

17 June 2020, 11:30 – 12:30

At: bit.ly/3cNltFE

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Innovation Team in collaboration with the Circular Design Lab
Innovation Lab (June)



Innovation to address COVID-19 in Thailand:

Local innovators discuss new initiatives created to address the changing social and economic needs in Thailand. Come learn about how grassroots initiatives are supporting some of the most vulnerable populations, and what new challenges may arise as the country begins to relax restrictions.

Lead contact: Ms. Lana Zaman, ESCAP; e-mail: lana.zaman@un.org

Session Description:

The coronavirus pandemic has rapidly transformed the global landscape. The virus has claimed the lives of over 400,000 people globally; economic activities have rapidly declined, causing many to lose their livelihoods; social interactions that were commonplace just a few months ago are now unthinkable; travel has come to a screeching halt; healthcare systems across the globe are becoming overwhelmed, leaving the sick even more vulnerable. Some of the most vulnerable populations include those who were already at risk before the crisis: those who lack access to infrastructure; those who lack access to social or political protections; those working in informal sectors; the elderly; women; refugees; migrants; and the poor, including those in densely populated urban areas where self-isolation is not possible. Unable to predict the trajectory of the disease, we find ourselves in a time of extreme uncertainty.

Amid this uncertainty, numerous innovators and social entrepreneurs have come forth with initiatives to help the public navigate these rapidly changing dynamics and support vulnerable populations. This innovation lab will explore some of the critical local issues pertaining to COVID-19 challenges in Thailand and how local grassroots initiatives are addressing them. We will hear from local innovators on community level actions and promising practices to help mitigate the current crisis. With a focus on social and economic dimensions of the pandemic, panellists will discuss the challenges facing companies, small businesses, civil society and vulnerable populations.

In an interactive session, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and to contribute to an ideating session to help support speakers in their initiatives. Lastly, the session will offer additional information for those looking to get involved on how they can help.

Agenda:

- 11:30 – 11:35 Background & Introductions
- 11:35 – 11:55 Panel Presentations (3 min each)
- 11:55 – 12:10 Panel Discussion (Questions from the Moderator)
- 12:10 – 12:25 Questions from Audience
- 12:25 – 12:30 Interactive R+D session: How local ecosystems can address current challenges
- 12:30 Closing

Speakers:

Introduction: Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary, **UN ESCAP**

Opening Remarks: Gita Sabharwa, UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand, **UN**

Natalie Bin Narkprasert, Founder, **COVID Thailand Aid**

Sakson Rouypirom, Founder, **COVID Relief Bangkok**

Ornsiree Junchaya, Deputy Director, **Chulalongkorn University Technology Center**

Weenarin Lulitanonda, Co-founder, **Thailand Clean Air Network**

Djoann Fal, CEO & Co-founder, **GetLinks**

Moderator: Lana Zaman, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, Energy Division, **UN ESCAP**

R+D Facilitator: Courtney Lawrence, Innovation & Sustainable Development Strategist, Regional Innovation Center, **UNDP** & Co-founder, **Circular Design Lab**

About ESCAP, the Innovation Team, & the Circular Design Lab:

ESCAP is the regional development arm of the United Nations Secretariat for Asia and the Pacific, with a focus on promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. ESCAP is the largest regional intergovernmental platform with 53 Member States and 9 associate members, ESCAP has emerged as a strong regional think-tank offering countries sound analytical products that shed insight into the evolving economic, social and environmental dynamics of the region.

ESCAP has developed a framework to support the socio-economic response of Asia and the Pacific to the COVID-19 pandemic. The framework's overarching principle supports building back better through integrated policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. ESCAP's offer to member States builds on its mandates and involves three main streams of work: protecting people and enhancing resilience; supporting economic recovery; and restoring supply chains and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). To ensure a concerted regional approach for sustainable recovery from the crisis, ESCAP calls for regional cooperation among member States and across stakeholders.

The Innovation Team consists of a diverse group of ESCAP staff who are committed to facilitating and promoting innovation at ESCAP. The team strives to help ESCAP enhance its efficiency, sustainability and impact in the region. In pursuit of this goal, the team organizes periodic Innovation Labs on topics of interest to help inform our work, bring new and innovative ideas into the conversation, and to collaboratively brainstorm on pathways toward a more sustainable future.

The 'Circular Design Lab' is a 100% volunteer, citizen driven, ground up (experimental) open innovation "platform" based in Bangkok focused on tackling society's complex challenges. Since 2019 more than 150 people have been involved to tackle air pollution, waste management and unsustainable fast fashion issues. You can learn more at circulardesignlab.org, read some of the backstory [here](#), or the most recent case example on Air Pollution [here](#).

Speaker Bios



**Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy
Executive Secretary, UN
ESCAP**

Kaveh Zahedi is the Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP). He oversees ESCAP's economic, social and environmental programmes, including on finance, trade, energy, natural disasters, statistics and the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also supervises ESCAP's institutes providing technical assistance on ICT for Development (Incheon), agricultural mechanization (Beijing), statistics (Chiba) and technology transfer (Delhi). He represents ESCAP in UN coordination mechanisms, facilitates collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams and oversees implementation of the UN Development System reform.

Prior to this, Mr. Zahedi worked at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) including as its Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific and Deputy Director of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, overseeing work on green economy, resource efficiency and climate change. He also set up and headed the Climate and Clean Air Coalition. Over two decades Mr. Zahedi has worked for the United Nations in Kenya, Mexico, Europe and Thailand.

Before joining the United Nations, Mr. Zahedi worked at an NGO as project manager for micro credit and development projects in Latin America and the Middle East. He holds a Master's degree from the Fletcher School, Tufts University, USA, and a BSc first class degree in Economics & Geography, from University College London.



**Gita Sabharwal, Resident
Coordinator in Thailand, UN**

Mrs. Gita Sabharwal was appointed as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Thailand on 15 March 2020.

Mrs. Sabharwal has close to three decades of development experience working across multiple country contexts in Asia. Her work has focused specifically on peacebuilding, governance and social policy, while generating and applying empirical and big data analysis to deal with emerging development challenges. Mrs. Sabharwal has worked in senior management and strategic leadership roles with different institutions. Her development experience ranges from working with a grassroots women's collective, an international foundation to bilateral and multilateral organisations. Preceding her appointment to Thailand, Mrs. Sabharwal was the Peacebuilding and Development Advisor at the United Nations in Sri Lanka, for nearly seven years.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Mrs. Sabharwal was The Asia Foundation's Deputy Country Representative for Maldives and Sri Lanka and has held positions as the Poverty and Policy Advisor for the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) in India and Vietnam.

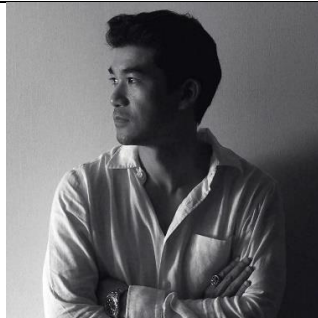
Mrs. Sabharwal holds a Master's Degree in Development Management from the University of Wales, UK and is the author of numerous policy papers on South and South-East Asia. She speaks English and Hindi.



**Natalie Bin Narkprasert,
Founder, COVID Thailand Aid**

Natalie is a serial entrepreneur and accidental NGO founder of COVID Thailand Aid with zero years of NGO experience.

Her background is in tech startups and real estate.



**Sakson Rouypirom, Founder,
COVID Relief Bangkok**

Recognizing areas around Thailand were going underserved in many basic needs, Saks founded SATI Non-Profit, an organization that focuses on providing access to healthcare and education to remote areas of Thailand and in Bangkok as well. The word Sati, a Buddhist Pali word meaning mindfulness, is a clear nod to the central emphasis of all of Saks' work. He works tirelessly on shifting public response from forced sympathy to authentic empathy rooted in mindfulness and supported by volunteer and charity efforts that produce results.

Saks is also one of the co-owners of Broccoli Revolution, a socially conscious fast casual plant-based eatery and cold pressed juice/smoothie bar as well as Case Space a social art and creative space both in Bangkok. They have merged business with social change by donating a percentage of sales to help fund various SATI programs; everything from clean water projects in Chiang Rai to art therapy programs for street kids in Hua Lumphong.

His most recent project is Na café at Bangkok 1899. A creative social impact café. He created this with the purpose of having a platform for creativity and social change. Na collaborates with socially conscious artists in order to build awareness of issues in our society both locally and globally. Na also collaborates with several non-profits such as SATI, AAT(Asylum Access Thailand), and SOS(Scholars of Sustenance). The café runs a food and beverage training program for at risk youths and urban refugees as well as a refugee catering service.

All of his social businesses have the same goal a focus on sharing knowledge and educating the parties involved in order to help sustain themselves.




Most recently in collaboration with Scholar of Sustenance, Urban Studies Lab, FREC, and Bangkok 1899 Saks' started Covid Relief Bangkok.



**Ornsiree Junchaya, Deputy
Director, Chulalongkorn
University Technology
Center (UTC)**

Ornsiree works in Deep Tech research innovation and commercialization for the Chulalongkorn University Technology Center in the following verticals: Medtech and AI/Data Science/Robotics, where she helps faculty and students realize the potential of their research through incubation and coaching to create university spin-offs to solve the nation's biggest challenges. She has also been involved in the establishment of the Medical Products Consortium of Thailand, a network between the Food and Drug Administration of Thailand and 27 Member Institutions to reform medical device regulations to support local innovators and manufacturers, bringing Thai medical devices to the world stage. Ornsiree has experience in the medical device industry, regulatory affairs, startup incubation, and spa consulting. Previously, Ornsiree worked with 1776, a startup incubator and venture fund in Washington D.C., and Dorsata, an electronic health record software startup which recently raised their Series A round.

Ornsiree attained a Master of Science in Bioscience Research and Health Policy from Rice University, and graduated with honors from Chulalongkorn University with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Chemistry and Management.

 <p>Weenarin Lulitanonda, Co-founder, Thailand Clean Air Network</p>	<p>Weenarin is a financial economist with over 20 years of professional experience that covers the private sector, public sector entities and international organization both based in Thailand and abroad. Weenarin's multilateral experience was with the World Bank Group based in Washington DC for a decade. The breadth of her work covered many different sectorial specializations across numerous jurisdictions. Weenarin is today the co-founder of the Thailand Clean Air Network, a multi-disciplinary, cross-organizational group of professionals that have joined today to address Thailand's air pollution crisis and to drive policy-change from the grass-roots up.</p>
 <p>Djoann Fal, CEO & Co-founder, GetLinks</p>	<p>Coming from a modest background in South of France, Djoann Fal started to code at 14. He used to be an intern at LAZADA. Now, he supervises operations across 4 countries, leading a team of over 100+ employees, as co-founder of one of Asia's leading technology companies.</p> <p>Forbes 30 under 30, entrepreneur Djoann is the founding CEO of GetLinks, and now its Group Strategy Officer. Labelled 'Tatler 2020 top 300 foreigner personality in Thailand', Djoann is one of the youngest technology founders in SEA, funded by Alibaba, JobsDB's and SCG, earning him a spot on Forbes 30 under 30 at the age of 26.</p> <p>He recently released his first book called "The Adaptive Economy" and he is planning, next year, to start a technology fund to invest in social impact projects</p>
 <p>Lana Zaman, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, UN ESCAP</p>	<p>Lana Zaman is a sustainable development professional with over a decade of experience in energy, sustainability, and economic analysis. Lana is currently an Associate Economic Affairs Officer to the Energy Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), a division committed to ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all in Asia and the Pacific in line with SDG7 targets. Her current work focuses on economic analysis of the impact of energy access programming on socioeconomic outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Prior to that, she worked as Senior Programme Manager of Impact Evaluation at the Washington DC-based Social Impact where she led and managed econometric evaluations of international development programmes for clients including USAID, the US Department of Agriculture, and Mastercard Foundation. Lana has additionally conducted economic research projects for organizations including the Environmental Defense Fund, the Center for Clean Air Policy, and Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co.</p> <p>Lana attained a Master of Public Policy from UC Berkeley's Goldman School and a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematical Economics from Brown University.</p>



**Courtney Lawrence,
Innovation & Sustainable
Development Strategist,
Regional Innovation Center,
UNDP &
Co-founder, Circular Design
Lab**

Courtney Savie Lawrence is Head of Exploration for the UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Innovation Centre and is cofounder of the Bangkok-based Circular Design Lab, an open innovation platform for the citizen sector. She has been working across Asia since 2012 as an entrepreneur, practitioner, researcher and university lecturer focused on the intersection of human centered design, systems innovation and inclusive policy change. She has worked among large scale organizations like Ashoka, and led programming for MIT's D-Lab, the Global Challenges Retreat at Oxford Said and research at Stanford's Institute of Design. Courtney is a current RSA Fellow and recent Cordes, Vital Voices, and Amsterdam-based THNK School of Creative Leadership Fellow. Her work has been published in the Design Management Review and she holds a Masters in Responsible Management and Sustainable Economic Development from the United Nations Mandated University for Peace and Conflict Studies in Costa Rica. She has also worked and lived in Japan, South Africa and Uruguay. You can find her on twitter @cocosavie and [LinkedIn](#)