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Best Practices of Secondary Level Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs) in Southeast Asia



***A Case Study of the
Home School Program
in Thailand***

Best Practices of Secondary Level Alternative
Delivery Modes (ADMs) in Southeast Asia:
**A Case Study of the Home School
Program of Thailand**

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Commonwealth Ave., Diliman, Quezon City



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Foreword

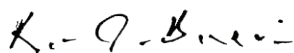
While enrolment in secondary schools has been increasing over the past decade, some young people are still not able to access quality and relevant secondary education. Some learners experience difficulty in transition from primary to

secondary level and from secondary level to the labour market. In some parts of Southeast Asia, there is disparity in terms of completion of secondary education between rural and urban learners, and between working students and those studying full time. Learners from marginalized groups including indigenous people, young people with special needs, and those from low socio-economic groups also face challenges in accessing and completing secondary education.

There are many barriers that can push learners out of the formal school system including geographical distance, poverty, conflict, natural disasters, etc. Alternative delivery modes (ADMs) are solutions that may help learners who are not in the regular schools acquire the needed basic education competencies and life skills. At the secondary level, these initiatives provide learners with the opportunity to complete their education at their own pace, given the resources and the context they are in, thereby preparing them for work or further education. ADMs offer flexibility, relevance and may be accessed at a lower cost than conventional schools.

In SEAMEO-member countries, numerous forms of alternative modalities have been and are being implemented. SEAMEO INNOTECH launched a research project to document successful secondary level alternative delivery models. The aim was to consolidate best practices, study more closely how the programs were able to work given the varied contexts, and identify factors that contributed to their success. This project resulted in the documentation of four exemplary ADM programs, which shall be presented as a series of case studies. These include: i) the school-industry partnership of the Multiple Entry Exit System (MEES) of Indonesia; ii) access to secondary education of island learners in Vietnam; iii) flexible learning delivery modalities and learner-centered support system of the Open High School Program (OHSP) of the Philippines; and iv) project-based learning approach in support of a needs-based curriculum evident in the Home School Program of Thailand. Each case study discusses the various components of the program and highlights the unique and facilitative factors underlying the successful ADM initiative.

The series of case studies was made possible through the active collaboration with in-country researchers from Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, and the stakeholders who contributed their ideas, insights and experience. We hope the case studies will give a better understanding of ADMs as education solutions and widen perspectives on the benefits of employing such modalities for students in the secondary level.



Ramon C. Bacani

Center Director

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We also would like to thank Wat Doi Pha Som, Phra Khru Thammakhut and the staff, the families helping in the program, and the learners for their cooperation and warm welcome.

And to the Ministry of Education, Thailand, our deepest gratitude, for giving us the opportunity to know more about the Home School Program and allowing us to conduct the case study research.



Research team from the Office of the Basic Education Commission (Photo credit: SEAMEO INNOTECH)



Educational Service Area 2 personnel of Chiang Mai, Thailand (Photo credit: SEAMEO INNOTECH)

Acronyms

ADM	Alternative Delivery Mode
BEID	Bureau of Education Innovation and Development
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
ESA	Educational Service Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OBEC	Office of the Basic Education Commission
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
INNOTECH	Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology
SFP	School Feeding Program

Background of the Study

Introduction

This case study on the Home School Program of Thailand, is one of the four country case studies featuring successful secondary level alternative delivery modes (ADMs) in Southeast Asia. This case study features the Home School Program being implemented in Wat Doi Pha Som, Sameong District, Chiang Mai.

Background of the Regional Study

In the past four decades, the demand for secondary education has expanded due to current global economic developments that necessitate higher educational qualifications and level of skills. Globalization, with its increased volume of global trade and finance, has changed the educational goals of nations. As such, companies around the world need more well-trained and productive employees that are competitive yet competent, able to make decisions, can accommodate change more rapidly, articulate, able to process information fast, and produce high quality outputs at lower costs.¹

Many developing countries, including those in Southeast Asia, have tried various means to address this demand, even as they continue to raise the educational attainment of their population. Some countries, however, struggle with the issue of increasing school dropout rates, which is fast becoming a serious social problem.

1 Vivian Figueredo and Stephen Anzalone, *Alternative Models for Secondary Education in Developing Countries: Rationale and Realities* (Washington, D.C.: American Institute for Research, January 2003).

The increasing school dropout rate is not just a problem affecting SEAMEO-member countries. Other countries beyond Southeast Asia such as Brazil, Mexico, and Africa experience the same problem. In South Asia, 40 percent of children drop out after completing primary school; in Africa, over 30 percent do so.² Some countries have initiated interventions to try to keep the number of school dropouts from increasing. For example, Brazil and Mexico offer free school meals to keep children in school, and more recently, provide cereals and other basic food to take home (the quantity is pegged to the number of days the children are in schools). For older children such as those in high school, potential dropouts are provided with “wages for learning”, a scheme in which children are “paid” to stay in schools in amounts approximating what they would earn as “start-up” workers with no skills³ if they are not in school. The Philippines also implements a similar scheme, the CCT (cash conditional transfer) Program and the school feeding program (SFP), to encourage children of indigent families attend school.

One of the proposed solutions to address the increasing demand for quality secondary education as well as the problem of increasing dropout rate is the provision of alternative delivery modes for secondary education.

2 Figueredo and Anzalone, *Alternative Models in Secondary Education*.

3 Juan T. Gabonton, “Dropouts ‘our immense and invisible failure,” *The Manila Times*, May 26, 2008.

Among the features of ADMs that help address school dropout and access barriers are the following:

- ▶ Qualification requirements for learners are not as restrictive as that of conventional schools.
- ▶ Flexibility is given to learners in terms of learning time, entry and exit, and period for accreditation/certification.
- ▶ Learning materials are made more relevant to the context of the learners as well as to the demands of industry, thereby improving learners' chances of getting employed, enhancing job performance, or helping them deal effectively with immediate social issues.
- ▶ Learning materials are made simpler and more manageable or "bite-sized" to guarantee a certain level of success on the part of the learners.
- ▶ Learners, in whatever circumstances they are, can still continue with their schooling and attain some certification which otherwise cannot be attained through conventional schooling.

Objectives

The overall objective of the Project is to document successful secondary level ADMs being implemented in SEAMEO-member countries. More specifically, the Project aims to:

- ▶ Describe the secondary ADM models being implemented in SEAMEO-member countries;

- ▶ Assess the successful ADMs in selected member countries; and
- ▶ Document best practices of different ADM models in SEAMEO-member countries.

The main objective of the case study is to gather additional data to substantiate the information consolidated from the Regional Forum on Secondary Level ADMs in Southeast Asia held at SEAMEO INNOTECH in 2012. More specifically, the case study aims to accomplish the following:

- ▶ Document best ADMs being implemented in selected countries by providing more insights into their delivery system, organizational structure, sustainability and success elements;
- ▶ Benchmark from the identified best practices as input to a possible regional secondary ADM and/or a secondary level ADM Toolkit; and
- ▶ Document the best ADM practices as identified from the best ADM models in selected member countries.

Methodology

Three best secondary ADM programs from among SEAMEO member countries were identified during the Regional Forum on Secondary Level ADMs in Southeast Asia conducted in 2012. These were the Home School Program, ADM program for island learners, and Multi Entry-Exit System.

In-country case study researchers were also identified for the project. A qualitative approach to data collection was the main method of research where focus group discussions with key ADM implementers and stakeholders, teachers, school staff and students as respondents were conducted by the case study researcher with assistance from a team from SEAMEO INNOTECH. In addition, the following techniques for data collection were used: observations, photo and video documentation, key informant interviews, and review of secondary data.

The Home School Program

Overview of the Thai Educational System

Education in Thailand aims for the full development of the Thai people in all aspects: their physical and mental health, intellect, morality, integrity, and their way of life to be able to live in harmony with other people and be able to meet the social and economic needs of the country. All individuals shall have equal rights and opportunities to receive basic education provided by the State for the duration of at least 12 years where compulsory education is until Grade 9 (primary education for 6 years and lower secondary education for 3 years). Thai education is provided on the basis of the national system of education and the National Educational Development Plan.

Education	Level	School/Level	Grade	Age	Years
9 years compulsory	Primary	Prathom 1 – 6 Elementary School	1 to 6	6 to 11	6
	Secondary	Matthayom 1 – 3 Middle School	7 to 9	12 to 14	3
High School	Secondary	Matthayom 4 – 6 High School	10 to 12	15 to 17	3
Vocation	Vocational	Vocational Certificate 1 st – 3 rd years	1 st year to 3 rd year	15 to 17	3

 Nine years compulsory education in Thailand (Grade 1 to 9)

Source: Office of the Basic Education Commission



Map of Thailand (Photo from Central Intelligence Agency)

The 1997 National Education Act of Thailand classified educational delivery into three: formal, non-formal and informal education. These are provided through educational institutions such as schools, and learning centers organized by individuals, families, communities, private groups, local agencies, professional bodies, religious institutions, welfare institutes, and other social centers.

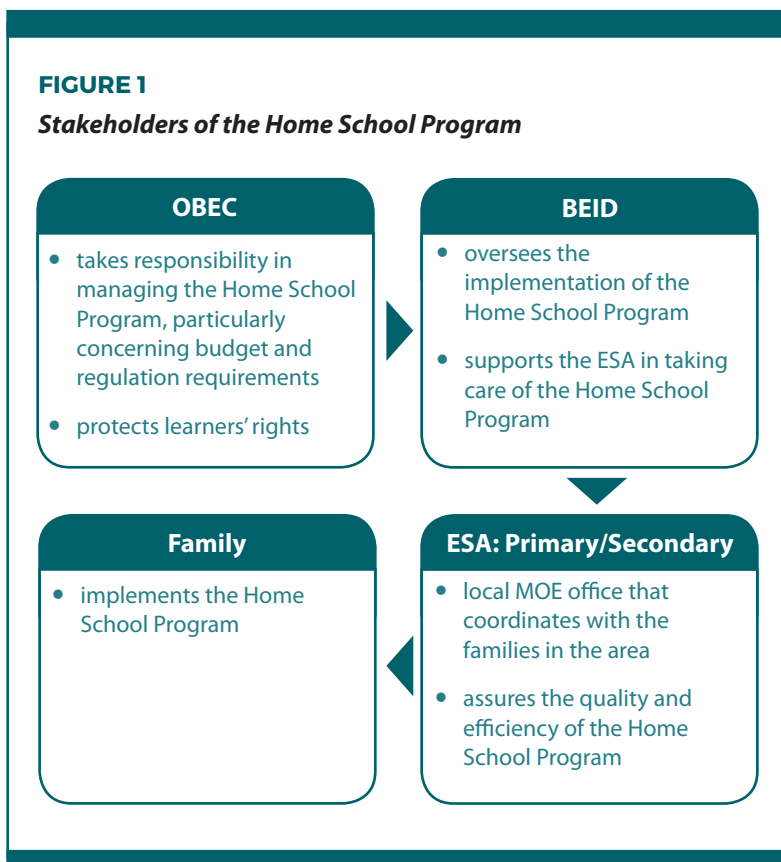
Education is largely a government responsibility provided through the Ministry of Education. However, the Government allows individuals, families and private groups to share this educational responsibility. The ministerial regulation issued in 2004 gives the right and permission to competent families and educational centers to manage the education of their children. This is the alternate choice for families and private organizations in sharing basic education responsibilities with the government bodies.

According to the 1997 National Education Act of Thailand (amended in 2002), **Home Schooling** is one of the flexible and independent modalities of educational delivery for special students who need more care or unable to go to regular schools because of particular circumstances. Home schooling can increase student literacy and can be a mechanism to decrease the number of dropouts in regular schools.

History/Rationale for the Establishment of the Home School Program

In the 2007 Constitution of Thailand, Section 49 states that every person of school age, regardless of his/her economic status, ethnicity, and physical condition, is entitled to equal rights to receive free and quality basic education. In response to this constitutional provision, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) sought to engage the family, as the most basic institution in society. The Bureau of Education Innovation and Development (BEID) under OBEC recognized the potential role of Thai families in facilitating or administering education to children. The familiarity of adults/parents with their children's needs and interests gives them leverage in terms of designing a more appropriate and responsive curriculum and learning activities.

Home Schooling is a mode of alternative education that combines both non-formal and informal education. Families can set up their own education platforms that are aligned and appropriate to their children’s needs. This form of educational delivery differs from those generally implemented by the OBEC. The Home School scheme is the responsibility of various stakeholders, i.e., families, Educational Service Areas (ESAs), Bureau of Education Innovation and Development (BEID) and the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) as illustrated in **FIGURE 1**.



The Home School Program

The Home School Program operates within a family. The parent/s become the primary teachers and the home, the primary learning environment. Learning may also take place in other learning environments as home schooling generally promotes independent study and lifelong learning. Though there is support from the Ministry of Education, parents take on the full responsibility of educating their children, managing the learning process, maintaining their studies, as well as ensuring that Ministry standards are achieved. Furthermore, homes, as the main learning environment, are expected to contain the basic materials and facilities for teaching and learning.

With the Home School Program, enhancing the talents and skills of students is prioritized. Towards this, several approaches are employed. There is sharing between families, socialization, networking, and even parent exchanges.

The 2014/2015 OBEC data on the Home School Program shows that there are 355 families registered in seventy-eight (78) ESAs all over Thailand. The Home School Program can be mainly classified into three (3) types, according to the group implementing the program. These are as follows:

1. Home School Program run by parent(s) who takes care of many aspects of the program such as management of learning activities.
2. Home School Program run by a group of families and taught by volunteer teachers or skilled parents in the group.



A home schooled learner with his family (Photo credit: ESA 2 - Chiang Mai)

3. Home School Program run as a learners' center by an organization and taught by a religious group or volunteer teachers.

Among these three types, the first kind (Home School operated by the parents) is the most popular.

Chiang Mai has some of the most successful Home School Programs in the country. The Home School Programs in this region are varied—delivery and content are based on the family's educational perspective, philosophy, economic status, and faith. In Area 2, one of the ESAs in Chiang Mai, there are thirteen (13) families that have adopted the Home School Program. Of the 23,323 school-age population, thirty-five (35) are home schooled.⁴ From these 35 students, sixteen (16) are in the secondary level. In Samoeng, one of the 5 districts under Area 2, two groups are implementing a Home School Program—one family with one student and Wat Doi Pha Som that has 16 students.

4 "Chiang Mai Primary Educational Service Area Office 2". Presentation, Educational Service Area Office 2, 2013.

Principles of the Home School Program

The Home School Program in Thailand differs in accordance with each family's educational philosophy. Each family/group, however, follows basic principles in managing the program. These are the following:

1. Recognition of parents/family as the primary human resource in delivering basic education.
2. Use of the Standard Curriculum of the 2008 Basic Core Curriculum which is being implemented in the formal schools. The curriculum, however, can be modified depending on the delivery approach.
3. Creation and submission of an educational program and management plan by the parents/organizers to the corresponding ESA office. Parents/Organizers can run the program once permission is issued. The BEID does not support any program that is not registered.
4. Periodic assessment of students' learning progress. Parents/Organizers manage the learning and educational documentation such as evidences showing learners' improvement and submission of the annual report to the ESA office.
5. Management of Home School Programs by ESA offices, with each office overseeing the registration, facilitating the processing of the learning plan, conducting students' assessment at least once a year, and ensuring the quality of educational management.

Once the above are fulfilled, the Home School manager can grant completion of learning per this principle:

6. Equal rights and privileges as received by those from the formal schools are given to graduates of the Home School Program.

Priority Target Areas

The Home School Program in Thailand is one of the alternative and flexible modalities of basic education, and is being operated to take into account the students' capabilities and competence. Although most students can get into the formal schools run by the Government, there are still some students who opt for an alternative like those whose families are always moving; indigent families; children who dropped out from the formal school system due to economic or social problems; children in remote or hilly areas who face the difficulty in travelling; children from strict religious groups whose daily lives are different from that of ordinary people; gifted and talented students; athletes; or child actors/actresses who cannot regularly attend classes, etc. The Home School Program can support children who have different education requirements.

Home School Programs can further be classified based on the needs of different students. These could be:⁵

1. Home School for lifelong education

5 Waraporn Anuworarat, "The Ideology and Process of Home School Management in Chiang Mai Province" (PhD thesis, The Rajabhat University of Chiang Mai, 2011).

2. Home School based on religious requirements
3. Home School for the disadvantaged
4. Home School for learners affected by migration
5. Home School for learners with special needs

In a 2014 OBEC report⁶ on basic education management for children in Thailand, it was found that:

- ▶ Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the school-age children who are unable to receive basic education come from remote areas.
- ▶ 9.27 percent of primary school graduates who do not proceed to lower secondary schools come from remote areas.
- ▶ The dropout rate in remote areas comprises 15 percent of the national dropout rate.
- ▶ Academic performance of children from hilly areas are not satisfactory, as perceived by government agencies.
- ▶ There is prevalence of malnutrition and poor health among pupils coming from remote areas.

6 Thailand Ministry of Education, "Office of the Basic Education Commission Report" (2014).

Several best practices with regard to provision of basic education to disadvantaged children, particular those from remote areas, can be observed in Area 2 in Chiang Mai. Wat Doi Pha Som, a Buddhist monastery located in Chiang Mai province, offers a Home School Program which focuses on sustainable development and intends to address poor academic performance and high dropout rate caused by limited access and prevalence of malnutrition.

Support policies to encourage implementation of the Home School Program

- ▶ The Home School Program was primarily offered to the public by the Government to execute the provisions under the 2007 Constitution of Thailand, particularly Section 49 which states that:

“A person shall enjoy an equal right to receive education for the duration of not less than twelve years which shall be provided by State thoroughly, up to the quality, and without charge.

The indigent, disabled or handicapped, or destitute person shall enjoy an equal right under Paragraph One and shall be supported by the State to receive equal education with other persons.

The education and training provided by professional or private organisations, alternative education of the public, self-directed learning and lifelong learning shall get appropriate protection and promotion from the State.”

Under the Home School Program, the Government allots THB 10,000.00 (USD 290.00) per student which is the same amount of budget given to those in the regular schools. The fund is used for books and school supplies/ project materials and is managed by the family handling the instruction.

- ▶ The Ministerial Regulation No. 3 in 2004 is the Home Schooling Law which emphasized the “right to basic education by the family.”

Delivery Strategies

The delivery of the program is dependent on who the learners are. The different types of learners were earlier discussed in the Priority Target Areas section. The program allows for flexibility in terms of the curriculum, learning activities and materials, instructional approaches, assessment, etc. One key determining factor in program delivery pertains to the needs and capacities of the students within each family. The Home School Program aims to develop the unique capabilities of each student, which may not be limited only to cognitive skills of the learners, but include their other talents as well. The program takes on the various dimensions of the learner’s potentials.

The capacities of the family, foremost of which are the intellectual and economic aspects, are another determining factor. In order for the teaching and learning process to be successful, family members have to be knowledgeable and capable of imparting knowledge and skills to their children. They should also have the financial means to supply the materials and facilities that will enhance learning and hone the students’ potentials. In some cases where the adults lack the skills in a specific learning area, family networks or other experts are tapped to share their expertise.



Project reports and outputs by the Home School Program learners in Wat Doi Pha Som (Photo credit: SEAMEO INNOTECH)

Implementation Strategies

The public offering of the Home School Program is basically managed by the Office of the Basic Education Commission wherein the Bureau of Education Innovation and Development takes on the main role of overseeing the implementation of the program in participating educational service areas. The BEID has published a manual for parents, families, educational institutions and other stakeholders on the Home School Program. Within each ESA, the Director heads policy making, program planning and implementation, supervision and monitoring, among others.

Interested families are required to obtain a permit from the ESA office before starting the program. Once this is completed, the parents can run the program and teach their children. One necessary condition is that the teacher–parent must at least have secondary-level education. If neither parent is qualified, the family may tap members of other families, monks, teachers from NGOs, professionals, volunteers, etc. In cases when no one can teach

a particular subject or the parent’s expertise does not include a specific learning area, the ESA office can cluster a group of home school learners that can be instructed in that specific learning area.

TABLE 1 shows the roles and functions of the different institutions/ stakeholders in the implementation of the Home School Program.

TABLE 1
Functions and Roles of Institutions/Stakeholders

Name of Institutions/ Stakeholders	Functions/Roles in the Home School Program
Office of the Basic Education Commission (specifically the Bureau of Education Innovation and Development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directs national program policy and planning Provides resource materials for program implementation including budget management Monitors and manages program implementation in Education Service Areas
Education Service Areas Office (provincial level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages the policy and program planning and implementation Performs supervision, monitoring and evaluation Handles the administrative and financial requirements of the program Provides training to teacher-volunteer/ teacher-parent Assesses student learning (partial roles only) and certifies graduates
Families/groups/ volunteers	Individuals or groups delivering Home School education

Curriculum

In Thailand, education institutions, whether in the formal, non-formal or informal systems, must adopt the 2001 and 2008 basic core curriculum for basic education. In accordance with this directive, the Home School Program uses the 2008 core curriculum. However, the OBEC is doing modifications in order to appropriately address the uniqueness of each target group, specifically to allow for:

1. More flexibility and mobility in terms of implementation of the Home School Program and the participating families;
2. Enhancement of the students' learning capabilities in accordance with their potentials;
3. Development of the dynamic assessment of students' learning abilities in parallel to the learning process; and
4. Establishment of the students' and families' network for the Home School Program in Thailand.

The curriculum has eight strands: five basic learning areas—Science, Mathematics, Thai Language, Social Science, English; and three specialized subjects that are based on student interest—health and sports, arts, and technology and livelihood. With the Home School Program, the student has to at least pass the five basic strands.

The curriculum is prepared by the families based on the five basic learning areas and submitted to the ESA office committee (Supervision/M&E team) for annual approval. The committee checks for appropriateness and adherence to national standards to ensure

that students will pass the annual provincial exam which is also given to those in the regular schools. The implementation of the curriculum is monitored by the ESA office through a monthly visit where the student's progress is verified.

Instructional System

The Home School Program employs an integrated approach to teaching and promotes independent learning. Experiential and project-based learning are basically being adopted in Home School Programs. Each class is comprised of learners of different grade levels. Instruction can be delivered by: parents, external/local experts, and/or formal schools which would mean that students will attend formal schools for the five required strands. Teaching by formal schools only happens when neither parents nor other families can teach Science/Mathematics/Thai Language/Social Science/English.



Home School students attending a class on Thai traditional wisdom and practices in Wat Doi Pha Som (Photo credit: Wat Doi Pha Som)

Flexibility is evident in learning timetables. Learning time is determined by the capacities and educational philosophies of the family member(s) in-charge of teaching as well as the learning outputs of learners which are mostly project-based. Teachers and the other stakeholders must ensure that at the end of the Home School Program, students already satisfy the required competencies based on the national curriculum. Since there is no fixed schedule for classes or class programs, one family may teach only one learning area for a whole month and another subject for another month. Another family may do it weekly. General scheduling of learning areas is accomplished at the start of the program.

Learner Assessment

The learners are assessed on knowledge, skills and attitude and against a learning contract which is approved beforehand by the Supervision/M&E team of the ESA office. They are assessed on reading, writing, and critical thinking, and have to achieve the standards as indicated in the curriculum.

Both the family and ESA office assess the children. The extent of responsibility varies according to the grade level and contract between the ESA office and the family. This mechanism was put in place to control the quality of student learning outcomes. In the primary level, 60 percent of assessment is conducted by the family (through projects) while 40 percent is done by the ESA office. On the other hand, 70 percent of assessment at the secondary level is done by the family and 30 percent by the ESA office.

The assessment done by the ESA office committee is through interview, written exam, or any form of authentic assessment. They evaluate knowledge, skills, attitude, and competencies in critical thinking, reading, and writing as well as review the portfolio of the students. The achievements of the students are manifested by physical appearance, awards, public speaking, etc. All assessments are being followed up monthly or once every semester. In addition, parents are not allowed to keep the transcripts and certificates of their children since these records are handled by the ESA offices.

After completing the program, qualified secondary level graduates may enter university or vocational schools. However, in most cases, graduates choose to take a vocational degree.

Support System

The Home School Program is supported through policies and offices established within the Ministry to ensure successful implementation. The government also allots THB 10,000.00 (USD 290.00) per student which is the same amount given to those enrolled in the regular schools.

Furthermore, there is local support from government offices within the area in the form of certification, and documentation as well as from networks for stakeholders. The network may be families themselves, students, NGO volunteers, or religious groups.

Depending on the group the program is catering to, field experts, community members or university professors become involved in certain stages of the student's learning cycle. For instance, in Wat Doi Pha Som, a university professor provided guidance to a student on food technology for a project-based activity.



ESA Officers monitoring the program in Area 2, Chiang Mai (Photo credit: ESA 2 - Chiang Mai)

Quality Assurance Mechanism

The OBEC leads in implementing measures that will ensure successful Home School Programs. At the local level, it is the ESA office which executes the following mechanisms for quality assurance:

1. **Quality management.** ESA offices require managers of the Home School Programs to submit an educational program and management plan. On an annual basis, the ESA offices monitor if these plans are properly implemented.
2. **Quality learning.** Learners are assessed by ESA offices on reading, writing, and critical thinking. Once students achieve curriculum standards, ESA will issue the certificates and transcripts for the graduates.

3. **National test** (not compulsory). The ESA office provides assistance to ensure that students successfully pass the national test organized by the National Institute of Educational Testing Service (NIETS). Students who pass the exam can take further studies in universities or begin employment.

Elements of Success

The success of the Home School Program can be attributed to the following:

1. **Flexibility in the curriculum.** The curriculum is designed primarily according to the needs of the students. Though the basic core curriculum of the Ministry is required in all forms of basic education, there is allowance for modification in the curriculum for the Home School Program. Added to that are the educational philosophies and available resources of the families.

Consultations are conducted by the ESA office with the parents with regard to the curriculum content. Content is discussed and approved as part of the process of the Home School Program.

2. **Flexibility in assessment.** At the start of the program implementation, families and the ESA office reach an agreement on the distribution of assessment responsibilities. Though there is a suggested distribution of tasks, either one may take on greater roles in assessing student competencies.

3. **Financial support from the Ministry of Education.** For families to smoothly implement the program, the Government provides an allowance for the students. Each student is allotted with the same amount allocated for children enrolled in the regular schools.
4. **Regular monitoring.** Implementing offices, like the ESA office, perform regular monitoring of the families on how they are conducting the provisions stated in the contract for the Home School Program. Staff under the Supervision, Monitoring & Evaluation Division hold this responsibility.
5. **Commitment of the families.** The dedication and commitment demonstrated by the families under this alternative delivery mode is a form of an “inside-out” system of program implementation in terms of resource provision. The families themselves are committed to teach their children through homeschooling. They allot time and effort, and provide the resources needed by their learners. The Home School modality can still be sustained even if no financial support from the government is available because it is the families who are the main providers of teaching and learning.
6. **Volunteer teaching.** Teachers who volunteer under the program do not expect payment for their services yet they teach with enthusiasm and dedication.
7. **Community involvement.** Community members are engaged in delivering education through various activities like apprenticeship.

Sustainability Mechanism

To ensure the sustainability of the Home School Program, certain measures have been employed. These include:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation

The ESA office conducts regular monitoring and evaluation activities to check if families are implementing the program as specified in their contract. Reports are submitted by the ESA office to OBEC as part of the monitoring system.

2. Capacity building

Teacher-volunteers/teacher-parents are given training on program management and instruction. The ESA office also provides ready assistance, which may include upgrading of knowledge in implementing the program, to these “teachers” to help them and their children meet Ministry standards.

3. Networking and creating learning groups

Families connect with other families, organizations, experts or other individuals (like students themselves) in delivering content or developing skills among their own children. Expertise outside the family is welcomed and tapped. Also, in cases where no one can teach a particular subject or the parent’s expertise does not include a specific learning area, the ESA office gathers home schooled learners together to be instructed in that particular learning area.

Strategy for Upscaling

To scale up the Home School Program to more areas, the OBEC and stakeholders have considered the following:

1. **Building capacities of Home School Program managers.** The OBEC equips families who want to run a Home School Program through sessions/information on program management, curriculum and delivery, learning assessment; consultation; and other various forms of capacity building.
2. **Advocating the Home School Program to ESA officers.** Since their support to ADM programs is critical in the program's success, the program has to be promoted to ESA officers. They need to recognize the importance of alternative education and regard it as equal to formal education.
3. **Establishing a network of families.** Stakeholders, especially families, need to establish a network among themselves to facilitate the sharing of experiences of home schooling.
4. **Designing the ADM curriculum based on needs.** The ADM curriculum should be appropriate to the needs of the students and local community, i.e., the curriculum must be able to respond to the community's needs for vocational skills rather than focus only on academic requirements.
5. **Maximizing practical and local knowledge.** Knowledge must derive from actual practice in the locality, and delivered by experts/entrepreneurs.

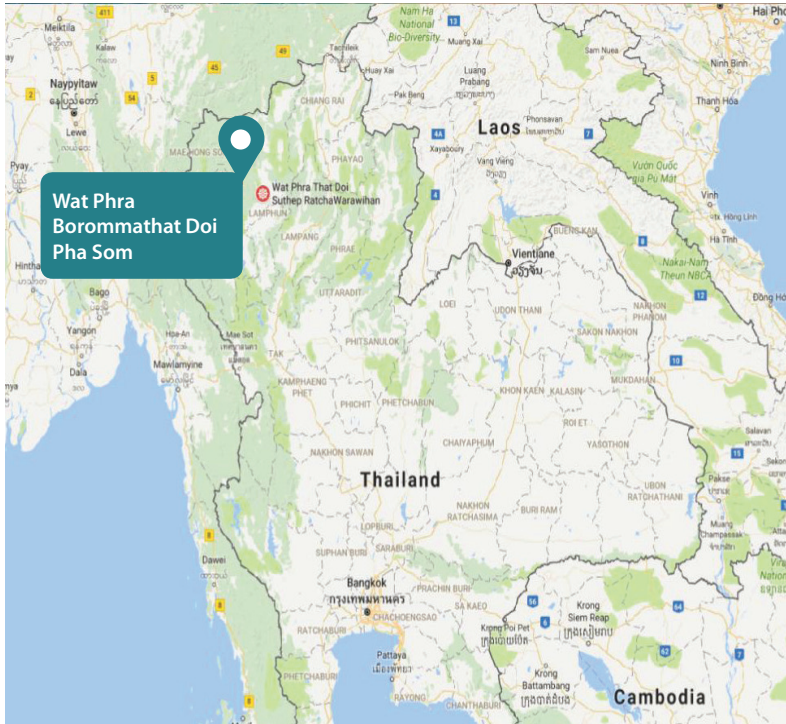
Home School Program in Wat Doi Pha Som



Wat Doi Pha Som (Photo credit: Office of the Basic Education Commission)

A Home School Program is being run by monks in Wat Doi Pha Som, a temple located in the village of Mae Sarb. It is classified as a learners' center, registered in the ESA Chiang Mai 2 for the secondary school level. The temple can be found in the mountains of Samoeng District, 70 kilometers from Chiang Mai city proper. It is led by the chief monk, Phra Khru Suprome Thammabhiwat, a Stanford University graduate.

Parents from this village were looking for ways to get their children to study without having to send them to schools at great distances. The difficulty of travelling long-distance to attend a formal school indirectly limits learners' opportunities to enter secondary school, and contributes to increased dropout rate.



Map of Wat Doi Pha Som (Map from Google Maps)

In addition, the local regular schools did not appropriately respond to the needs of the community which is agriculture. The educational philosophy did not align with the ways of life in the community. Hence, the Home School approach became an option. However, most of the parents did not possess the minimum requirement for a Home School Program. Thus, they asked the chief monk to lead in educating their children.

Delivery Strategies

The temple opted to offer a non-conventional way of education based on the parents' requests and on the need to provide students who do not wish to focus on the academics an alternative way to learn. These students, instead of dropping out and discontinuing schooling, are given another chance to study and acquire skills and knowledge. The main thrust of the temple is to develop the students to excel as a member of the community, particularly in the area of protecting the environment. This is aligned with the community's philosophy of promoting localization and self-sufficiency.

The Home School Program was designed to serve as the avenue for students in the village to learn and at the same time, keep their village growing. This in line with the temple's vision of planting seeds of self-sufficiency among the learners to help them develop their own home and country, and love one's own community. Its education philosophy clearly supports King Bhumibol Adulyadej's project of sufficiency economy. In a self-sufficient economy, a community maintains its own water system, electricity, food, livelihood, etc.

Since the village has adopted this system eight years ago, the community's efforts have been directed to improving agriculture and building their own dams and reservoir, farms (produce, grains, livestock), and livelihood/business. Education in the village gives emphasis to village practices and solutions. The students are given the freedom to study their area(s) of interest but are still required to learn the basics to sustain the village such as water conservation, forest preservation including prevention of forest fire, and reforestation. In some cases, students go to another province to learn about the best ways of farming.



Students planting trees (Photo credit: Wat Doi Pha Som)

Under the Wat Doi Pha Som Home School, the program manager (chief monk) follows a needs-based curriculum, focusing mainly on agriculture and livelihood. In addition to agriculture-related subject offerings, Wat Doi Pha Som has courses on construction (e.g., construction of dams), basic accounting, and business management.

The program objective is to teach the students academic skills and life skills in order for them to survive and be self-sufficient, lead a quality life, and earn a living. The program is now on its 10th year. As of October 2013, the program had sixteen (16) students. Three volunteer teachers and one volunteer monk help run the program.

Class hours are flexible and learning can take place outside the classroom. Students take classes at the learning center and move to study with the local experts and professionals at their homes/shops.



A mathematics class being taught by a monk (Photo credit: Wat Doi Pha Som)

Curriculum

Curriculum content of the Home School Program in Wat Doi Pha Som is basically centered on the interest of the learners. It, however, still follows the 2008 basic core curriculum of OBEC where implementers are required to teach the five core learning areas.

At the beginning of the year, students have to select two out of the five subjects (Thai language, Science, Mathematics, English and Social Studies) to study during the first 2 months. The rest of the subjects are taken in the succeeding months. In addition to this, they also have to take compulsory subjects such as (1) nutrition and health based on indigenous wisdom/practices, (2) water storage, (3) forest preservation (including fire prevention and tree planting), and (4) waste management. This basic program is crucial because it will give the learners a renewed mindset and make them more



Classes on the five academic subjects in Chanting Hall, Main Hall and Ordination Hall at the Temple (Photo credit: Wat Doi Pha Som)

responsible and disciplined, and will eventually change their study habits. The teacher's understanding, patience and support are also vital during this stage. Students who are under this program reside in the temple dormitories for a period of time until they move to the succeeding level which focuses more on knowledge and skills acquisition.

In the next level, subject areas are based on the learner's needs and are incorporated in the 16 courses (projects). This provides learners a combination of academics and life skills that will prepare them for a future career. Learners have the option to choose projects according to their interests. These include technical-vocational

courses (mechanical, construction, agricultural), alternative energy, livestock farming, dyeing, charcoal production, and handmade detergent making. Most of the major courses prepare the learners for livelihood/entrepreneurship. The program utilizes project-based learning and apprenticeship where learners study under a professional. These professionals are familiar with the program and are willing to assist as mentors. In some instances, the mentors help fund the education of the mentees.

To finish the course, students are required to produce products and earn money from selling these. In addition, they must also submit a report regarding their progress every month.

Instructional Strategies

In terms of teaching approaches, project-based learning is implemented. Students are allowed to live in the temple as well as accomplish their projects in their homes. The students' projects become opportunities for livelihood and entrepreneurship while addressing the needs of the village. Examples include a 13-year old boy raising a small pig and chicken farm, and a Grade 11 girl preparing and packaging organic products like rice, liquid soap, and shampoo as her project. Products from these projects are sold locally and some can be purchased online. In the completion of these projects, the community members contribute in the learning process by helping the students gain knowledge and skills.

Volunteer teachers teach the core subjects prescribed by the national curriculum, while local experts and a university professor offer their time and expertise in teaching the 16 courses offered by Wat Doi Pha Som.



Hands-on classes of some of the sixteen (16) projects (Photo credit: Wat Doi Pha Som)

Learning Materials

Volunteer teachers use learning materials such as textbooks, printed materials, and digital media which are available in the library for the five core subjects. On the other hand, sources of materials for the sixteen (16) projects come from the mentors' (work) shops and the *Sufficiency Learning Center* in Wat Doi Pha Som where knowledge and skills are acquired by "learning by doing." In particular, students learn from available local materials, local experts, entrepreneurs and professionals.

Assessment

Learner assessment in Wat Doi Pha Som is conducted by two groups: mentors/teachers/families and the ESA office. Seventy percent is done by the former and 30 percent by the latter.

Seventy percent (70%) of the assessment is on:

- ▶ Students' academic knowledge which is assessed by the volunteer teachers and life skills which is assessed by professional mentors; and
- ▶ Students' affective knowledge which is assessed by their parents/families.

Thirty percent (30%) of the assessment is on:

- ▶ Students' learning achievement which is annually assessed by the ESA offices in accordance with national standards. If students choose to continue their studies in the formal schools, they are assessed and given the equivalent credits.

Support Systems

The Home School Program in Chiang Mai is supported by several social institutions such as government offices, educational institutions and NGOs working for the education of disadvantaged children. In the case of Wat Doi Pha Som, the effective execution of the program was facilitated by the organizational structure composed of the program manager, volunteer teachers and mentors, and government offices.

The parents entrusted their children's education to the manager and teachers and were repaid by the dedication and hard work of the temple staff. The local ESA office, meanwhile, provided help in two ways: (1) staff and officers helped familiarize the monks and teachers about Ministry procedures like auditing/assessment; and (2) staff assisted in advocating the Home School Program to fellow education officers and other offices.

In terms of infrastructure, a dormitory at Wat Doi Pha Som was made available to students and even teachers to address the problem of long travel.

Challenges and Issues

One major challenge encountered by Wat Doi Pha Som was that community members did not fully understand what the monks were doing during the early years of the program. In response, the teachers in the temple redesigned the program which prepared students to learn better. The teaching process was revised and became more focused on building the foundations of learning, which eventually led to improvement in the study habits of the learners.

Success Factors

The Home School Program at Wat Doi Pha Som helps children of indigent families from remote hilly areas to obtain learning in accordance to the basic compulsory education decree. Wat Doi Pha Som has produced learners with professional/vocational skills and who are able to live independently. The success of the program is mainly because of:

- ▶ **Volunteer teaching.** The school has volunteer teachers who are not paid as they do not wish to receive money; they are, however, provided with food by the monks.
- ▶ **Support from the Ministry of Education.** The MOE extends support financially as well as help in advocating the program and familiarizing the monks on program policies.
- ▶ **Learning environment.** Learning can take place in the expert's home or shops of local entrepreneurs.
- ▶ **Curriculum content.** The curriculum integrates authentic learning approaches in the delivery of the core curriculum of Thai basic education.
- ▶ **Relevance of the curriculum.** The program offers 16 courses (projects) which are relevant to the community and makes the most out of available resources.
- ▶ **Collaboration and leadership.** The manager of the Home School Program in Wat Doi Pha Som collaborates with government authorities, educational institutions, and the community in the implementation of the program.



A student who took the Livestock Farming course (Photo credit: Wat Doi Pha Som)

Sustainability

The Home School Program in Wat Doi Pha Som has been aimed at developing students according to three components of sustainable development. These are through:

1. Focus on developing the attitude of students to make them realize the importance of nature and the environment.
2. Social development which has helped students take responsibility not only for themselves, but also for their families and the society. They are able to adopt local wisdom into their daily lives.
3. Economic development, based on the King's advocacy of a sufficiency economy, which has enhanced learners' knowledge and skills toward a decent livelihood.



A SEAMEO INNOTECH researcher interviewing the students (Photo credit: SEAMEO INNOTECH)

Testimonials

These are some comments collected from the learners:

On learning opportunities (Interests)

- ▶ "It gives me more chances to learn and practice my interests since I am able to choose my subjects."
- ▶ "The program caters to my interests and gives me more opportunities to learn with professionals."
- ▶ "There is more experiential learning than in the formal schools."
- ▶ "Through the program I have learned new and correct ways of doing things e.g., using organic fertilizers instead of chemicals."

On other aspects of the program

- ▶ “The class is smaller so it is easier to learn.”
- ▶ “It is free.”
- ▶ “The temple is near my house.”

On non-academic gains

- ▶ “Through the program, I am able to help elderly people especially with their health.” (from a student who studies traditional medicine)
- ▶ “It has made me into a better person.”

These are some comments collected from the learners’ parents:

- ▶ “The Home School Program can save me financially. I don’t have to pay much for my children’s schooling.”
- ▶ “My children’s schooling doesn’t affect our family life. They still do chores at home as usual. We are still close with each other and experience the warmth in the family. My children are still able to take care of elderly relatives because they don’t need to leave the house for long periods to go to a regular school.”
- ▶ “Monks can guide us in the ways to happy living. They are able to help us with debt problems and teach our children how to earn money while they are studying.”

This is a comment collected from the volunteer teacher:

- ▶ “This Home School Program helps students become more aware of nature and be in harmony with nature through Thai traditional wisdom. The curriculum, both in theory and practice, focuses on the best skills for living and cultivates love for nature and adoption of Thai traditional nutritional practices and medicines.”

Conclusion

The Home School Program of Thailand is a learner-centered initiative, mainly focusing on what the student needs and how his/her talents and skills can further be enhanced. Offering both academic subjects and subjects of interest to the learner, the program develops cognitive and life skills, employability or entrepreneurial skills, and other competencies for higher education or work. The contexts that the students are in, such as the available learning resources in their homes or other learning environments, are utilized to their advantage. Students learn through experiential learning achieved by project-based teaching approaches. By the end of the program, they can be granted the same credits given to those who complete secondary education in the regular schools.

There are many good practices from this ADM program but three points can be highlighted. First, relevance is given priority as demonstrated in Wat Doi Pha Som where secondary education responds both to learners and society. Students learned how to care for their environment, provide for themselves and their families (i.e., sell products or raise livestock), contribute to the local economy, and apply indigenous knowledge and practices. On the other hand, the community provided the environment—including traditional practices and wisdom under which the students learned. In return, community members are able to reap the benefits of their commitment and cooperation.

Second, the flexibility the program provided gave more room to develop the affective domain of the learner. The program became a vehicle to instill and cultivate discipline in studies, time and priority

management, responsibility, independence, good decision-making, and love for the community. The values that they developed help prepare them for life.

Lastly, the collaborative nature of the Home School Program opens different kinds of opportunities not only to the learners themselves, but also to the teachers/family members, government offices, volunteer workers, experts, and members of the community. Under this delivery system, the family becomes the driving force, and delivering and attaining education becomes more fulfilling and sustainable.

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