

ADMINISTRATION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THAILAND

การบริหารงานการศึกษานอกโรงเรียนในประเทศไทย

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study showed that the initiative policy to reduce a rate of illiteracy to 10.5% was centralized by the government. To combat the illiteracy, Non-Formal Education centers were established throughout the country. These centers were used to accommodate the educational facilities and provide information to the local people.

Nevertheless, the Non-Formal Education Department requires a large national budget to support its own organization and activities as much as coordination with local personnel and agencies to prevent the repetition of certain activities. It was recommended that the Non-Formal Education Department should work in collaboration with primary and secondary schools which already had educational facilities in order to achieve the principle of self-reliance among the targeted people.

บทคัดย่อ

ประเทศที่กำลังพัฒนาเช่นประเทศไทยต้องเผชิญกับปัญหาที่สำคัญประการหนึ่ง คือการที่ประชากรบางส่วนไม่รู้หนังสือ ซึ่งจากการสำรวจเมื่อปี พ.ศ. 2526 พบว่าจำนวนผู้ไม่รู้หนังสือ มีประมาณ 14.5% ของประชากรทั้งประเทศ ดังนั้น รัฐบาลจึงต้องวางนโยบายเพื่อหาทางขจัดจำนวนผู้ไม่รู้หนังสือให้ลดลงอย่างน้อย 10.5% ในปลายปี 2529 รัฐบาลจึงเห็นควรให้จัดตั้งกรมการศึกษานอกโรงเรียนขึ้น โดย

เป็นองค์กรหนึ่งในสังกัดกระทรวงศึกษาธิการ เพื่อให้มีหน้าที่รับผิดชอบและดำเนินนโยบายในการจัดปัญหาประชากรไม่รู้หนังสือดังกล่าวตามนโยบายของรัฐบาล โดยกำหนดคนโยบายจากส่วนกลาง เช่น การจัดตั้งศูนย์การศึกษาออกโรงเรียนในทุกจังหวัด ทุกภาคทั่วประเทศ เพื่อให้การบริการทางด้านข่าวสาร และงานอาชีพไปยังกลุ่มประชากรเป้าหมายโดยตรง ซึ่งจะทำให้จำนวนผู้ไม่รู้หนังสือลดลง และคาดหมายได้ว่ามีแนวโน้มที่จะลดลงไปเรื่อย ๆ

การวิจัยเชิงสำรวจนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่า กรมการศึกษานอกโรงเรียนจำเป็นต้องใช้จ่ายเงินจำนวนมากเพื่อเสริมสร้างองค์กรของตนในการแก้ไขปัญหาดังกล่าว และการทำงานมีลักษณะซ้ำซ้อนกับหน่วยงานอื่น ๆ หากกรมการศึกษานอกโรงเรียนจะได้ประสานแผนงานและขอความร่วมมือจากหน่วยงานอื่น ๆ และบุคลากรต่าง ๆ ในระดับท้องถิ่น เช่น โรงเรียนประถมศึกษาและมัธยมศึกษา ซึ่งมีอุปกรณ์และสถานที่พร้อมมูล รวมทั้งให้วัดเป็นสถานที่ศึกษาด้วยแล้ว โครงการดังกล่าวจะช่วยให้การสูญเสียงบประมาณของชาติลดน้อยลง ทั้งนี้ รัฐบาลจะต้องเน้นนโยบายการพึ่งพาตนเองเพื่อกระตุ้นให้นักการศึกษา ผู้นำในท้องถิ่น และการศึกษาโดยกลุ่มให้รู้จักการช่วยเหลือตนเองให้มากที่สุด

INTRODUCTION

According to the National Demographic Survey, approximately 3.5 million of the Thai population between the age of 14-55 were unable to read or write, that is, 14.5% of the total population. These illiterates can be classified as:

1. Those never entering school.
2. Those failing the Grade 4 final examination.
3. Those still illiterate after receiving the Grade 4 Certificate.

The survey, involving 18 provinces out of 72, in 1982 revealed ca.* 660,322 persons were illiterate, mostly female, including those receiving only primary Grade 4 education of which one consequence is a lack of the necessary training to do business with local merchants, which brings about the fear of exploitation.

Measures intended to combat this situation are under the following headings:

1. Transition from adult education to Non-Formal Education.
2. Establishment of Non-Formal Education facilities.

* ca. = approximately

3. Distribution of Non-Formal Education.
4. Impact of Non-Formal Education on national and rural development.

At the time of absolute monarchy, educational opportunities existed only for the privileged classes. Traditionally, teaching was conducted in the temple where young pupils learned to read, write, became novices at the age of 12-19, and were finally ordained as a monk at the age of 20. They might subsequently withdraw from the monkhood in order to serve the country. The Sangha organized its educational program into 2 levels 1. Dhamma: levels 1 to 3, 2. Pali: levels 1 to 9 and there were two Buddhist universities employing traditional and modern educational methods in conjunction.

The Thai People's Party assuming power in 1932, set its policy towards: 1. National self-sufficiency 2. Internal security 3. Job-creation and economic opportunity for all 4. Social equality 5. Freedom, according to the preceding four principles 6. Universal education: The Compulsory Elementary Act was passed in 1923. Adult education leading to the award of a certificate was commenced in 1940, but this opportunity has been available only to a few, since ca. 14.5% of the population still remains illiterate.

Hence the 5th National Social and Economic Development Plan (1982-1986) has set the goal of reducing illiteracy to 10.5% by the end of fiscal year 1986, it is a task for which the Department of Non-Formal Education will be responsible.

Transition from adult education to Non-Formal Education

The Department of Non-Formal Education was established by a Royal Decree through amendment of Administrative order No. 216, September 19, 1972 (Article 8). The National Educational Planning Board for 1983-1987 (Section 2, No. 16) reiterated the Government's obligation to increase the standard of living of underprivileged people through multi-purpose Non-Formal Education, following the aim of the 4th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (1977-1981) towards wider distribution of socio-economic, health and educational opportunities among rural people.

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministries of Interior, Health, Agriculture and Cooperatives, and other local agencies, will campaign to eliminate illiteracy within 3 years. In 1982 the Non-Formal Education Department surveyed the feasibility of setting up its operations in 24 provinces, which would be extended to 31 provinces in 1983, and nationwide in 1984.

Objectives of Non-Formal Education

1. General

To eliminate illiteracy among people between the age of 14-55.

2. Specific

2.1 To promote literacy and interest in reading.

2.2 To promote access to modern knowledge via literacy and vocational training.

2.3 To promote mutual help and cooperation towards development.

3. Procedure

3.1 To utilize the services of e.g. government agencies, private sectors and individuals in solving this persistent problem.

3.2 To encourage students, scholars, novices and monks to voluntarily campaign to eliminate illiteracy.

3.3 To utilize the mass media for the distribution of Non-Formal Education.

Curriculum, learning and teaching processes

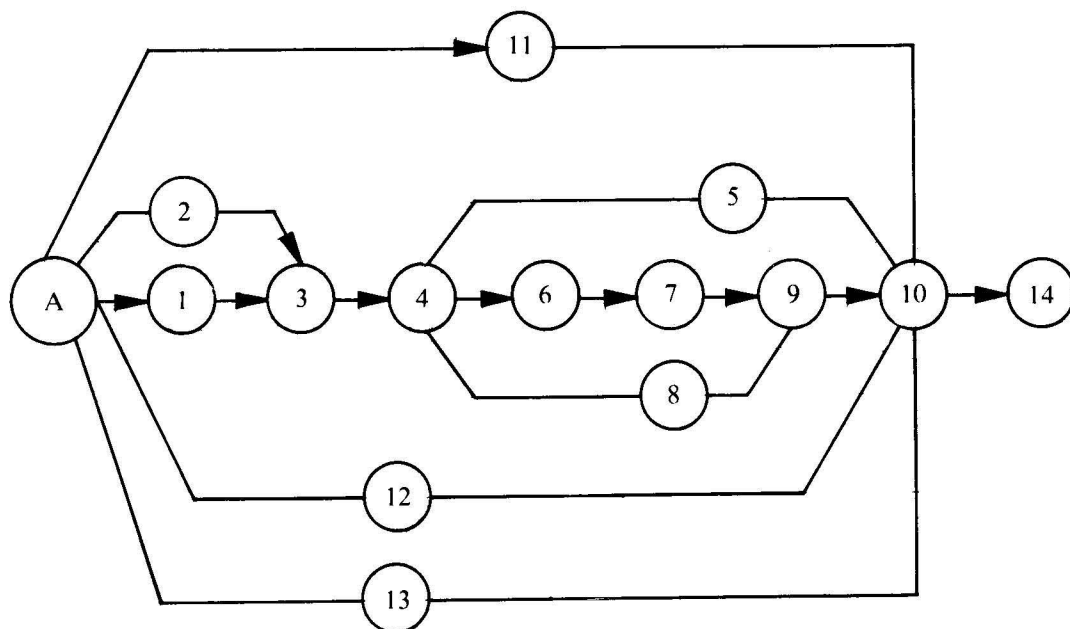
These processes aim at adult or unemployed persons, leading to a certificate granting eligibility to pursue higher education. Some may receive short-term occupational training e.g. hair-dressing, mechanical and electrical techniques, building, or painting.

A basic curriculum is designed to eliminate national illiteracy. Teaching is given voluntarily by those able and willing to serve. A community able to implement the program successfully will receive privileges and a certificate of honour from the Ministry of Education (MOE). As for the pupils, when they are sufficiently proficient they may take an examination provided twice a year by the MOE. Subsequently, in order to improve the ability of those who have learned to read and provide them with access to necessary information (including market price information), each village must be provided with at least two newspapers and other reading material. This plan generates the distribution of books and the development of communications within the village.

The Educational Supervisor for Non-Formal Education, and concerned agencies including voluntary personnel will visit villages regularly to give advices relating to current problems. The MOE has also endeavoured to promote public awareness of national illiteracy,

lack of knowledge and occupational skills that impede development. The government strongly encourages the use of mobile educational centers and libraries as a means to reduce illiteracy. Sequence of the social events is demonstrated in the following diagram:-

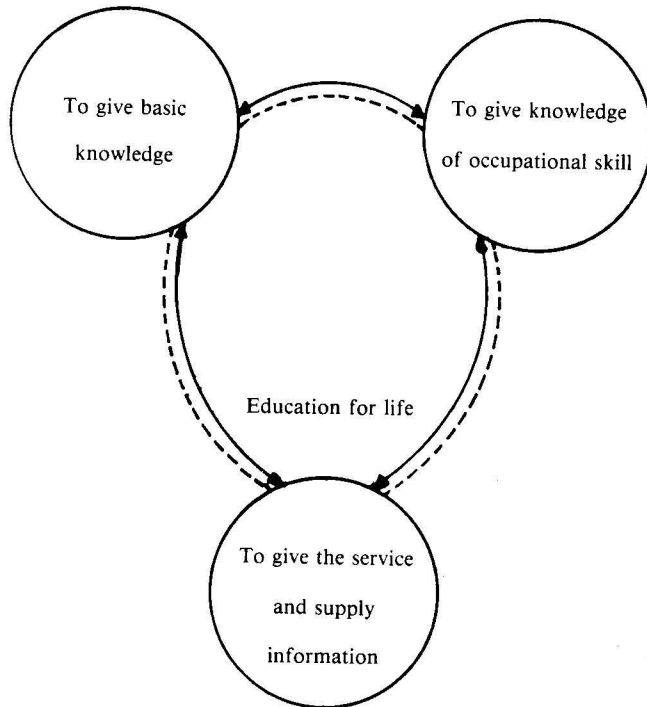
The process of national literacy campaign project



A. Project approval

1. Information from the offices concerned
2. Survey of the extent of illiteracy
3. Selection of provinces for launching a project
4. Meeting with the heads of the selected provinces to explain principles and procedure
5. Design of curriculum and textbooks
6. Selection of volunteers
7. Selection of respondents at local level
8. Training of lecturers responsible at local level
9. Training of respondents at local level
10. Work of the volunteer teachers
11. Evaluation study
12. The information project
13. Orientation, follow-up, and evaluation
14. Report on the results of each project.

The basic plan for Non-Formal Education, which views education as a life process, may be illustrated by the diagram:-



The Non-Formal Education program

There are 2 programs:-

1. Adult general education

It is a non-formal adult education leading to a certificate equivalent to the normal certificate of education. Its courses of study, usually in the evening, have 2 levels. (Diagram 1)

1.1 Primary level

1.1.1 Grades 1-2, 6 months. These courses are used in some adult schools in rural areas, except for adult classes in prisons, and other rural adult schools using the functional literacy curriculum.

1.1.2 Grades 3-4, 6 months. These courses are used by adult schools in towns for those wishing to continue school, and for adult classes in prisons.

1.1.3 Grades 5-6, 1½ years. Completion of at least 30 credits are required for a pass.

1.2 Secondary level

1.2.1 Functional education Grades 7 - 9, 1½ years, 50 credits required.

1.2.2 Adult education Grades 10-12 for upper secondary school, issued by the Ministry of Education in 1975.

The above program enables a student, lacking previous opportunity to study, to attain the High School Certificate within 3 years. Many students enrolled on these courses have proved successful at the highest level of national and international education.

2. Vocational adult education

The program provides short-term vocational training according to job-market demands, There are 2 schemes:-

2.1 Courses of 100-300 hours, specializing in industry, home economics, business, and agriculture, held in fixed day schools.

2.2 Classes given by mobile units serving remote areas. Mobile adult schools offer courses in dress-making, tailoring, hair-dressing, mechanics, and agriculture, of 150-300 hours, attendance from 9.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. Mobile trade training schools specialize in industrial vocations, offering courses of 400 hours, attendance from 9.00-12.00 a.m., 1.00-4.00 p.m., 5.00-8.00 p.m.

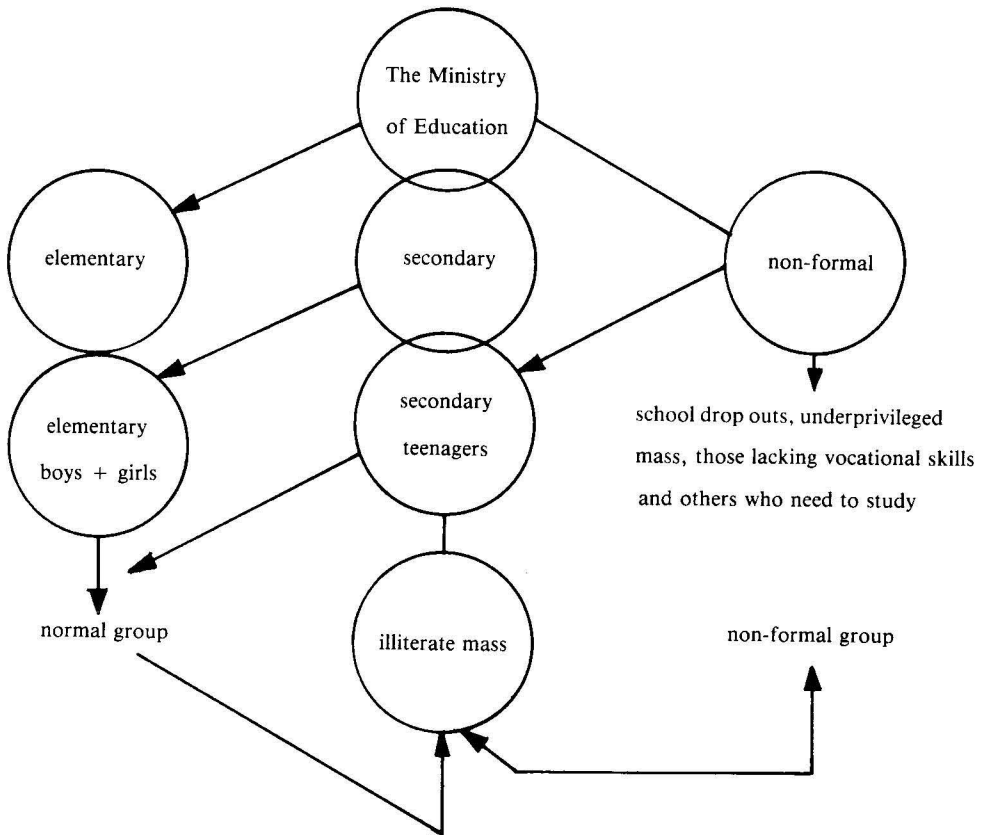
Operating since 1973, interest groups program offers courses of 5-30 hours, depending on people's initiative wishes to study in the field of interest beneficial to themselves and their community. It is interesting to note that the program has been popular in all regions. Action may be initiated by:

1. Random selection of at least 15 people wishing to study in a specified field, following a survey of local needs by provincial officials.

2. A request from at least 15 people interested in studying a specified topic which must be clearly defined. Resources are provided by provincial or central authorities, teachers being paid a government stipend of 30 baht per hour.

Connection with the existing formal system

The Department of Elementary Education has been successful in providing services in remote areas and the standard of elementary education is considered high in Southeast Asia. The Department of General Education is responsible for secondary schools and employs teachers of a high standard, often degree holders. Both elementary and secondary school teachers also assist development at the village level by acting as advisors in educational matters. The Academic Department handles curriculum development and research into improved educational material. The next diagram relates Non-Formal Education to the other departments:-



The Non-Formal Education project is diffused throughout the country, its facilities are modern, and makes use of time outside that allotted to elementary and secondary school classes.

Establishment of Non-Formal Education facilities

1. Public libraries

Public libraries have been established as multi-purposed organizations. The government provides its people with public libraries to implement the habit of reading and profitable use of leisure time, and also disseminating up to date news and current informations. There are many types of public libraries, such as, provincial public libraries, district public libraries and mobile libraries. The mobile libraries are mobile vans and boats moving around communities.

2. Functional library program

Public libraries also provide the functional library program. The training is offered to illiterates to promote social and environmental knowledge, problem-solving and decision-making abilities according to local problems, interests, and needs. Discussion between students and teachers on communal and individual problems and their solution may take place in schools, temples, or the students' own homes.

3. Educational audio-visual unit

These units, one for each province, bring information to people in remote areas, in the hope of clearing up misunderstandings among people and between the people and the government. Usually movies are preferred. The unit sets a visiting date, on which educational films and slides are shown.

4. Mass media for adult education

The mass media are used to provide instruction to some 80% of the people who do not attend school.

“Adult Education News” is a bi-weekly wall newspaper sent to village newspaper-reading centers, temples, village headmens' houses, health centers and adult schools, providing information on vocational guidance, health, nutrition, family planning, and laws relating to everyday life. The contents also cover social education, culture, and traditions, in simple language and in forms that can be practically applied.

Radio and television programs inform people concerning economic conditions, marketing and prices of agricultural products.

5. Radio and correspondence

Transistor radios are the cheapest form of mass media, widely used in the countryside. Students receive information by radio and course materials by mail and follow the course according to schedule, or by meeting with a group of teachers for at least 3 hours per week.

6. Village newspaper reading center

According to the survey, about 80% of rural persons literate on leaving primary school lose their ability through lack of opportunity to read. They are disadvantaged in business with local middlemen and subject to exploitation and cheating. It is a feature of an underdeveloped society that the rich exploit the poor; and rural farmers have been regarded as holding the lowest rank in Thai society.

Education is necessary to overcome this inequality, promote business ability and the formation of cooperatives to check middleman exploitation. Hence the government is attempting to quickly solve this problem by launching a pilot project to acquire reading material for rural people. This center has been established for donation for children's books, textbooks, periodicals, supplementary reading and vocational books. Solution to the problems of illiteracy in a developing country is an enormous task for a government, but one very relevant to human development.

7. Provincial Non-Formal Education centers

Since the 1976 survey indicated that 32.4 million persons were not attending school, expansion of NFE services to the provinces is considered urgent. So far, the NFE has established centers (Figure 1) while radio programs are broadcast from Bangkok and 32 provincial stations, covering the subjects of : 1. Life experience 2. Social science 3. Music and pragmatic art, Grades 1-6 4. English language, Grades 5-9 and 5. Thai language, Grades 1-6. At the same time the section provides teachers' handbooks and learning materials for students, and instructs teachers in the effective use of the programs.

The radio visual material section supplies materials for use in and out of school e.g. documentary films and supplementary films for educational television programs. The technical

section provides electrical expertise to the center and co-ordinates with the Public Relations Department in installing and maintaining equipment. Programs are televised on channels 9 and 5 and are recorded for re-use by provincial stations. The above center conducts research into the effective application of new technology for teaching media.

8. Center for educational technology

It provides educational radio programs for members of the public, including education officials, and specific groups such as the people of the four southernmost provinces, the majority of whom are muslims.

Educational radio programs are summarized in the following table.

The voice of radio education	Radio Broadcasting Station			Programs: entertainment information and other extra programs such as national security etc.	Types: drama music song occupation nutrition law foreign language
	Monday ↓ Friday	time 7	hour -		

Source: Report from Non-Formal Education Bulletin, Ministry of Education.

9. The Bangkok Planetarium

One of the largest in Southeast Asia, the Planetarium was established in 1964 to promote astronomical knowledge. It offers numerous instructional services for exhibitions on the solar system, universe and space exploration, training in the teaching of astronomy, use of the telescope the most popular with students-exhibitions on current space research.

10. Science Museum

The Science Museum, within the same precincts of the Bangkok Planetarium, exists to promote scientific and technological knowledge among students and the general public. Its temporary and permanent exhibitions include:

1. Basic environmental science, mathematics, measurement, energy conversion, wave phenomena, basic chemistry and biology.
2. Technology in everyday life: communication, transportation, human necessities, and agriculture.
3. Technology applicable to rural areas e.g. wind power, hydraulics, methane fermentation of organic waste, and the use of local crafts such as blacksmithing, pottery, and brick manufacture.

The museum comprises of 3 sections as follows:

1. Suggestion section: Dealing with the acquisition of knowledge at primary, secondary and vocational levels.
2. Illustration section: The promotion of scientific and technological knowledge, at academic level, via audio-visual materials and lectures.
3. Agricultural Dome: Mechanization, use of fertilizers, and other agricultural technology.

11. Mobile unit on science education

This involves the application of mobile units to science education, with the aim of promoting scientific knowledge in rural areas and its application to the benefit of these areas.

12. Natural History Museum

This was opened in 1984, to promote the understanding of natural science relevant to natural resource development, and will undertake collection and research into local and foreign flora and fauna, organize exhibitions and conduct science teaching.

The most difficult of the illiterate to educate are those who turn their backs on learning and occupy their time in unproductive pursuits. Likewise one of the biggest obstacles to scientific knowledge is the belief in a superhuman culture.

13. Museum of Thai Cultural History

It was planned to disseminate among the people a knowledge of the value of their own cultural heritage.

Distribution of Non-Formal Education

At present, we can say that the program described is being actively pursued. In addition, Sukhothai University is offering extramural courses through correspondence and television, which are open to all able to read the Thai language.

Hence adult education may be classified in 3 categories:-

1. The university level offers a degree and also a certificate level, of law, business administration, public administration, education, political science.
2. The education of the young, adult and the old age in the study of Buddhism.
3. The Non-Formal Education offers to all under privileged citizens, all types of national learning process which is able to solve the illiteracy mass.

However, there is a lack of coordination between these 3 systems. Buddhist education was the first to be opened to all and is considered of great value towards developing the potential of the mind. Sukhothai University has extended the possibility of university level education to all — though students must pay for learning material. Non-Formal Education was designed as an urgent measure to quickly combat illiteracy and provided vocational training.

Effective distribution of education requires clear identification of the needy target groups, adequate budget, and the cooperation of those to be taught. Despite the fact that the task is being approached with efficiency, the result is as yet uncertain.

The impact of Non-Formal Education on national and rural development

At present, the urban illiterate benefit more from the project. When the people from rural areas become literate, they will understand such things as the relation between Government policy and price changes, and at the least to understand information related to their work on the farm. Moreover, an uneducated farmer cannot protect himself from exploitation by the local elite.

The cooperative link-up

The system of 4 ministries working in collaboration was designed to mobilize national resources to meet the needs of the rural population; while the Rural Development Committee was formed for the purpose of eradicating rural poverty and hardship. The 4 ministries have been co-ordinated into a single administrative body to direct rural development to high-poverty areas. To eliminate the problem of the 11 million people classified as “poor” throughout the country, government subsidies have been allotted to rural areas for the development to local resources, for example; irrigation, health care, security and education of the illiterate.

The cooperative organization comprises the Central Committee for Rural Development attached to the Office of the Prime Minister, and corresponding committees at provincial, district, communal, and rural levels. Though these committees are working together in the hope that the major problems of rural areas may be relieved by the end of the 5th year plan in 1986, the fact remains that decisions continue to be made by an elite group at the top. Though it was intended that the rural population should organize and plan for themselves, the basic administrative bodies, the commune councils were not yet sufficiently strong nor legally constituted to be self-determining.

In fact, the temple remains the only real school for many villagers. The monks and novices, trusted as members of the community itself, are instructors in the rural areas. They may leave to acquire education themselves and return to their own villages as teachers. The system has been in operation since early time and it is possible for a villager to acquire a good education through this medium, thus tending to mitigate the inequity between urban and rural districts.

Despite the fact that the Non-Formal Education program, modeled on the western system, is well organized at the bureaucratic level, it is still uncertain how effective is the service provided where it is needed — it may tend to be limited to urban students living near the center of activity.

Ineffectiveness of the services

As a result of observations and discussions with responsible officials, the different ministries work well individually but somewhat in isolation and with limited resources. The system works well in the urban areas; but the planners have not foreseen the difficulties of the remote rural areas, with their widely scattered villages.

Although the project is targeted specifically at rural areas, progress has not been so rapid as expected because the level of poverty is far greater than had been imagined by the central authorities. The people are farmers, uneducated, with many children and limited resources for cultivation, subject to exploitation. For them, the cost of food leaves little for education. Hence the educational service must be developed side by side with economic development or learning by producing.

Overview of the problem

The administration of NFE, from the top downwards leads to dysfunction and lack of coordination at the practical level. In consequence NFE has faced the following problems:-

1. The classification of illiteracy is not clearly specified between the urban and rural illiterate mass.
2. How to serve remote areas adequately. The answer may be simple: to serve those who want to be served. The high expense of projects may cause the need for new technological equipments to reach the mass of learners. The program is not rendered redundant by standard primary and secondary education programs since different tasks and different target group are involved.

The following points should be added to the overviewed problem.

1. The urban poor are too fully occupied with earning a living to find time for learning. The rural poor face a similar problem though in a different setting.
2. There is a problem of integrating the plan; since many agencies, performing different tasks, are operative at the local level.
3. The technological approach is hampered by the fact that many rural people cannot afford radio or television (many villages even lack electricity).
4. Many working persons take the view that learning is an activity of a special profession and are disinterested in studying. Hence the distribution of learning materials may be wastefully expensive if related only to the mere number of illiterates in an area.
5. The larger facilities are located only in Bangkok, which for economic reasons make them inaccessible to many people from rural areas.
6. The general and vocational education offered by NFE has been the most successful part of the project since its launching in 1983; and, being related to the actual number of students enrolled, budgeting was realistic.
7. The use of mobile units may be something in the nature of propaganda, as it is difficult and expensive to handle these facilities effectively. It may be preferable to dispatch

a mobile unit to an area under a specific arrangement as to the use of this facility, by the parties concerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The critical problems must be solved if NFE is to reduce the rate of illiteracy to 1.5 million by the end of the 5th year plan in 1986.

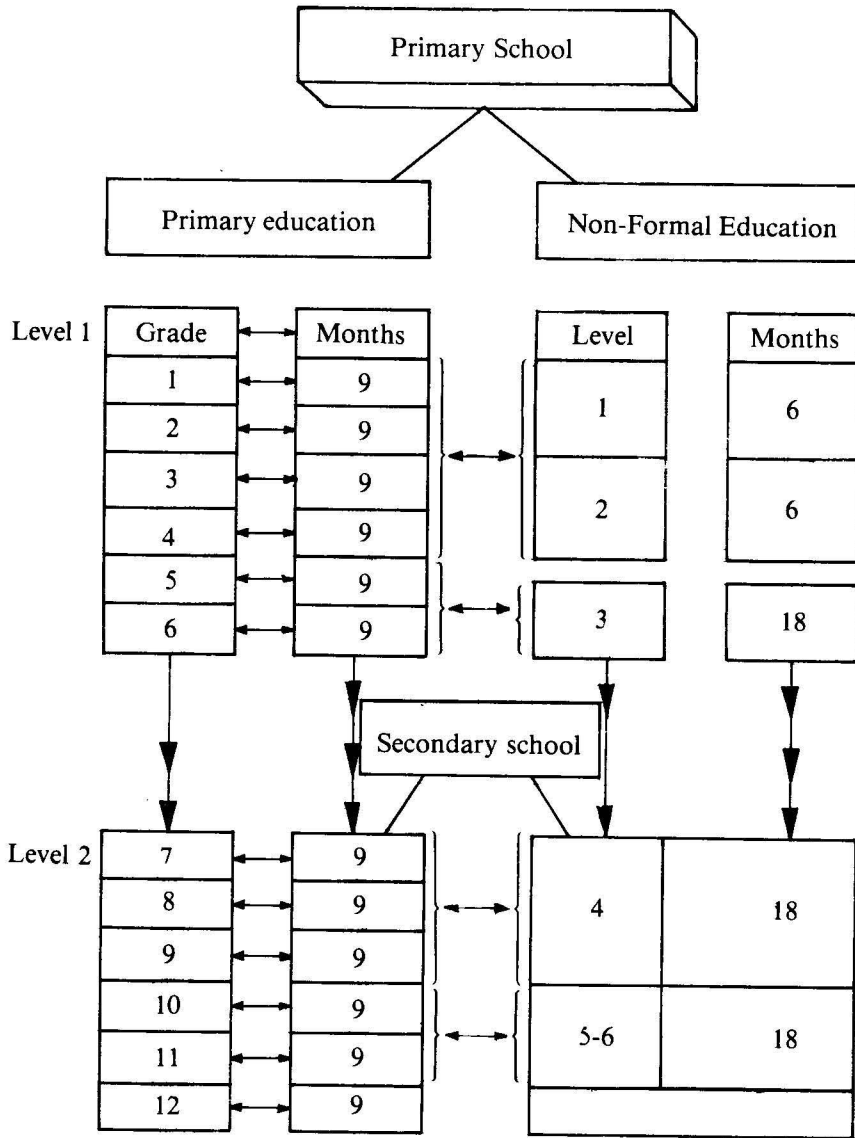
At the primary level: NFE work should collaborate with village primary schools by providing its budget for personnel to reside in the locality, the school Headmaster being responsible for distribution of materials and the conducting of extension courses. Likewise, the temple should be selected as the center for mass dissemination of education, the monks and novices are freely responsible for teaching.

At the secondary level: the secondary schools under the direction of the Department of Secondary Education, mostly situated at district level but drawing pupils from neighbouring rural areas, have adequate facilities and teachers with many years experiences in this field and a record of success in attracting adult learners. In fact, the secondary schools and temples being already long experienced in this work, it would be preferable and more economical for NFE to operate through these institutions than to spend resources in wasteful reduplication of their efforts.

Such technological instruments as radio and television may be of most value to responsible adult learners if e.g. documentary films on topics as vocational skill, health care and the various means by which people can benefit themselves and the ration are shown. A documentary film may encourage people to look for means of better education.

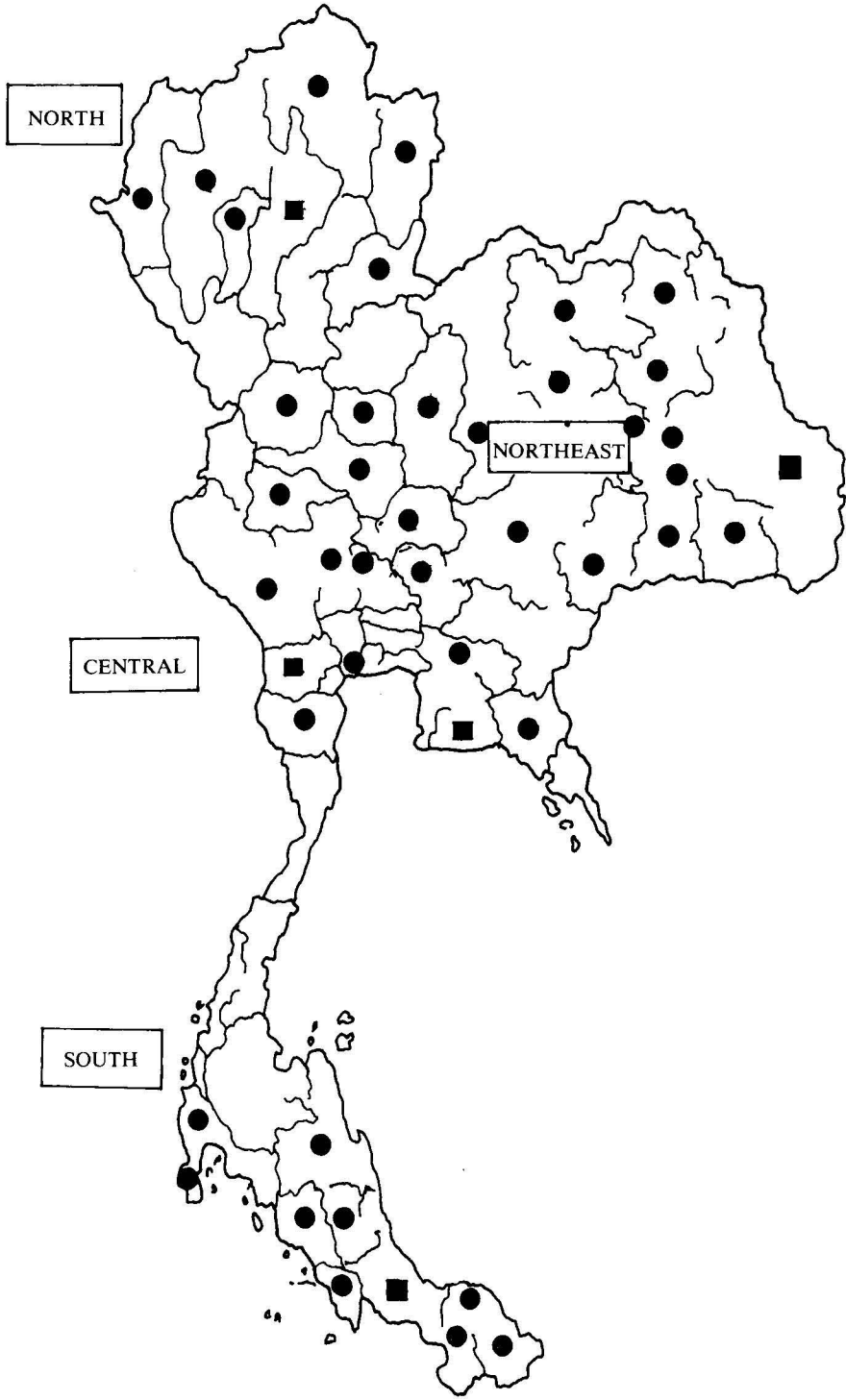
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Source: Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education.

Diag. 1 Comparison time between study in Formal and Non-Formal Education



- Center of provincial Non-Formal Education
- Center of regional Non-Formal Education

Fig. 1 Provincial Non-Formal Education centers