandatory selected and tested for good quality control before deliver to customers in Chiang Mai and other parts of the country
- 20-30% of total farm produces sold via the RP Marketing programs, annual revenue 19 million \$US (2008)

# Changes over 40 years

## 1969

- **Opium poppy growing prevalent**

- **Hill tribes solely depended on opium poppy cultivation and forest products**

- **Poverty and high growth rate**

- **Slash and burn cultivation causing deforestation**

## Today

- **No opium poppy growing in the RP development areas and other highlands**

- **Farmers cultivate 225 crops and livestock, 386 varieties**
- **3,900 ha. of fruit trees, tea and coffee farming**
- **Farmers are certified with Good Agriculture Practices and organic farming**

- **Income generation from alternative crops 1,500-2,700 \$US/household (2007)**
- **Family planning: birth rate 0.55 person/year (2005)**
- **500,000 tourists visit the Royal Project areas annually**

- **901 ha of farmers forest**
- **Land use planning and soil and water conservation adopted**
- **Community has participated in rehabilitation of forest and watershed**

# Royal Project and its Extended Programs in 2010

## Royal Project Development Centres

38 areas, 5 provinces,  
31,514 families



## International Cooperation

Afghanistan, Bhutan,  
Colombia and Lao, PDR,  
Myanmar



## RP Extended Program

43 areas, 7 provinces  
17,005 families



## RP Learning Network

180 villages, 12 provinces  
8,511 families





