

# THE ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OF THAILAND

by Randy H. Hamilton\*

## The Aims and Purposes of the League

The National Municipal League of Thailand (NML) was organized during the first quarter of 1960. It is patterned after the American Municipal Association, the International Union of Local Authorities and similar non-political, non-partisan organizations in many countries which are designed to improve the level of services and standards of performance by municipal governments. It is devoted entirely to increasing the efficiency and economy of local government in Thailand.

The charter specifies eight major objects of the NML:

- (1) To study and do research in technical and legal fields which are useful to municipalities and to publish the results thereof;
- (2) To promote harmony, mutual aid, technical assistance and interchange of ideas among its members;
- (3) To provide opportunities for the members to meet together and exchange experiences in solving the practical problems encountered in municipal operations;
- (4) To provide training courses for municipal personnel;
- (5) To promote the welfare and improve the level of performance of municipal personnel;
- (6) To act as a sounding board for the formulation and presentation of ideas, policies and programs concerning local government and to transmit those matters through the Ministry of Interior to the Government of Thailand;

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(7) To cooperate with international institutions and organizations in promoting local government and its improvement; and,

(8) To assist in charitable and all other activities that promote the welfare of local authorities.

The membership of the NML is made up of all 120 municipalities, with membership being in the name of the city itself. Prerogatives of membership are exercised by the Mayors of the municipality-members, with the advice and assistance of the municipal clerk.

### **The Program of the League**

To carry out its aims and purposes, the NML has developed a full program that is noteworthy for its comprehensiveness.

#### **The Research Program**

Research is performed by staff members who are employees of the NML or the Ministry of Interior, on pertinent problems of local government. Commissioned research, on special occasions or particular problems, is also performed by practitioners of municipal government or academic persons. The Executive Committee of the NML has under advisement the award of a gold medal, each year, for the best paper or study on municipal government prepared by a student in one of the various political science or public administration faculties in Thailand.

#### **The Publications Program<sup>1</sup>**

The NML has published approximately 100 booklets or handbooks detailing recommendations and experiences on specific municipal tasks or projects. Reference manuals have been published and distributed to members and interested persons on professional aspects of municipal personnel such as engineering, accounting, sanitation, etc.

The league publishes a monthly magazine which is distributed to all members containing current articles of interest.

A long range project of the publications program will be the preparation and annotation in loose-leaf form of a municipal code containing all of the pertinent provisions of various laws concerning municipalities, which are now scattered through several sets of laws. This code will bring together in one place, in reference form, all applicable laws, rules, regulations for the conduct of municipal affairs by operating officials.

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<sup>1</sup> A partial list of these publications is annexed as Exhibit J.

### **The Annual Conference**

One of the most important NML programs is its annual conference attended by delegates from every municipality in Thailand. Conference attendance has averaged 300 delegates for the past three years during which they have been held in Chiangmai in the North, Songkhla in the South and Udorn in the Northeast. The 1963 conference will be held in central Thailand, in Bangkok. Conferences run for about six days during which time a full range of activities is presented for the attendees including work sessions, discussion groups, plenary sessions and lectures and instruction with audio-visual aids. Experts, both Thai and foreign, have participated in these meetings bringing to the municipal officials a distillation of many years of practical experience and knowledge in local government. The conference has a balanced program designed to provide information, give technical training, encourage exchange of ideas among members, and increase the fellowship among operating municipal officials from all parts of the Kingdom.

The policies of the NML are set at the annual conference by the members in the form of democratically debated and adopted resolutions which become the guide for the future year's work of the staff and officers. These resolutions represent the considered municipal policy of municipal officials in Thailand.

### **Regional Meeting Program**

Within the near future, the NML will add to its dimension by organizing a series of regional meetings to take place in various, natural groupings of provinces. These short, working meetings will feature "how-to-do-it" sessions for specific groups of operating officials.

### **Educational Program**

The magazine is a major tool of the educational program. It carries illustrative materials aimed at improving the individual municipal official in his professional, social and cultural life. In addition to articles of professional interest, English lessons and other educational material is included in each issue.

The purpose of the NML's educational program is to improve the efficiency of municipal employees, establish more uniformity in the performance of municipal tasks throughout the country, develop a spirit of "professionalism" among municipal government employees and improve the performance level of individual employees and thereby provide better and/or more municipal government services for the urban citizens of Thailand.

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A by-product of the educational program has been the opportunity to discover and encourage unusually gifted employees and to advance their career in Thai local government.

#### **The Municipal Reference Library and Technical Advisory Program<sup>2</sup>**

The MML has organized and collected a specialized Municipal Reference Library that currently numbers about 2,000 pieces of literature, periodicals and other technical information for research use in municipal government and local administration. The collection is designed to provide comparative information on municipal performance and activities in other countries, both the more highly developed and the developing ones. There are also reference materials for the use of national government employees who are concerned with aspects of municipal government. Utilizing the reference library, any operating official in Thailand can obtain information and advice on the programs, problems and practices of municipal organization, management, finance or operations. The NML encourages queries by mail from members with answers sent by return mail developed from the information in the Municipal Reference Library.

The library forms the backbone of the NML's embryonic Technical Advisory Service. This service to league members makes available to them, upon inquiry from the field, either technical written advice or a visit of a member of the NML's staff to help solve a particular operating problem. The strongest sector of the Municipal Technical Advisory Service is in the field of municipal recreation. By agreement with the Asia Foundation, a full-time highly qualified American recreation specialist has been made available to the NML to provide technical advice on recreation for all Thai municipalities. More than 90% of the league's 120 members have already availed themselves of this opportunity and have contacted the NML for advice on recreation.

#### **The Training Program**

In three years, the NML has become a major sponsor of in-service training in Thailand. In addition to its continuing program of educational activities described above and the training which takes place at the annual conference of the NML, the league has completed six formal in-service training courses that have been attended by more than 600 municipal officials from every corner of Thailand. Each training program has been guided by the over-all necessity to

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<sup>2</sup> The NML received a grant of \$2,000 from the Asia Foundation which was sufficient to provide about one-third of the present collection of municipal reference library materials.

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improve efficiency and economy of performance. The latest techniques, practices and regulations have formed the core of the curriculum. Specific technical and professional information has been imparted to the trainees to meet their different needs in actual operating situations. The in-service training courses have taken place in the Ministry of Interior's Training Center in Bangkok and at the Health Department's Training Center in Cholburi.

A statistical presentation of the in-service work follows:

OFFICIALS ATTENDING THE COURSE	DURATION OF COURSE	NUMBER TRAINED
City Clerks	1 Feb. — 13 March 1961	45
District Sanitation Officers	7 Dec. — 23 Dec. 1960	120
Accountants (municipal)	12 Nov. — 24 Nov. 1961	158
Chief Engineers (municipal)	14 June — 30 June 1961	126
Municipal Veterinarians	28 Jan. — 12 Feb. 1962	81
Public Relations Officers	16 Apr. — 25 Apr. 1962	130
Total number of officials receiving training :		660

Early in 1963, three additional in-service training and refresher courses will be held for municipal doctors, nurses and midwives. More than 500 persons will each receive at least 10 days of technical and professional training designed to acquaint them with latest techniques and developments and to upgrade the performance of municipal public health work. This program will be assisted by a UNICEF grant of money and materials.

#### **International Cooperation Program**

The NML closely follows the work of international organizations in the field of municipal government. It has sponsored the training of a young Thai official in Israel at the offices of the Israel Union of Local Authorities. Reports from Thai municipal officials who travel abroad and who study municipal government are always prepared, published and distributed to all members.

The NML sponsored an international visit by more than 200 Thai municipal officials to Penang in Malaya in 1961. This marked the first time that such a large group of officials ever journeyed together outside of Thai borders for group observation and study in a foreign country. Visits were arranged to municipal installations in Georgetown, discussions were held with various municipal officials and a thorough explanation of the role of municipalities in Malaya was accorded to Thai officials during the two day tour.

In 1962, the NML sponsored a tour for 18 Thai municipal officials who visited Hong Kong, Taipeh and Tokyo. The two-week program featured detailed study and observation of municipal activities such as youth centers, public works, street cleaning practices, and observation of other municipal activities in the three countries.

The President of the NML serves on the Board of Directors of the International Union of Local Authorities, and delegates from the NML attend the international meetings of this organization at which speeches and papers on local government in Thailand are always presented. The NML frequently prepares reports for publication by various international organizations on local government services, history, traditions and practices in Thailand.

### Organization and Budget

The NML has its headquarters in the Local Government Bureau, Department of Local Administration, Ministry of Interior. Employees of the league serve on detached status for league affairs from the bureau. The Secretary General of the NML, Mr. Visit Chaiyaporn, is the Chief of the Local Government Bureau. There are three deputy secretaries-general: (a) Finance—Mr. Vichit Chamsai, (b) Program—Mr. Radom Mahassaranond, (c) Policy—Mrs. Nandaka Suprabhata-nanda. Other league officials are the Planning and Training Officer, Mr. Anant Sanguannam; the Financial Officer, Miss Soothira Soonthonwipak; and the Recreation Inspector, Mr. Chit Nilpanich.

The League's governing body, the Executive Committee, has nine members:

Dr. Chamnan Yuvapurna,	Lord Mayor of Bangkok, President
Luang Wivitsurakarn,	Mayor of Udornthani, Vice President
Mr. Sai Hutachareon,	Director General, Department of Community Development, member
Mrs. Nandaka Suprabhatananda,	Deputy City Clerk, Bangkok, member
Mr. Tongyod Chitwera,	Mayor of Song-peenong, member
Mr. Prakong Dhevaruth,	Mayor of Bangkla, member
Mr. Siri Watanasook,	Mayor of Nongkai, member
Mr. Chote Teeharat,	Mayor of Haadyai, member.

The current operating budget of the NML is 860,000 baht. Of this total, 450,000 baht is from dues received from the 120 member municipalities; 400,000 baht is from a government subsidy to encourage NML activities and 10,000 baht is from accrued interest on bank deposits.

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**A Partial Listing of the Publications of the National Municipal League**

## EXHIBIT I

1. "Accounting for Municipal Funds"
  2. Collected Papers, 1st annual Conference of the NML  
Collected Papers, 2nd annual Conference of the NML  
Collected Papers, 3rd annual Conference of the NML
  3. "Planning Municipal Recreation Activities"
  4. "Organizing Municipal Recreation Activities"
  5. "Report on the 1960 Meeting, International Union of Local Authorities, Tel Aviv"  
"Report on the 1961 Meeting, International Union of Local Authorities, Washington"
  6. "The Use of the Referendum in Municipal Government"
  7. "An International View of Municipal Government"
  8. "Public Personnel Administration in Los Angeles County"
  9. "Municipal Government in France"
  10. "Rules and Regulations for English Municipal Officials"
  11. "Private Organizations & Social Welfare"
  12. "Local Development Projects in Municipalities"
  13. "Municipal Police Administration"
  14. "The Use of Special Assessments in Municipal Public Works"
  15. "The Use of Special Districts"
  16. "The Rural Cooperative Development Project at Mae Phaek, Chiangmai"
  17. "The Government of Japan"
  18. "Local Government in Selected Asian Countries"
  19. "The Urban Government of Hong Kong"
  20. "Salaries of Municipal Officials"
  21. "The Role of the Volunteer in Social Welfare"
  22. "Street Cleaning Practices"
  23. "Traffic Control in the U.S.A."
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24. "Community Development and Local Government"
  25. "The Role of the Social Worker in Community Organization"
  26. "The Status of Lord Mayors in England"
  27. "Report of the Study Tour of the Bangkok Lord Mayor"  
"Report on the International Conference of Mayors, Chicago, 1960"
  28. "Techniques of Coordination"
  29. "Fifteen Public Relations Techniques for Municipal Officials in Thailand"
  30. "Fire Fighting Services in Municipalities"
  31. "How to Select a City Manager"
  32. "The Management of Municipal Education"
  33. "The Control of Dogs Running-at-Large"
  34. "Public Health Activities of Thai Municipalities"
  35. "State—owned Pawnshops"
  36. "Pawnshops in Burma"
  37. "Education Administration"
  38. "A Brief History of Thai Municipalities"
  39. "The Relationships between Central and Local Governments"
  40. "Some Restrictions on Local Self-Government in the U.S.A."
  41. "Public Health Administration in Local Government"
  42. "The City Manager-Head of the Family"
  43. "Relationships between Private and State Social Workers"
  44. "Keys to Local Administrative Success"
  45. "Preventing Water Shortages"
  46. "Sanitation in Food-Handling Establishments"
  47. "Public Health in Municipalities"
  48. "Position Classification in Municipal Government"
  49. "Site Planning and Architecture in Slum Areas"
  50. "Local Government Administration in Puerto Rico"
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