

Independent Study : People's Participation in Implementation of the Integrated Pocket Area Development Project in Mae-Cheam District, Chiang Mai Province.

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Abstract

The Integrated Pocket Area Development Project (IPAD) in Mae-Cheam District is one of several highland development projects which receive financial support from foreign countries. The broad objective is to reduce opium cultivation and to improve the quality of life of people living in the project area. The IPAD differs from other highland development projects in that it targets a specific operational area and is implemented by the existing government bureaucracy at provincial and district level. The success of the program at all levels is dependent upon the individual civil servants who assume the responsibility for its implementation.

It is evident from the circumstances thus far that project implementation affects impacts heavily on the lives of those living

in the target area. Yet, the people have no opportunity to participate in the implementation.

This research examines the opportunity for public participation in the implementation and operation of the IPAD in Mae-cheam district. It is hypothesized that the project failed to meet its objectives due to the lack of target population participation in project activities and program formulating in the annual planning.

The study found that various implementing officials, along with the Tumbon Chief, and Village Chief, dominated the implementation process. This left no role for the people who felt the direct effects of IPAD and were the target of the program's objectives. Additionally, the activities proposed by the people were not incorporated into the agenda and budget for the annual implementation plan. These proposals were received with general lack of interest by the implementing officials.

Moreover, there were no steps taken to increase and to encourage public participation in program implementation. In fact, every aspect of the program placed the target population exclusively in the role of "receiver". This caused the target population to have a "negative attitude" towards the program. Their enthusiasm for participation and their level of cooperation with the program's objectives diminished steadily.

The final result was that IPAD achieved limited results in improving the people's quality of life and reducing opium cultivation.