

Environmental Education: A Case of Thailand

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Thailand is one of the front line countries that value Environmental Education in its education system and school curriculum. Over 40 years, the school curriculum has been contained either the content or knowledge concerning environment in various form and subjects, from the elementary up to secondary education. If one divided the development and progress of environmental education, it could divide into 3 periods. The first period, from the early sixty to mid seventy, environmental education was established as one subject called “**nature study**” and it was offered at the elementary education. This very name might familiar with many countries. At this time, the status of environmental education hardly observed at the secondary education. In 1975, Thailand had changed new education system and launched a new school curriculum from grade 1-12. At the beginning of this change, environmental education was part of other subjects such as part of life experience subject at the elementary education and one unit on ecology as in science subject both at the lower and upper secondary education.

Until 1990’s after the world summit at Rio de Janeiro, the environmental education was named as a subject and established in the school curriculum. However it was categorized in the field of social studies and was offered at the lower secondary education or junior high school as an elective course. At other levels of education, the environmental education was integrated in subject such as life experience in the elementary education and partially touched upon environmental education such as ecology in the science subject at the secondary education. In 1998, it was the first time that science education committee took an active role in educating our children about environmental education by developing a new subject called “**environmental science**” and assigned it as a compulsory course for every students to study at the upper secondary education. Despised the named environmental science, the objectives and content was focused on educating our children of the next generation to understand sustainable development and care for our environment. At the very same time, the King of Thailand has motivated and encouraged the Thai people to conduct their life on sufficient economic which very much carries the environmental value in it. Thus, the Thai people as well as Thai education and school curriculum accept His profound thought and put into practice as part of the main theme of environmental education and sustainable development.

In the year 2001, the government of Thailand announced the education reform and launched the new curriculum framework. At this time, there’s a policy for all school curriculum to integrate environmental education in all subjects particularly science, social studies and health education.

One uniqueness of working on environmental education in school in Thailand is that environmental education is not only concerned by the Ministry of Education, but there’re also other agencies and

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organizations such as NGO's and other government organizations. These organizations have been working closely and collaboratively among each other and with the schools in order to reach the success of environmental education that is to inculcate our children to love and care for our environment. The case that can be observed, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment has produced supplementary readings, teacher handbooks, audio visual, poster and printing materials for the use of teaching environmental education. National Energy Policy Organization (NEPO) is another semi government authority has funded one of mea-project for integrating environmental education in the school from elementary up to secondary education. At this moment, environmental education could be observed in almost every school in Thailand.

DEVELOPMENT OF EE IN THAILAND

- **1960 – 1975**
Nature Study at the Elementary Education (grade 1-7)
- **1975-2000**
(Change of Ed.System and Implement New Curriculum)
- **Integrate Environment Knowledge ie. Ecology**
- **In: Life-experience Subject in Elementary Ed.**

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- Science Subject at the Lower Secondary education

1990's:

- * Environmental Education as elective course at the Lower Secondary Education
- * Environmental Science as compulsory course at the Upper Secondary Education


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- 2001 Education Reform

Environmental Education must be integrated in all subjects at all levels
Especially in Science, Social Science and Health Education

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Environmental Education



- * Ministry of Education
- * Government Organization & Semi-autonomous Organizations
- * NGO's

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Selected Project/Work

- 1. NGO**
 - The Chao Phraya Barge Programme
- 2. Individual**
 - Community Forest (Research Project)
 - Learning from the Rice Field (Local School Curriculum)
- 3. Network Project/Work**
 - The Dawn Project
(The Integration of Energy and Environmental Conservation at the Elementary and Secondary Education)

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Corporation among 3 agencies

- Ministry of Education
- National Energy Policy Office
- Thailand Environment Institute



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CONCEPT

- ✦ **PARTICIPATION**
 - * HOME- SCHOOL -COMMUNITY
 - * IN SCHOOL
 - SCHOOL PRINCIPAL-TEACHERS-STUDENT
- ✦ **LEARNING**
 - * ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACH
 - * MEANINGFUL LEARNING
 - * PROJECT APPROACH
 - * LIFE-LONG LEARNING
- ✦ **INTEGRATION**
 - * IN ALL SUBJECTS
 - * AT ALL LEVELS
 - * BY EVERY TEACHERS

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OBJECTIVES

1. TO RAISE AWARENESS OF ALL THAI PEOPLE REGARDING: THE ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THAILAND AT LOCAL, REGIONAL, COUNTRY AND GLOB
2. TO RAISE CONSCIOUSNESS OF INDIVIDUAL REGARDING HIS/HER ROLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

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3. TO BUILD IN MORAL COURAGE IN TAKING ACTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE
4. TO DEVELOP HABIT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS
5. TO TAKE ACTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION WITH UNDERSTANDING

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PHASES OF PROJECT

- ✦ **PREPARATION STAGE**
 - MENTORS PREPARATION
 - * NATIONAL LEVEL
 - * REGIONAL LEVEL
 - * PROVINCIAL LEVEL

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PREPARATION

- ▶ Participatory and Empowerment Approach
- ▶ 3 Phases:
 - phase I
 - * Awareness in EE
 - * Teamwork


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phase II


- * Introduce approaches and methods in teaching EE
- * planning for implementation

phase III

- * Sharing experiences



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TARGET

- 600 SCHOOLS
- 300,000 STUDENTS
- 23,400 TEACHERS
- 2,400 COMMUNITY LEADERS
- * 300 SUPERVISORS

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RESULT

- * ENERGY CONSUMPTION REDUCED BY 10 %
- * 80 % OF TEACHERS & STUDENTS HAVE IMPROVED CONSUMING BEHAVIOR
- * COUNTRY WIDE NETWORK



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STRENGTH



- ‡ CLOSELY CORPORATION AMONG ED. INSTITUTES AND MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT
- ‡ DEPARTMENT OF ENV. QUALITY PROMOTION ACTS ACTIVELY AND CONTINUOUSLY
- ‡ NETWORK AMONG TEACHERS, EDUCATORS AND OTHER CONCERNED GROUPS (INFORMALLY)

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SUPPORT FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY PROMOTION

1. SUPPROT INFORMATION
2. SUPPROT FUNDING
3. SUPPORT IN INCREASING ABILITY AND CAPACITY OF TEACHER IN WORKING ON E.E.
4. SUPPORT THE TEACHING/LEARNING MATERIALS AND SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

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NEEDS

- ◆ Teacher preparation for E.E.
 - * limited in number
 - * occasionally rather than regularly
 - * no formal preparation for pre-service teacher
 - * should focus on helping to understand the inter-relationship among nature, nature and human being and their way of living

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- ◆ There're positions for teachers in different subjects except EE.
- ◆ Understanding and competencies of all subjects teachers to master the integration of EE in the curriculum and teaching without preparation

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● SCHOOL PREPARATION

- * ADMINSTRATOR/ COMMUNITY/ CORE TEACHERS

● IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

- * TEACHERS PREPARATION
- * TEACHING
 - *INTEGRATION
 - *PROJECT
 - * EXTRA CURRICULUM

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- ◆ Support from all level from the Ministry of Education and School Administrators
- ◆ Easily Access Information

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