



โครงการอนุรักษ์และใช้ประโยชน์ความหลากหลายทางชีวภาพ
อย่างยั่งยืนในพื้นที่ชุ่มน้ำลุ่มน้ำโขง
Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity
Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme



Applying Local Knowledge to the Local Curriculum

Nakhon Phanom, 4 April, 2006

Recent legislation in Thailand, in particular the 1999 Revision of the National Education Law, has opened up the process to enable involvement from the local level in curriculum development. As a result, local educational institutions are now mostly responsible for tailoring the content of the national curriculum to meet the social needs of each community and include “local wisdom” as part of the students’ coursework. However, to date the progress of actually adopting a local curriculum has been rather slow and met with many obstacles, often related to confusion as to what constitutes “local knowledge” and who should be taking the lead role in adapting it to the local curriculum.

As part of the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme’s efforts to encourage wider environmental education, the Songkhram Demonstration Site has recently been coordinating with educational administrators and teachers in finding ways of integrating local knowledge gained from Tai Baan Research into the schools’ curriculums, with particular focus on wetlands, local livelihoods and participatory research methodologies. One suggestion was to formally instigate the process by hosting a workshop for local teachers to introduce some of the material and potential methods.

This workshop was run in parallel to the final workshop on water quality testing in schools at the Mekong Grand View Hotel in Nakhon Phanom. The target beneficiaries of the workshop were teachers from 22 primary and secondary schools in Sri Songkhram District. In addition to the teachers and provincial education administrators, many project partners and invited guest speakers with experience in local curriculum and environmental education were invited to attend the workshop.

The morning session was opened by Mr Thiradet Wongrat, Deputy Provincial Governor of Nakhon Phanom Province, and commenced with a presentation by Mr Rattaphon Pitaekthepsombut, Co-Manager of the Songkhram Demonstration Site about MWBP and its activities. Then Mr Suriya Kotamee, Chairman of the Tai Baan Research Network of the Lower Songkhram Basin gave a presentation on Tai Baan Research and its achievements. There followed a seminar, entitled: “Approaches to and Adoption of Environmental Education and Local Curriculum”, which was a panel discussion by several participants from various institutions, both government and non-government, namely:

- Mr Khampan Akaranet - Deputy Director of the Area 2 Nakhon Phanom Education Office
- Ajarn Amphai Gaedsatit – Red Ants Network
- Dr Oy Ganjanawit – Green World Foundation
- Miss Sawitee Srisuk – Dept. of Environmental Quality Promotion

After lunch, a second seminar session considered the question: “How can local knowledge from Tai Baan Research be integrated into the local curriculum?”. This seminar invited Ajarn Sobsan Petchkam, a lecturer from Sakon Nakhon Rajabhat University with extensive knowledge of the Songkhram Basin and Khun Chainarong Srettauchau, ex-Director of the Southeast Asia Rivers Network (SEARIN) and PhD candidate in Thai Studies at Mahasarakham University to discuss the potential linkages between the local curriculum and Tai Baan research. Afterwards, Dr Oy Ganjanawit and Ajarn Amphai Gaedsatit raised the topic of “Adapting Environmental Lessons Outside the Classroom, taking the Water Detectives Project as a case study”. The next lecture raised an actual local example of practical application, namely Ban Nong Batao village school

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and a buffalo manure composting project by Mr Samanchai Suwan-ampai, under the title, “Adaptation of Local Natural Resource Usage into the School Curriculum”.

For the rest of the workshop, discussions focused on ways of taking the main lessons of the day forward to actual implementation by schools in the future. A panel consisting of Mr Khampan Akaranet, Mr Samanchai Suwan-ampai and Mr Rattaphon Pitakthepsombut gave some input and ideas for the audience to consider. The final session produced a wide concensus that Tai Baan Research is a good source of material for inclusion in the local curriculum and teachers at the workshop were keen to adopt aspects of the research into future curriculums, but felt they still need external support to turn the vision into reality.



Participants (e.g. school directors and teachers) from schools under Area Education Office 2, Nakhon Phanom Province register for the workshop



Discussion panel: the guest speakers present their own concepts about environmental education and related experiences to the audience



A member of the audience poses a question to the panel of speakers, about ways of introducing the Tai Baan Research into the local curriculum



Khun Tawatchai Rattanasorn – National Programme Coordinator for Thailand, gives a gift to one of the invited guest speakers (Ajarn Amphai Gaedsatit – Red Ants Network)