

# Cooperation and Community in Rural Thailand

*An Organizational Analysis of Participatory Rural Development*

**by Shin'ichi SHIGETOMI**

**Institute of Developing Economies**

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INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

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## **Cooperation and Community in Rural Thailand**

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Rural Development

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This study looks at the cooperation that takes place among Thai villagers by examining their cooperative activities and the bases for these activities.

During the past thirty years the market economy has penetrated rapidly into rural Thailand, breaking down the traditional form of dyadic cooperation in the exchange of resources. This is being replaced by organizations that carry out the exchange of resources based on collective agreement. However, these new organizations have required villagers to accept new administrative principles and organizational norms which they have never previously experienced, and this has generated a strong sense of uncertainty when first setting up these organizations. To overcome this uncertainty, villagers have mobilized their existing social organizations. This study found that the existence of a "village community" has been a key element in supporting this new form of villager organizing.

Through an analysis of self-organizing activities in rural development, this study points out the principles of Thai villager cooperation and the structure of their village community. It is also meant to be a contribution to the theoretical study of villager organizing which is vital to participatory development strategy.

**Shin'ichi Shigetomi** was born in 1958. He joined the Institute of Developing Economies in 1986. His main field of research is the rural economy and society of Thailand.