Position  Director

Organization  Youth Innovation Year Project (YIY), Prathumthani, Thailand

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Education  BA at Thammasat University, Thailand

Expertise  Human Rights, Information Technology and Rural Development

Biography

Ms. Sreesunpagit is Director at the Youth Innovation Year Project (YIY). She obtained her BA at Thammasat University. While at university, she joined government-funded rural development camps, popular vacation destinations among socially active university students in Thailand. In her fourth year at university, Ms. Kritaya founded a vacation project completely different from the camps: an online youth conference on information technology and rural development. Shortly thereafter, she and a friend came up with Thai Rural Net, a project to foster rural development through information
technology. They submitted an application to the World Bank’s Development Marketplace competition, which would later serve as a model for her Youth Innovation Fair. Their proposal won funding, and immediately after graduation Ms. Kritaya and her friend began work on it full time. Thai Rural Net continues to this day, and in 2003 it won an Ashoka Citizens Base Initiative award for its success in mobilizing local resources.

Kritaya creates a system that supports young people in Thailand in developing and carrying out ideas for social improvement. Her work centers around the organization Youth Innovation Venture (YIV), which she founded as a playground for budding social entrepreneurs. Through YIV, Kritaya encourages motivated young people to experiment—to fall down, get up again, and ultimately leave their playgrounds with the confidence, knowledge, and concrete resources to implement their projects in the real world. Development projects in Thailand have wasted vast amounts of money on ineffective programs that treat young people as objects rather than subjects of change. Learning from these programs, Kritaya encourages youth to lead new ventures, rewarding dozens of ideas per year with funding and professional mentorship. She positions YIV to release the innovative potential of young people, to lower the barriers that prohibit youth from implementing their ideas, and to guide talented minds toward sustainable careers in the citizen sector. Together, the participants in Youth Innovation Venture are engineering a new model for citizen organizing in Thailand that channels the energy and creativity of youth toward positive social change.