

Final Report

on

The First International Forum on Education Reform:
Experiences of Selected Countries

July 30-August 2, 2001

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Message

Rung Kaewdang, Ph.D

Secretary-General of the National Education Commission,
Thailand

On the Occasion of the Opening Ceremony
Of the First International Forum on Education Reform:
Experiences of Selected Countries

In 1997, the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC), in its capacity as a central body in charge of formulating policy and plan for national education, took the initial measures of conducting documentary research on experiences in education reform of 11 countries. The initiative was therefore expected to provide bodies of knowledge essential for the drafting of the National Education Bill, which was subsequently enacted in 1999. For the Comparative Study, emphases were placed on the rationales, practicable strategies, and key factors for the successes as well as benefits to all learners in respective countries. The information thus gained on these

various aspects was adopted to suit the socioeconomic, political, and cultural context of Thailand. The National Education Act of 1999 has therefore been nationally and internationally acclaimed as an “Education Reform Act”, which provides clear objectives and guidelines for the education reform in all aspects. Improvement in the quality of education will undoubtedly enable Thailand to keep abreast with current global movement.

On the occasion of the second anniversary of the enactment of the National Education Act 1999, ONEC has the privilege of obtaining cooperation of 12 international organizations and embassies based in Thailand, which have agreed to co-host the First International Forum on Education Reform: Experiences of Selected Countries. For the Event, well-renowned experts have been invited from Australia, Cambodia, China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Malaysia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and Vietnam. The objectives of this forum to be held in Bangkok, Thailand, are to enable the participants to exchange knowledge and experience and to learn of successful strategies for implementing education reform measures as well as the program made thus for. Educational policy makers, administrators, academics, teachers, faculty staff as well as reform advocates in Thailand are also urged to identify ways and means of cooperating and networking with their counterparts from other countries. I am therefore confident that the Forum will contribute in no small measures to the appreciation and recognition of the

education reform as a national agenda, resulting in successful implementation of the program for enhancement of human capacity.

May I take this opportunity to warmly thank all our co-hosts as well as the scholars from 12 countries and from Thailand for their intellectual contributions and moral support, which argue well for the success of the Forum. My thanks also go to the Forum participants who have made timeless efforts for the Thai education reform, which is implosive and urgently needed.

Rung Kaewdang, Ph.D
Secretary- General
National Education Commission
July 30th, 2001

Introduction

Fueled by the stunning rate of change that the world community is continually trying to adjust and respond to, educational reform has become a top priority for many countries. The foundation upon which the planning for this forum was based is a recognition of the need to share experiences and planning strategies for educational reform among those responsible for, or involved with, the process in a variety of different countries representing a diversity of cultures and different stages of economic development. It is hoped that this forum has engendered further international communication and cooperation, and that, in the future, will forge alliances for joint reform projects as well as for the sharing of innovative strategies and best practices.

As a government agency responsible for educational policy planning and evaluation, the Office of the National Education Commission of Thailand (ONEC), is charged with exploring and defining implementation strategies and processes of educational reform in many areas. For this, ONEC sought international consultation to the overall educational reform process by inviting researchers from twelve countries to participate in this inaugural Forum. This was done for the express purpose of bringing to Thailand the best and most current reform ideas and implementation strategies from those countries. In its aftermath, it is hoped that this forum will have furthered international understanding of issues related to educational reform, while

presenting international perspectives and input that will assist the process of reform in Thailand.

Background

In 1997, Thailand adopted the new Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. The New Constitution includes a large number of provisions specifically related to education. For example, it calls for the provision of twelve-year basic education--- free of charge. It also calls for the incremental involvement of local administration in education as a further effort towards decentralization. Overall, the New Constitution places greater-than-ever importance on the field of education to promote the overall development of the country.

Also in 1997, following the dictates of the New Constitution, the Office of the National Education Commission undertook research into the experiences of educational reform in eleven countries. This comparative research focused on the rationales, key strategies, and successful results of educational reform, especially the identifiable benefits to learners in each country. This information, once gathered and analyzed, was adapted to suit the socioeconomic, political, and cultural context of Thailand. As a result of this effort, the National Education Reform Act of 1999 has been acclaimed both nationally and internationally, for providing clear objectives and directions for all aspects of the educational reform process.

With the passing of the National Education Act of 1999, Thailand entered into a new intensified period of reforming all aspects of its education system, a process that is still underway, and a process that has provided the impetus for this First International Forum on Educational Reform to be convened. In particular, The National Education Act of 1999 introduced the concepts and goals of: learning reform and lifelong learning, educational decentralization and refinancing, teacher education reform, as well as educational standards and quality assurance.

Purpose

Most often efforts at educational reform are analyzed after the reform has been implemented (or abandoned) in order to ascertain what happened and/or what went wrong. Prior to that, reform efforts are noted by the activity of scholars and researchers, acting as agents of change, before the reform is implemented---that is, in the planning stages of the reform effort.

The overall purpose of this Forum is, first, to examine various aspects of the education reform process as it has developed in the twelve represented countries, or special administrative regions. Represented at this Forum will be Australia, Cambodia, People Republic of China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Luxembourg, Malaysia, New Zealand, Vietnam, and the United Kingdom.

Specifically, this Forum seeks to identify the strategies these reform efforts have applied in different contexts, and in response to different problems---and to note what might be learned from those strategies and applied to the reform effort underway in the Kingdom of Thailand.

Thus, part of the purpose of this Forum is to apply the knowledge gained by all of these shared experiences in order to make adjustments and modifications in the reform effort as it is in the process of being implemented in the Kingdom of Thailand. In other words, one of the motivating ideas is to not wait until the reform effort in Thailand is finished before investigating what might have been done better. This is, in part, an attempt to intervene as the reform process is underway.

At the same time, by following these objectives, it is intended that this Forum will make a significant contribution to further international understanding of educational reform processes as they are conducted in many different countries. By so doing, it is hoped that the common difficulties identified, and the strategies and best practices shared, will lead to new strategies and new international alliances for cooperation and collaboration on different aspects of the reform process.

Objectives

The Forum focused on the strategic planning, implementation, best practices, and trends of educational reform with the following objectives in mind:

- to make a comparative analysis of educational reform based on the shared experiences of selected countries;
- to review major trends and processes of education reform;
- to identify and document specific strategies of educational reform that have been successfully implemented in other countries;
- to propose new strategies that might be effectively employed to address difficulties and problems that arise in the implementation stage of educational reform;
- to discover potential areas of international cooperative interest in the education reform process that will lead to specific proposals and cooperative alliances; and
- to contribute to an emerging international network of policy makers and researchers in educational reform.

Themes

The overall Forum themes presented by the four Keynote Addresses were as follows:

- Leadership for Education Reform: Strategic Thinking and Building Public Support
- Education Reform at the School Level: From Policy to Practice
- Education Reform: How to Make it a National Priority
- Strategies for Systemic Educational Reforms: An International Perspective on Asian Experiences

Format

Each morning session of the Forum began with a Keynote Address establishing a theme, or topic, for the day. The daily keynote was followed by a panel presentation by three Resource Persons representing educational reform in their own countries. At the conclusion of these three presentations, a Question and Answer session followed with the three Resource Persons heading a panel discussion.

For the afternoon sessions, the panel presentations with Question and Answer continued in the Main Hall. At the same time there were two other sessions underway. These other sessions were labeled Parallel Room 1 and Parallel Room 2.

Parallel Room 1 offered participants an opportunity to more closely examine common strategies of education reform. They also provided an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences and establish relationships for future networking. These roundtable discussions were intended to be working sessions with a view to producing specific recommendations on strategies for national systems to consider. These sessions were not for theoretical talk and hypothetical discussions; they were working sessions for action; they were for brainstorming ideas, making specific recommendations, and putting forth proposals.

The sessions in Parallel Room 2 offered participants an opportunity to more closely examine topics of specific interest to the education reform process. The topics covered were:

Higher Education, Vocational Education, School-based Management, and Teacher Professional Reform. These were intended to be learning/sharing sessions with a view to discovering specific common problems and concerns for which future avenues for international cooperation might be designed to address.

To begin both of the smaller sessions in Parallel Room 1 and Parallel Room 2, Resource Persons made brief presentations for the purpose of stimulating the discussions that followed.

Opening Address

Professor Dr. Krasae Chanawongse

Minister to the Office of the Prime Minister
Deputy Chairman of the National Education Commission

Professor Dr. Krasae opened the Forum with an expression of confidence that this international meeting would provide an excellent opportunity for the exchange of views and experiences on sustainable strategies for implementation of reform and would generate concrete recommendations for future cooperation among the participants and the organizations they represent. The focus is of particular importance in Thailand, which is implementing significant changes in the educational system, not only in the structure but also in the content of and approaches to learning at all levels of the society.

Full text of remarks

On behalf of the Royal Thai government as well as I myself, it is indeed an honor to join you at this afternoon's opening ceremony. First of all, please allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the Office of the National Education Commission as well as twelve international organizations and embassies based in Thailand for having agreed to co-host this First International Forum on Educational Reform: Experiences of

Selected Countries. Their joint efforts both physical and intellectual have made this important event possible. May I also welcome to our country our honored guests, researchers and resource persons, and others from afar. I hope that your stay in Thailand will be a pleasant and memorable one.

With the proclamation of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand in 1997 the Thai people have great confidence in the political and socio-economic reform declared. We all firmly believe that the radical changes resulting from application of the constitutional provisions will enable us to attain sustainable national development. Regarding the development of human capacities the Constitution recognizes the fundamental right of the Thai people to receive basic education free of charge for not less than 12 years. The Constitution also required enactment of a national law on education, so that the quality of education will be greatly enhanced in keeping with the socio-economic and political changes. The National Education Act of 1999 has indeed received unanimous support from all. Its four main objectives are:

Firstly, to enhance the learners' quality of life by enabling them to learn how to learn, and to develop their abilities of analytical and critical thinking for their practical work and solutions to problems in their daily lives. They will thus become competent, good and happy members of society.

Secondly, to improve the structure and methods of educational administration as well as management of resources, so that authority for decision-making will be decentralized to

educational institutions. Such measures will result in the provision of education that is flexible, and that will serve the real needs of the learners, parents and the communities.

Thirdly, to improve the system of producing teachers, and to develop teaching profession standards; the teachers will consequently be honored, thereby enabling them to enjoy greater well-being and raising their professional status accordingly.

Fourthly, recognition of educational standards and enhancement of educational quality will be made possible with the strengthening of internal evaluation by the educational institutions themselves. At the same time, the Office of National Education Standards, a public organization, has been established to be responsible for external evaluation of all educational institutions.

During the past two years various measures implemented for the education reform in Thailand have met with gratifying success. It can be seen that students, parents, teachers, educational administrators and people from all walks of life have come to better appreciate the expediency of education reform. Our present government, under the leadership of H.E. Police Lieutenant Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra, Prime Minister, who has also assumed the post of Minister of Education, is strongly committed to the implementation of education reform, the ultimate goal of which is to maximize the potential of the Thai people who will have to cope with the demands of a knowledge-based economy

and the world of information and communication technology, and at the same time retain our own identity in the future.

One assumption I may draw from this forum is that since the twelve participating countries have launched their reform as a national agenda, this forum therefore should be a venue whereby international and Thai participants will be able to exchange views and ideas as well as 'lessons learned'. Moreover, sustainable strategies of educational reform should be explored and adapted to serve ongoing programs that are being implemented. It will indeed be successful if this forum results in concrete measures for future cooperation for education reform among participating individuals, organizations or even countries. All of these objectives should therefore be kept in mind throughout this 4-day event, because it is not easy to have so many renowned experts as in this forum in Thailand at the same time.

In conclusion, may you enjoy this meeting, enjoy our country and most of all, enjoy the resulting success of this great meeting on education reform. Have a safe journey home and resolve that you, education leaders of the world, make it your duty - our duty - to make our home the world and to make the world our home - the home of education for all, the home of education with quality, equality, and relevancy for all.

I would now like to take this opportunity to declare open the First International Forum on Educational Reform: Experiences of Selected Countries. I also wish this Forum every success.

Thank you.

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Rung Kaewdaeng

Secretary-General of the National Education Commission
Thailand (ONEC)

This Forum has been organized in the context of the ongoing educational reform activities in Thailand since 1996, when planning for enactment of the 1999 National Education Act began. Now two years after initiation of operations, the reform efforts have seen a number of policies nearing full implementation, while several others are still under study and are pending final determination of the optimal strategies for success.

Significant progress has been made in articulating the following policies:

- Government approval of a bill raising to 9 years the level of compulsory free education and making the opportunities available to all children to access that education;
- Government approval of regulations enabling home education as a means of opening further alternatives for education
- Implementing changes in the way learners learn and the way teachers teach
- Developing an effective system of quality assurance; for example, through the mechanism of the New Office for

National Education Standards

- Decentralizing educational administration, moving it from the Ministry of Education to the local level to enable school-based management

Further planning and discussion is needed to effect other measures that are considered of importance and priority for the reform movement. It is hoped that this forum will be able to identify strategies and approaches that will be of value to Thailand in these areas. These issues include:

- Providing 12 years of basic education that is of high quality and free of charge; this is a problem that requires substantial investment, and is therefore still under consideration.
- Consolidating the Ministries of Education and University Affairs and the National Education Commission into a single Ministry of Education, Religion and Culture; the barriers to implementation are considerable, since such a move involves vested interests and authority, and is therefore not easy to effect changes.
- Improving the quality of teaching through the teacher certification and licensing, effective professional development, and improved compensation
- Introduction of a voucher system to finance education in both public and private schools
- Developing a Master Plan of Information and Communications Technology for Education

Through this forum it is expected that the participants will be able to learn from the experiences of a number of countries, and secondly, that common strategies for educational reform will be identified that are applicable to the Thai efforts.

A third and equally important outcome sought is the establishment of an educational reform network among the participating organizations within Thailand and internationally as well.

Keynote Presentations

- Leadership for Education Reform: Strategic Thinking and Building Public Support
- Education Reform at the School Level: From Policy to Practice
- Education Reform: How to Make it a National Priority
- Strategies for Systemic Educational Reforms: An International Perspective on Asian Experiences

**I. Leadership for Education Reform: Strategic
Thinking and Building Public Support**

Sir Brian Fender

Chairman, Higher Education Funding Council
of England The United Kingdom

Monday 30 July 2001, 1700-1730 hrs.

The experiences of the United Kingdom in its long-term reform efforts to improve the quality of British education mirror the global trends in education that continue to expand access to educational opportunities, that focus on individual student needs, that increase the role of information and communications technology, and that take into consideration the global and regional economies, as well as reflect the greater competition between higher education institutions, and that focus on increased professionalism and quality assurance.

The major emphasis of the current reform measures have been in the area of basic skills, post compulsory and higher education, as well as in continuing professional development and adult education. The participation of public and private investment is essential to the success of these efforts.

Reform has been fueled by the desire for improvement in the services and outcomes of education, particularly in the

weakest area of English education, the provision of basic and intermediate skills. Traditionally strong in higher education, the government seeks to further strengthen links with business and providing qualifications that combine work-related experience and workplace learning.

Three themes characterize reform in the United Kingdom: participation and progress in employability, governance and management of schools, as well as innovation. During the period 1995–2025, the government is committed to increasing participation in educational opportunities, focusing on pre-school, teens, particularly women, and lifelong learning.

Compulsory Education Level Reform

Successful delivery of education at this level depends on the appropriate balance between centralized education and autonomy and academic freedom for the teacher. Tension exists between the strong central drive to raise standards and the need for autonomy of school management and individual teacher freedom.

At the compulsory education level national direction is strong; there is a focus on quality through a strong external inspection process; curriculum qualifications are examined and set from the center; national targets for performance are set, teacher accreditation standards, and intervention in failing schools.

There are high level aims for schools. Expectations are that each pupil will achieve basic skills; schools must be good at basic

operations and excellent in other areas; every school must have a distinct ethos and mission and must have the autonomy to carry out its mission provided it is successful.

Innovations have been undertaken from the center to secure the desired standards of excellence and to achieve change in a number of ways including :

- setting targets and driving towards them,
- supporting disadvantaged individuals and areas through networking as well as joint and cooperative activities;
- infusing individualism and pride among schools through development of innovation and specialist schools;
- recognizing good schools and supporting weaker schools
- providing leadership training for school administrators,
- supporting the inclusion of information and communications technology in the schools
- supporting gifted and outstanding students
- providing career counseling and advice to older students

Some targets set by the central administration to effect changes at the compulsory education level include ensuring that

- 67% of 3-year-olds will receive schooling by 2002 and 100% by 2004
- 80% of 11-year-old children will achieve the standard in English and 75% in mathematics by 2004
- the percentage of 16-year-old children achieve satisfactory school-leaving qualifications will increase by 4% .

In addition, ambitious targets are being set in English, mathematics, and information technology for 11-14 year-old students

Post-compulsory Education

Directions and guidelines for post-compulsory education include efforts to remove the distinction between school-based learning and workplace learning. This is being done through a number of innovations, including:

- the creation of a Learning and Skills Council to oversee all post compulsory education except for higher education,
- the establishment of a National Training Organization to specify training needs in different business sectors, and
- the setting of National Vocational Qualifications and setting standards of accreditation in staff development as well as workplace learning
- awarding 'foundation degrees' that provide for the academic accreditation for work experience, in combination with academic studies
- expanding access to learning through technology, such as made possible through the University for Industry

Higher Education

Higher education institutions must respond to the three core needs of teaching and learning, research, and interaction with

business and the community. A radical agenda has been set for higher education reforms to focus on these areas. Innovation in teaching and learning is seen as essential, as is expanding the participation to those previously not engaged through the use of information and communications technology, through engaging in partnerships with schools, and developing quality assurance approaches.

Funding support is being used to stimulate and encourage excellent teaching and research projects and to encourage cooperation and interaction with the community and the business sectors. More research is needed into the nature of teaching itself, and such topics are being supported with funding.

Changes in the focus of research must also take place; research and development activities will need to be all-pervasive, and must include partnerships with business and industry.

Broadening participation in higher education remains a most important aspect of the reform efforts. This may be accomplished in part through the use of technology and e-learning, which is a new challenge in higher education. The best outcome so far is that there has been a great deal of collaboration among institutions in course development.

Effective management development will be essential for improvements in higher education. As collaboration and strategic alliances become even more critical, effective management approaches will be needed.

One crucial ingredient in ensuring the success of a reform policy is consultation. Bringing stakeholders into the discussions and the implementation is the only way to ensure that policies will be sustained, even after funding is cut.

Despite all of the reform activities, autonomy will remain an important characteristic of higher education, with the assurance that accountability will be included. Financial freedom will also be the desired state, but this goal may never be reached.

II. Education Reform at School Level: From Policy to Practice

Ms. Susan Pascoe

Chief Executive Officer, Victoria Curriculum and
Assessment Authority
Commonwealth of Australia

Tuesday 31 July 2001, 0830-0900 hrs.

Educational reform was quickly implemented in Victoria, Australia, in the early 1990's after the opposition political party was swept into office by a wide margin, with an agenda that included changes in the educational system as having high priority for action.

The newly installed Center-Right government had prepared itself to enact its Schools of the Future (SOF) plans immediately. This concept included a shift to local management, which it was believed, would give school administrators the flexibility to deploy resources more efficiently and effectively to achieve improved learning outcomes. The government retained control over curriculum, along with the setting of standards as well as assessment and accountability guidelines.

A surprising 800 of Victoria's 1600 schools voluntarily elected to implement the Schools of the Future framework

immediately, so the structural transition moved forward smoothly.

The reforms enjoyed the support of the leadership, which had the political will to effect vigorous change at a pace and scale never seen before. The new Minister of Education moved swiftly and aggressively to consolidate power and to isolate the opponents of reform, particularly education unions. Communications bypassed potential opponent groups and alliances were formed with school principals, who became the foot soldiers of the campaign.

Since the reforms were carried out during period of fiscal restraint, cost-efficiency was a priority consideration, and budgets were cut rather than increased. The teaching force was reduced by 20 per cent and the bureaucracy by 50 per cent, mostly through voluntary early retirement. Twenty per cent of the schools were closed—all in the government's first term.

However, the new reforms created losers as well as winners. The losers, mostly in the less populated rural farm areas, felt increasingly excluded. Consultation was not the reformers' style, particularly at the beginning, and a sense of alienation became evident among teachers and other stakeholders. Also, the pace and extent of the reform activities had created 'reform fatigue' among school personnel, and the move to site-based management did not result in the desired improvements in the quality of teaching.

Following the 1999 elections, which brought about the surprise defeat of the government, the Center-Left coalition assuming power continued the education reforms but at a more measured pace, taking a consultative approach in implementing

the policies. In place of the across-the-board changes of the previous government, the new administration has selected priority areas of need and focused its energies and efforts on measures to improve these. The new government has kept a commitment to high academic standards and the Curriculum and Standards Framework, and has expanded the information technology infrastructure initiatives begun earlier. In addition, the new government is putting greater emphasis upon the post-compulsory level in learning and training through the creation of Local Learning and Employment Networks, and upon improvement in teacher quality and status through a proposal to establish a Victorian Institute of Teaching.

There are several insights that can be gained from the Victoria experience and applied to reform efforts elsewhere:

- In terms of the pace and scale of change, beware of using too resolute and urgent an approach. A collaborative and consultative approach may work better because the public and the teachers will not feel that they lack input or control.
- As policy drivers, ‘efficiency’ and ‘effectiveness’ do not work as well as ‘inclusion’ and ‘balance in social/economic/environmental concerns’, or the ‘triple bottom line’, as it is termed.
- When it comes to shifting power, keep access balanced to all; avoid totally denying access and consultation to those previously in power

- A focus on priority areas in which to concentrate reform efforts is more effective than across-the-board, cross-portfolio approaches.
- In any reform effort the most important change agents, the teachers, must not be overlooked or underestimated.

III. Education Reform: How to Make It a National Agenda

Dr. Byong -Sun Kwak

President of the Korean Education Development
Institute (KEDI) Republic of Korea

Wednesday 1 August 2001, 0830-0900 hrs.

Korea, like Thailand, cannot tolerate the widening disparity in standards of living between nations. Rich nations have implemented education reform to maintain their competitiveness through an emphasis on human resource development. For nations like Korea and Thailand, education reform is therefore a critical need if these countries are to 'catch up.' At the same time in both countries, policy-makers have sometimes encountered opposition in their efforts to develop a national agenda for reform.

In Korea, globalization and neo-liberalism are seen as factors behind education reform. Globalization is definitely a factor driving reform in Korea, which has accomplished its economic growth through export-oriented industrialization. But global market mechanisms behave independently and uncontrollably. The country has therefore become vulnerable to the negative effects of

globalization that generates unavoidable competition among the small number of producers to win the majority of consumers. Countries in superior positions tend to drive out the late developers, and this has resulted in creating situations that make poor countries like Korea and Thailand even poorer. The government cannot be relied on for protection. Korea believes that any country that fails to secure its own standing in the era of globalization will be relegated to the periphery in a consumer status--possibly bringing about internal crisis and disintegration. An educated citizenry is of fundamental importance in ensuring national stability.

Neo-liberalism refers to a series of policies adopted by the industrially advanced nations to strengthen their national competitiveness in the midst of globalization. These policies include restructuring inefficient organizations, reducing welfare budgets, minimizing government intervention in economic activities, and relaxing consumer protection regulations.

In terms of education policies the United Kingdom and the United States have not deliberately followed a formal neo-liberal stance so much as they have simply chosen whatever measures have seemed most appropriate. For example, the United Kingdom strengthened, not reduced, government intervention in the educational system when it adopted a national curriculum and reinforced the government role in evaluating schools and local education authorities. On the other hand, it has increased the choices available to educational consumers and encouraged parent's participation in educational management. It supports expanded

functions for school governing bodies, and supports vocational education. The US has also been pragmatic in its approach to improving education and has adopted a variety of different methods. It has preserved the tradition of decentralized education systems but has developed subject-specific educational standards and allowed experimental school movements. In both countries, education reform work has been bi-partisan, not linked to one or another political regime.

Korea's Choice

Korea's economic structure has been nested deeply inside the economic structure of the world market, but education reform did not really begin until mid-1995. Korea's educational reform has focused on learner-centered education, diversified education, and school management based on autonomy and accountability. It is hoped that Korean education reformers will ultimately seek to transcend political regimes and form policy out of a general consensus, mindful of the entire nation's fate, since everyone should recognize that reform of the education system is the necessary choice for national survival.

To make education reform a national agenda in Korea reformers established national education policy council, the National Committee on Education, which transcends political parties. Therefore, national educational policy will not change during shuffles in the office of education minister during a certain regime, nor change rapidly simply because there is a change of

government. Its members are appointed by the political leadership and its main functions are to:

- create a consensus on national educational goals
- deliberate on major education policies.

Education policy research agencies were strengthened to provide valid and reliable knowledge and information to bureaucrats and political leaders through the Korean Educational Development Institute. Reform follows a strategy of selection of and concentration on policies that will have the broadest impact so as to efficiently use limited financial resources. The approach of this institute is to discuss educational problems comprehensively, intensively, and extensively. Any conclusions reached incorporate the best among many alternatives considered.

Finally, educational policy issues are discussed openly and involve all stakeholders on a nation-wide scale, including parents, teachers, local figures, and experts. Realistic expectations are promoted so that quick results will not be expected within a single government term.

By following these steps, educational reform in Korea has truly become a National Agenda rather than merely the platform of any particular party. Other countries may find something to learn from the Korean experience.

**IV. Strategies for Systematic Education
Reforms: An International Perspective
on Asian Experiences**

Dr. Zhou Nanzhao

Acting Chief of UNESCO-ACEID

Thursday 2 August 2001, 0830-0900 hrs.

Reform can be defined as ‘a fundamental reorganization in structure, content, methods of delivery and management effected by major policy changes’. In setting goals for reform, two aspects of development, namely social and individual, must be regarded as interdependent. As a result, the general goals of any systematic educational reform were not only to promote the international competitiveness of a country but also to simultaneously enhance the love of learning of that country’s citizenry. In meeting these goals we are cautioned not to believe that there might ever be only one way of education reform that could fit the needs of all countries.

Throughout the world, the record of education reform to date has been quite mixed, in large part due to the conflicting values and ideas of the many concerned stakeholders who inevitably become engaged in educational reform. Nevertheless, a number of lessons have been learned from past Asian reform experience. These include:

- The need for a long-term, rather than short-term, vision
- A systematic, rather than piecemeal, reorganization approach
- The general readiness and cooperation of concerned individuals at all levels as well as a socio-economic environment for reform
- Minimal efforts of ‘top-down’ impositions of education reform
- The need to prioritize goals since ‘too many reforms, one after another, can be the death of reform’
- The commitment and cooperation of concerned teachers but also of administrators, students and parents
- Adaptation, instead of wholesale transplanting, of reform from other countries

Drawing his Asian examples from both China and Thailand, the keynote stressed four major points in his address. They were:

- (1) A balancing of centralization with increasingly greater local autonomy

Public debates were proposed to motivate and ready the general public as well as to build a true national consensus. National standards of educational excellence must not only be set in order to better mobilize and rationally distribute the too often very limited resources, but also to better monitor local performance and progress. Training should result in capacity building and accountability. The desired result is centralized, over-all planning but with intersectional coordination.

- (2) The pursuit of equity while maintaining quality Education, although a fundamental human right, must be viewed as compulsory. From ‘All for Education’, the emphasis must shift to ‘Education for All’. Following moderately achieved success at the primary level, the new focus must be opportunity with merit at the secondary level. It is essential that new qualities of creativity, critical thinking, enterprising minds and team spirit be fostered in today’s students while correspondingly improving the existing evaluation and examination systems. Market forces must be harnessed in order for education to serve as both a ‘service’ and ‘export’ industry.
- (3) The harnessing of information-communication technology to enhance the role of teachers
It is essential that teachers not feel threatened by the newest technology, but instead should regard it as a means to reach disadvantaged groups. Seen in this light, technology thus allows the teachers to improve both the quality and effectiveness of education for increasing numbers of learners.
- (4) The strengthening of international cooperation while preserving cultural identities
More and more interdependent, countries in today’s global environment will be able to make greater use of international responses to their unique educational problems while maintaining their country’s cultural

identity and diversity, in the manner of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, with its emphasis on the teaching of ethics, human values and culture in the school curriculum.

Questions

- From your experience, have you seen examples of good strategies for capacity building in leaders?

Actually, the training of policy makers should come before the training of teachers. When China launched reforms, directors of education commissions in provincial, municipal and local levels received mandatory training.

- You mentioned there are different standards for different students. Can you describe the standards for gifted or exceptional children?

Unified entrance examinations are not fair for students who have studied under differing curriculums. For example, students who go through the vocational track will be at a disadvantage in comparison with students who went through the academic secondary stream. Students also have differing aptitudes. Universities in China are being given greater autonomy in setting entrance examinations.

Panel Presentations

ว่า

Panel I

Moderator: Dr. Padoongchart Suwanawongse
SEAMEO/RIHED.

Tuesday 31 July 2001, 0900 - 1200 hrs.

Presentation I/1:

The Changing World and the United Kingdom
Experience

Eddie Newcomb

University of Manchester, The United Kingdom

A new kind of institution for higher learning has emerged in the United Kingdom with the concept of the 'Civic University', an institution that manifests the changing environment of higher education, and articulates the qualities seen to be needed at this level, to reflect and constructively and effectively respond to the changes taking place within the society. Such an institution will need to focus upon the roles of higher education as they relate to the linkages between universities and society, and to deal with the challenges to the traditional value of autonomy within the new context. It will require that management be prepared to work in an integrated fashion, flexibly, and proactively.

The new ‘Civic University’ is seen as being an internationally oriented institution, located in a city or regional center, which maintains academic excellence and undertakes research—just as an ordinary university would do. In addition, it adopts a broader mission of encouraging those from the lower socio-economic groups, both the young and the old, to become engaged in its activities, as well as raising the aspirations among young people to continue on to higher education, thereby preparing all levels of society for effective involvement in the Knowledge Economy.

The Civic University, further, is charged with delivering services that support business activities, namely manpower development, business-related research, and other assistance to the business community through incubation and enterprise programs. In this institution, public health issues become part of its mission, where a quality work force is developed through research on occupational health issues, as well as clinical health services and programs that focus on public health improvement.

The Civic University will ensure that the community within which it operates is provided with access to libraries, theaters, galleries and cultural activities, and will extend support for creative industries and audiences.

To sum up, the mission of a ‘civic university’ is to maintain academic excellence, take a leadership role within higher education, engage all stakeholders, and demonstrate local good neighborliness.

Mr. Newcomb's own institution, the University of Manchester, has attempted to take on such an expanded role. The task has not been easy. A number of challenges have been encountered in articulating the concept. One major issue remaining to be solved is how to effect a proper balance between the new mission and the traditional teaching and research duties of an institution of higher learning. It is also a challenge to engage staff to willingly accept the broader roles that the Civic University requires. Some of the measures that have been introduced to achieve the goal of a Civic University include:

- gaining approval from the University Council and developing a detailed action plan
- delegating broadly to senior officers to get everyone involved
- approaching the tasks with open and participatory styles of management
- ensuring that good communication channels and approaches are used
- setting fewer committees, with more emphasis on individuals and teams
- taking an interdisciplinary approach
- setting policies that foster excellent staff training and development
- establishing clear priorities for action within agreed time schedules

Despite the commitment and the dedicated efforts and careful planning, the transition has not been easy. Changes that are taking place within the traditional university moving toward the goal include: developing more strategic approaches within the University Council; developing more professional management; reducing bureaucracy and increasing capability, as well as bringing about greater flexibility and responsiveness. In the meantime, there is a continuing debate about whether or not university autonomy can be completely unfettered. The conclusion being reached is that the institution must be accountable to its stakeholders.

Presentation I/2:

**Can Korea Build a World-Class University?
On the Practicality of Korea's Ambitious Aspirations.**

Professor Dr. Ki-Seok Kim

Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Counselor
of Institute of Asia-Pacific Education Development,
Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

'Brain Korea 21' (BK 21) is a national-level higher education reform project initiated by the South Korean government to prepare Korean human resources for the 21st century. It will invest \$1.2 billion in universities over a period of seven-years.

Three quarters of the budget will be invested in supporting graduate schools in certain fields in the natural and applied sciences, humanities and social sciences and selected graduate schools and universities will be developed into leading world-class universities, or regional universities to create human resources for local industries. Research funds do not go directly to professors in the form of grants. A large part of the budget is used to provide a supportive educational environment for graduate students in the form of stipends, financial support for overseas study and research infrastructure.

Expected outcomes:

- Excellent human resources comprising nearly 1,300 persons with doctorate degrees in science and engineering will be produced every year.
- Korea's R&D capabilities will be strengthened through cooperation and collaboration with high quality overseas educational institutions
- Cooperation among members of industry, academia and the government will be expanded.
- Cooperation among colleges and universities will be strengthened
- Top level higher education reform project initiated by South Korea government to prepare Korean human resources

As in any kind of reform, some resistance has been met because BK21 is different from previous policies and shifts the focus to

- efficiency of investment rather than equality of opportunity in the distribution of research funds
- graduate education rather than undergraduate education
- 'selection and concentration' rather than balanced development among universities and subject areas, which means that
 - most professors in non-selected colleges and universities will not receive research funding.
 - non-selected universities without funding are likely to

have insufficient numbers of graduate students, which may further weaken research activities

Another serious concern relates to potential loss of institutional autonomy. Some feel that this government controlled and development oriented educational reform will jeopardize the intellectual freedom and autonomy of universities in the long run.

Nonetheless, after the first year of the project, there were measurable improvements in research activities of graduate schools, with a 15.6% increase in the number of articles published by Korean scholars. Various project goals were attained and progress was made in the university system reform. Therefore, it is likely that the BK21 project will be continued as the impetus for university innovation and higher education reform.

Comments and Questions

A member of the audience observed that the increase in the number of research publications seemed to be weighted toward publications of research in applied and natural sciences and technology, surpassing those in the humanities and social sciences. The participant wondered whether the reasons for this were

- the disparity in the amount of funding, since funding for research in the sciences and technology was 5-8 times greater than that for the humanities and social sciences; or

- the difficulty of writing up research in these fields in English
- the fact that the social sciences and humanities are not linked to industry

Dr. Kim responded that all three factors contributed to the disparity in the number of research publications. Language difficulty was indeed an important reason, since much of the research in the humanities and social sciences is carried out in Korean. To deal with this problem, the Korean government plans to recruit 100 English speaking scholars per year over a period of 5 years to work with and support Korean scholars in their preparation of research results in English.

A second participant observed that despite the economic crisis Korea has made a significant financial commitment to higher education reform; hopefully Thailand will do the same.

The participant also noted that Korea is very Western focused in its interest in university cooperation. He wondered when Korea would become interested in closer cooperation with universities in Asian and Southeast Asian nations.

Dr. Kim acknowledged that Korea traditionally looked to the West for its models and benchmarks, but this is now changing. As an example, in 1999 Seoul National University established the Institute for Asia and Pacific Educational Cooperation, which is focused on increasing the interaction and cooperation among countries in the Asia Pacific region.

Presentation I/3

Vietnam and the Issue of Continuing Higher Education Reform

Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Tai

Vice Rector for International Relations and Research Affairs
University of Social Sciences and Humanities
Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City
The Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Overview and Background

Vietnam hopes to become an industrialized country by 2020 but faces several challenges in fulfilling its goal. It needs to develop its science and technology capacities and enhance education and training in order to provide skilled labor resources for social development and economic growth. Serious education reform began in 1986; in 1998 the Education Law was enforced, making education a primary national policy. Now the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) faces these issues:

- Correction of an imbalance which has resulted in a shortage of skilled workers and a surplus of university graduates
- Improvement in the quality and quantity of teaching staff
- Redistribution of the national network of higher education

away from the urban areas to cover the whole country and establish good linkages between them

- Revision of teaching methods and application of progressive education technology through the introduction of
 - Student-centered approaches, seminars, discussions, brainstorming, problem-solving, case studies, and simulations
 - teaching and learning aids, digital library systems, communication systems, and the Internet
- Improvement in the quality of education at public and private universities

Despite these daunting challenges, Dr. Van Tai concluded that with a strong political will, Vietnam will be able to succeed with higher education reform because it is crucial to push the process of industrialization and modernization so that it can compete with other countries in Southeast Asia and in the world.

Comments and Questions

A participant commented that education reform parallels that of health care reform; that success depends not only upon a good plan but strong political support as well. He cautioned that careful consideration must be given to the investment in technology, since it has the potential to reduce the costs of education, but also requires substantial increase in technologies that are constantly changing. The expenditures

for technology must be pegged to the cost-effectiveness of any such investment. A third observation was that, like health care reform one of the most important aspects of successful education reform should certainly be the expansion of opportunities for higher education among the lower income group, this point has not been considered thus far in the deliberations.

Dr. Van Tai agreed with these observations.

The participant further wondered how universities, both in Thailand and Vietnam, were going to be able to survive during this period of financial setbacks, when they must compete for severely limited resources. He also asked whether the WTO emphasis on trade liberalization, which includes education as well, would increase the competition from western countries for students, thereby having a negative impact on the local education market.

Dr. Van Tai confirmed that financing education, particularly higher education is a serious problem in Vietnam, where only 15% of the national budget is allocated to higher education. Fortunately, the World Bank has provided a \$70 million loan for education in Vietnam. In response to the second question, he said that Vietnam welcomes input from foreign universities and follows an open door policy on this issue, as the support of foreign universities is one means of improving the quality of young lecturers, thereby the education standard as a whole.

Panel II

Moderator: Dr. Siriporn Boonyananta
Deputy Secretary General
the Office of the National Education Commission
Tuesday 31 July 2001, 1300-1530 hrs.

(Mr. Yu Fuzeng, from China, was unable to attend the Forum.
Following is a summary of his paper)

In his paper, Mr. Yu Fuzeng, President of the Chinese Association of Universities and Colleges for Foreign Student Affairs and Special Consultant to the Beijing Academy of Educational Science, the People Republic of China discussed the progress made in the field of education over the last 50 years, focusing on the progress made in the past decade.

Since 1990, illiteracy dropped by 9%, and the number of people finishing senior secondary and post-secondary education increased by 39% and 154% respectively.

Mr. Yu's paper noted that the main problem in the early days of the 'New China' was the ability of rural people to feed themselves. Once this had been solved, even at a low level, the most effective way to ensure children attend primary schools is to have a school in every village, where the school building would be the responsibility of the village, and the provision of teachers would be the responsibility of the central government.

One key to the Chinese success in reducing illiteracy was provision of access to education for all school age children. Mr. Yu noted that prior to the 1960s, even with 80% enrolment of school age children, perhaps 50% of the country was illiterate, a remnant of the ‘Old China.’

For the last three decades, enrolment has increased to more than 90%, and this has contributed to reducing illiteracy down to its current level of 6.72%. In 1986, the central government enacted legislation for 9-year compulsory education, and as a result, when secondary school education increased significantly thereafter, from 68.4% in 1985 to 94.9% in 2000.

In order to ensure a basic standard quality of education was achieved nationwide, uniform textbooks and syllabus was developed and teacher training was given priority. The curriculum has undergone reform over the years, in order to modernize content; most recently to ensure that information technology and a knowledge-based economic theory were included.

Mr. Yu concludes that the quality of teachers is key to the development of primary education. Accordingly, many efforts have been made to improve the status of teachers in China, including establishment of a national Teacher’s Day, on which teachers making significant contributions to the education process were recognized by the government. A Teacher’s Law was established, which stipulates that the average teacher’s salary should not be lower than that of public servants and should be gradually raised.

The central government has also begun to emphasize the importance of secondary and higher education, starting in 1998. They have set a target of 15% of youth aged 18-24 to be in higher education by the year 2010.

Prior to the 1980s, university graduates were assigned jobs by the government. The system has subsequently been reformed, and a two-way selection system has been implemented.

Employment of students with undergraduate degrees from Ministry of Education universities stands at 9%, whereas graduates of schools under the jurisdiction of Central Ministries have an employment rate of 76%. The paper went on to note that those graduating with Masters Degrees have an employment rate of 93%, and those with PhDs find immediate employment 96% of the time.

The paper concludes that progress in education is not only the result of economic development; education itself has also made important contributions to economic development.

Presentation II/1

**National Education Reform in Indonesia: Milestones
and Strategies for the Reform Process**

Dr. Ella Yulaelawati

**National Office of Research and Education in Indonesia
Ministry of National Education
The Republic of Indonesia**

According to a 1992 study, in comparison to much of Asia, Indonesia had a relatively low literacy rate of 51.7%. There were many reasons for this, including conflicts among the nation's educational leadership; a heavily centralized, single-solution program; an absence of 'local knowledge and skills', and gender bias.

Clearly, education reform was needed, with improved access to education; the need to prepare youngsters for the knowledge age; national IT development, and moral development among the objectives.

A law was passed in 1989 to improve the national education system, with goals that included expansion of compulsory education from six to nine years; decentralization of curriculum; and provision of access to education without discrimination against race, religion, social status, and sex.

While the intent of the law cannot be faulted, problems still remain, as the reform did not substantially enhance the principles of education for all, nor did it provide greater involvement of community and democratic principles in education in Indonesia.

A Committee for Educational Reform (CER) was set up this year to propose a new education law that would address the above concerns, and introduce new elements to the curriculum, following study experiences in other countries.

A paper has been submitted that includes a draft of a new education law and government regulations, and promotes education reform as a public debate on TV and through the Internet.

Nine strategies are proposed in this academic paper. Key among them are implementation of compulsory education, development of competency-based curriculum, implementation of educational autonomy management, and the empowerment of community participation in the education process.

Still, challenges remain, particularly in the area of district-based education, due inadequate human resources, and the challenge of piloting a new curriculum in parallel with the new law and regulations.

The ultimate objectives of the reforms are to provide heterogeneous local educational leadership practices, establishing firm national standards, encouraging partnership in education, and providing greater accountability for parents through a de-bureaucratized educational management system.

Questions and Comments:

- With 17 million Indonesians still illiterate in the country, how is Indonesia addressing the problem of illiteracy under the education reform efforts?

There are programs to encourage adult literacy in the non-formal education system, but with the crisis, they have been given rather low priority. There are two packages for adult literacy training, one a primary level and the other a secondary level. After completing their primary level package they take an examination.

- Indonesia is using a competency-based curriculum. We find this very difficult to implement in Thailand, because teachers are not comfortable with; how is the competency-based curriculum being implemented?

In the past there was a set curriculum, with rigid syllabus and strict guidelines on teaching. Now however, a national standard of competencies has been introduced, something like desired learning outcomes. There is no set syllabus, number of hours, etc., only a policy framework giving minimum requirements in subject matter. Manuals are distributed to the districts and the local levels will develop the

curriculum. Not all teachers and administrators understand this approach as yet. But it is linked to decentralization of the curriculum to provide flexibility to the teachers.

- How does 'action research' work in Indonesia?

The directorate of secondary and non-formal education employ action research and active learning. Teachers groups work together well to solve their own problems. Teachers communicate among themselves much better than when the education officers try to introduce methods; teachers become passive rather than active participants.

Presentation II/2

Major Movements of Education Reform
in Cambodia

Mr. Sam Sereyrath

Director of Planning, Ministry of Education
Youth and Sport
Royal Kingdom of Cambodia

In planning reform in Cambodia, a review of the situation and extensive consultations were undertaken with stakeholders at the provincial and community levels. The findings were disappointing, particularly limited impact of aid, unstated policy priorities and processes, underdeveloped regulatory mechanisms and weak sector monitoring.

Key issues for reform include the improvement of equal access to education; reduction of costs to rural poor; the need to build new schools; improving overall quality of education; and the need for capacity-building, including performance-based incentives, organizational and communication systems, and improved staff training and deployment.

The involvement of personal leadership of the education reform process is critical to its ultimate success by ensuring high-

level ownership of the process, indicating that the Minister of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the Secretaries of State had been part of the process.

As a result of their involvement, education-related spending would be doubled within 5 years, with the building of 15,000-20,000 new classrooms by 2005, and a commitment to education for all by 2015, an increase of 1.2 million students.

Efforts will be made to revise teacher's incentives, particularly in remote areas, to provide better teacher education, to monitor the capacity building program, and to ensure access for the poor to scholarships, particularly for girls.

Cambodia needs to study what is being done in other countries and reiterated the need for high level commitment and leadership as part of a shared understanding of the mission among all relevant stakeholders.

There had to be new thinking in the way educators teach students - teaching students to think and analyze, not simply memorize, and to recognize that the world is changing and everything and everyone is interrelated.

Presentation II/3
Education Reform in the Lao PDR

Dr. Khamphay Sisavanh

Director of the National Research Institute
for Educational Sciences.

Lao PDR

During the past decade Laos' education strategies included universalizing primary education, as well as reforming general, vocational and higher education. A companion focus was on reforming teacher training and management and expansion of access to education in remote areas.

Key achievements include: more than 4,500 students studying in teacher training schools; improving facilities in these schools; active promotion of pedagogy by teachers; 83% literacy rate (age 15-40); improvement of English-language skills of more than 300 civil servants; a labor-market oriented curriculum implemented for vocational training; and increased allocations of national budget and GDO into education.

Despite the many achievements, problems remain. At the general education level, many children do not have access to kindergarten, and education in remote regions is still inadequate. Teachers are reluctant to change their teaching methods and

behaviors, and there are shortages of teaching materials in many schools.

Problems in teacher education include the loss of many graduates who do not join the teaching profession, and the shortage of teachers in ethnic minority areas. There is also a lack of correlation between the school curriculum and the program of teacher training, resulting in young teachers being unprepared for their teaching responsibilities.

In the area of curriculum reform, while Lao PDR has achieved many successes, there have been problems in curriculum design, implementation, and follow-up. In order to improve the national curriculum, there needs to be upgrading of capacities of textbook writers, upgrading of the qualifications of teachers, and conducting research on the impact of the new curriculum.

Numerous ‘lessons learned’ can be cited from the Lao experience. Future reform must focus on: expanding education to ethnic areas; linking education to integrated rural development programs; further reinforcing de-centralization in education from the center to the grassroots levels; and increasing the allocation of funds from the national budget into education.

Questions and Comments

- One of Laos’ goals is to combine the individual and public interest. What strategies do you use to accomplish this goal?

In compliance with the government policy students are inculcated with the notion of working for the well being of the society and the community, not only to think of their own interests.

- How many years will it take to revise the curriculum? It is difficult to reach many schools and to bring teachers together for training. How will these problems be overcome to develop, and particularly the local curriculum?

We have limited funding to devote to this, so it will take 10 or 15 years. The next revision should come in 2005. The local curriculum is being developed with the help of more than 500 pedagogical advisors.

- I have heard that there may be an opportunity to establish regional universities using the local teacher training colleges as the nucleus.

Yes, this is the plan.

- Would these be campuses of the national university? Or regional universities?

These should be campuses of the national university. One university is enough for our population. We may establish 4 campuses.

- Minority groups are prevalent throughout Laos. What measures are being implemented to assist these groups?

In 1999, a 5-year project to supported by USAID and ADB was begun to provide basic education for girls and ethnic minority groups and to teach Lao to these groups, using the concentrated language and culture approach of Australia and assisted by SriNakarinWirote University

- Please explain how the new curriculum has brought about ‘new ways of thinking’?

We are using the ‘Bloom taxonomy’ to try to encourage our students to understand, analyze and appreciate. Our philosophy is that everything in the world is inter-related and changing and in the process of development.

The speaker added that the school dropout rate in Laos is over 10%, and illiteracy is still a serious problem. The non-formal education department is trying to combine the teaching of basic skills and vocational training.

Panel III

Moderator: Dr. Pimon Ruetrakul,
Executive Director
The Thailand-United States Educational Foundation
Wednesday 1 August 2001, 0900-1200 hrs.

Presentation III/1

Education in Malaysia:
Enhancing Accessibility, Capability and Quality

Professor Dr. Hassan bin Said

Director of the Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Education
Malaysia

Malaysia's education system is being reviewed in order to meet global challenges and also to achieve the vision of transforming Malaysia into a center of academic excellence. The system must meet the requirements for the country to become fully developed by the year 2020.

External and internal forces of change include Accessibility, Capability and Quality. Accessibility is paramount because the demand for education is so high. Education is considered to be the means for developing the nation's manpower, for creating socio-economic equity, and for balancing society. Therefore, the

private sectors have been encouraged to share responsibility for increasing access to education for young Malaysians. Technology will provide distance learning for lifelong education by providing access to ‘digital global learning’.

Capability is another force of change. Science and technology have been identified as the engine of economic growth but not enough students are interested in it. Therefore, Science and Technology will be emphasized and programs of postgraduate studies will be offered and 4th generation research and development will be strengthened to promote innovation.

The final force of change is Quality. In a global economy, employers arbitrate the world looking for the best deal, so Malaysia’s education system must produce a workforce that is educated and skilled for the global market. Development of new curricula of international quality and use of benchmarking, international standards and professional requirements will be introduced.

- As a result of the forces of change, Malaysia has a vast numbers of initiatives:
- Schools: ‘smart,’ vocational and technical, community colleges/city polytechnics,
- Teachers: better training allowances, more graduate teachers in primary schools
- Universities: technical ‘hands-on’ universities, research universities, joint postgraduate degrees with foreign universities

- Students: funding available to excellent students

Dr. Hassan revealed that the success in Malaysian education reform rests on these important factors:

- Good governance and policy
- Commitment at all levels
- Public and private sector partnership
- Creating competitiveness (culture/mindset)
- Sufficiency of qualified teaching professionals
- Quality

Questions and Comments

- English is not given as much prominence in Thailand as it is in Malaysia; would you comment on this?

The Constitution specifies that the public language is Bhasa Malay or English, but in private schools other languages are available. Almost 90% of the population can speak English, which is taught at the primary, secondary and university levels. Other languages can be studied in secondary school as electives. By university, students should have 3 languages.

- Are there educational opportunities for those who couldn't continue their education? What about Community Colleges--as well as opportunities for school leavers too?

We now have an Open University, with instruction delivered through printed materials, Internet and television, based on the UK and Australian systems. Community colleges began this year - there are a variety of courses. There are also skill-training centers with apprenticeships.

- A participant mentioned that he understood that English was the language of instruction in the primary schools and wondered whether this was accurate.

Dr. Hassan said that in the Malay primary schools, the language of instruction is Bhasa Malay. All subjects are taught in Malay in public schools, but perhaps English is used in some private schools. It has been difficult to send good English teachers to the rural areas, as they are in demand in the urban schools.

- A participant commented that in Thailand, as in Malaysia, the number of students going into science fields is very low. Even though there are attempts to increase the number, if the career path is not positive, students will not select these fields. Some countries, rather than spending so much in developing the resources, import them from elsewhere. Might this be a solution?

The second observation involves quality. It is difficult to assure the quality of the output when

this also depends on the input. The quality of the teachers and the teaching is as second factor impacting on the quality of the output. In Thailand, the success of the reform is in teacher quality and in higher education. What are we going to do about teachers who are not qualified?

Presentation III/2

Sustainable Strategies of Education Reform:
The New Zealand Experience

Professor Dr. Gary Hawke

Victoria University of Wellington
New Zealand

New Zealand's educational reform runs parallel to the events described by Ms. Pascoe in regard to the Victoria experience. New Zealand is now about 10 years into the reform process; it might be at what is called the 'consolidation phase', but some might even call it a period of retreat, since the reform has not been universally popular. However, while some dissatisfaction exists, particularly at the tertiary level, there are few who would go back to the pre-reform era. The outcomes of the reform movement are well entrenched.

In essence, the New Zealand experience suggests the following about education reform:

- The education reform process has not been undertaken in isolation. Education is a part of society, and as such it is part of wider social and economic development. Teacher may have thought that they were in a special situation, but this was not the case. Medical doctors, scientists,

and those in other sectors all felt that their group had been singled out.

- The forces at work driving the reform in New Zealand are the same as outlined in the case of Korea: globalization, demands of modern societies and economies, and, in particular, the necessity for lifelong education to enable people to adapt to change and participate fully in the society and the economy. There has been an increased focus on acquisition of needed skills and capabilities, and the acknowledgement that everyone should share educational opportunities, that education is not only for the elite.
- The influence of politicians is secondary; there will be modifications as the political regimes and personalities change, but the underlying driving forces remain and the reform process is not primarily driven by the political regime.
- The issues of reform are closely related to the issues of learning. Relationships among the schools, the community, the central bureaucracy, the assessment system, and the quality of the education services, are going to be continuing issues that remain and are still being debated:

What is the role of the teacher and what is the type of materials that are to be presented to the students? This issue is being studied in a number of countries, for

example, Korea, Singapore, and Ireland, and the discussion is ongoing. Should the teachers be presenting pre-arranged classroom materials, or should they be taking high level objectives and translating these into plans and approaches for delivery to students? The questions have not been answered definitively.

Should there be a centralized examination process? In secondary education, school leaving qualification is a normal practice, but the setting of central examinations during the course of the secondary system is fairly unusual and is a principal area of debate.

An effective mechanism or device that was useful in the New Zealand reform process was the use of ‘autonomous conveners’ - in this case, the Cabinet Social Equity Committee Working Groups. These conveners enabled the final decision on the choice of direction for the reform. They listened to and assessed the variety of points of view and then came to an independent conclusion where there was not a consensus.

- The reason that reform was successful was that informed discussions led to informed decisions that led to informed actions. The key was to make judgements and implement them continuously.

- There is danger of separation of design and implementation. Responsibility for making things work concentrates peoples' minds on what will work.
- The cost of the reform implementation was greatly underestimated - the cost in funds, time and effort to acquire the intended changes in the management of schools and the new skills that had to be developed. A great cost was the decline in the importance of the skills that had previously been valuable human capital.
- Reform is a continual process with periods of especially strong focus followed by periods of less strong focus but there cannot be discrete educational reform flowed by 'business as usual'
- It takes a long time to see clear results. It must be remembered that those who initiate reform undertake a long difficult task and are unlikely to be popular.

Principal challenges in the future include:

- Interaction between public and private roles: what can government best do directly and what is better left for others to do?
- Lifelong education, which makes the concept of free education redundant. The question remains as to the best way of financing the various parts of the education system. Controversial components, particularly regarding the role of public vs private financing, are the primary, secondary, and early childhood education.

Questions and Comments

- We have heard a great deal about reform in this conference. But what is still not clear is how we can know which reforms have been successful, which countries have succeeded in their efforts?

Evaluation mechanisms must be put in place at the beginning of the reform efforts. However, objectives and content of reforms change, so it is difficult to evaluate the outcomes based on original goals. But it is possible to evaluate specific components of reform. Also, indirect evaluation may yield evidence of success.

- You stated that free education is obsolete. Thailand there is debate about whether government should provide free education for all within the system or only for those in need.

There is a continuing debate about how resources should be used. We might begin by rejecting the assumption that education should be free. We might also ask whether the best use of public funding is only for the schools. There may be other useful sources of education worthy of support. But... we probably will want to continue to provide free education - for all.

Comment

The success of reform depends greatly on the teacher. I have not yet heard much about how we can create ‘smart teachers’ for reform. We’ve heard only about ‘smart schools.’

Presentation III/3

**Korean Vision of Teacher Reform:
An Attempt for Quality Control**

Dr. Hye Sook Kim, KEDI

Republic of Korea

The two directions of the reform effort in Korea in the last 5 years have been quality control and teacher empowerment. These reforms were initiated by the elite in the government as platforms in a national education reform movement. Unfortunately, these efforts did not lead to success.

Purpose of teacher reform has been to improve the quality of teacher education to attract high-quality college graduates and to facilitate professionalism among teachers. Professionalism among teachers means that the teachers:

- are engaged in continuous self training and development
- possess knowledge in the subject areas
- maintain positive perspectives and attitudes
- have logical thinking ability
- maintain good health

During the 1990's Presidential Commission on Education Reform began moving towards intensive education reform because it believed that quality education was the basis for ensuring

national prosperity. Policy priorities were given to teachers, and teacher education. In 1996 directions taken included:

Reform of pre-service training: focus on producing teachers with expertise in subject areas and a strong commitment to teaching.

The steps taken included

- introducing a national system for evaluating teacher training programs and institutions;
- changing the teacher selection procedure
- initiating changes in teacher certification and employment status
- improvement in the educational administrative system to provide specialized professional support to teachers,
- and making improvements in the compensation system;

Implementation. The institutional evaluation system was launched in 1998. The size of programs was cut by two thirds, with a view toward consolidation; improvement of facilities is still slow; the proposed change in the length of the training programs (6 years) is not popular.

Teacher selection procedures were moved to a 2-stage process. They include an essay test, an interview, and a teaching demonstration. The validity and procedural fairness of the process has come under criticism by the public.

Teacher certification and employment status was diversified, with contract and temporary status, teachers who contracted to both individual schools and to districts, multiple certification

for those who taught more than one subject, recruitment and training of teachers for elementary schools in art, music and physical education

To improve the administrative system, the Commission recommended restructuring certification and selection systems for supervisors; provision of research funds and support for teachers, supporting in-service teacher training programs, and establishing staff exchanges among schools.

In-service training participation has increased, through accumulation of credits for training that are linked to promotion and compensation. Outstanding teachers in research and teaching are selected as ‘special research teachers’, and are given financial and other support accordingly.

Regarding attempted improvements in the welfare system, the merit-based system has failed because of resistance from the teachers.

Two conclusions can be made:

The government has been the key actor in the reform efforts, from the Presidential Commission to the Ministry of Education and the Human Resource Development Department.

Positive outcomes

The evaluation program seems to be working as a mechanism to improve the quality of teacher training institutions. Evaluated teacher institutions have begun to compete to improve their scores

through curriculum revision and improvement of training conditions. But it has been difficult to ensure consistency and continuity in the evaluation process because of a lack of legal and institutional support.

Funding and legal arrangements for the establishment of a national accreditation center for teacher education institutes is being proposed as another mechanism for improving teacher training institutions.

The main issue has been the assurance of quality.

The current agenda

- A new certification system to reinforce a closer relationship among the three levels of education, pre-school, elementary and secondary education
- An attractive licensing system to encourage professionals in other careers to enter the teaching profession, particularly those in computer education, extra-curricular activities, English in the elementary school.
- Providing substantial increase in salaries and welfare
- Improvement in working conditions, i.e., smaller classes, fewer hours, through increasing the number of teachers by 2,000 each year for 5 years.

Barriers, including opposition, legal and financial issues, remain.

Long-term problems and issues that still persist include:

- Problems in attracting high-quality teacher candidates (especially males) because teacher remuneration, working

conditions and conditions of teacher training institutions are poor.

- Failure of quality control in teacher certification and recruitment because prospective teachers are recruited to public schools through teacher selection examinations provided by boards of education in each geographic area. The questionable validity and reliability of the preliminary written tests and the lack of variation in the results of final oral tests show that such tests do not necessarily select the highest quality candidates.
- An imbalance in the supply of teachers, with a serious under-supply at the elementary school teachers, and an oversupply of secondary level teachers.
- Low socio-economic status and working conditions of teachers when compared with university professors and those in other professions. This situation negatively affects morale.
- Teacher un-preparedness in response to the 7th National Curriculum, which emphasizes learning according to individual academic capability in Grades 11-12. The system of teacher training and certification does not prepare teachers to teach students on the basis of their capabilities.

A major constraint in the implementation of reform has been the lack of consensus. The Korean reform efforts had tended to be top-down and designed by an elite who excluded the teachers in

the reform rather than bringing them in as partners. The Ministry initiative attempted to change the negative impact. Teachers were extremely dissatisfied to be so poorly treated by the government and public, being seen as obstacles to education reform. They withdrew their support of any further reform attempts, causing them to fail. There are important lessons in the Korean experience for other countries:

- education reform can never be accomplished without teacher's voluntary participation and willingness to reform.
- there must be a balance between top-down and bottom-up reform.

Questions and Comments

- KEDI has developed the credit bank for teacher improvement. Is this related to the reform efforts?

KEDI is responsible for this learning bank. It is not only for teachers, but also for anyone who would like to accumulate credits from accredited institutions for eventual diplomas or degrees. This is considered another effort in reform for lifelong learning.

- Ms. Kim, your presentation mentioned the self-evaluation of teacher institutions. What about individual teachers?

We have a reasonable device for teacher evaluation, but many think it is not as objective as it should be, nor is it as reliable as desired. It should be connected to promotion and compensation. We have a reasonable device for evaluation, but we are still not satisfied with the process.

- A participant commented that he thought the idea of bringing people from other professions into teaching was an excellent one. He expressed doubt that teachers would be successful researchers, since research requires skills and abilities that take a lot of time to develop. Time and adequate funding are also difficult to secure.

Ms. Kim replied that research skills are developed during graduate training study as well as in in-service programs. The Korean government supports a lot of funding, and teachers themselves also support their own funding. This effort seems to be successful in Korea.

- It seems that a number of countries are extending their pre-service training to 5-year programs. Is Korea considering this approach?

Ms. Kim said that in Korea, there are several standardized 4-year programs for teachers. Extending this to a 6-year program is being

considered, but it has not yet been confirmed.

Mr. Hawke commented that in New Zealand there was no trend to standardize pre-service training in a five-year curriculum. There are a variety of pathways to teaching. It is better to set the requirements desired and consider ways those requirements can be attained.

Mr. Said explained that in Malaysia, those completing 11 years of education go on to a 3-year pre-service teaching programs and can teach in the primary schools. After 13 years of education, students can go on to an integrated 4-year program or go for a bachelor degree (3 years), then complete an additional year in education, and teach at the secondary level. Now there are several in-service programs to enable teachers to get their first degree.

The moderator mentioned that in Pennsylvania, there is a move to require a 5th year of training for teachers, but it have met with resistance because of the high cost.

Panel IV

Moderator: Dr. Chantavit Suchatanond
Assistant Permanent Secretary
Ministry of University Affairs
Wednesday 1 August 2001, 0900-1200 hrs.

Presentation IV/1

Educational Reform in Luxembourg

Dr. Jean-Paul Reeff

Director of Luxembourg International Foundation
for Education Luxembourg

Luxembourg is a small country of only about 400,000 people. 40% of the population is foreign. This creates a multi-lingual situation, not only in the society, but in the schools. The steel industry has been the main economic force during the past century, and only recently has the financial service industry become important. The transition from steel to financial services has been challenge for the educational system.

The focus of the reform efforts discussed centered upon reforms in the vocational education system during the past decade.

The process of vocational educational reform in the late 1980s came as a result of a call from industry to develop a pool of

higher skilled labor. Some of the key problems the reform process had to address included the difficulty in adapting curriculum reforms to the rapidly changing occupational requirements, the difficulty in evaluation students' competencies, and lack of infrastructure for ongoing curriculum reform.

Over a 3-year implementation process, the work in reforming the vocational training system was performed by teachers, for teachers. They focused on how people did their jobs, what was reasonable for the education system to deal with, what students should be able to do by grade 13, and development of intermediate and final curriculum framework objectives.

The program was not a total success, as there were difficulties in terms of general education (e.g. what every student should know), and in the assessment of success/failure.

This first project led to a 1994 program designed to cope with the problems identified vis-à-vis general education. The program sought to make the transition from identifying goals to developing quality criteria for good teaching, utilizing a broad consensus-seeking process and a subject-matter oriented curricula.

To address the problems of assessment, another program was implemented to develop and evaluate instruments to examine students' competencies via task-based assignments, the area in which the program succeeded.

The result was that students were pleased and industry was

pleased, as they were presented with a better-trained workforce that had demonstrated the ability to solve the sorts of problems they would face when they went out into the real world of work.

The acceptance by teachers, however, was not universal. Some were extremely supportive; others were slow to embrace the new system; and others were openly hostile.

The major lesson learned through this decade-long process is that ‘the authority that triggers the innovation should seek a broad consensus before starting a major innovation program, but should avoid renegotiating the fundamentals at the very end of the process (except of course in case of complete failure).’

Another lesson to be learned is that it is important to bring in external assistance in implementing reforms. In this case the cooperation of industry would have reduced the cost significantly.

In contrast to the advice of a previous speaker that the reform process should be ‘collaborative and consultative’ rather than ‘resolute and urgent’, the representative from Luxembourg believed that the process must be ‘both resolute and urgent AND collaborative and consultative.’

In terms of the Thai situation, only Thais can best say what is best for reform in the country. At the same time, the experience of other countries may provide important perspectives in this effort.

Questions and Comments

- How has the Luxembourg reform efforts been able to overcome the mindset of teachers unwilling to go along with the new approaches and try to make them work?

The procedure has been to first identify a certain number of teachers and try to work with them and involve them in the process from the outset. The next phase is to have these teachers assist in the training of colleagues through pilot projects. This has proven to be efficient when the basic acceptance is there. In some cases it has not worked well; for example with the electrical and electronics teachers. Nothing worked, even though 20% of the teachers were involved in the project. It hasn't worked well on the broad scale.

- Has Luxembourg attempted to develop instructional media for language learning?

In secondary school we are rather weak in using instructional media in secondary education, but there is a center for adult education that used instructional media for language learning on a broad basis.

- Is there a national language policy to respond to the multilingual situation in the country.

There is a national policy to maintain the Luxembourg language, which is mainly a spoken language. The bi-lingual policy is also important. In primary schools, Luxembourgish (closely related to German) and French are the official languages. German and later French are taught in the primary schools. In the secondary schools other subjects are taught in the two languages. There is some discussion about when and how to introduce English, which is normally introduced in the 8th grade. But agreement has not been reached as to the optimal time to introduce the teaching of English.

Presentation IV/2
Japanese Educational Reform after World War II

Mr. Kazufumi Yoshida

Director of Research, Planning, and Development
The National Institute for Educational Policy
Research (NIER)
Japan

Since the end of World War II in the mid 1940's, enrolment in secondary education has risen from 61.7% to 97.4% in 1998 and in higher education from 5.8% to 42% in 1998.

This increase is due, in large part, to a 1955 policy to promote upper secondary education and to promote the study of science and technology. The increase in secondary education, in turn, led to societal demand for increase in higher education and over the past two decades, Japan has been in a period of 'popularization of higher education.'

The improvements have not simply been quantitative, but qualitative as well, with the quality of teachers, school curricula, and textbooks also increasing.

And, while the Educational Ministry initiated many programs along these lines, they created both successes and problems.

Among the latter are the negative effects of cram education and intensified competition resulting in anti-social behavior among students.

Over the past two decades, the Ministry of Education has implemented education reform designed to: realize lifelong learning, strengthen the linkages between schools, home and society; respond to social elements, including those described above; and promote education in accordance with individual needs and capabilities.

Last year, the Educational Ministry instituted additional education reform, incorporating 17 proposals and 7 ideas. The most important strategy contained in this reform program is to make people realize the importance of education and the importance of education reform.

Accordingly, key Ministers and executives have traveled to 47 prefectures to speak at forums, town meetings, and seminars, and while there has been some opposition, the ideas have penetrated the entire nation.

The new reform program has advantages over prior reform efforts, particularly in terms of accountability to the public. When prompted to cite a key point of success from previous reforms, he observed that he really did not believe there had been great successes.

The new Prime Minister is focusing on ‘reconstruction without sanctuary,’ and disclosure of information, policy assessments, and accountability are among the most important measures for the new Japanese Cabinet.

Questions and Comments

- The Japanese education system creates quite a lot of stress among students. How is the government dealing with this issue and with the influence of the so-called ‘tutorial schools?

It is true that there has been a great deal of competition and a heavy workload for students. The government is trying to lighten this load by reducing the core curriculum subjects and to enable students to learn by themselves. The new comprehensive study program also seeks to encourage students to apply the knowledge they are learning in the core subjects in topics that interest them in their local areas; teachers are being trained to help students dig deeply into aspects of their communities, for example, the local history, geography, environmental problems, industry issues, etc. In this way they integrate the learning. At the same time, there are still standards and expectations for academic achievement. The challenge is to be sure there is a balance. As far as tutorial schools go, the efforts to reduce competition will reduce the importance of tutorial schools. But there will always be students who strive to enter the top tier universities, and they will continue to seek all opportunities to gain the

advantage. Japanese students continue to score well internationally in the TIMSS (the Third International Mathematics and Science Study). But the time spent by students in other countries is less. But for most of the students, the situation is changing.

- Has the matter of the university entrance examination been considered in Japan under the Rainbow Program? Because if there is no change in the examination criteria, the reform efforts will not succeed. It is difficult to describe the examination system in Japan, because it is changed so often. Entrance into public and some private universities is contingent on competing in the examination. It is rather complicated in the details. But there are efforts to give many opportunities to candidates.

The problem of competition has not been solved. Now that the birthrate is declining, perhaps in 10 years a university place will be available to everyone, if he is not choosy.

In closing the session, Dr. Chantavit noted that the experiences of the two countries have great value for the Thai situation. The 'Rainbow Plan' of Japan, to mobilize not only the schools, but the home and the community in a common effort to improve learning, is similar to the current strategy of educational reform in Thailand.

Panel V

Moderator: Dr. Chinnapat Bhumirat
Director of Policy Development
And Educational Management Planning
Office of the National Education Commission
Thursday 2 August, 2001

Presentation V/1

Setting the Stage for Real Education Reform
in Australia

Professor Dr. Brian Caldwell, Dean of Education,
University of Melbourne
Commonwealth of Australia

There is a widely held view that Australian education has had much change but little actual reform. Because of the 2001 national election, though, all three major political parties have now prioritized education in their policy.

The basis for much policy intentions, the Adelaide Declaration in National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (1999), calls for “all Australian students, everywhere, to become literate and numerate with the capacity for life-long learning that will lead to successful and satisfying work”. A ‘public good

test' seems timely, to measure the extent that the above intentions have satisfactorily met the expectations of Australians in regard to tests of access, equity, choice, growth, efficiency and harmony.

Although 70% of Australian students attend government owned and operated schools, their numbers have been decreasing, whereas the numbers in independent secondary schools, which also receive funding from the government, have been increasing. This seems to indicate that the expectations of many Australian parents for their children are not being fully realized in government schools.

In pursuing national reform goals, there has been considerable decentralization, particularly in Victoria, where 90% of the state's education budget has been decentralized, school charters are in place and the schools are held accountable through annual and triennial reviews.

Moreover, Australian Grade 8 & 9 students have performed quite well on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which has become an international benchmark in assessing the fit between government policy settings and student achievement. The analysis of Woessmann in Germany on the performance of 260,000 TIMSS students from 39 countries has revealed some controversial findings about TIMSS success requirements. The three most often cited requirements are (1) an increase in school autonomy; (2) less influence from teacher unions; and (3) improved performance assessment. Many education reformers see TIMSS as a significant link to school-based

management, in which local teachers have responsibly assumed the decentralized authority.

Nevertheless, closer scrutiny of Australian education reform reveals a serious retention problem among certain students (mainly boys, rural and indigenous) who are still ‘falling through the cracks’ before completing Grade 12.

Because the three intentions of access, equity and harmony are not succeeding as planned, a re-ordering of the Australian education reform priorities has become imperative.

But given the slowing Australian economy, a re-ordering of priorities, instead of an increase in education resources at the expense of other public sector services, may be necessary. Caldwell favors ‘knowledge management’ (pre-service teacher education and professional development programs, so that schools have the capacity to themselves improve the achievement of their students), and the balancing of innovation with the selected ‘abandonment’ of things that are either outdated, have a limited ‘shelf life’ or are inhibiting more promising approaches to future success.

Question

- Can you elaborate on the rationale for dividing the learning curriculum into 8 areas? And what areas were ‘abandoned’?

There is continuing discussion and debate on this. For about 20 years emphasis was placed on school-based curriculum development, but it became evident that there should be goals for education and key areas that served as the basis of the curriculum from a national perspective, because of a highly mobile population, and for the success of the nation as well. During a period of 10 years the goals were set out and schools began to adapt to the requirements. The knowledge society has set the challenges, as well as defined the areas that had to be adopted as well as those that would be abandoned.

Presentation V/2
Education Reform in Hong Kong:
Challenges, Strategies & International Implications
Professor Dr. Cheng Yin Cheong
Hong Kong Institute of Education
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China

Three major concerns characterize the reform efforts in Hong Kong: Effectiveness in teaching and learning; quality of education to meet multiple and diverse needs in society; and relevance to the future in an age of IT and globalization.

Hong Kong has tried meeting these concerns in three waves. The First Wave (1984-1996) stressed the methods and processes of teaching and learning (internal effectiveness). The Second Wave (1997-2000) has stressed the accountability of teaching and learning as they interfaced with shareholders' expectations, too often local and short-termed, which are largely influenced by economic and political changes. The Third Wave (2001 onwards) will be concerned with the relevance of education reform in meeting external/future effectiveness in a global world.

The first wave encountered drawbacks due to insufficient research support as well as too much ignorance of the processes and heterogeneity of individual schools. Despite an espoused policy

of both school-based management and the further training/ qualifications of teachers and principals by 2000, the results have fallen far short.

‘Intelligent’ was singled out as the chief of five constraints (intelligent, structural, social, political and cultural) which have prevented more success of the second wave. Listed under ‘intelligent constraints’ were the lack of a research and knowledge base; the lack of a critical mass of intelligence; the use of ‘part-time’ intelligence in policy-making; piecemeal, thin and repeating school-based intelligence; diluting intelligence in the professions; a disappearing bureaucratic intelligence; and the lack of intelligent platforms at both school and systems levels.

The presenter advocated a movement from a ‘tight-loose coupling theory’ [that encourages school autonomy within a clear accountability framework] to a ‘platform theory’ [that maximizes the existing knowledge and high technology of local and global networking]. The result should be a new paradigm of learning called ‘triplization’ (globalization, localization, and individualization) that fully utilizes the students’ ‘pentagon (technological, economic, social, political and cultural) intelligence’.

In closing, Dr. Cheng stressed that total effectiveness, quality and relevance were essential for Hong Kong to meet its long term, Third Wave reform in the new millenium.

Question

- How would you convert ‘cultural intelligence’ into ‘economic intelligence’? In terms of education reform, most decisions made are based on economic concerns. How can a balance be struck among the various aspects of intelligence?

It is very difficult to transfer the various types of intelligence. Education has the responsibility to ensure that students cannot be made redundant in their careers. The educational process must focus on making them adaptable, so they can take their competencies and adapt them to the demands of the society or the economy of any period so that they will not be made redundant.

Strategic Consultations

- Social Participation in the Process of Education Reform
- Knowledge Building in the Process of Education Reform
- Effective Evaluation in the Process of Education Reform
- Networking and Forming Cooperative Alliances for Education Reform

**Summation of the Discussions
in Parallel Room 1:
Sustainable Strategies of Education Reform**

The consultative sessions in Parallel Room 1 were designed to brainstorm strategies that have been, or might be, applied to particular aspects of educational reform. These were roundtable discussions that first allowed for identification of needs, and/or problems, related to the reform process, and then encouraged a sharing and discussion of strategies to address those concerns. Each session began with two brief presentations by carefully selected Resource Persons who set the topic for consideration and launched the discussions.

The four topics that were considered in the Strategic Consultation Sessions in Parallel Room 1 were:

- Social Participation in the Process of Education Reform
- Knowledge Building in the Process of Education Reform
- Effective Evaluation in the Process of Education Reform
- Networking and Forming Cooperative Alliances for Education Reform

Social Participation in the Process of Education Reform

The first session, ‘Social Participation in the Process of Education Reform’, began with an exploration of the idea of

consultation, both its important utility and its inherent dangers when overdone, or poorly planned. The session then touched upon a theme that the Strategic Sessions returned to in all four sessions, namely, the importance of including all stakeholders from the very beginning of the reform process. It was suggested that education reforms must be promoted through all means available, from public hearings on national policy to participatory inclusion at the grassroots level.

To address the need to actively include all stakeholders in the process of educational reform, the example of School Governance Boards in Korea was offered. These Boards were introduced in 1994 to facilitate parent's participation in school governance. They can exercise limited control over local budgets, and make decisions on curriculum and extra-curricular activities. In this way they seek to involve the grassroots: parents and teachers in local schools.

A further strategy from Korea was offered indicating the utility of having the Ministry of Education link their activities with other ministries, NGO's and other broad constituencies in order to 'maximize synergy and human resources' devoted to education. This strategy is aimed at policy-makers and national-level stakeholders.

Some other strategies to enhance social participation in the reform process that came out of the ensuing roundtables were:

- Alternative National Service: Using volunteers in the schools to help alleviate the pressures of the student/

teacher ratio;

- offer incentive packages and career paths to encourage capable people to enter the teaching profession;
- develop programs that attract parents to come to the school in order to promote lifelong learning and to develop avenues of communication with parents as stakeholders;
- outreach to business/industry for help in promoting the reform effort that will ultimately benefit them by upgrading the quality of the workforce of the future;
- explore the possibility of involving the religious community, the traditional providers of education, to help promote the reform effort.

These are just a few of the ideas that resulted from the Social Participation Session. But, some of them are quite innovative and worthy of further consideration.

Knowledge Building in the Process of Education Reform

The second Strategic Session, Knowledge Building in the Process of Education Reform, began by refining the question to be, “What Knowledge must a system acquire in order to implement an educational reform?” It was suggested that, for a reform process to be successful, every person in the country should be able to answer these three questions:

- 1) What is?...meaning, what is the current state of education,

- 2) What ought to be?...ideally what should our reform aim at achieving, and
- 3) What is possible?

Some of the suggested strategies that came out of the roundtable on Knowledge Building were:

- Develop young researchers, but remember to make full use of existing research;
- Promote performance-based evaluation;
- Utilize school-based and classroom-based research to build new Knowledge while involving teachers directly in the reform process and challenging them to hone their professional skills;
- Specifically target those closest to the grassroots of the reform;
- Establish Community Learning Centers where indigenous knowledge of the community can be gathered and disseminated to others, and where new knowledge, especially concerning education and the necessity of educational reform, can be made available to the community.

Effective Evaluation in the Process of Education Reform

The third Strategic Consultation Session was on Effective Evaluation in the Process of Education Reform. Because this topic is so wide-ranging, to focus the discussion, the roundtables

were asked to consider the following three questions:

- 1) What **MUST** educators and education authorities report; that is, what are the non-negotiable essential aspects of evaluation?
- 2) How can schools be assisted in the evaluation process?
- 3) How can evaluation ultimately support the reform effort?

To the first question above, the whole group consensus indicated that student achievement was the first non-negotiable point of evaluation, with teacher performance second.

Consideration of the second question brought to light the following possible strategies:

- Incentives, monetary or material, could be offered to schools for the quality of their evaluation process...REGARDLESS...of the overall result of their evaluation;
- The use of student and teacher self-evaluation should be encouraged;
- A Participatory Model of evaluation was suggested that would include students, parents, teachers, and other local community stakeholders;
- Clear and precise standards must be established at the national level to guide the evaluation process;
- It is important to keep the evaluation as simple as possible, identifying specific targets so as to lessen the time/work commitment necessary to conduct the evaluation.

The roundtables did not have sufficient time to delve into the final question posed above, “How can evaluation ultimately support the reform effort?” However, in the closing minutes of the session as groups were reporting the results of their discussions, there was understood to be an implicit relationship between evaluation and the reform process. It was clear that local evaluations were considered to be the most effective, and absolutely necessary means, by which information can be fed back to the policy level of the reform process.

Networking and Forming Cooperative Alliances for Educational Reform

The final Strategic Consultation Session on Networking and Forming Cooperative Alliances for Educational Reform first offered for discussion the difficulties incumbent in sustaining networks and institutional relationships that are based on personal interactions forged at conferences and seminars like this Forum. It was noted that too often such relationships, especially once they become institution to institution, dissolves when one of the primary contact persons retires or moves on to another job, thus necessitating the restarting of the entire process. The only suggestion offered was to encourage the formal signing of Memorandum of Understanding as an attempt to ensure the continuation of certain kinds of commitments. Other than that, it was simply agreed that this situation was frustrating and too often interrupted

or terminated previously fruitful relationships.

The session also was to consider how sustainable networks might be developed and maintained, and how cooperative alliances for educational reform might be forged involving institutions, ministries, NGO's, and/or international organizations. A few of the suggested strategies that participants put forth include:

- To maintain continuous contact and networking, for example among the participants to this Forum, by way of electronic means like a managed interactive Web-Centre. The idea is for the establishment of a powerful, multi-faceted, interactive WebCentre that will provide, among other things, interactive communication with colleagues throughout the network, continuous updating of information regarding the educational reform movements in different countries, discussions around current articles of interest, monthly 'live' lectures by leading authorities, including on-line Question and Answer sessions, and dissemination of information regarding educational reform according to various areas of specific interest, like, Higher Education, Vocational and Technical Education, Teacher Education etc. Such a Web Centre would need to be professionally monitored and modified on a daily basis;
- Establish links to domestic networks that already exist in order to facilitate direct communication between colleagues in different countries;

- Encourage bilateral cooperation among network partners around shared issues and specific projects with the understanding that we learn more about each other and each other's systems by working 'shoulder to shoulder' together than by simply meeting and talking;
- Promote grassroots participation through teacher study visits and action research in the classroom;
- Start with small groups around small, specific projects, that is, build from the bottom up;
- Expand the Thai Model Teacher Group idea as a means to counteract prevalent top-down influence. This selection and identification of model teachers has provided them with a platform from which they can gain access to policy-makers;
- Incorporate parents, students and teachers into a network along with policy-makers;
- Consider changing the current wording of the reform effort---perhaps the word 'reform' itself is too strong and off-putting. We need to learn from professionals in other fields, like marketing and politics: often it is not what one says that makes the greatest impression, but how one says it.

In all sessions a couple of themes were repeated over and over. Those themes were:

- 1) the necessity of selling, or marketing, the reform effort to all stakeholders, especially those at the grassroots level;

- 2) the need to include all stakeholders in the process from the beginning;
- 3) the need to build all aspects from the ‘bottom up’; and
- 4) a continuation of the discussion initiated by this First International Forum by both meeting like this and by way of an electronic network.

All in all, the Strategic Consultation Sessions in Parallel Room 1 were very successful, generating many interesting and valuable strategies and approaches to issues related to educational reform. Particularly encouraging was the ‘discovery’ that similar problems exist, or have existed, in nearly every country represented. It was also very helpful to learn that some countries have been able to solve some of these problems and difficulties, and the sharing of those kinds of successful strategies was a strong endorsement for future activities like this Forum. Lastly, it was universally acknowledged that there was a need and desire for a means of continuous interaction and networking to be established.

Roundtable Discussions

- Higher Education
- Vocational Education
- School-based Management
- Teaching Profession Reform

I. Roundtable Session on Higher Education

Chairman: Professor Dr. Adulya
Viriyavejakul, Thailand

Resource Person: Professor Sir Brian Fender,
The United Kingdom

The Chairman pointed out that Thailand was in the process of reforming and restructuring its education system at the national and institutional levels, and needed mechanisms to ensure the long-term sustainability of the restructured system. The discussion centered on two principal areas, the quality assurance of teaching and learning, as well as issues related to governance and management at the university level that are closely linked to autonomy and accountability.

The meeting discussed the needs of higher education in Thailand in the context of the four functions that universities are obligated to undertake; namely, teaching and learning, research, academic services to the community, and contributing to the art and culture of the country. The issue of how information technology will contribute to the capacity to teach was raised. In addition, issues related to the information gap (digital difference) were raised in terms of information access in urban areas and the lack of access in rural areas and the gap among countries in the region.

The participants also discussed the difficulties linked to the transition from teacher-centered to learner-centered teaching, which is now mandated by law in Thailand. This will require significant development and re-training of Lecturers. The focus of the retraining should be on strengthening the ability to teach and to identify and learn good practices to motivate students to learn. Issues related to incentives focused on adapting teaching to the diversified backgrounds of students by developing problem-based curricula, which results in the students being the center of the learning process.

Summary and Conclusions:

- Research on teaching and learning is necessary. Action research to improve pedagogy of the teaching profession should be undertaken by collecting research results, assessing the quality of the research, and disseminating research results.
- Teachers must be given incentives to change. Mechanisms should be developed for quality assurance based upon both teacher and student expectations, which have been arrived at through consultation.
- Teachers were expected to learn from society, from communities, business and industry. This element currently is lacking in the Thai education system.
- However, students also learn from one another, since students set the standards for learning among themselves.

- Mechanisms for disseminating best practices derived from research and student-teacher consultations include:
 - creating a fund to identify good practices implemented in universities and to support development and dissemination of the good practices;
 - establishing a club of collaborating universities to share experiences;
 - establishing centers to identify the specific needs of different disciplines;
 - providing information about quality assurance processes to both teachers and students;
 - informing students about what will be taught and information on how it will be taught.

Indicators for quality assurance of teaching and learning that were discussed included the following:

- benefits received by students
- accountability regarding the quality and outcomes of courses
- standard reporting mechanisms should be developed and include a report, but not a single number
- measure sustainability by undertaking cyclical assessments that will take into account changes

Solutions to constraints related to maintaining quality assurance include the following:

- engaging experts to address weaknesses
- removing students from bad educational experiences

- engage the private sector to assess teaching and research
- follow up to quality assurance assessments to ensure that issues raised are addressed
- establish an independent body to supervise the quality assurance program and to ensure accountability

II. Roundtable on Vocational Education

Chairman: Associate Professor
Dr. Chana Kasipar,
Thailand

Resource Persons: Mr. Peter Fleming,
Commonwealth of Australia
Dr. Jean-Paul Reeff,
Luxembourg

The principal question to be answered is whether Thailand has undertaken an educational reform process that is too ambitious. Thailand also should address the question of the acceptability of moving towards an ‘industry-driven’ education system. Formal linkages should be defined between industry and educational institutions, including the types of incentives that industry will require to ensure their long-term commitment to vocational education.

The core competencies for vocational education were identified as the following:

- language and communication
- mathematics
- science and technology
- problem solving

- cultural understanding
- personal and inter-personal relationships
- planning and organizing

Vocational education is having to adapt to the changing learning environment by adopting a holistic, project-oriented approach.

Australia restructured vocational education to be part of the post-secondary system, working in collaboration with industry to mold the curricula. However, teachers do not adapt easily to the changes, and pilot studies are underway to identify the most appropriate incentives to motivate teachers to work with industry. Stakeholders in the learning process must understand one another's needs and adapt accordingly.

Due to the slowness of government, some industries have established their own training institutes without any incentives from government. These institutes focus on specific skills required by individual industries. A representative from the private sector recommended that vocational training be integrated into formal training to ensure that core skills are taught along with technical knowledge. It was noted that although industry driven training is important, the rules, regulations, and policies used to govern the process must be clear.

Although some regional arrangements exist for certifying technical specialists and professionals in the Southeast Asian region, a program to disseminate these arrangements is necessary. UNESCO

and the International Labor Organization have been working on certification issues for nearly 20 years.

The discussants agreed that decentralization of quality control should be avoided. National quality standards should be maintained by all industries within a national framework agreed to by all stakeholders.

Summary and Conclusions:

- The private sector should be rewarded for providing skill training. More incentives are needed to motivate industry to become involved and to retain their involvement.
- If private sector training institutes meet government criteria, government should reward the firm.
- The government must be decisive when making changes or the reform and restructuring will fail.
- A process for assessing and certifying teachers should be developed jointly by the public and private sectors.
- A strategy proposed was to establish a small task force of people from government and industry, chaired by a representative from industry, with a majority of task force members from industry. The work should focus on establishing standards and certifying teachers and graduates. With a majority of members from the private sector, if the government moves too slowly, the task force can act with majority support from private sector members.

III. Roundtable on School Based Management

Chairman: Associate Professor
Dr. Uthai Boonprasert,
Thailand

Resource Person: Professor Dr. Cheng Yin Cheong
Hong Kong Administrative
Region of China

In the 1980's improvement of the teaching-learning process shifted a classroom focus to a rethinking of the school environment as a whole and to the organizational management of the schools. Many of the ideas for a new approach to school management came from business approaches. It was felt that granting greater autonomy to schools to change curricula, hire teachers, etc., would result in more effective solutions and better outcomes of teaching. The changes are both external (especially the relaxing of controls by central administration) and internal (new roles within the school hierarchy itself). Most countries are making efforts to reform education by changing from external structural control to decentralized school-based management to stimulate human initiative. The objective is to solve problems at the core by encouraging self-managing systems that give autonomy and freedom to schools, while letting them take responsibility for their situation.

School-based management is multi-level self-management that emphasizes two important elements, autonomy and flexibility, allowing schools and school personnel to develop themselves. School-based management is a mechanism for continuous development through the promotion of individuals and groups.

There are several challenges to school-based management, but the most difficult one seems to be the cultural challenge, which requires that all stakeholders share the spirit of school-based management. In countries such as Thailand, where authority figures are not challenged, where junior personnel defers to their seniors, there is often an unwillingness or inability to put forth opinions and assert one's beliefs on a subject. It is important to learn more about how the cultural context impacts the way changes take place; research should be undertaken in this important area. It is important to retain traditions and culture

School-based management is a technology that can be very effective if applied correctly, but the relationship between school-based management and cultural values and the resistance to change must be considered. It is also important that school personnel are accountable for the outcomes of student learning. The goal is to ensure that proposed reforms result in an improved environment for students to learn in the classroom and beyond the classroom. School based management seems to be occurring naturally in many private schools, where the government does not interfere with the operations, and the parents play an important role in the school activities. School-based management

must be linked to student-centered learning. It provides open-ended opportunities for people to participate in the reform process and it provides opportunities for formulating of new educational options for future generations in the new millennium. Its implementation allows the development of new educational aims that are relevant to the future.

Two examples of attempts at school-based management in Thailand were given. In one case, the progress seemed to be very slow, given the lack of preparation of the community members to assume their roles effectively, and the reluctance of the school administrators to share the responsibilities and the authority with other stakeholders. In another case, the move towards school based management seems to be moving more quickly. Personnel in many schools do not know very much about implementation of school-based management. The key is the understanding and readiness of the players - which must be accomplished through ongoing training, through clear communication and discussion to ensure understanding.

IV. Roundtable on Teaching Profession Reform

Chairman: Professor Dr. Somwung Pitayanuwat
Thailand

Resource Person: Dr. Hye-Sook Kim,
the Republic of Korea

The purpose of teaching profession reform is to improve the quality of teacher education in an effort to attract graduates and to revitalize the teaching profession. An essential element is the provision of teacher pre-service and in-service training that builds links between theory, learning, and practice. Strategies discussed that will facilitate reform and empower teachers include:

- increasing teacher salaries
- improving working conditions
- improving the teacher welfare system
- facilitating social esteem toward teachers
- reinforcing certification and employment standards

Obstacles encountered in the reform process include

- teacher resistance to reform
- the financing of government initiatives
- distrust of the government's commitment to reform.

Problems confronting professional teacher reform include:

- attracting high quality teacher candidates to the profession
- failure of quality control in teacher certification

- teacher supply and demand imbalance
- socioeconomic status and working conditions of teachers

Approaches to realizing the goal of a improvement of teachers:

- Teachers and government must be partners in the teacher reform process
- There must be a government commitment to facilitate reform. In the past government has been reluctant to finance reform.
- Teacher reform should include the development of a framework that allows teachers to reform themselves.
- On the issue of pedagogy versus content, the current trend is to place a new emphasis on how to teach.
- Teachers must be ready to serve as facilitators who guide students in developing themselves.
- School administration and management should give full support to teachers and supply what is necessary for teachers to facilitate student learning.
- Teacher requirements include a competitively high salary and adequate working conditions.
- Teachers should experience democratic participation in the workplace, giving them a sense of power over the curricula and school governance.
- A system of mentoring young teachers that would contribute to making them better teachers in the long-term.

Teacher reform strategies being tried by Thailand currently include:

- Although teachers must be seen as important actors in educational reform, it is not possible for teachers to reform themselves. Reform has a better chance of success only if teachers and parents work together with government officers and those in academia.
- development of a new salary scale for teachers
- licensing and certification of teachers
- upgrading teachers by supporting graduate studies
- guarantee job security and competitive salaries to attract good people
- reforming teacher education

Other strategies recommended include:

- lifelong learning through accumulated credit system by collecting credits to obtain teacher promotion and compensation; and
- establishing a national evaluation system for teacher training institutions to promote competition among institutions.

— Conference Summation —

Conference Summation

During the three days of the Forum educators from 13 countries exchanged ideas and experiences dealing with the challenges and issues relating to educational reforms taking place in this region and elsewhere in the world. The expertise and information shared with Thailand came from the experiences of twelve countries that are in various stages of their reform missions.

In his opening address Dr. Krasae Chanawong, Minister to the Office of the Prime Minister on Thailand, expressed his hope that this international forum would identify sustainable strategies for implementing the education reform goals here in Thailand and suggest concrete measures for future cooperation among the participants and the organizations they represent.

Over the three days, in the Keynote and Country Reports, specialists gave presentations describing their country's experiences with educational reform. In addition to their presentations, they also submitted papers that dealt with the topics in greater detail. It was unfortunate that the representative of the People's Republic of China was unable to join the proceedings. However his paper is available.

In their presentations the Keynote and Panel speakers tracked the reform process in the various countries and discussed, in some detail, the goals for education reform in each; the process of

implementation; achievements and failures; lessons learned; and barriers to reform. Thailand's reform mission can learn a great deal from these experiences.

Reform Issues Discussed include these:

- In the United Kingdom reform has been broad-based, but with particular focus on improving basic and intermediate skills of students during the compulsory education years and improving the quality of the schools at this level. Improvement of higher education, research, science and technology capabilities and the relationship between industry and education, as well as lifelong learning are other areas where significant reforms are taking place.
- Reforms in specific universities were discussed in papers from Korea and the United Kingdom
- The presentations from the six ASEAN member countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, as well as Thailand, identified similar sets of problems that reforms are being implemented to overcome, including:
 - inadequate delivery to rural population (particularly ethnic minorities);
 - modifying teacher attitudes and behavior, improving quality of the teachers and the teaching-learning processes;

- improving salaries and budgets;
 - linking education reform to overall government reform.
 - expanding ICT capacities and skills throughout the system, including both students and teachers
 - Thailand's reform issues also include expanding compulsory education to 9 years and decentralizing educational administration
 - Vietnam is also particularly interested in correcting the imbalance between skilled workers and university graduates, and
- Malaysia's efforts that include addressing the population's need for lifelong education through digital global learning, greater emphasis on science and technology, and the efforts to develop postgraduate studies and strengthen its research and development capacities.
 - In New Zealand problems of reform are similar to the forces at work in Korea and Malaysia, particularly the need for lifelong education, the need to share education with everyone, not just the elite.
 - Japan's education system has moved from a 'top-down' approach to a system in which the national government identifies curriculum standards and supports local education efforts.
 - The representative from UNESCO-PROAP, Mr. Zhou Nan-Zhao, also provided valuable perspectives on the Asian experiences in the reform of education systems.

Barriers to Implementation of Reform and Lessons Learned

The road of reform is not an easy one to tread. All of the countries participating in the forum have experienced problems and barriers. We can learn a number of lessons from their experiences:

- The experience of reform in Victoria, Australia, has been echoed by other speakers throughout these 3 days. Two of the most important points garnered from the reform efforts are that
 - a collaborative and consultative approach is needed to make sure the public and the teachers will give their long-term support, and that,
 - instead of attempting education reform as part of a ‘sea change’ in a society, it may be more feasible to focus on priority areas
- The one theme that continued to emerge in so many presentations was the need for the commitment of the political leadership (at the highest levels) to embrace educational reform so as to ensure high-level ownership of the reform process as a critical step toward successful reform. The success of the Victoria efforts exemplifies the power of a committed leadership.
- There must also be continuity. The representative from Korea noted that it is necessary to make education reform

a national agenda that should not be turned into a political football to be dropped or sidelined whenever the players on the field change.

- Another theme that was repeated again and again was the need to establish a consensus among stakeholders, particularly teachers. In Korea, because the reform efforts tended to be top-down and designed by an elite who treated the teachers as an obstacle to reform rather than partners in the reform, the teachers withdrew their support. This reluctance is similar to problems cited in other presentations. The Luxembourg reform process in vocational education has also met with mixed results. Teachers have not universally embraced these innovations. In England many of the new requirements of the reform is seen by the teachers as being burdensome. One conclusion from the Luxembourg report that is mirrored in the other presentations suggests the need to seek broad consensus prior to implementing reform, and once consensus is achieved, the fundamentals of reform should not be renegotiated.
- One of the most important lessons learned was the danger of underestimating the costs and time investment for the educational reform process.
- A basic tenet of reform is that a well-designed and executed approach to implementation is crucial to its success. This approach must be flexible to respond to unexpected changes during the implementation period.

Roundtable Discussions and Strategic Consultations

During the conference many participants attended group meetings that focused upon particular issues of reform. These groups were asked to identify key strategies for successful reform outcomes and to recommend practical and achievable means of continuing the dialogue that has been begun here. Roundtable discussions involved Higher Education, Vocational Education, School Based Management, and Teaching Profession Reform.

In the Roundtable Session on Higher Education the discussion centered on two principal areas: quality assurance of teaching and learning; and issues related to governance and management at the university level that are closely linked to autonomy and accountability. A number of recommendations have come out of that session, including the development of mechanisms for disseminating best practices derived from research and student-teacher consultations, identifying indicators for quality assurance of teaching and learning; and suggestions on overcoming constraints related to maintaining quality assurance.

The Roundtable on Vocational Education Reform pondered the questions of whether Thailand has undertaken an educational reform process that is too ambitious, and whether moving towards an ‘industry-driven’ vocational education system would be an acceptable approach. Such an approach would require incentives to ensure industry’s long-term commitment

to vocational education. A number of recommendations were put forward. One strategy proposed was to establish a small task force comprised of government and industry representatives, chaired by a representative from industry, with a majority of task force members from industry. The work should focus on establishing standards and certifying teachers and graduates.

The discussion on School-based Management considered this means of improving the effectiveness of schools and the learning experience. Most countries are making efforts to reform education by changing from external structural control to decentralized school-based management to stimulate human initiative. School-based management, which emphasizes autonomy and flexibility, is an approach that can be very effective if applied correctly, but the relationship between school-based management and cultural values and the resistance to change must be considered. School-based management must be linked to student centered learning. There are several challenges to school-based management, but the most difficult one seems to be the cultural challenge, which requires that all stakeholders share a spirit for school-based management.

The roundtable discussion on Teaching Profession Reform focused on the need to provide pre-service and in-service training that builds links between theory, learning, and practice. Important issues highlighted during the discussion included the notion that teachers and government must be partners in the teacher reform process. It is important that government facilitate reform. One measure proposed is a system of mentoring young teachers that

would contribute to making them better teachers in the long-term. On the issue of pedagogy versus content, there is a new emphasis on how to teach. Strategies discussed that will facilitate reform and empower teachers include:

- Increasing teacher salaries, working conditions and welfare
- Reinforcing certification and employment standards, and
- Improving the education administrative system to provide specialized professional support for teachers.

Another set of meetings, organized as Consultation Discussions, came up with some interesting strategies and recommendations for reform issues including social participation, knowledge building, effective evaluation and approaches for further cooperation. The sessions were active and productive, and a number of recommendations came out of these discussions.

Some of the strategies to enhance social participation in the reform process included:

Social Participation

- Alternative National Service: Using volunteers in the schools to help alleviate the pressures of the student/teacher ratio;
- Incentive packages and career paths to encourage capable people to enter the teaching profession;
- Lifelong learning programs for parents and stakeholders, and the development of avenues of communication with them;

- Outreach activities to business and industry for help in promoting the reform effort;
- Involving the religious community to help explain the necessity of reform.

Knowledge Building:

- develop young researchers, but remember to make full use of existing research;
- promote performance-based evaluation;
- utilize school-based and classroom-based research to build new knowledge
- involve teachers directly in the reform process and challenge them to hone their professional skills;
- particularly target those closest to the grassroots of the reform;
- develop Community Learning Centres

Effective Evaluation in the Process of Education Reform

- In this session all agreed that student achievement was the non-negotiable point of evaluation, with teacher performance second;
- Incentives could be offered to schools for the quality of their evaluation process...REGARDLESS...of the overall result of the evaluation;
- Student and teacher self-evaluation should be encouraged;
- Participatory models of evaluation should include students, parents, teachers, and local community stakeholders;

Clear and precise standards must be established to guide the evaluation process;

- Keep the evaluation as simple as possible, identifying specific targets so as to lessen the time/work commitment necessary to conduct the evaluation.

Some of the strategies put forth in the Strategic Consultation Session on ‘Networking and Forming Cooperative Alliances for Educational Reform’, include:

- Keep continuous contact and networking by way of electronic means, for example a managed interactive Web-Centre;
- Establish links to domestic networks that already exist;
- Encourage bilateral cooperation among network partners around shared issues and specific projects to work ‘shoulder to shoulder’ together rather than by simply meeting and talking;
- Promote grassroots participation through teacher study visits and action research in the classroom;
- Start with small groups around small, specific projects, and build from the bottom up;
- Expand the Thai Model Teacher Group as a means to counteract prevalent top-down influence;
- Incorporate parents, students and teachers into the network with policy-makers;

Themes and strategies were repeated over and over in these sessions were:

- the need to sell, or market, the reform effort to all stakeholders, especially those at the grassroots level;
- the need to include all stakeholders in the process from the beginning; and
- a continuation of the discussion initiated by this First International Forum by both meeting like this and by way of an electronic network.

Evaluation of the
First International Forum on
Education Reform: Experiences of
Selected Countries

Evaluation of the
First International Forum on Education Reform:
Experiences of Selected Countries

This first international forum on education reform must be considered successful from a number of aspects:

Participation from the Thai Education Sector

The pre-forum publicity generated a participant list of well over 300 educators and other stakeholders from throughout the country, a large number of whom hold high level positions and responsibilities for policies and planning for education. It is noteworthy that these senior officials and advisory personnel participated in a number of sessions over the three days, and did not merely attend the opening and closing sessions. It was also gratifying to note the large number of teachers and administrators, not only from the university level, but from the schools as well. These individuals participated actively in the sessions with a number of questions and comments posed by these hands-on professionals. Members of the business sector also participated in some of the sessions, and their input was very valuable.

The availability of translation into Thai was a very valuable service and ensured that the language barrier was not an obstacle

to understanding. This should be a feature of future programs, and should be announced in advance to ensure that those who are hesitant to take part in an international conference will be comfortable in participating.

Preparation for the Forum

The organizing team did a very good job of setting expectations and guidelines for the forum program, and communicating them to the speakers. Letters explaining the objectives, the approach and other matters aided presenters in planning their papers and presentations. They knew what to expect well in advance of the conference, which contributed to the high quality of the information presented and the consistency with the planned program. This is an approach that should be continued and further refined in future programs.

Invited speakers

Speakers and invited resource personnel were well-prepared, and most presented papers of relevance to the theme of the conference. The sessions produced a wealth of information, some primarily background or historical in nature, but a significant amount of useful and relevant points that relate to Thailand's own reform activities.

Many of the speakers in the main sessions were given responsibilities in the small group sessions as well. The involvement

of the speakers in the roundtable sessions during the conference was an excellent idea, and enabled these experts to provide valuable input beyond their prepared presentations. This worked very well, and should be a feature of future conferences.

Organization of the Conference

The program was well organized, and given the rather short lead time for an international meeting, pre-conference arrangements seem to have gone smoothly. It was noted that the need to rely on embassies and international organizations for speakers led to delays in confirmation of availability. Perhaps giving deadlines for confirmation to the liaison personnel could help to keep the schedule on track.

In any event, most of the documentation was received in a timely fashion, and enabled the written papers of the panel presenters to be distributed prior to the conference. It was interesting to note that the keynote presentations were not similarly ready for distribution in advance, and in some cases were not distributed at all. Power point handouts for some of the presentations were difficult to acquire, as the number of copies was not always adequate for the participants.

The preliminary meeting of speakers and moderators prior to the forum opening ceremonies was an excellent idea, and went far in ensuring that the program proceedings went as planned. This meeting also served to bring the presenters together to get to know one another. It is unfortunate that few of the

moderators were able to attend. If the session could have been attended by all or at least a majority of the moderators and speakers, it would have been possible to get together in the panel groupings of the conference to go over the plans for the session. Even without this session, however, the preliminary meeting was a useful activity.

Organizing several roundtable and small group discussions was an excellent approach to involving participants more actively. However, there were not enough small groups for the number of participants.

The Program Itself

The program addressed issues of reform broadly and from a number of perspectives. The speakers talked about issues that were related to the reforms being implemented in their countries, and the country-by-country approach may have resulted in the identification of too many issues that, of necessity, were treated too broadly and in too little depth. The small group sessions did attempt to focus and provide in-depth treatment on a few themes, but the discussions did not comprehensively include the concrete experiences of a number of countries on that issue.

The keynote presentations did not really differ from the panel presentations, and did not set the focus for the following panels. Normally, a 'keynote' presentation will introduce a theme or emphasis for discussion, and related panels will consider the topic in greater detail.

In a number of sessions, questions were invited only at the end of the period. It would have been better to encourage questions immediately following both keynote and individual panel presentations, to enable greater interaction on the part of the audience. Keeping the formal presentations strictly within the time limit ensures that there is time for participation from the audience. At the same time, it should be made clear that comments from the audience must be kept short to enable input from several voices.

The Social Programs

The pre-conference and evening programs arranged for speakers and selected conference participants were useful in bringing people together, and by the time the conference ended a number of good contacts were made for future communications.

Venue for the Conference

By and large, the venue was well selected, although the facilities were perhaps a bit too crowded for the large number of participants. The room for the Roundtable Sessions was too small for the number of participants interested in joining the discussions. It would have been useful to have additional rooms to break the roundtable sessions into smaller groups.

The sound system in the main hall and the lighting and temperature control in the room where the Roundtable Discussions

were held could have been better, but did not create serious problems.

With the large number of participants, either several more food tables should have been set up, or the service should have been provided to the tables. By the last day, however the hotel had got it right.

Follow-up

The interest expressed by several of the foreign resource persons in continuing their association and in establishing closer links with Thailand's reform efforts bodes well for continued dialogue and cooperation of these specialists.

A major objective of the conference, mentioned again and again, was to establish a network for education reform among the countries and organizations represented. The conference participants concurred with this idea. The Office of the National Education Commission offered to host the network. To maintain the momentum, this task should be begun as soon as possible. An important first step in this endeavor would be to develop a database and electronic mailing list of the participants. It would be desirable to establish a Web Site, with a bulletin board and chat room capacity. A report of this Forum, along with the country papers, should be posted on the site. But the site should not be a static location for documents. If it is to be a true network, there must be a rationale for involving busy people on a regular basis. One way to kick off this network would be to set a series of tasks to be accomplished.

For example, the Web Site could gather input from the network members on specific aspects of reform, setting a topic for discussion each month and inviting brief responses, references to papers, reports, and other sources of detailed information about that topic. A sample topic might be, ‘bringing teachers into the reform process’. Some questions might be listed that could be responded to either briefly or at length, with a time limit set for responses, after which time these responses would be gathered and a short paper prepared on the topic from the findings and the discussions. A second round of input on that topic could be invited after the report was posted on the Web. Input of this type would be relevant to the needs of Thailand, and provide a wealth of specific information and ideas.

Observations

In terms of the value of the briefings to the Thai situation, there was much that was relevant and applicable. While several speakers cautioned that reform is culture and situation specific, and that an approach seen as appropriate for one country may not fit the context of another country, there was still much of importance to compare and contrast. A number of speakers touched upon issues that parallel the Thai priorities, and their input should be considered carefully by policy makers and those implementing reform in Thailand.

In some countries, recent reform efforts have been underway for only a few years; it may be too early to draw conclusions

about their success or failure. In other cases, country representatives were able to share the lessons learned, and these are important for the Thai context - particularly the common themes sounded by so many speakers about the need for continuity of political commitment and leadership, the importance of dialogue and consultation among the stakeholders, particularly teachers, and the dangers of attempting changes that are too rapid and too sweeping.

It is clear from several presentations that the central governments play a critical role in originating, driving, and implementing reform, regardless of the trends toward school-based management in most of the countries represented at the conference. It is interesting to note the common experiences of some countries, which have found that the move toward school-based management has had little, if any, impact on the improvement in the quality of education unless other factors, such as the involvement of teachers in implementing the reform components, are accomplished concurrently. This is a sobering thought for those who believe that decentralization of authority alone will produce the quality of education so strongly desired.

Recommendations for future programs of this nature

- The issues have been set out in this forum. Given the importance to Thailand of the success of its education reform efforts, future meetings based on a continuation of this focus are useful and appropriate. A logical next step would be to select one of the

sub-topics of this forum, narrow the scope of the topic, and seek in-depth examination of all aspects of it. There are many issues that would be appropriate for further discussion; for example, engaging teachers in the reform efforts, curriculum changes at each level; the mechanisms used in implementing reform; community involvement in education, etc. These issues were mentioned in the presentations of many of the speakers, but only briefly. A full treatment of each topic from many perspectives would provide more in the way of concrete approaches and strategies of implementation that might have relevance to the Thai situation.

- Work should begin as soon as possible to organize the International Network for Education Reform. Many of the participants expressed interest in participating in such a network, and a quick response to this interest will be effective in keeping these individuals involved in the idea. Suggested ‘first steps’ have been discussed under the section, ‘Follow-up’, above.
- Set keynote presentations to serve as the thematic topic for discussion during the session or during the day, and arrange panel discussions so that they continue the topic theme in greater depth.
- Increase the number of small discussion groups to encourage participation, and set tasks to be completed by each group during the course of the conference.
- On a consistent basis, provide time for audience participation following keynote presentations and each panelist, rather than

waiting for the end of session. A general question/answer period can be set at the end of each session, but it is useful to invite audience reactions and questions immediately following the presentation. Two hours is a long time for the audience to sit without being invited to comment, ask questions or otherwise provide input.

- Be certain that speakers keep to the subject they have been asked to prepare, and that they keep within the time limit set. The procedure of supplying clear outlines and guidelines well in advance of the date is a good way to assist speakers in planning their presentations, and should be continued..
- Encourage moderators to review the guidelines with the presenters about the time to be used, and the points they should address. Moderators can ask questions following the presentation aimed at eliciting the points that were not covered.
- To facilitate networking, the names and addresses of participants should be made available upon registration, or at least within the first day of the meeting. This can be done by having computers available at the registration table to add or update the list of participants. A final list should be made part of the proceedings or placed on the Web Site for reference as soon as possible.
- It would be useful to engage the Thai participants as well as those not able to attend the forum in follow-up activities, perhaps by organizing review sessions in various provinces where one or more of the topics could be examined in depth.

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