

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THAILAND

by

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a. Introduction

"The achievement of the Economic Development Program in Thailand relies heavily on the competence of our government officials," states General Thanom Kittikachorn, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand.

An Economic Development Program is not self-executing. It requires interpretation, planning, delegating and executing; in other words, *good management*. Thailand has placed great emphasis on the education of its government officials. She has sent many of her talented citizens abroad to be trained as engineers, economists, agriculturists, physicians, etc. The use of these talented citizens to attain the goals of an Economic Development Program is a real challenge to management. Good physicians do not necessarily work together easily. Good engineers need management techniques to coordinate the building of highways. Economists need understanding superiors to make their knowledge operationally effective. These things don't "just happen." They need planning. They need systemization. They need decision-making processes of some little sophistication. The best use of these talents require, in short, administrative know-how.

"Impatience is becoming the hallmark of underdeveloped nations;" says Raymond L. Randall, Special Consultant on Executive Development, "in this they are ambivalent. Their culture dictates, possibly, a go-slow, take-it-easy orientation to today's problems, but power politics calls a different tune. These nations are caught in a squeeze which impels them to actively seek for sources to provide them with a minimum reserve of high talent manpower. This is, however, more than a problem of the moment. Its implications transcend today's emergency. It becomes even more critical when capital investment brings nations to the 'take-off point'. The scramble will be for an ever-increasing supply of managerial skills to maintain administrative structures. A principle and enduring solution, therefore, is training--continuous, intensive, professional, no-nonsense, high-priority training."

Executive Development is a valuable administrative device for such nations "in a hurry". It short-circuits decades of growth; it is "hastened experience". It helps produce skilled managers somewhat more quickly than any known unplanned process. It is with in mind that Thailand leaders approved and promoted our Executive Development Program.

This is the story about the Executive Development Program in Thailand. It is not just another technical report in training. It is an exciting story of responsible Thai officials thinking responsibly about Thai administrative problems. It is a testimonial to the Thai career executive, to his cooperativeness in supporting the program and his willingness to share his experiences to serve the objectives of Thailand's Economic Development Program.

b. Objectives of Executive Development Program in Thailand

1. To provide practical opportunities to all Special Grade Government Officials (i.e., top level career officials) to improve themselves on their present job and to develop their potential for the future. Executive Development is the eternally sworn foe of complacency and destructive routine in an organization.
2. To increase coordination between various Ministries through friendships established between government officials from each Ministry.
3. To create a desire among these government officials to provide training for their subordinates--resulting in an Institute objective of the establishment of Training Offices in each Ministry.
4. To lay the groundwork for a continuous Executive Development Program by encouraging the formation of Alumnae groups to meet periodically to discuss administration and personnel problems in Thailand.

c. History of Executive Development Seminars in Thailand

The following interesting pattern has evolved, resulting in the establishment of an Executive Development Program in Thailand:

1. Experimental Executive Development Seminar conducted by a renowned American Consultant.
 2. Obtaining top level support for future seminars.
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3. Preparation of Staff and Seminar Leaders.
4. Administrating and conducting of seminars and improvement made in each subsequent seminar.
5. Formation of Alumnae Groups.

Below is a more detailed account of each of these steps:

1. Experimental Seminar

On April 1, 1960, Mr. Raymond L. Randall, Special Consultant in Executive Development, arrived in Thailand to prepare for and conduct an "Experimental Executive Development Seminar". This Experimental Session consisted of four separate steps:

1. Interviews with Under-Secretaries and other top civilian officials of the Thai Government.
2. One week of problem identification sessions of two hours each.
3. Individual interviews with each of the selected participants (13).
4. One week full time problem solving workshops at Hua-Hin--a beautiful seaside resort in south Thailand.

2. Obtaining Top Level Support

Shortly after the departure of Mr. Randall, Mr. William Berg, the co-author of this article, arrived in Thailand to be the advisor. The acting Chief of the In-Service Training Division and the Advisor then met individually with each of the Under-Secretaries and the participants of Mr. Randall's Experimental Seminar. The purposes in these meetings were to informally evaluate the Experimental Seminar, to receive backing and cooperation in future seminars, and to receive recommendations for future seminars. Generally, as a result of the Experimental Seminar and the interviews, support of future programs was pledged. Each offered to send two of their Special Grade Government officials to the next Seminar. While each was genuinely impressed with Mr. Randall and his conducting of the session, all agreed that future seminars must be conducted in the Thai language by Thai Government officials.

Also, a gathering was held at the In-Service Training Division of the Institute of Public Administration for the participants of Randall's Experimental Seminar. Through small group

discussion, recommendations for future seminars were given. While these recommendations were important, more important was the feeling of this group that they were to be a vital part of future seminars.

With this background, the Governmental Cabinet's approval for another Seminar was granted. Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, the Prime Minister of Thailand, opened the ceremony, thus giving support from the top and ensuring the Institute of the publicity necessary to get the Executive Program off to the right start.

3. Preparation of Staff and Seminar Leaders

Once approval of the Cabinet was obtained, the Seminar Leaders were chosen and contacted by Dr. Malai Huvanandana, Dean of the Institute of Public Administration in Thailand. While the policy was to conduct the seminars in the Thai language with Special Grade officials, it was expedient for this first Seminar to use Institute personnel and the Advisor as some of the Seminar Leaders. (In subsequent seminars this policy of conducting Seminars in the Thai language was closely adhered to.) Each Seminar Leader was assigned a "Resource Person" from the Institute Staff to assist them in preparing their sessions.

All effort was made to take these Seminar Leaders away from their job as little as possible. To ensure that the best methods of training were used, an intensive session of Dynamics of Learning was conducted for these Leaders and their Resource Persons.

The Resource Persons worked individually with each Seminar Leader in providing materials, recommending methods, outlining course content, and providing visual aids. It was made clear that it was the full responsibility of the Resource Person to see to it that the best methods were to be used with the best materials.

4. Administrating and Conducting Five Seminars

Second Executive Development Seminar

The opening ceremony by the Prime Minister got this Second Seminar (the First one in Thai language by Thai Government officials) off to a high start. There were four basic stages of this Seminar:

- a. **Problem Identification Sessions:** These were group-centered discussion sessions designed to arrive at definitions of common problems, philosophy of administration
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in Thailand and duties of an Executive in Thailand. Five of these sessions, lasting 2 hours each, were conducted at Thammasat.

b. **Preparatory Stage :** During this stage (2 weeks) the Executives returned to their jobs and were to further prepare themselves by reading recommended writings on administration and in reflecting on the problems identified in the First stage. This stage was also profitably used by the Institute for further refining of the course content and preparation of the Seminar Leaders before the sessions at Hua-Hin Resort.

c. **Problem Solving Sessions at Hua-Hin :** This is the stage where the selected officials were taken away from their jobs and their operating problems for intensive study and discussion of administrative problems.

The Seminar Leaders used such methods as lectures with visual aids, case studies, small group discussions, movies and role-playing to make the subject matter most meaningful.

Each day after the sessions were over, the Executives continued their own discussion in these problems far into the night. This stage lasted five full days with the Executives living and eating together.

d. **Formation of Alumnae Group :** Executive Development does not end after the Problem Solving Sessions are completed. For the greatest results, this must be a continuous process. For this reason the staff has encouraged the voluntary formation of an Alumnae Group, to periodically get together. This second Group, having formed and Alumnae Group now meet together periodically.

Third Executive Seminar

The above format was used for the Third Seminar except for the following improvements:

a. All Seminar Leaders were Thai Government Officials of same rank or above that of the Executive Participants some of whom were participants of the Second Seminar. Since the Second Seminar, no Thai official that the Institute has asked to be Seminar Leader has refused. They say they are proud to be a part of this program.

- b. General Thanom Kittikachorn, Deputy Prime Minister and Rector of the Thammasat University, opened the ceremony at the University.
- c. The Problem Solving Sessions were conducted at Suan Mongkol Resort in Nakorn Nayok Province.
- d. Workbooks were prepared for each session.
- e. The Colloquium Method was introduced. That is, at the close of each day, one of the Executive Participants led a group-centered discussion on the topic discussed by the Seminar Leader that day. The Colloquium was led to discuss "Can This Be Adopted Or Adapted In Thailand?"; "How Can We Best Use This On Our Jobs?"; "What Problems Must Be Overcome Before We Can Do This?", etc., etc.
- f. A panel of experts from Bureau of Budget, Audit Council, Ministry of Finance and Civil Service Commission was used to answer problems or questions of the Executives on their particular field.

Fourth Executive Seminar

The major changes from previous seminars were :

- a. Elimination of the Colloquium sessions which did not prove to be successful.
- b. The introduction of the Syndicate Method wherein the Executives were split into small groups to study a problem of their choosing and eventually report on their findings. Two hours each day for 3 days were spent on this method. The Executives enjoyed this method and gained a greater appreciation of the solution and application of the problems involved.

Fifth Executive Development Seminar

Major changes made for this Seminar were :

- a. Experience in the past showed the Institute that the first week (Problem Identification) at Thammasat left quite a bit to be desired. The Group of Executives was too formal and did not feel free enough to create a frank discussion until they were outside of Bangkok. This was probably due to the "too formal" physical arrangement in the Thammasat Auditorium Hall. Therefore, instead of the five 2 hour
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sessions at Thammasat, it was decided to include the Problem Solving Session outside of Bangkok and to increase this time from five full days to eight full days (including the weekend). This made the total Seminar time longer--but actually less time away from their busy jobs.

- b. The Deputy Prime Minister not only opened the ceremony but was for the first time a Seminar Leader. This was a major step in the progress of In-Service Training in Thailand as his subject was "Government Policy on In-Service Training." He made many positive statements that will promote training of all government officials in Thailand.
- c. This Seminar was conducted at the Government Resettlement Project in Saraburi Province.
- d. The popularity and good results of the Syndicate Method caused the Division to devote every full afternoon to good usage of this discussion method.
- e. Each Seminar Leader was given 3 hours for his session.

Sixth Executive Development Seminar

No major changes were made in this Seminar from the previous one.

d. Cumulative Evaluation of the Four Executive Development Seminars

1. Overall Seminar Evaluation

Shown in the box below are the directions given for this portion to the Special Grade Government Officials of Thailand for evaluating the four Executive Development Seminars conducted in 1961.

Your reactions to the Executive Development Seminar you have just completed will be very useful to us in determining its effectiveness and in planning future seminars :

Please fill in the blank for item No. 1. Also, will you check questions No. 2 to No. 5. For example, in question No. 2 below: If you feel the course has been helpful to your self-development, check No. 3 "*Helpful*". If you feel the course was of little or no value to your self-development, check No. 5 — "*Little or No Value*". However, if you feel the course would rate somewhere between "*Helpful*" and "*Little or No Value*" check column No. 4. In the same manner, please check questions No. 3, No. 4 & No. 5. *You need not sign your name to this evaluation.*

The Questions asked (1-5) are shown below. Included below each question are the results (by percentage of those answering the questionnaire).

1) HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SEMINAR IN GENERAL? (Results too voluminous to be shown here).

2) HAS THE SEMINAR BEEN HELPFUL TO YOUR SELF DEVELOPMENT?

Very Helpful		Helpful		Little or No Value
1	2	3	4	5
61.6%	11.6%	25.6%	1.2%	0

3) WILL THE SEMINAR BE HELPFUL IN CARRYING OUT YOUR JOB?

Very Helpful		Helpful		Little or No Value
1	2	3	4	5
60%	14%	24.8%	1.2%	0

- 4) DO YOU FEEL READY NOW TO APPLY THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS YOU GAINED FROM THESE SEMINARS?

Very Confident		Ready to try		Skeptical or Not Prepared
1	2	3	4	5
30%	14%	53.6%	1.2%	1.2%

5. FROM YOUR OBSERVATION, HOW MANY OF THE EXECUTIVES YOU KNOW WHO ARE IN THE SEMINAR HAVE BENEFITTED FROM IT?

All		About Half		None
1	2	3	4	5
57.2%	40.4%	1.2%	1.2%	0

2. Evaluation by Topics

In the box below are the directions given to the Special Grade Government Officials for evaluating the topics of the four Executive Development Seminars conducted in 1961. Some of the topics were not used in all 4 seminars. This is noted in the results.

Questionnaires

The following are the topics covered in the four Executive Development Seminars:

(Topics used in Seminars are listed in instruction)

Answer the following questions about these topics:

1. *Indicate the THREE TOPICS in the list which you found the most interesting to you personally. Write the names of your choice in order of their interest value.*
2. *Indicate the THREE TOPICS you found most useful or practical to you on your job by writing the names of your choice in their order of practical value.*
3. *Indicate the TWO TOPICS in which you feel you need or would like further training.*
4. *If it was found necessary to shorten the program, which topic or topics could be eliminated with least damage to the seminar?*
5. *What topics do you feel should be covered that were not covered? Explain.*

Results of the Questionnaires Part 2

Topics	<u>Most Interesting:</u>	<u>Most Practical:</u>	Further training needed	Eliminate if necessary
	3 pts. for 1st choice 2 " " 2nd " 1 " " 3rd "	3 pts. for 1st choice 2 " " 2nd " 1 " " 3rd "		
Review of Management Process (3 seminars)	10 points	12 points	17 votes	12 votes
Human Relations (4 seminars)	125 points	105 points	32	1
Delegation of Authority (4 seminars)	72 points	87 points	7	2
Managing Changes (2 seminars)	5 points	0 points	6	17
Executive Planning (4 seminars)	109 points	121 points	21	1
Communication (3 seminars)	27 points	38 points	9	4
Coordination (2 seminars)	27 points	31 points	7	5
Decision Making (4 seminars)	55 points	44 points	11	1
In-Service Training (4 seminars)	39 points	36 points	10	10
Organization (1 seminar)	4 points	0	2	1
Right Man on Right Job (1 seminar)	0	0	0	0

Evaluation of Methods Used in Conducting the Seminar Part 3

Shown in the box below are the directions given to Special Grade Government Officials for evaluating the methods used in conducting the four Executive Development Seminar in 1961.

Questionnaires

Listed below are some of the methods used in the Executive Development Seminar:

1. Lecture
2. Lecture with Visual Aids
3. Conference or Discussion
4. Panel Discussion
5. Small Group Committee
6. Case Studies
7. Role Playing
8. Movies
9. Reports by Executives
10. Reading Materials
11. Workshop
12. Colloquium or Syndicate

Answer the following questions about these methods:

1. *Indicate* the THREE METHODS in the list which made the topics *most interesting* to you personally. Write the names of your choice *in the order of their interest value*.
2. *Indicate* the THREE METHODS you found that made the topics *most useful* or practical to your job by writing the names of your choice *in the order of their practical value*.
3. *Indicate* the TWO METHODS you feel should have been used *more often*.
4. *Indicate* the TWO METHODS that should either have *not been used* or should have been used *less often*.

Results of Questionnaires Part 3

	<u>Made Topic</u> <u>Most Interesting</u>	<u>Made Topic</u> <u>Most Practical</u>	Should have	Should have
Some of the methods of instruction used in the Executive Development Seminar	3 pts. for 1st choice 2 „ „ 2nd „ 1 „ „ 3rd „	3 pts. for 1st choice 2 „ „ 2nd „ 1 „ „ 3rd „	used more often	used less often
Lecture	40 points	39 points	14 votes	20 votes
Lecture with Visual Aids	67	57	14	2
Conference or discussion	80	102	22	1
Panel Discussion	64	63	24	3
Small Group Committee	81	63	21	4
Case Study	25	34	11	9
Role Playing (3 seminars)	11	6	4	25
Movies	21	16	7	5
Reports by Executives	18	7	2	4
Reading Materials	25	42	11	10
Workshop	7	19	3	11
Colloquium (1 seminar)	22	10	4	2
Syndicate (2 seminars)	52	40	13	6

E. Evaluation by the Advisor of Executive Development Seminars in Thailand

The only practical way to evaluate the Executive Development Seminars in Thailand is to ask the question, "Were the objectives of the program (page 2) achieved?"

Below are the original objectives with comments on the degree of their achievement:

Objective No. 1: *To provide practical opportunities to all Special Grade Officials to improve themselves on their present job and to develop their potential for the future.*

Certainly, to varying degrees, these opportunities were provided. Opportunities were provided to the Executives to:

1. Exchange ideas and experiences through group discussion.
2. Review or learn of administrative practices and to discuss their application to their jobs in Thailand.
3. Discuss, analyze, and solve common Executive problems in Thailand.

Ninety-eight percent of the Executives have said the Seminar has been "helpful" or "very helpful" in their self-development. The same percentage have said the seminar will be "helpful" or "very helpful" in carrying out their job. Thirty percent are "very confident" that they can apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills to their job (67.6% of the remaining 70% are "ready to try").

Some of the written comments by the Executives in this regard are:

"I now realize that my job performance in the past has only been trial and error. Now that this seminar has assured me of principles and techniques, my effectiveness has been broadened."

"I gain more knowledge, discovered the defects of my job and am anxious to try the new ways to better my job."

"It has been useful to both the individual and the government as a whole. I feel confident that I can now work better."

Many more such comments are made by the Executives. While some of the written comments have suggested ways of improving future seminars, none has said the seminar has not

been beneficial to them. We have visited, through the Alumnae Groups, most of these Executives months after the seminars. Most of them have told us that the Seminar has helped them to improve their job. Some, proudly, give examples of ways they are now doing their job differently, such as: better planning; delegating some authority (one jokingly told me he does not know what to do with his time now that he has delegated authority); bringing his subordinates in to assist in planning; taking the responsibility for making decisions rather than appoint a committee, etc.

However, these are the results as we hear or see them. Unfortunately, we do not hear of or see the many cases, I am sure, where there are no tangible results. The Thai nature is not to criticize the results or lack of results, but to compliment them.

Of the four objectives for the seminars, I believe this first objective needs the greatest amount of improvement. I think we are off to a more than satisfactory start, but there is much room for improvement in making the course more meaningful, more practical, more interesting and resulting to greater tangible results.

Objective No. 2: To increase coordination between various ministries through friendships established between government officials from each ministry.

This objective, more than any others, has been successful. By bringing together approximately two Executives from each Ministry and having them live together, eat together, and learn together for at least one solid week, strong friendships are established. Many Executives have said to me, "Now when I need some help or clearance from another Ministry, all I need to do is pick up the phone and talk to my Seminar friend--rather than go through all the red tape, confusion, and possibly, refusal." This, I believe is progress in a government to begin to rid itself of its "individual empires."

In the written evaluation the Executives were asked to comment to the question, "How do you feel about the Seminar in general." Over 50% commented that the friendships gained and the understanding of the others' problems will result in closer coordination.

Each group has formed an Alumnae Group and meets periodically--resulting in, we feel, a continuation of their friendship and improving in closer coordination between the ministries.

This objective needs no further improvement other than a continuation of more seminars.

Objective No. 3: *To create a desire among these government officials to provide training for their subordinates--resulting in an Institute objective of the establishment of Training Offices in each Ministry.*

As a direct result of the Executive Seminars, some Executives have decided, "this is good, my subordinates should have it." The following are examples of those requesting assistance of the Institute in setting up training offices or in assisting in conducting training programs: Department of Agriculture; Department of Interior; Ministry of Cooperatives; Province of Nonburi; Department of Post & Telegraph; Ministry of Public Health; Department of Public welfare; Ministry of Communication; Department of Highways; Kamnan (i.e. Chiefs of Village Headman) Training; Nai Amphur (i.e. District Officers) Training and others.

During the Fifth Seminar, Deputy Prime Minister, General Thanom Kittikachorn was the Seminar Leader on "Government Policy and In-Service Training." In his discussion he encouraged each Department to set up a Training Office and to request the assistance of the Institute in doing so.

While we have an extremely long way to go before the objective is accomplished, requests are coming in as fast as we can handle them. Our emphasis in 1962 will be on setting up Training Offices in all the Ministries. I think we have made a good start.

Objective No. 4: *To lay the groundwork for a continuous Executive Development Program by encouraging the formation of Alumnae Group to meet periodically to discuss administration and personnel problems in Thailand.*

Each group has voluntarily formed its own Alumnae Group that meets periodically. However, to my knowledge, they have only met on a social basis and have not continued their discussions and studies. While this meeting socially has enhanced their friendships, it certainly has not accomplished this fourth objective. However, it is hoped that these social gatherings will be a basis for further professional meetings.

Some of the other most encouraging aspects of the Executive Development Seminar have been:

1. The apparent backing of the top government officials.
2. The readiness of the Executive to profit by these seminars.
3. The willingness of the Executives to become Seminar Leaders and, of course, the time and effort of these busy Seminar Leaders to aid in improving their government.
4. The acceptance of the Syndicate Method.
5. The encouragement and recommendations given by the Alumnae Groups for future seminars.
6. The donation of 35,000 Baht by Standard Vacuum Oil Company to defray the costs of these seminars.
7. The excellent accommodations at Hua Hin, Suan Mongkol, and Saraburi Resettlement for the Executives and training staff.

However, certainly there have been disappointments. Many are due to miscalculations of the Advisor:

1. Probably the greatest disappointment has been the utilization of the Resource Person. As a result of the Resource Person's understandable reluctance to "tell" a Seminar Leader of higher status the methods of instructions to use, more and more lectures have crept back into the Seminars. However, the idea of a Resource Person from the Institute is imperative and ways and means will be found to correct this situation.
 2. The "Colloquium" Session wherein the Executives discuss the topic of the day and determine how it can best be utilized in their job was a complete failure and has been abandoned.
 3. The lack of indigenous materials and training aids lessens the meaningfulness of the seminars.
 4. The absence of professional meetings of the Alumnae Groups.
 5. The administration of the Seminar, while markedly improving, needs further refinement.
 6. The poor acceptance of role-playing will require a new approach to this excellent method.
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All in all, I feel the Executive Program in Thailand is now firmly established and that the successes far outweigh the failures. Frankly, the Institute has progressed to this stage of the Executive Program further and faster than I dared feel a year ago when it began. This is a tribute to the Institute of Public Administration, Thammasat University, for its far-sightedness and its willingness to be an entrepreneur in an unknown field, and for its assumption of a tremendous work-load.

Experience

Men are wise in proportion, not to their experience, but to their capacity for experience.

George Bernard Shaw

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