

# **Establishing Environmental Legal Clinic at Chiang Mai University, Thailand**



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# Two Main Problems

- ASEAN Environmental and Educational problems
- ELC's Goals
- Three ELC Models
- CMUELC Proposal
- Challenges
- Road Map to Establish CMUELC

# Two Common Environmental problems in ASEAN

## Natural Depletion

- ❖ Deforestation
- ❖ Dam construction

## Pollution

- ❖ Coal Mining & Power Plants
- ❖ Air Pollution

# Mekong Dams



## RUN-OF-RIVER DAM CASCADE ON THE MEKONG RIVER MAINSTREAM



Source: MRC Strategic Environmental Assessment: ICEM, 2010  
\*Initially proposed as a 3,300 MW project, 465 MW and 2,600 MW options have also been studied.

# Xayaburi Dam Lawsuit





# Coal Mining and Power Plants



# Transboundary Air Pollution



# Primary Legal Educational Challenge

- Emphasize on texts and court opinions
- One-way interaction: Speakers and listeners
- Students' disengagement
- Irrelevant to live-experience
- Do not well prepared student to face real legal problems



# Environmental Legal Clinic

**Society:** Provide legal services to address environmental problems

**Law school:** Provide hands-on, live-experienced to students

**Students:** Learning by practicing law to solve important problems

# Student Testimony

“When we firstly talked about social responsibility, I felt it was so empty, so ambiguous. However, after I started working with the clinic, I gradually had experience with the poor. People who came to the clinic are poor. They are grass-roots people. University students have no contact with these people... Before working with the clinic, social responsibility was nothing, so vacant. But after working with the clinic, I know that it’s real. It is **true.**” Srichaiyarat et al., *Clinical Legal Education in Thailand: A Pedagogy Whose Time Has Come*

# Three ELC Models

- 1. Law Reform Model: Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria, Canada (Uvic ELC)
- 2. Litigation Model: Environmental Law & Justice Clinic, Georgetown University, USA (GEJC)
- 3. Consulting Model: Environmental Law Clinic of Wuhan University (ELCWU)

# Uvic ELC

1. Law Reform Model
2. Accredited course-Elective course
3. Public interest environmental cases
4. **Have legal status separated from University**
5. **Fund mostly by external funding**

# GEJC

1. **Litigation Model**
2. Accredited course
3. Public interest environmental cases
4. Part of Law school
5. **Fund by law school and external funding**



# ELCWU

1. **Consulting Model**
2. Accredited course
3. Public interest environmental cases
4. **Under Research Institution**
5. **External Funding**

# Chiang Mai University Environmental Legal Clinic

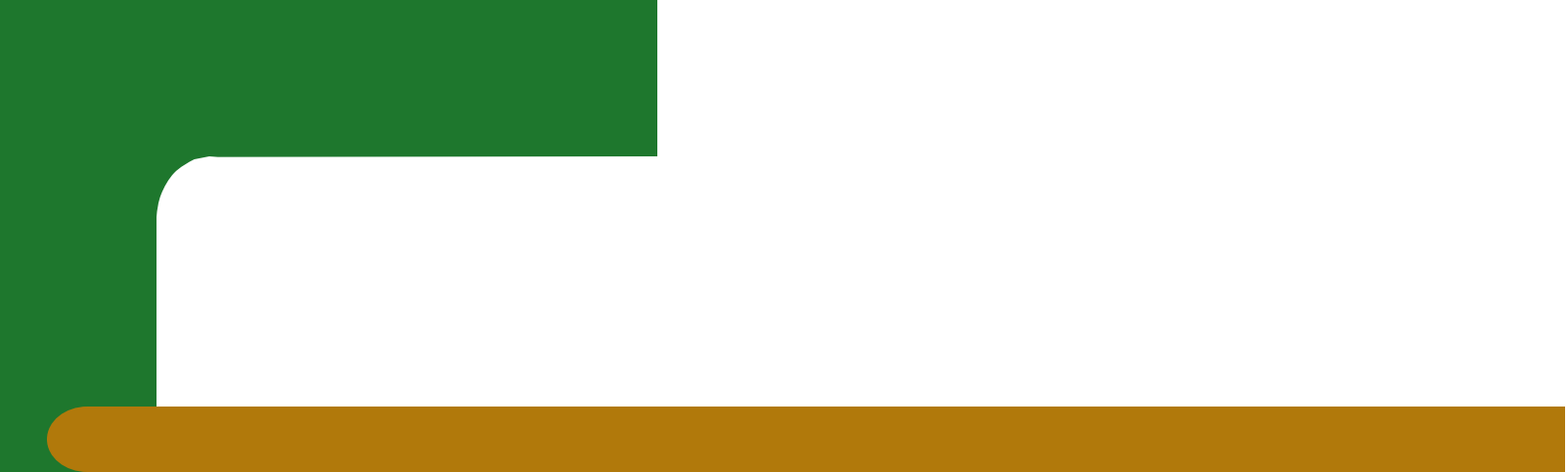
1. **Consulting and Law Reform Model**
2. Accredited Course-Elective
3. Public interest environmental cases
4. Under Law School
5. **Fund by External and internal funding**

# Challenges

1. Life circle of cases vs university semester
2. Supervising capacity
3. Case selection criteria
4. Funding sustainability

# CMUELC Road Map

- ❖ 2020-Develop a concept paper
- ❖ 2021-Propose to Faculty & Develop curriculum
- ❖ 2022-Propose ELC as an elective course in Law school curriculum & obtain funding
- ❖ 2023-Start the ELC course

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- Thank you very much for your attention.
  - Feedbacks or questions are welcome.