

Evaluation of Training for Thoulakhom School Cluster Implementing the Education Development Project for Lao PDR

Chalard Chantarasombat

*Faculty of Education, Mahasarakham University, Kantharawichai District
Mahasarakham, Thailand 44150*

E-mail: chalard.chantarasombat.msu@gmail.com

Tel: +66-43-721764 ext. 6068

Abstract

To develop working efficiently is the main task for development organization potential. The objective is to get standard production by using budget materials, human being, time at least which identify to the quality development of the primary level of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education of Lao PDR. It's necessary to find out the method for development the school's quality management to get the same level as other so that they can cooperate, help each other about academic but the lack of budget to implement. The performance which was tried and developed continually is School cluster. It was run in the Primary Education level project by the private organization in Thailand and International since 1994. There were 2 steps of training which included 1) Study tour in Thailand and 2) Training work shop according to curriculum. The training operation continued and ended systematically in cooperation with every section in the country. The result evaluation report of Personnel School cluster training workshop in Thoulakhom District for the topic "School Cluster and Resource center administration and management". It was the trainee-centered training and emphasized on searching and learning by practicing. And it could be the Master and guidelines for applying in further training.

Keywords: Education, Development, Thoulakhom School, Evaluation, Lao PDR

1. Introduction

There are many necessary factors to develop a country. But the most important factor is having efficient population because of the changing world and no border age, of data and communication. It is necessary for population to adapt and live happily. To develop a country to reach the goal, the population must be efficient which is based on education, management and learning through life efficiently. The school administrators and involved personnel are the teams who have important roles to make the learners develop widely in learning. To promote the school administrators and involved personnel to have ability, knowledge and recognize in moral and ethic, they should develop themselves all the time in the changing world age, the performance of the school administrators and involved personnel development are: studying tour, training in a country and overseas and etc. in order to reach the goal (Prawit, 2008). These personnel group will bring back the knowledge and apply it suitably to their country.

The Primary and General Education Department, Ministry of Education in Lao PDR have recognized the important of establishment a school cluster in order to co-operate with the resource center. To develop of education quality in school to the same level and use resource person, materials

mostly, the Ministry has co-operated with international organizations (Peter, 2007) such as UNICEF, CWS, CRS, GOL, W.B., Redd. Barma, and ZBS since 1998. Now there are 207 school clusters. ZBS has a project that will establish school clusters. They will co-operate with the Primary and General Education Department in Thoulakhom in 1999 in order to be the Pilot school for the next operation. To prepare completely in school operating in Thoulakhom, there have been potential developing teachers' activities in resource center. There are 110 school administrators, advisors, and District Education officers there. Studying tour to Mahasarakham province and Roi-Et province, Thailand. Then they will adapt the lessons to use in Laos PDR. And there are also training work shop about resource centers, school, the management of teaching and learning the Lao language, mathematics, World around us, producing teaching aids and internal supervision. The consultants from Mahasarakham University, Thailand were invited to guide during the training.

To operate the project completely and efficiency, the evaluation was done at the end to get the information which would be the advantage of determining in improving the next project's operation.

The Operation Objectives

- 1 Input Evaluation is a project operation such as the Education committee, curriculum, teaching aids, places for training work shop, trainees and plans of training.
- 2 Process Evaluation such as training activities including the problems and barrier.
- 3 Product Evaluation when the training ends such as the results from the training and ideas about the training.

2. Research Methods

There were a lot of methods, different operation so the General Education department cooperated with World Bank-Switzerland-Norway for establishing "the Primary school cluster" to be the "Pilot schools" and further expanding. From the upper result, the General Education Department which was the runner of this project, held the Personnel school cluster training in cooperation with principals, academic teachers, Pedagogic Advisors, Head of Resource center and concerning staff. There were 2 steps of training which include 1) Study tour in Thailand, 2) Training work shop according to curriculum.

2.1 Training Workshop

- The establishment of training curriculum.
- Resource person training.
- Produce practice training manual.
- Study tour.
- Training workshop and evaluation.

The training operation continued and ended systematically in cooperation with every section in the country and abroad especially Mr.Chalard Chantarasombat, the consultant from Mahasarakham university, Thailand. Mr.Boonthong Wilaisak who was the last head of the General Education Department, was the consultant in the country including 11 representative of DGA staff from Ministry of Education Lao PDR.

2.2. Sampling

In this evaluation, there are following steps in sampling

Population according to school groups in Thoulakhom were divided into 7 school groups. They are Phathao, Naphaeng, Taupio, Bauchaeng, Namphanai, Donedouat and Baubor. There were 45 elementary schools.

- In each school cluster, select all 45 perfect elementary schools by purposive sampling.
- Project committee means people who from department of primary school and general education, 1 educational officer and 1 person from school group. The persons who were responsible for Thoulakhom school cluster were school principal, academic teachers, resource center personnel and the educational officer. There were 101 personnel's.
- Resource person: resource person means all resource personnel.
- Selected by purposive sampling, selected all 45 school principals of Thoulakhom school.
- Selected by purposive sampling. Select 21 teachers from Thoulakhom school cluster. Selected teachers were responsible for the Lao Language, Mathematics, and Social studies.
- Selected by using Purposive Random Sampling, 21 teachers were selected by picking up a name randomly. 75% of all teachers in Thoulakhom school cluster were selected. Teachers in this type of sampling, normally teach Physical Education, Arts, Crafts, and Invention.
- For Resource Center personnel, Purposive sampling was used to select 7 personnel to enter the program.

2.3. Evaluation of Training

2.3.1. The Evaluation of the Project

Stufflebeam and others (Stufflebeam et al., 1971) had presented a model "CIPP" It consists of 4 types. They are Context evaluation, Input Evaluation, Process Evaluation and Product Evaluation.

2.3.1.1. Context Evaluation.

It is used when we want to evaluate the needs, to construct the program and/or arranging ideas or criteria in the program. We can set-up the goals for the program, separate the relationship between the goals and the importance and to identify any outside pressure.

2.3.1.2. Input Evaluation

It is about the evaluation of our needs, it enough or not, under the program or pick out the goal for evaluation. It can also tell if the plan is running well or not, or the plan still needs supports).

2.3.1.3. Process Evaluation

It is to evaluate the establishment of the program whether it is going well or not. The evaluation can be identified into types.

- Evaluation before processing and evaluation while processing. Observation helps evaluation by giving right data. It can improve the process of the work.

2.3.1.4. Product Evaluation

It is the evaluation of the results that we reach the goals or not. We can do immediately when the project ends. Project evaluation helps in deciding whether the project should continue or stop or multiply.

In order to evaluate by following Stufflebeam's idea, we can evaluate with one specific job or the whole job.

2.3.2. Evaluation of School Cluster Personnel Training

The efficiency of the training evaluation can be trusted if these 3 import parts are considered.

2.3.2.1. Input

- Relevancy of the training.
- Objectives of the training.
- Project and schedule

- Was the document related to the training in line with the goals of the project or not).
- Selection of resource person.
- Selection of trainees.

2.3.2.2. Process

- Lecturer is professed in his knowledge. They can transfer all techniques.
- Trainees are very interested in Training.
- Documents involve telling.
- Environment Factors.

2.3.2.3. Output

- **Learning:** Did trainees learn what they should?
- **Reaction:** Did the trainees think that all topics were useful or not?
- **Behavior:** Did their behavior change in a good way?
- **Outcome or Results of the ability of the trainees:** Did their ability increase or still the same? Are they accepted or not after training?

3. Research Background

3.1. School Clusters

In many countries, the school cluster is one of the educational management strategies to improve the education quality at the primary level. Its organizational structure is a network of complete primary schools, which are close to each other and with the objectives to improve the administration, management or education (Mun, Christopher, 1993). The world population and individual nations populations will continue to rise and expanded investments in school facilities and teacher training will always be needed not just in physical facilities but also school qualities (Warren, Jee-Peng, 1995).

Until 1980, in many countries the school cluster was the principal structure of school management and a distinctive level of educational administration and management. In Thailand, each primary school is a member of a school cluster. In Sri Lanka, each primary and secondary school is determined by law to be the member of the school cluster. School clusters coverage is 80% of the total primary schools in Myanmar and 75% in Bangladesh. The school cluster's size in the later is much larger and can include 100-200 schools that were divided in sub-school clusters. In Vietnam, 60% of the schools are members of the school clusters. 7,000 and 1,150 schools are included in the school clusters in China and the Philippines, respectively. In LAO PDR, school cluster concept was piloted in 1989-90 in Pathao commune, Thoulakhom district. In 1992, the pilot concept was expanded to 7 provinces, one cluster/province, as follow:

- Luang Prabang, Ban Muang Khay, 1 school cluster: 8 schools.
- Vientiane Prefecture, Ban Thamuan, Thadeua, 1 school cluster: 7 schools. Then another school cluster was established at Ban Horn Tai, Haysaiphong district, 10 schools.
- Vientiane province, Ban Saka, Phon Hon district, 1 school cluster: 8 schools.
- Savannakhet, Ban Baak, Chain Phorn district, and 1 cluster: 10 schools.
- Khammouane, Ban Na Din Chi, Thakek district, and 1 school cluster: 8 schools.
- Champassack, Ban Sok Am Noua, Pakse district, 1 school cluster: 8 schools.
- Saravane, Ban and district Khon Se Don, 1 school cluster 11 schools.

In 1994-95, 7 school clusters which included 42 schools were additionally expanded in Thoulakhom district as a pilot district under the World Bank/Swiss sponsored project. Similar expansion also occurred in Pek district (Xiang Khouang Province) and Vang Vieng district (Vientiane

Province) with the Ministry of Education's approval. Besides, the UNICEF sponsored Basic Education Project had expanded at least 3 school clusters per district in the project targets.

3.2. The Founding of Thoulakhom School Cluster

The district of Thoulakhom is located downstream from the Nam Ngum reservoir in Vientiane Province. Thoulakhom school cluster was founded in 1990. The budget was from Ecole Saus Frontiere (ESF, France). The purpose was to let it be the Pilot cluster for other school cluster. During 1994 - 1995 funds were received to establish. It is from the Department of Primary and General education and a private organization. There were 7 school clusters. The planning got started, teaming up seriously with ZBS organization of Switzerland and Norway. They prepared the personnel group in order to reach the goals of the model Management school. Personnel were explained of what happen about their roles and the management systems. They went to visit Thai school cluster in February 1999 and 101 personnel will be trained in Thoulakhom District in March 1999. Personnel were divided into 2 groups. Moreover, consultants and experts from Lao and overseas were invited to give advice and teach the staff of Department of Primary and General Education while running the project.

3.3. Researches Involved School Groups and Resource Centers

A joint study between Thai authorities, United States Operations Missions Task Force, Michigan State University and UNESCO (Wadi, Terry, 1994) in the early sixties indicated that Thailand's education system needed to be modernized to meet the requirements of the changing Thai economy. The Board of National of Primary Education of Thailand was involved in a project concerning school cluster and academic of school cluster, under the name Developing Centers. In 1987-1996, they did the same project in a national scale. They found that personnel in school cluster helped one another in academic. They exchanged experiences in teaching, evaluations and managing schools. Thus, it raised the quality of other schools. Everything happened as planned by using school cluster and resource center as equipment.

Mahasarakham Primary School Board of Education involved in a research, the development of education quality and the development of school cluster educational center. The outing of the development has 3 parts.

- Management process by using lower standard to be the goals of development.
- Teaching process were done by using programmed learning.
- Demonstration. It is the process of teaching.

These outlines were applied to use continuously with the schools in school cluster in District Kantarawichai, Mittrapap School Cluster and District Kaedam in Thailand during 1988-1989. It was found that the outcome in studying the same core courses of school cluster is normal. Teachers had good attitude toward the principals in running the program. About the development, teachers were satisfied with the demonstration and the complete, lesson plans.

Ministry of Primary and General Education of Lao PDR have trained their personnel in communication of school Personnel for Thoulakhom in "Exchanging Visiting Personnel" (at Thai Schools and Thai Resource Center, at Mahasarakham Board of Primary Education and Roi-Et, February 1999) to bring back the experiences to develop their country and establish schools throughout Lao PDR.

4. Research Results

4.1. Input Evaluation

4.1.1. The Evaluation by Resource Persons

4.1.1.1. Resource Person's Knowledge and Ability Development According to Contents and Topics Assigned

By unity were rated at a high appropriateness, for a topic, supervision had more mean than others and join planning had the least mean.

4.1.1.2. Resource Person's Knowledge and Ability Development in Training Workshop

By unity, they were rated at a high appropriateness and by a topic, was rated at a high appropriateness too. Only resource persons were rated at an average appropriateness.

4.1.1.3. Preparation Before Training by Project Committee

By unity, they were appropriated at an average. For a topic, the definition and running of project were rated at a high appropriateness. But for the resource persons, the thing to be improved was the preparation of knowledge and ability development. It was rated at an average appropriateness.

4.1.1.4. The Resource Persons Development

By unity, they were rated at a high appropriateness. For a topic, three topics were rated at a high appropriateness as follow -:

- The preparation of resource persons.
- Training curriculum.
- Training process.

4.1.2. The Evaluation by the Trainees

4.1.2.1. Input for Training

By unity, they were rated at a high level. For a topic consideration,

- Documents and training manual were rated at a high appropriateness.
- Time for training was rated at an average appropriateness.

4.1.2.2. The Process of Training Operation

By unity, it was rated at a high level. But for the consideration of the following samplings' status, principals, teachers, academic teachers and Resource center staff were rated at an average appropriateness.

4.1.2.3. Product of the Training

It was appropriated at a high level. For consideration of the sampling's status, especially the principals and cluster academic teachers appropriated at a high level but the Resource center staff appropriated at an average.

4.1.2.4. The Appropriateness of Contents and Practicing Activities

By unity, it was appropriated at a high level. For consideration of the samplings' status, the principals appropriated at a high level but the cluster a academic teachers and Resource center staff appropriated at an average.

4.1.3. New Knowledge

There was an important ordering according to a topic and form of training. It was found that training work shop form was different from the before training because for this training, trainees were the center, everyone joined thinking, practicing, learning and there was concept of each topic. The new

topics which the trainees got most was Curriculum analysis, Curriculum components, lesson plan writing. All of these supported the trainees to learn about curriculum objective, curriculum analysis before writing lesson plan, writing lesson plan better and sure for curriculum analysis. For school clusters, they got just a little additional knowledge because they had known about these topics before.

In the otherwise, there was evaluation according to the point and use color paper to evaluate by percentage. It was found that learning for this training was rated 80% up appropriateness.

- Learning was brought to develop working 80% up appropriateness.
- The trainees were satisfied in training workshop 90% up appropriateness.
- The resource persons' ability rated 83.33% appropriateness.
- Activities practicing was rated 91.67%.
- The quality and efficiency of the training were rated 90% appropriateness.

4.1.4. The result of 2 Study Tours in Mahasarakham Province and Roi-et Province Thailand (Group A, B)

Group A: emphasized on School cluster and Resource center administration and management. They were rated at a high level appropriateness by unity and by topic was rated at a high level too.

Group B: emphasized on Internal Supervision, teaching and learning management by twin class per period. By unity, they were rated in a high appropriateness and it was rated in a high appropriateness by a topic too.

Beside this, there was the meeting between the resource persons and the Project committee about an exchange of experience on 24 March 1999 at the General Education Department Ministry of Education, Loa PDR. It was found that the training reached to the goal 75% up, Curriculum agreed to the need of organization and trainees 80%. The appropriate form of the process of training workshop. It was a trainee-centered training and rated 75% up appropriateness. The training manual was rated 75% up appropriateness. But one topic should be improved was the time. It was not enough for activities.

5. Discussion

5.1. Input Evaluation for Project Operation

5.1.1. Evaluation by Resource Personnel

5.1.1.1. The Development of Resource Person's Knowledge and Ability in Providing for the Content According to the Training Table and the Responsible Sub-Unit of Training

It was found that it appropriated in a high level. And for 8 sub-unit consideration (after dividing), they also appropriated at a high level. All this is due to the fact that before the definition of training curriculum, the resource persons participated in surveying the need of training content of Pilot group. Including there was a study and searching about problems from report of documents which concerned school cluster from private's and government's organizations. Inclusion the consultant in the country and from oversea had joined planning with the resource persons to provide the agreement content to sub-unit by managing the workshop conference.

5.1.1.2. The Development of Resource Persons' Ability and Knowledge for Producing Training Workshop

It was found that, it appropriated at a high level by unit. And for a topic consideration (for 7 topic all), it appropriated at a high level too. All this is due to the fact that before producing a training manual, the consultant in the country and from oversea had the conference to declare the way to produce the training manual which emphasized on the trainees centered. And the resource persons selected the workshop process performing that was: since observation, acknowledgment, doing as model, none of model doing and skill practice until they could understand. Before producing, it should be corrected the

accuracy of contents and structure by the consultant. There was an analysis, comment on the competition of each topic by working group. Then it was brought to improve for the unit of participant planning. Resource person staffs learning was at an average. All this is due to the fact that new contents and there was not a practice before. So they were not self-confident in producing this training manual but there was a performing demonstration for the following activities management. From resource persons' interviewing who responsible for unit, they were self-confident for the operation.

5.1.1.3. The Preparation Before Training of the Project Running Committee

It was found that it appropriated at an average by unit. And for a topic consideration, appropriated at an average that was the resource persons, preparation of knowledge and ability development. All this is due to the time for resource person's preparation to produce training manual and technique for training according to the curriculum, some resource persons were not free or had another work to do effected they had not enough time for participation in workshop conference. So the resource persons got knowledge less than it could be. But in the part of the definition and operation, appropriated at a high level. All this is due to the fact that project running staff joined planning such as principals trainees and the consultant. Working development reached to the goal, effect to the program that continued according to the schedule.

5.1.1.4. Resource Persons' Development

It appropriated at the high level by unit and by a topic as follows.

- Resource persons' preparation.
- Training curriculum.
- Training process.

All this is due to fact that the consultants from oversea and in the country managed the period for developing resource persons in the way of workshop conference continually. Since present condition's study, problem, contents and small topic of training curriculum, training manual production and technique of practical training continually until the resource persons get knowledge, ability which they were assigned.

5.1.2. The Evaluation by the Trainees

5.1.2.1. Input for Training's Operation

It was found that it appropriated at a high level. And for a topic consideration, documents and training manual which brought for training, were appropriated at a high level. All this is due to the fact that preparation of materials documents, training manuals before training. But the needed part for improvement was time for training, appropriated at an average. All this is due to the fact that the time for each curriculum was not enough so they rarely practiced on training.

5.1.2.2. The Training Process

It was found that, it was appropriate at a high level. For the status of the trainees' consideration, principals, academic and resource persons staff appropriated at a high level too. All this is due to the fact that the training process according to the curriculum emphasized on the trainees centered. Including brain storming in various performing by person and by group. There was a presentation to a small group and a big group. So the activities were interesting. It agreed to focus group at the point from the former training because each unit was not boring. The activities connected each other, the trainees participated in learning. There was the process of thinking and solving problems in order to apply in school and school cluster according to the area's conditions. It agreed to focus group at the point of main emphasized on training and everyone join thinking, practicing, learning so as to have a concept.

5.1.2.3. Product of Practice Training

It was found that, it appropriated at a high level by unit. For the consideration of the trainees' status as the followings.

Principals academic teachers, and resource center officers. They also appropriated at a high level. All this is due to the fact that the complete preparation of the project training committee. There was factors and appropriate process of training by emphasized on trainees centered including there were practice training in each unit. The trainees were satisfied with the contents which they could bring and apply for their work. So they were interested in the training effected to the good product of training. It agreed to the focus group which found that this training performing was different from the former training.

5.1.2.4. The Appropriateness of Contents and Practice Activities Agreed to the Need

By unit, it appropriated at a high level. For trainees' status consideration, administrators appropriated at a high level. All this is due to the fact that the figure of speech of school cluster development were system the organization's leaders. They got a practice more often than the academic teachers and resource center officers. Hence, there was a different level of opinions and the principals got more concept for the development of their duties and vision. It also agreed to the conference. Conclusive result of the project running committee. It was found that curriculum agreed to the need of organizations and the trainees 80%.

5.1.3. Result of study tour in Mahasarakham and Roi-et province, Thailand

5.1.3.1. Study tour group A

Consist of principals, academic teachers resource center officers and academic staff. It emphasized on school cluster administration and resource center. It was found that it appropriated at a high level by unit. They appropriated at a high level too. All this is due to the fact that activities and study tour managements staff and coordinators in various resource centers had a coordination between province. Activities management rain smoothly in cooperation with study tour staff and the succeeding study tour.

5.1.3.2. The study tour Group B

Consist of principals, academic teachers resource center officers and academic staff. Main emphasis of this group was Internal. Supervision, teaching and learning management, twin class teaching. It was found that it appropriated at a high level. For a topic consideration, 3 following topics appropriated at a high level.

The outcome is the due to the fact that the activities and study tour manager staff and coordinators in various resource centers had experience and brought the benefits that found in study tour Group A so the activities in study tour Group B succeeded.

6. Suggestions and Recommendations

6.1. Suggestion for Work Development

6.1.1. Resource Person Development

They should prepare for knowledge, learning about contents, curriculum analysis, various techniques of being a resource person. There was a problem about resource person preparation and project running as it planned. That was "the time", they should free at the same period so that they could fulfill in working and there ability.

6.1.2. Training Manual for Training

There were problems for some topics as follows

- Time for training

- The definition of activities for training work shop.

- Time for each of content.

There should be a training manual production and try on a small group then brought to improve about contents, activities and the appropriateness of time before the training.

6.1.3. Knowledge and Learning About School Cluster Administration and Management Curriculum

- Curriculum analysis and curriculum components.
- Learner-centered teaching.
- Work planning.
- Project writing.
- Have the supervision to follow the result continually.
- Have a training work shop conference for upper topics.

6.1.4. Study Tour in Thailand

Some points which should be improved for the appropriateness were

- Time for training and study tour.
- Contents were not agree to period of time because there are so many resource centers to study.
- Should reduce the resource centers for study.
- Have more study deeply for various topics.
- Thai language preparation for study tour staff before going to Thailand for a period of time. It will make them get knowledge and understand well in communication.

6.2. Suggestions for Further Research

- Follow systemically for the result of school cluster administration and management in Thoulakhom after training for 6 months.
- Evaluate systemically after the project operation ended for 1 year. So as to get a good point and bad point to improve and expand further.

References

- [1] Mun C. Tsang, Christopher Wheeler, (1993). “School Clusters as a Management Strategy for Improving Primary School Quality”: *Effective schools in developing countries*, Taylor & Francis, ISBN: 0750701730, 9780750701730 Pg; 118-128.
- [2] Peter Grime, Khomvanh Sayarath, Sithath Outhaithany (2007). “The Development of the Lao PDR School Self Evaluation Tool”, *Professional Challenges for School Effectiveness and Improvement in the Era of Accountability*, Proceedings of the 20st Annual World ICSEI Congress 3–6 January 2007, Convention Center Bernardin Portorož, Slovenia, the National School for Leadership in Education, Faculty of Management Koper, Cankarjeva 5, 6104 Koper, ISBN; 978-961-6573-65-8 Pg; 117-131.
- [3] Prawit Erawan, (2008). “Teacher empowerment and developing a curricular management system in municipal schools using cooperation between university and municipality in Thailand”, *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, ISSN; 1742-6855, 0218-8791, Volume 28, Issue 2, 2008, Pg; 161–176.
- [4] Stufflebeam, D. L., Foley, W. J., Gephart, W. J., Hammond, L. R., Merriman, H. O., & Provus, M. M. (1971). *Educational evaluation and decision-making in education.*, Itasca, IL: Peacock, Pg; 138.
- [5] Wadi Haddad, Terry Demsky, (1994). “The dynamics of education policymaking: case studies of Burkina Faso, Jordan, Peru, and Thailand”, *World Bank Publications*, ISBN: 0821326600, 9780821326602, Pg; 128.
- [6] Warren C. Sanderson, Jee-Peng Tan (1995). “Population in Asia”: *World Bank regional and sectoral studies*, World Bank Publications, ISBN: 0821331310, 9780821331316, Pp; 174-175.