

New Book Highlights the Power of Lifelong Learning



Left to right: Nalin Tutiyaphuengprasert, Paulo Blikstein, Deborah Fields in Northern Thailand after a constructionism workshop at a local village.

The Society That Learns, a new book published by MIT Press, explores how a decades-long educational movement in Thailand has transformed learning into a catalyst for community development and social change. Co-authored by Dr. Deborah Fields, Ph.D., research professor in the Department of ITLS, and Paulo Blikstein, Ph.D., Associate Professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, the book documents more than 25 years of Thailand's constructionist learning movement, drawing on approximately eight years of research. Inspired by the educational philosophy of Seymour Papert, the movement emphasizes learning through creating, experimenting, and solving real-world problems. Since 1996, educators and community leaders have adapted these ideas through the Suksapattana Foundation, building one of the world's longest-running community-based learning initiatives.

"This book is about learning," Dr. Fields said. "It tells the stories of how all the transformations came to be... and most importantly, about learning itself and what people are capable of as learners."

The book shares stories of communities restoring water supplies, improving agriculture, strengthening local industries, and fostering entrepreneurship through collaborative learning. Beyond documenting Thailand's experience, it offers a vision for how lifelong learning can help communities address challenges and create meaningful social change.

The Society That Learns is available through MIT Press. All proceeds support the ongoing educational initiatives of the Suksapattana Foundation in Thailand.

Congratulations to Dr. Deborah Fields on this remarkable achievement! We are proud to celebrate this important contribution to educational research and its potential to inspire learners and communities around the world.