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Thammasat University
Issues and Future Challenges for Thailand

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
HUMAN RESOURCES INSTITUTE

1995 Budget: Are the People Better Off?

Towards the 21st Century

by
Dr. Chira Hongladarom, Executive Director, Human Resources Institute, Thammasat University.

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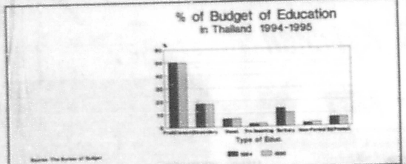
Here are some of the statistics and subjects discussed and interpreted at the seminar:

- About 35% of the national budget is allocated to human resources in the form of education, health, labour, training, social welfare and housing.
- Too much of the education budget is allocated for primary education (50%), and too little for vocational training (6%) Even less is allocated for adult education. By comparison 30% of Malaysia's education budget is allocated to vocational training.
- Of the Ministry of Labour's ฿8 million budget, less than 10% is allocated for skills development, whereas ฿10 billion would be more realistic.
- A representative of the Finance Ministry expressed strong support for tax incentives to encourage the private sector to conduct more training.

I hope all the concerned agencies - The Ministry of Finance (MoF), Budget Bureau, Bank of Thailand (BoT) and the NESDB will take a hard look at the budget to see if it achieves the desired objectives. For the moment, I doubt this is the case.



Dr. Chira: [illegible]

Dr Paichit Pawabutr, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health:

[illegible]

When the budget comes through we allocate it to the doctors who represent the ministry so that it finds its way directly to the people. However, we suffer from an acute shortage of personnel. Whereas we need 10,300 doctors, we have 40% fewer; 5,700. And whereas we need 56,000 nurses, we have about 50% fewer; 28,000.

Since we want to improve our human resources both quantatively and qualatively we have now established a personnel development institute and planning office to work with universities towards achieving both objectives.

Dr. Chira: How can the MoE succeed in producing more qualified people without sufficient budget?

Mr. Chao Attamana, Director of the Education Project Division of The Budget Bureau:

The first consideration is that for every ฿10 of budget we spend ฿4 on actual personnel training.

The second consideration is that whereas in 1980 the increase in the number of civil servants was limited to 2%, during the Anand administration there was no increase at all, and now H.E. Chuan would like to actually decrease the number of civil servants so that the most capable people get more, as happens in some of our neighbouring countries.

The third consideration is that with the overall objective of enhancing the quality of life the Government has broken the budget down into four sections;

1. Education - comprising MoE, MUA, local government offices, border patrol police and a small amount to the military.
2. Health-MoH, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, local government offices and a small amount to the military.
3. Personnel development - civil service, including Institute for Civil Service Development and other government agencies which train their own staff.
4. Institute for Skills Development (MLSW).

However the budget is not utilized efficiently and 10% is not utilized at all. There are further questions as to whether the money is actually used for the stated purpose and whether the right people receive the benefits.

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Dr. Chaovalit [illegible], Director of the Policy and Financial Institution Division of the Ministry of Finance:

[illegible]

Dr. Chira: [illegible]

Mr. Phanurat Rattrayapart, Acting Head of the Educational Policy and Planning Division of the Office of the National Education Commission:

Looking at what is being done, we may note the important differences between the 7th and 8th NESDP as follows:

- The expansion of compulsory education to secondary level.
- Identifying fresh strategies for development in response to the present conditions.
- Introducing HR projects into work plans.

But while the MoE's budget for 1994 was ฿121,646 million or 19.46% of the total, in 1995 the budget of ฿134,33 million accounts for only 18.79%. That means that as a proportion of GDP education is actually getting less.

Dr. Pairote Sooksamrit, Policy and Planning Analyst at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare;

With over 30% allocated to HR this looks impressive until you look more closely and see that while the 12 million people involved in formal education get most of the budget, only ฿3,000 million or 3% of the Education budget is allocated to non-formal education where far more people could be helped. This is something that the Ministry of labour could look at.

The problem is unskilled labour. Of a population of 58 million, the workforce comprises 34 million, but 81.6% haven't gone beyond primary education.

We should set the budget in a manner that will achieve our objectives. Although we propositioned the Budget Bureau they only gave us 40% (฿8,169 million) of what we need. However we were still quite happy because it amounted to 1.1% of total budget which compares favourably around the region.

We devote ฿609 million, or 7% of the ministry's total budget to tackling the problem of unskilled labor, but this is a small amount compared to the task. 88% of the ministry's budget (฿7,000 million) is allocated to health and social security, which I think shows how the Budget Bureau gives a higher priority to today's problems than long-term development.

Bangkok Post สยามโพสต์

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ดร. จีระ หงส์ลดารมภ์
ผู้อำนวยการสถาบันทรัพยากรมนุษย์
มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์

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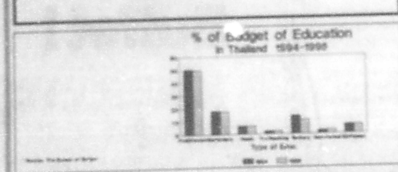

ดร.จีระ: [illegible]

ดร.ไพจิตร ปวะบุตร ปลัดกระทรวงสาธารณสุข:

[illegible]

ดร.จีระ: [illegible]

คุณชวฎ์ อรรถมานะ: [illegible]

ดร.เชิดชัย ขันธ์นะภา [illegible]

ดร.จีระ: [illegible]

คุณภานุรัตน์ รัตรยาภาส [illegible]

ดร.ไพโรจน์ สุขสัมฤทธิ์ [illegible]

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