Press Release 20 October 2026

Banpu Marks BC4C's 15th Anniversary with THB 500,000 to Support Two Social Enterprises Using Energy Solutions to Address Business Challenges

Banpu Public Company Limited, in collaboration with ChangeFusion Institute, has announced **Karen Design and Chang Ek** as the two social enterprises selected to receive a combined THB 500,000 in funding under the **Banpu Champions for Change (BC4C) 15th Anniversary Special Program**. The funding will support both enterprises in using energy solutions to address business challenges and create opportunities for growth. Karen Design plans to use solar energy to address power outages affecting local weavers in Mae Hong Son, while Chang Ek aims to develop electric-powered agricultural tools and energy solutions that help older adults earn a living and become more self-reliant.

Under the theme **"Energy of Possibility"** the special anniversary program invited social entrepreneurs, including members of the BC4C alumni network, to propose ways to integrate energy solutions into their businesses to create positive social, community, and environmental impact.

Karen Design: Using Solar Energy to Address Power Outages and Create More Income Opportunities for groups of Local Weavers

Karen Design is a social enterprise based in the Mae Tho Noi community of Mae Hong Son Province that builds on traditional Karen weaving craftsmanship to create jobs and generate income for the local community. The enterprise aims to reduce the community's reliance on maize farming and help address PM2.5 pollution caused by agricultural burning. Karen Design currently works with groups of approximately 50 local weavers, creating alternative livelihoods for community members while using part of its profits to support forest conservation in the area.

One of Karen Design's main challenges is an unreliable electricity supply, particularly during the rainy season when power outages can last for several days. These disruptions affect production and delay product deliveries.

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For many weavers who have family responsibilities during the day, evenings provide an important opportunity to work. Without sufficient lighting, they cannot weave as usual, directly affecting their ability to earn an income.

To address this challenge, Karen Design plans to install solar power systems with battery storage at four locations, each serving approximately seven to eight households. These systems will provide backup power to ensure weaving activities can continue during electricity outages. In parallel, the enterprise plans to invest in raw materials, labour, inventory, and marketing to strengthen its production capacity and ensure timely product delivery.

With improvements to both its energy systems and business operations, Karen Design aims to increase its revenue by approximately **THB 1 million within one year**, helping provide more stable jobs and income for community members. Karen Design also aims to involve community members in managing and maintaining the energy systems, with the goal of developing a model that can be expanded to nearby communities in the future.

Chang Ek: Advancing Clean Energy to Create Livelihood Opportunities and Improve Quality of Life for Older Adults

Chang Ek is a social enterprise that develops agricultural equipment tailored to the needs of older adults by using electric technology and clean energy solutions to address the limitations of conventional equipment, such as heavy weight, noise, and engine emissions. This makes the equipment easier for older persons to use, helping them continue working, earn an income, and become more self-reliant. Its main products include wheeled and backpack-style electric brush cutters, with nearly 1,000 units sold to date.

As part of its proposal for the BC4C 15th Anniversary Special Program, Chang Ek plans to increase its production capacity and inventory to meet existing market demand. The enterprise also plans to improve product standards and marketing to generate steady revenue, with profits reinvested in developing further innovations for older adults.

One of Chang Ek's plans is to explore reusing decommissioned solar panels to reduce the cost of a home backup power system for seniors, known as "**Electricity Phase 2.**" This low-voltage, 12-volt system is designed to operate independently of a home's main electrical supply, combining solar panels with battery storage to provide backup power for essential areas such as bathrooms, walkways, and kitchens, as well as phone charging points during power outages. In addition, Chang Ek is exploring the development of a "**Community Energy Technician**" initiative in collaboration with universities. The initiative aims to equip local students and young people with clean energy

knowledge and practical skills, creating career opportunities while developing local technicians who can maintain community energy systems in the long term.

Empowering People to Unlock the Potential of Energy for Social Impact

Mr. Rattapon Sukhunthee, Head of Corporate Communications, Banpu Public Company Limited, said: "The BC4C 15th Anniversary Special Program aims to encourage social enterprises to use energy to grow their businesses and create greater social impact, as energy plays an important role in improving people's quality of life. Both social enterprises stand out for their understanding of local communities, their practical approaches to using energy solutions to address specific challenges, and their strong business foundations for future growth. As their businesses grow stronger, they will be able to create jobs, reduce inequality, and continue creating opportunities for people in their communities.

Moving forward, BC4C will work closely with mentors to support both teams in planning their operations, managing funding, and measuring business performance and the benefits they bring to local communities. We will also closely follow their progress, helping them address challenges and adjust their plans as needed. Banpu believes that the entrepreneurs' experience, together with continued support, will help both enterprises achieve their business goals and create lasting benefits for their communities."

Follow the progress of Karen Design and Chang Ek and stay updated on the Banpu Champions for Change (BC4C) program via Facebook page: Banpu Champions for Change.

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About Banpu Champions for Change (BC4C)

The "Banpu Champions for Change" (BC4C) project is a collaboration between Banpu and ChangeFusion Institute, a non-profit organization under the Rural Restoration Foundation of Thailand under the Royal Patronage. The project has been operational since 2011, with a mandate to support young social entrepreneurs who demonstrate creativity and potential for driving social change. These social entrepreneurs are encouraged to develop business ideas that not only generate income but also create a positive impact on society, communities, and the environment.

About Banpu

Banpu Public Company Limited is a leading versatile energy company, operating across four business pillars under its Energy Symphonics Strategy: U.S. Closed-Loop Gas, Next-Gen Mining, Power+, and Future Tech – with operations across Asia Pacific and

the United States. Banpu is committed to expanding the world's energy capacity through reliable and responsible energy solutions that move the world toward a better future. For more information, visit www.banpu.com.

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