

SEAMEO Community Involvement Project

Ban Pruewai School Four Years of Adoption: 1996 - 2000 By SEAMEO Secretariat

Background

His Excellency Sukavich Rangsitpol, the then SEAMEO Council President, announced during his visit to the SEAMEO Secretariat on 17 July 1996 that many of the primary schools in rural Thailand are considered "backward" compared to other schools that receive adequate community and government funding. A prime example is the Ban Prue Wai Primary School of the Chachoengsao Province. H E Sukavich Rangsitpol proposed that the SEAMEO Secretariat adopt this school in order to improve its present condition. The SEAMEO Secretariat Director promised to study the needs of the school and accepted the SEAMEO Council President's proposal.

The first official visit to the school took place during the SEAMEO Centre Directors Meeting (CDM) on 24 July 1996. Upon invitation of the SEAMEO Council President, the SEAMEO Secretariat Director, SEAMEO Centres' Directors, and other SEAMEO Staff toured the school's facilities. At the CDM it was agreed that the Ban Prue Wai Primary School be adopted under the SEAMEO Community Involvement Project. In August 1996 the SEAMEO Secretariat and SEAMEO TROPED/Network undertook a needs assessment of the school that revealed the following:

- Ban Prue Wai School is a primary school located in a rural area of the Phanom Sarakham District, Chachoengsao Province, Thailand. It is located 70 km east of Chachoengsao town and 30 km east of Phanom Sarakham district town.
- Many students were suffering from malnutrition and therefore did not have the energy to learn. There was a high student drop out rate. This was primarily a result of seasonal employment where parents had to frequently move their families to other areas in order to find jobs.
- Some students did not have the required textbooks. Libraries were small, had few resources and those they did have were outdated. Kindergarten classes lacked sufficient toys, games, mats, blankets, and pillows.
- The headmaster and four of the seven teachers placed at the school had to commute more than 50 km to work every day. With the extra tasks given by the headmaster, most teachers did not have enough time to complete their lessons. Without enough time to prepare and execute a lesson plan, the teachers were unable to effectively teach and accomplish the goals set out in their curriculums.
- The headmaster assigned each teacher to a classroom, and this teacher was responsible for all subjects except Physical Education teacher. The headmaster had to manage the school, without a clerk or librarian, and had to act as a teacher for one of the classrooms.
- The parents were in the low-income bracket of the agricultural industry. The long, hard hours they worked and their basic level of education could not create the learning environment their children needed at home.

Objectives of the Adoption

The short and mid term objectives were:

- to assist the school in improving the capabilities of the students,

- to update and increase the capacity of learning facilities (e.g. books, libraries, and teaching aids),
- to develop the skills of teachers and school management, and
- to increase parent involvement in the education of their children.

The long-term objective is to help the school achieve sustainability.

Methodology

The school problems were solved systematically, through an integrated approach using direct and indirect help. The teaching-learning process developed for Ban Prue Wai Primary School followed the educational policies already in place and was therefore well received. The variables this project sought to effect were the students, learning facilities, teachers, school management, and parents' involvement. This Community Involvement Project sought to realize the following goals:

- To increase students' readiness and ability to learn, and their presence at the school
- To update and increase the number of school materials and increase the capacity of the school library and other learning facilities
- To develop teachers' skills to enhance their ability to teach
- To increase parents' involvement in the learning of their children both at the school and at home
- To improve the school buildings and environment
- To improve the school management

Provision of Interventions: the SEAMEO Secretariat and the SEAMEO Centres provided the direct help to the school.

4.1. The SEAMEO Secretariat improved the school through the following ways:

- Approached related SEAMEO Centres to give slots for teacher training, i.e. SEAMEO RECSAM opened a place for upgrading teaching skills in Mathematics and Science, SEAMEO RELC in cooperation with SEAMEO RETRAC opened places for English instruction, and SEAMEO RIHED shared its collaboration with Assumption College for provision few slots for the teachers to participate in some English workshop.
- Convened workshops at the school to share the gains of the teachers they obtained from the Centres. Some of the workshops were attended by 25 teachers from neighbouring primary schools. At the same time, students' readiness and motivation to learn was encouraged.
- Collaborated with other institutions, such as the Office of Chachonegsao Provincial Primary Education in Science training for the teachers and Katsetsart University graduate students in English Camp for the teachers and students of the school.
- Facilitated the school to get access to the internet and provided training on using computer and internet for educational purposes.
- Advised the teachers and the headmaster of the school to form a Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in order to increase parents' involvement in their children's learning.
- Solicited donations to complete the construction of Kindergarten building.

- Solicited donations for books and school furniture to improve the school library.



4.2. SEAMEO TROPMED/Network advised on:

- How to improve student readiness and ability to learn by improving the student health. Both teachers and parents were advised on healthy and nutritious food choices, what students need to be productive and happy in the classroom.

4.3. In collaboration with SEAMEO RECSAM, Malaysia

- Three stages training in Mathematics and two-stage training on Science was held with five days each in Chachoengsao Province by inviting resource persons from SEAMEO RECSAM. Twenty five teachers from its surrounding schools were in attendance. The training was customized in accordance with their actual needs that were collected two months prior the training.

4.4. In collaboration with SEAMEO RIHED and Assumption College at Sriracha.

- Five teachers of the school were admitted to participate in a workshop on "The (038) TESOL Network, Linking Teachers of English along the Eastern Seaboard" held on 1999 at the College campus.

Achievements after Four Years of Adoption

Based on the blue print made following August 1996 needs assessment, all the inputs provided to the school were evaluated in FY1999/2000, to assess the success in achieving objectives. Using process and output evaluation, through observation and questionnaire administered to the teachers, the principal, the supervisor and addressed to the physical aspects related to the quality improvement process, the Secretariat summarized the following findings:



5.1. Improvement Made in Teaching Mathematics, Science, English and Computer.

Based on the interview with the teachers, it was disclosed that the project has improved their ability in teaching Mathematics, Science and English very much. Of the three subject matters, the most improvement made was in Mathematics. From observation on their teaching, they found to be very effective teachers using effective teaching aids and teaching methods which could enhance students' activity during their teaching-learning at the school in the subject matters.

One of the teachers who was prepared to be a Mathematics teacher in the school was rewarded by the Office of the Chachoengsao Provincial Primary Education as the Outstanding Mathematics teacher for Primary School in the Province. The other teacher who was prepared to be an English teacher in the school was rewarded by the Office of the Chachoengsao Provincial Primary Education as the Second Outstanding English teacher for Primary School in the Province.

It was also disclosed that the teachers also improved very much the skill in using computer for preparation of their teaching and improving students' activity in learning.

5.2. Improvement made in School Management

The school principal (he) disclosed that much had been improved by the project in terms of school management consisting of teacher management, facilities and time management, and more active involvement of the parents and surrounding community in upgrading the school. This information was supported through observation and interview with the teachers.

5.3 Improvement Made in Quantitative Measures



More students won competitions in school cluster, e.g. won first prize in Quick Mathematics 1998. The drop-out number of the students was slightly decreased across time since the project adoption. More students made use of library service. The number of books of the library were

increased both textbooks and other books and so were the teaching materials. A room of 11 x 16 meter square was completed through donations rendered by SEAMEO Secretariat and the school which has been used for teaching area and toilet for kindergarten students. By this, the Library area had been enlarged using the old room of the kindergarten students before they were moved to the newly constructed room.

Achieving this quality and quantity measures and in accordance with the objectives of the adoption, the school was assessed to be able to sustain the quality teaching and learning activities. By this, the Secretariat will terminate adoption of this school and adopt another feasible school in FY2000/2001.
