

TH  
301.35  
K44

PN-AAH-105  
3

GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR THAILAND'S RURAL POOR:  
A SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A Report Prepared under USDA Contract No. 53-319R-9-138  
for the Office of Rural Development and Administration,  
Bureau for Development Support, USAID/Washington and  
for USAID/Thailand

by

Charles F. Keyes  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington 98195

August 1979

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction . . . . .	2
2. Policy Basis and Antecedents of the Provincial Development Program . . .	3
3. Sociocultural Feasibility of the Provincial Development Program . . . .	8
4. Impact of the Provincial Development Program on Rural People . . . . .	18
5. Villagers' Role in the Provincial Development Program: Some Conclusions . . . . .	40
Summary and Recommendations . . . . .	48
Appendix: Chronology of Trip to Thailand, July 15 - August 10, 1979 . . . .	53

## 1. Introduction

In this report I provide an assessment of the social impact of the Provincial Development Program, a program instituted by the Thai government in 1978, on the rural poor of Thailand. USAID/Thailand has identified this program as a potential focus for project support with reference to its strategy to develop projects which promote developmental benefits for the rural poor of the country and which promote increased involvement of this sector of the populace in the developmental process.

While I focus on one current development program of the Thai government in this report, this program can be adequately understood only if it is viewed within the context of the processes of political and economic change which have taken place in Thailand over the past two decades. Before travelling to Thailand to examine the impact of this program on Thai villagers, I spent considerable time in attempting to develop an understanding of this larger context. This effort involved both interviews in Washington, D.C. with various people who had had previous experience with developmental programs in Thailand and review of a portion of the existing large body of literature on this subject. It would not be feasible in this report to present a detailed interpretation of villagers' roles in the total development process of the past two decades, but I would note that this interpretation is presupposed in much of what I say. Where directly relevant, I make specific reference to the larger context of political and economic change in which the Provincial Development Program is situated.

This report is based on several types of information: (1) official statistics and reports issued by agencies of the Royal Thai Government; (2) results of interviews and observations made during a four-week stay in Thailand during which field trips were made to the South, the North, and the Northeast; (3) results of studies analyzing the impact of the Tambon Development Program, the direct antecedent of the Provincial Development Program; and (4) results of

previous researches on impact of development programs and on village-state relations carried out in rural Thailand (including the author's own research in northeastern Thailand). Despite the range of information which has been drawn upon in this report, I would emphasize that the report is preliminary because it is not based on the results of systematic research carried out in rural Thailand on questions of the social impact of the Provincial Development Program. While I feel confident that the conclusions reached in this report could be born out by such research, I would still recommend that a study be made which is directly comparable to that made on the social impact of the Tambon Development Program by a team from Kasetsart University, the National Institute of Development Administration, and ILO.\*

Although the Provincial Development Program is a national program, I will concern myself in this report primarily with the social impact of the program as implemented in northeastern Thailand and, to a lesser extent, in northern Thailand. My focus is dictated, in part, by the fact that if USAID were to create a project to support the program, funds will be provided primarily for activities to be carried out in the northeastern region with, perhaps, some attention given to the north. The rural areas of northeastern and northern Thailand have social and cultural characteristics which distinguish them from other rural areas of Thailand. Thus, not all conclusions reached about the social impact of the program in these two regions would necessarily be applicable to other rural areas of Thailand. In particular, I would draw attention to the fact that northeastern and northern villages are typically well-integrated communities in contrast to central Thai villages which are typically much more fragmented. Northerners and northerners also hold distinct ethnic/regional

---

\* The results of this study are interpreted in the report, Evaluation of the Tambon Development Programme in Thailand, by H. Poot. Bangkok: ILO-ARTEP (Asian Employment Program, Working Paper), 1979.

identities which condition their relationships with central government agencies. Poverty is also much more prevalent in the rural Northeast and the North than it is in other rural areas of the country. It is precisely this latter point that has attracted USAID attention to these regions.

## 2. Policy Basis and Antecedents of the Provincial Development Program

The Provincial Development Program (krongkan phatthana cangwat) was initiated by the Thai government in 1978 in accord with certain nationally-determined policies. The government of General Kriangsak Chomanan continued the policy instituted in the late 1950s and early 1960s to use government resources for the purpose of stimulating economic development in rural areas of the country. This policy has, however, been formulated in a rather different way than it was under the governments of Field Marshal Sarit Thannarat and Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn. The Kriangsak government has shown particular concern to use public financing for development projects located in rural areas which have benefited relatively little from the economic growth which Thailand experienced over the previous two decades. It is also a policy objective of the Kriangsak government to promote development through structures which facilitate the participation of local people in the determination of projects. Finally, in attempting to make the most effective use of government resources with reference to local needs, mechanisms to institute rational planning at the provincial level were instituted. While the policies relating to rural development under the Kriangsak government differ significantly in their formulation from those of the Sarit and Thanom governments, there is a marked consistency between these policies and those instituted under the government of M.R. Kukrit Pramo in the mid-1970s.

### 2.1 Rural Development Policies in Thailand From 1957 to the Present

Programs of planned change in rural areas in Thailand became a central concern to the Thai government in the period from 1957 to 1963 when Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat served as Prime Minister. The Sarit government made a fundamental

assumption that by promoting "development" (kanphatthana) the political "security" (khwammankhong) of Thailand would be ensured. Policy planning predicated upon a presumed linkage between development and security remained in force during the period between 1963 and 1973 when Sarit's successor, Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, was Prime Minister.

The development programs of the period from 1957 to 1973 were predicated upon the premise that the ruling elite of the country had a "fatherly" interest in improving the quality of life of the citizenry. The "father-benefactor" image is particularly strong in the speeches of Field Marshal Sarit, but it remained a theme in the political rhetoric of the Thanom government.

The actual rural development programs instituted under the Sarit and Thanom governments reflected both the development-breeds-security policy assumption and the paternalistic attitude of the leaders. There was a heavy concentration of government resources in those rural areas -- notably in northeastern Thailand -- which were deemed to have real or potential insurgency problems. The major rural development programs of the period -- Community Development under the Ministry of Interior, Mobile Development Units under the Ministry of Defense, and Accelerated Rural Development directly under the Prime Minister's Office and the major irrigation construction projects under the Ministry of Agriculture -- all were structured so that trained government officials were responsible for implementing programs which had been deemed by the government to meet the needs of the people. The role allotted to the rural people themselves was that of passive recipient.

The rural development programs instituted during the Sarit and Thanom period did succeed to some extent in effecting improvements in the living standards of some rural peoples. However, these improvements were quite modest in comparison to the improvements which came about as a consequence of the involvement of some villagers in the open market economy. Moreover, the improvements in the standard of living of rural people living in the areas in which government

development programs were concentrated paled in comparison to the improvements in the living standards of urban people -- particularly the people of Bangkok -- and even in comparison to the improvements in the lives of those rural people -- concentrated in the Central Plains -- who were well-situated to meet market demands. Finally, the development program instituted by the governments of Sarit and Thanom failed to eliminate the abject poverty of many sectors of the rural populace, particularly in the Northeast.

While the development impact of government programs instituted in rural Thailand in the period from 1957 to 1973 was quite limited, the objective of attaining greater "security" within Thai society through these programs was even far less realized. Armed insurgency persisted, and in some areas even intensified. Of far greater significance, increasing numbers of rural people became dissatisfied with many of the actions of the military dictatorship. Confrontations -- both legal and illegal -- between villagers, including those in areas where rural development programs had been instituted, and government officials intensified in the late 1960s and early 1970s. While these confrontations were eclipsed by the much more dramatic confrontations between students and the government, they were nonetheless highly significant. Rural activism indicated most strongly that many villagers no longer were satisfied with governmental paternalism, and particularly with a paternalism which did not entail substantial benefits.

The Revolution of October 14, 1973 resulted in the downfall of the Thanom government and the inauguration of a new period in Thai political history. While there remains a significant segment of the ruling elite which still adheres to the paternalistic development and security ideology of the Sarit-Thanom period, there has also emerged since the 1973 revolution another sector of the elite which is committed (albeit in varying degrees) to lessening the inequalities in wealth within Thai society and to a process of decentralization of power. Under the Kukrit and Seni governments and again under the Kriangsak government, policies have

been instituted which are predicated upon this new commitment. The success of these policies is hampered by a bureaucratic structure which in many of its critical components often functions to promote the interests of bureaucrats rather than those of the people and to provide services to the populace through paternalistic actions. The new policies have also stimulated resistance from members of the ancien régime who still continue to wield power. On the other hand, there are now some elements within the bureaucracy, particularly in <sup>the</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, which support the new policies and the political leadership provided under the Kukrit, Seni, and Kriangsak governments has succeeded in instituting a number of new programs which have been designed to further the objectives of helping the poor and effecting decentralization of power. The Provincial Development Program is one such program.

## 2.2 Policy Objectives of the Provincial Development Program

The policy basis of the Provincial Development Program is evident in the following summary of the objectives of the program as given by Vithya Siripongse, the Director of the Regional Planning Division of the National Economic and Social Development Board:

Pursuance to the Fourth (Five-Year) Plan strategies, local development planning in Thailand has added another important dimension of the bottom-up concept of planning "with" the people to the already established top-down process of "for" the people. This concept has three distinct socio-economic objectives; namely

- to meet the basic felt needs in the predominantly rain-fed rural areas where, for the past two decades, the people have long been denied the fruits of development,
- to provide adequate rural infrastructure and related productive inputs in order that they would be in a better position to help themselves, and
- to further enhance, on a step-by-step basis, capability of local self-governing bodies to become more responsive viable tools for integrated development in the rural areas.

With this conceptual framework in mind, the so-called "Provincial Development Plan" (in the form of the Provincial Development Program) has emerged as a desirable bottom-up process within the context of the Fourth Plan Development strategies.

---

\* Vithya Siripongse, "Development of Local-Level Planning in Thailand,"  
n.p., n.d.

The Provincial Development Program has its roots in the Tambon Development Program of the 1960s (also known as the sapha tambon program and the "Developing Democracy Program" in USAID literature) and particularly the Tambon Development Program or the "Local Development and Rural Labor Assistance Program" instituted in 1975 and 1976 under the Kukrit government. Indeed, it is clear from both public statements on the part of the Thai government and from the similarities between the Tambon Development Program and the current Provincial Development Program that the present program is a direct successor of the former. In the intervening years between 1976 and 1979 many projects of the type carried out under the Tambon Development Program and now under the Provincial Development Program were implemented under the aegis of drought and flood relief programs. As these programs were also administered at the provincial level, there has been considerable continuity in the rural development effort since 1975.

There are, nonetheless, some significant differences between the current Provincial Development Program and the Tambon Development Program:

- (1) The Tambon Development Program provided equivalent amounts of support for public works projects to all the tambons in the county regardless of population size, of previous development efforts, of income levels of the population, or of existing infrastructure. The Provincial Development Program has been constructed to provide support for projects in accord with criteria which take into account different population size and existing economic conditions.
- (2) The Tambon Development Program was funded at a much higher level than is the Provincial Development Program. The reduced funding apparently reflects a number of considerations. First, there has been concern that project funding be geared to what is referred to as the "absorption capacity" of the communities in which the projects are undertaken. Secondly, it was concluded that other development efforts (e.g., Rural Electrification, Community Development, New Village Development Program, etc.)

might be better suited to carrying out some types of projects which had previously been undertaken under the Tambon Development Program.

- (3) Priorities in determining funding for the Tambon Development Program had been rather ad hoc. Under the Provincial Development Program, priorities are supposed to be determined with reference to provincial plans and to the deliberations of a provincial planning committee.

The structure and administrative implications of the Provincial Planning Program have already been well laid out in some detail in the report of a team contracted by the Office of Rural Development in USAID based on study in Thailand in early 1979.\* In this report, I shall attempt to identify and interpret some of the social implications of the Provincial Development Program, particularly with reference to the rural people for whom the program is intended.

### 3. Sociocultural Feasibility of the Provincial Development Program

#### 3.1 Cultural Values and Rural Development

It is often asserted, both by Thai officials and by Western scholars, that villagers in Thailand are bound by traditional values which preclude their taking an active role in the development process. This assertion is clearly belied by the highly significant fact that a large proportion of villagers (as high as 70 to 80% of villagers above the age of 20 in some communities in northeastern Thailand) have left their home communities for periods of time to seek out wage-labor jobs in Bangkok, in other cities, and even in the distant south (where they work in tin mines, among other things.) This assertion is also belied by the fact that during the 1960s and 1970s local entrepreneurs (rice millers, truck owner-operators, commercial farmers) have emerged in nearly every village, including in the poorer northeastern region. Clearly, a significant proportion of villagers in Thailand demonstrate by their actions that they are motivated to seek to

---

\* Office of Rural Development, Development Support Bureau, Report of USAID

Team on Provincial Planning and Administration: Washington: USAID, March, 1979.

improve their material well-being in non-traditional ways.

It would lead me well beyond the scope of this report to demonstrate that there have been cultural processes which have led to many villagers embracing value-orientations which motivate them to organize their actions to produce future material improvements in their lifestyles.\* It is, nonetheless, essential that the conclusion of such a demonstration be known. In the first place, Thai Buddhism in even its traditional form does not lead people to adopt a fatalistic approach to action; positively stated, even traditional Buddhist values include an emphasis on actions which will lead to improvements in human welfare (in Buddhist terms, to a reduction in suffering). Traditional Buddhism, however, tends to place these improvements in a future life, being a result of "meritorious" actions performed in this life. Still today, every village in Thailand includes a number of villagers, even a majority in some villages, who tend to see their ability to effect improvements in their well-being as limited to actions ("merit-making") whose consequences will only be realized in a future existence.

Traditional Buddhism is not, however, the only source of worldview for villagers in Thailand today. A reformed Buddhism which emerged in the nineteenth century under the leadership of King Mongkut and his son, the Prince Patriarch Vajirañarorasa, has also been adopted by many in rural areas in Thailand. This reformed Buddhism lays much greater stress upon the freedom to act and to control one's actions for achieving goals in this life. Those who have accepted reformed Buddhism are much more likely than are their traditional neighbors to undertake efforts to improve their well-being in this life. In sum, the adherents to reformed

---

\* Some of this demonstration can be found in my articles, "Buddhist Economics in Action," Visakha Puja 2522 (Bangkok: The Buddhist Association of Thailand, 1979) and "Ethnography and Anthropological Interpretation of Thailand," in The Study of Thailand, ed. by Eliezar Ayal (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, Southeast Asia Program, 1978), pp. 1-60.

Buddhism are likely to set goals for themselves which translated into other terms might well be called development goals.

As a consequence of secular education (implemented in rural Thailand since the 1930s) and the modernist education of many monks, reform Buddhism has gained, and continues to gain, ground at the expense of traditional Buddhism in the villages of Thailand. Given the values of those who have become adherents of reformed Buddhism, it cannot be assumed that villagers have to be guided by more knowing, more sophisticated persons (i.e., government officials) to achieve development goals. On the contrary, given the growing number of villagers who seek to control, at least in some significant ways, their own destinies in this life, it is imperative that villagers throughout Thailand be involved as full participants in the development process. Concretely, this means that structural constraints to villager participation should be removed and new structures which accord the villagers a larger role in the development process should be created.

The implementation of the Provincial Development Program does not face any serious barriers posed by the values held by villagers. On the contrary, increasing numbers of villagers are strongly motivated to pursue development goals. The real question, in this regard, concerns whether or not such motivations are effectively drawn upon in the creation and implementation of projects under the auspices of the Provincial Development Program. The answer to this question cannot be found in the sociocultural characteristics of rural Thai society but in the character of the politico-administrative structure of the program. It is the structure which will determine whether or not the objectives of the program are coincident with the development goals of villagers.

### 3.2 Ethnic Factors in the Implementation of Rural Development Programs

Ethnic factors, particularly in northeastern and northern Thailand, will have some conditioning effect on the implementation of the Provincial Development Program. Most people in northeastern Thailand follow cultural traditions which are distinctively different to those of central Thailand. A large majority of

northeasterners see these cultural differences as manifestations of a distinct identity -- one they call Lao or Isan (the latter word meaning "northeastern"). There are also a few small segments of the northeastern populace who follow yet other traditions -- Kui (or Suai, related to Khmer), Phu Thai (a Tai-speaking group which traces its origins to a place in northeastern Laos), etc. While these other traditions are locally important (in the southern part of the region for Kui and in various pockets for the Phu Thai), it is the Lao or Isan identity which provides most northeasterners with their sense of cultural distinctiveness.

The Lao/Isan of the Northeast point to a number of cultural practices as markers of their identity: a distinctive language (actually a congerie of related Lao dialects), a distinctive diet based on sticky rice and fermented fish, a distinctive musical tradition which includes the music of the polyphonic pipe organ called the khaen and a type of singing known as mqlam, a distinctive set of Buddhist ritual practices, to name only the most obvious. The Lao/Isan are proud of their ethnic distinctiveness and sensitive to remarks and acts which they interpret as denigrating to their identity. In particular, they often feel (with considerable justification) that central Thai, and particularly Bangkok Thai, view Lao/Isan identity as that of backward countryfolk.

Ever since northeastern Thailand was fully integrated into Thailand at the end of the last century, a considerable tension has obtained between the Lao/Isan of the region and the central Thai officials sent to administer the area. Even today when many government officials in the region are actually northeastern in origin, many village-government official interactions are <sup>still</sup> strongly colored by ethnic overtones. The most successful government efforts in the Northeast have not been ones which have been only technically successful; they have also been ones in which the officials involved have shown respect for, or at least not denigrated, the ethnic identity of the people for whom the benefits of the project were intended. It still remains the case that any government-sponsored development programs

carried out in the Northeast must be implemented with sensitivity shown towards the ethnic distinctiveness of the people of the region.

Rural people of northern Thailand are also ethnically distinct from the Central Thai. The most distinct are, of course, the members of the various tribal groups -- the Karen, Hmong (Meo), Yao, Akha, Lisu, Lahu, Lawa, and so on. Yet, even the Tai-speaking people of the North hold distinct ethnic identities which distinguish them from other peoples of Thailand. The majority of Tai-speaking people in northern Thailand identify themselves as Khonmyang, people of the muang, i.e., the traditional principalities of pre-modern Thailand. Like the Lao/Isan, the Khonmyang also point to a distinctive language (called Kammyang in its spoken form, and Yuan in its written form), a distinctive diet also based on sticky rice and including a number of other distinctive dishes, a distinctive set of religious practices, and so on as diacritica of their identity. Like the Lao/Isan, the Khonmuang (who traditionally were lumped together with the Lao/Isan by the Siamese under the rubric of "Lao") also feel that they are viewed by the Central Thai as rather vulgar countryfolk. And like the Lao/Isan, the Khonmyang also often find their relations with Thai officials to be conditioned by their ethnic distinctiveness. Again, it is essential that development programs carried out in the North be structured to take into account the ethnic pride which northerners have in their distinctive identities

The ethnic identities of northeastern and northern villagers are conditioning factors in the implementation of the Provincial Development Program in the Northeast <sup>and the North</sup>. If projects are perceived by northeasterners and northerners as being the product of a noblesse oblige attitude on the part of Thai officials who consider themselves culturally superior to the northeasterners or northerners, then these projects are not likely to be successful even if they would produce an objective benefit for the villagers. To determine whether or not ethnic factors inhibited the implementation of the Provincial Development Program as carried out to date would require more

in-depth field work than was possible for me to do in the space of time I was in Thailand. However, I would note that evidence from a number of studies of which I am aware which have been made in the past two decades suggest that there has been a decline of ethnic tension in northeastern and northern villager-Thai official relations over this period. Such evidence notwithstanding, there remains a potential for resistance to government-sponsored development programs, including the Provincial Development Program, if villagers believe that officials involved in implementing the program are insensitive to the significance of Lao/Isan or Khonmuang ethnic pride or the ethnic pride of one of the other distinct ethnic groups in the rural areas of Thailand.

### 3.3 Rural Social Structure and Rural Development

Rural development programs, including the Provincial Development Program, are focused not on individual farmers or farm families but on rural communities. It is, therefore, highly relevant to have some understanding of the structure of these communities if the impact of a program is to be stressed adequately. If one reviews what is known about rural communities in Thailand,\* one finds that there is a striking difference between communities in northern and northeastern Thailand and those in Central Thailand (those in the South are divided between the two types). Those in the North and Northeast are typically ecologically separate from one another and are socially well-integrated around the local Buddhist temple-monastery and the cult of locality spirits. The government-imposed institutions of schools and administrative villages (muban) have tended to reinforce the solidarity of rural communities in the North and the Northeast. In marked contrast, rural communities in Central Thailand are typically not ecologically distinct but are arbitrary divisions of settlements lining canals, streams, or rivers. The congregations of temple-monasteries are typically not the same as the population

---

\* For references to relevant studies, see Keyes, "Ethnography and the Anthropological Interpretation in the Study of Thailand," op. cit.

of an administrative village and neither of these are the same as the population of the rural school district. Central Thai rural society has also been atomized by the long-term involvement of villagers in this region in the market economy. Typically, Central Thai villagers do not see their economic welfare as dependent in any significant way upon their interdependency with fellow villagers. In contrast, northern and northeastern villagers -- even those strongly oriented towards the market economy -- have a much greater sense of sharing a common economic destiny with their fellow villagers.

Given the differences between northern and northeastern villages, on the one hand, and Central Thai villages on the other, there needs to be a different strategy for implementing rural development programs in the North and the Northeast than in Central Thailand. For the most part, development programs instituted in the North and the Northeast have been predicated upon the assumption that rural communities are significant social entities. There are, nonetheless, a number of implications of this assumption which are not always taken into account. First, while northern and northeastern villagers are willing to undertake projects which have benefit for the whole community, they would prefer to define these benefits for themselves than to have them defined by outside government officials. A road project, for example, may be viewed by villagers as something which they need in order to facilitate travel to the market; sometimes, however, it is perceived as something which the government wants in order to make it easier for government vehicles to come to or pass through the village.

There are also some projects instituted under government-sponsored programs which while ostensibly for the benefit of whole communities actually benefit only a sector of the community. Small-scale irrigation projects typically have this effect. In such cases, it is hardly surprising that villagers who do not benefit from the project should be unwilling to participate in the project. Yet, there is not always sensitivity to this fact.

It should also be noted that while villagers, even in highly integrated

communities like those in northern and northeastern Thailand, are interested in promoting the commonweal, they also have individual and familial interests as well. Since most villagers throughout Thailand are dependent, to some degree, upon gaining cash income through the sale of their products and/or their labor, they look particularly favorably upon those community projects in which they are paid for their labor rather than donating it free. This preference is strongly marked in the cases where a project has been instituted by a government agency rather than by a village institution such as the temple-monastery. Too often government-sponsored projects which require the free contribution of significant amounts of village labor are viewed by villagers as a continuation of the traditional *corvée* system or of the pressed-labor policy utilized during World War II by the Phibun government.

There are throughout rural Thailand vestiges of many projects undertaken at government expense which have been rendered useless or inefficient by the lack of maintenance. Government officials often become quite annoyed by what they see as villager stupidity or uncooperativeness as manifest in the lack of maintenance of wells, irrigation dams, roads, and so on. The fact of the matter is that villagers often find themselves unable to maintain projects -- particularly if maintenance requires the purchase of materiel such as cement -- because of the lack of community funds. Typically, communal revenues are generated almost exclusively for the use of the temple-monastery because moral imperatives can be utilized in the collection of contributions from the constituent households of a village. Villages lack the institutional means to raise revenues for other purposes. The village is not a fiscal entity; neither is the tambon. Thus, there are no legal means whereby villages or tambons can raise revenues through the imposition of legally-recognized taxes. Similarly, neither the village nor the tambon has the legal capacity to raise money through loans. Maintenance funds can be raised in villages, if they can be raised at all, only by village

leaders persuading their fellow villagers to contribute voluntarily their labor or money. If villages and tambons were given the legal status of fiscal entities and were empowered to tax and raise money through loans, then it would be possible for local communities to maintain projects which have been funded from the outside.

#### 3.4 Sociocultural Feasibility: Some Conclusions

Thai villages have demonstrated over the past two decades that if an innovation has observable benefits and if it is susceptible of copying, then it will be adopted by as many as are capable of copying it. The dramatic spread in northeastern Thailand of kenaf and cassava production, the emergence throughout Thailand of hundreds, probably thousands of small village-based rice mills, and the establishment of village-based trucking firms clearly demonstrates that villagers, given the necessary resources, are anxious to adopt innovations which will lead to an increase in their physical well-being.

It is worth underscoring the fact, however, that almost all innovations that have been widely adopted by villagers and have had significant results in raising the standard of living of villagers have been ones which have not originated in government programs. This fact is not so surprising when it is recalled that the economy of Thailand is a free enterprise economy and not a command economy.

The most successful government-sponsored programs have been ones which have facilitated economic development rather than directly resulting in higher incomes for villagers or have been ones which have increased public services for villagers. Economically, one of the most successful government programs has been the creation of a system of highways and roads which has stimulated the flow of goods and people to and from markets. Government-provided education (although perhaps not at a level or of a type which was desired by villagers or even at a level at which the government was capable of providing) has increased the capacity of villagers to operate in situations outside of their home communities. Health services

(again perhaps not as much as might have been provided) have led to a reduction in death rates, enhanced the well-being of many villagers, and, most recently, effected a decline in birth rates. Unfortunately, not all government programs or policies have been so successful. Past government policies regarding the slaughter of beef and the marketing of pigs strongly dampened the growth of both beef and pig production in the Northeast during the 1960s. Government extension agents strongly discouraged the spread of cassava production because of information provided them which suggested that the methods of cassava production in use leaches the soil of nutrients. There is a third category of government programs and policies whose effects either as regards facilitating economic development or for increasing well-being through the public services have been only marginally positive or negative. Many projects sponsored under the auspices of the Community Development Program, the Tambon Development Program, and now the Provincial Development Program fall into this category. Such projects as repairs to roads, water tanks, small dams, and so on serve to maintain facilities which villagers use for economic purposes. They do not, however, add anything new to the capacity of villagers to engage in development activities.

In sum, there are no insurmountable sociocultural barriers to the introduction of development programs in the rural areas of Thailand. This does not mean that programs might not fail if certain sociocultural characteristics of rural society in Thailand, or in certain parts of Thailand, are not taken into account. Programs which depend for their success on communal cooperation must be predicated upon a realistic understanding of the structure of rural communities which are the target of the programs. Moreover, programs which are implemented by government officials who act in ways that demonstrate that they deprecate the ethnic differences found in northern and northeastern Thailand may engender resistance to their efforts. On the other hand, if programs are constructed with sensitivity to social structural and ethnic factors and if these programs create genuine

opportunities for villagers to improve the material quality of their lives, many, if not most, villagers throughout the country will act positively to take advantage of the opportunities.

The basic problem with rural development lies in the fact that opportunities open to villagers to improve their standards of living are unequally distributed throughout the country. At one end of the rural spectrum are those villagers in parts of Central Thailand who farm sizeable holdings of productive land, who can make use of irrigation facilities to produce multiple crops on the same land, who have sufficient capital to make it possible to invest in fertilizer, insecticides, improved seeds, and mechanized farm equipment, and who have ready access to markets. At the other end are those villagers, mainly found in the Northeast, who farm marginal land with a highly changeable and uncertain water supply, who lack all but a bare minimum of liquid capital, and who live far from markets. The villagers with significant economic opportunities can enjoy not only a better material standard of living, but can also afford to purchase better educational and health services than can those villagers whose economic opportunities are extremely restricted. The contrast is even more striking if one compares the situation of the rural poor with that of the wealthy middle and upper class living in Bangkok and other urban centers.

Government-sponsored rural development programs can be successful only if they function to increase the economic opportunities available to the disadvantaged sector of the rural populace. So long as serious differences in economic opportunities exist between sectors of the rural population and between rural and urban populations, then the disadvantaged sector will have a greater dependency on the government for provision of basic health, education, and welfare services.

#### 4. Impact of the Provincial Development Program on Rural People

##### 4.1 Organization of the Provincial Development Program

In 1977, in conjunction with the process leading up to the formulation of a

strategy for the Fourth Five-Year Plan in Thailand, each province in the country prepared a provincial five-year "plan" -- in actual fact, a compilation of projects which provincial development committees (kammkan phatthana cangwat, also called provincial planning committees in English) deemed worthy of support. Most of the proposed projects subsumed in these plans, insofar as I was able to ascertain, were forwarded to the province by district officers. The district officers, in turn, had gathered proposals from tambon development committees (kammakan phatthana tambon) and/or tambon councils (sapha tambon), from the community development officers on the staff of the district, and from other district officials. In addition, the provincial plans also included projects proposed by provincial-level officials -- notably, those representing Accelerated Rural Development, Community Development, and Irrigation. The actual processes which led to the formulation of provincial five-year plans varied to some extent from province to province, a function, in part, of the differences in capabilities and interest of officials in the province who were given the responsibility of preparing the plans.

The ~~total~~<sup>total</sup> amount of money required to fund all the projects in any one provincial plan was several orders of magnitude greater than could possibly be considered for support by the central government for the period in question. Almost no plan was constructed with any realistic sense of the level of funding that might be available. In part, this lack of realism appears to stem from inadequate guidelines being provided by the government of the time -- then under Prime Minister Tanin -- as to what level of funding might be expected. The fact that the Tambon Development Program, the direct predecessor of the Provincial Development Program, had been funded at a quite high level -- \$400,000 - \$500,000 for every tambon in the country -- may have led the provincial planners to assume that funding would be at a high level. When General Kriangsak assumed the Premiership in late 1977, provinces were informed that the funding which would be provided by the central government for projects under the Provincial Development

Program -- that is, a Program based upon the five-year plans produced by the provinces -- would be quite modest. In fact, in 1978, the first year of the Kriangsak government, no funds were allocated for the Provincial Development Program. Instead, the funds which would have been used for this program were diverted to disaster relief program. I examined some of the documentation on the results of this program and found that many of the projects had actually been chosen with reference to the provincial Five-Year Plans. This fact notwithstanding, the structure of that program was not the same as the Provincial Development Program.

The first year of funding for the Provincial Development Program was 1979. During this year, 1% of the national budget was allocated for funding projects under the Provincial Development Program, the total amount to be divided among provinces according to criteria which favored the poorest and most underdeveloped sectors of the rural population. Provincial allocations were based upon a formula which took into account population size, total land area inside and outside irrigation districts, average per capita income, land area afflicted by disaster (floods and drought), and land area in security sensitive zones. These allocations were determined by a Central Provincial Development Committee (kammakan klang phatthana cangwat).

The Central Provincial Development Committee, the governmental entity assigned the responsibility for administering the Provincial Development Program draws its membership from representatives of several ministries: Interior, Finance, Agriculture and Cooperatives, Industry, Communications, Commerce, Education, Public Health, the National Economic and Social Development Board, and Bureau of the Budget in the Office of the Prime Minister. The Committee is chaired by the Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior and the secretariat is provided by the Regional Planning Division of the National Economic and Social Development Board. Representatives from the Office of Policy and Planning and the Office of Personnel in the Ministry of Interior have the duty of assisting the

Regional Planning Division of the NESDB in the secretariat functions. Practically speaking, the prime responsibility for administering the program at the national level falls to representatives from the Ministry of Interior and the Regional Planning Office of the NESDB.

In 1978 each Provincial Development Committee was asked to prepare a provincial development plan for 1979. These plans, like the five-year provincial plans, are compilations of projects rather than integrated plans. The provincial planning officers, who, in most cases, carried out the actual work of preparing the plan, usually drew projects from the five-year plan, sometimes in consultation with relevant officials (e.g. District Officers, Provincial Councils, other provincial officials, etc.) and sometimes not. The several provincial plans for 1979 which I have examined again projected expenditures way in excess of the level of funding actually available. For example, in Mahasarakham province, the provincial plan projected a total budget of 526.7 million baht for rural projects and another 6.1 million baht for urban projects. The actual amount for rural and urban projects which Mahasarakham received totalled 16.3 million baht, 1/33 of the total projected.

With the help of the regional development centers of NESDB's Regional Planning Office, the provinces prepared their plans cum proposals and submitted these to the Central Provincial Development Committee. I was informed by several people that this committee rarely rejected actual projects, but left it up to the provincial development committees to choose among the projects that had been proposed given the actual funding which was allocated to the province. From what I was told, there was considerable variation in the processes whereby actual projects were chosen from the provincial development plans for 1979. The dynamics of these processes need to be better understood.

In sum, the actual projects supported under the provincial development program in 1979 had their origin in proposals first prepared for inclusion within the provincial five-year plans prepared in 1977. It was not possible for me to determine

how many of the actual projects funded had actually been proposed at the village or tambon level and how many had actually been initiated by district officers, district officials (e.g., community development officers), sanitary district and municipality authorities, and various provincial officials. Whatever the case may have been, it is clear that villagers had a much reduced role in the process of selecting projects supported under the Provincial Development Program than they had had under the Tambon Development Program instituted by the Kukrit government. Villagers were essentially excluded from the process of winnowing out projects for actual funding and there was, so far as I could determine, no consultation with villagers about projects subsequent to the original proposal made in 1977. There is a marked need to make better provision for consultation with villagers about the selection of projects if the objective of giving emphasis to the bottom-up element of the Provincial Development Program is to be realized.

Whether or not projects were initiated by villagers themselves, the objective of the program is that the projects meet genuine needs of the rural people. This objective was reiterated by every official from assistant district officer to governor and from field staff of the regional planning centers of the NESDB to the director of the regional planning office of NESDB whom I interviewed. To assess the degree to which this objective was met requires first that one know what type of projects were funded under the Provincial Development Program. Table 1 shows the types of projects instituted in rural areas for the North, Northeast, and South as well as for the whole country. Tables 2 and 3 show more detailed breakdowns of types of projects for Chiang Mai and Mahasarakham respectively.

#### 4.2 Impact of Road Projects Under the Provincial Development Program

The statistics reveal that about half the projects and over 60% of the total funds allocated were used for "communication" projects -- that is, projects to build and repair rural roads and bridges. The percentages are even higher for the south than they are for the North and Northeast. Although the percentages

TABLE 1. Provincial Development Projects for Rural Areas by Type and Region, 1979\*

	Types of Projects						TOTAL
	Communication	Irrigation and Agriculture	Water Supply and Sanitation	Social Welfare and Occupational Promotion	Rural Electrification	Other	
Whole Country (70)**							
No. Projects	2,057	1,366	75	8	682	41	4,229
Percent	48.6 o/o	32.3 o/o	1.8 o/o	0.2 o/o	16.1 o/o	0.1 o/o	100.0 o/o
Budget Projects	358,245.0	150,160.1	18,421.3	439.1	55,412.2	3,138.0	585,815.7
Percent	61.2 o/o	25.6 o/o	3.1 o/o	0.1 o/o	9.5 o/o	0.5 o/o	100.0 o/o
Northeast (15) **							
No. Projects	757	591	34	3	418	24	1827
Percent	41.4 o/o	32.3 o/o	1.9 o/o	0.2 o/o	22.9 o/o	1.3 o/o	100.0
Budget Projects	130,903.3	55,207.3	6,138.9	90.2	28,352.6	609.2	221,306.5
Percent	59.2	25.0	2.8 o/o	0.04 o/o	12.8 o/o	2.8 o/o	100.0 o/o
North (17)							
No. Projects	509	392	10	3	100	6	1020
Percent	49.9 o/o	38.4 o/o	0.1 o/o	0.3 o/o	9.8 o/o	0.6 o/o	100.0 o/o
Budget Projects	84,965.3	52,275.6	3,682.5	180.0	7,983.0	1,234.4	150,320.8
Percent	56.5 o/o	34.8 o/o	2.5 o/o	0.1 o/o	5.3 o/o	0.8 o/o	100.0 o/o
South (14)							
No. Projects	358	113	9	1	54	4	539
Percent	66.4 o/o	21.0 o/o	1.7 o/o	0.2 o/o	1.0 o/o	0.7 o/o	100.0 o/o
Budget Projects	68,115.4	11,600.4	2,814.1	96.7	5,482.1	362.1	88,470.8
Percent	77.0 o/o	13.1 o/o	8.8 o/o	0.1 o/o	6.2 o/o	0.4 o/o	100.0 o/o

\* Based on data provided by the Regional Planning Office, National Economic and Social Development Board. All budget figures in millions of baht. Numbers in parentheses following regional designation refer to number of province in region or whole country.

\*\* Does not include data for Buriram province which had not yet reported at the time when the data were aggregated.

TABLE 2: Provincial Development Program Projects, Chiang Mai Province, 1979\*

Type of Projects	No. of Projects	o/o	Amount of Projects	o/o
<u>Rural Projects</u>				
1. Communication	23	45.1	4,611,925	41.8
Rural road construction (35 km.)	3	5.9	260,000	2.4
Rural road repairs (98.4 + km.**)	10	19.6	2,084,875	18.9
Rural road paving (7.5 km.)	4	7.8	1,665,000	15.1
Bridge construction	3	5.9	482,050	4.4
Bridge repairs	3	5.9	120,000	1.1
2. Irrigation and Water Control	23	45.1	4,421,107	40.1
Dam and weir construction	12	23.5	2,028,635	18.4
Dam and weir repair	1	2.0	359,500	3.3
Tank construction	2	3.9	338,972	3.1
Pond expansion	1	2.0	432,000	3.9
Strengthening river banks and changing river courses	4	7.8	962,000	8.7
Construction of canals and irrigation ditches	2	3.9	150,000	1.4
Construction of pipe across stream	1	2.0	150,000	1.4
<b>TOTAL Rural Projects</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>9,033,032</b>	<b>81.9</b>
<u>Projects in Sanitary Districts and Chiang Mai Municipality</u>				
1. Communication				
Road paving (4.692 + km.**)	4	7.8	999,507	9.1
2. Irrigation and Water Control				
Embankment construction along Ping River	1	2.0	1,000,000	9.1
<b>TOTAL Projects in Sanitary Districts and Municipality</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>1,999,507</b>	<b>18.1</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL PROJECTS</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>11,032,539</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Based on data provided by the Regional Planning Office, National Economic and Social Development Board. All project amounts in baht.

\*\*Not all projects listed the total number km. in project.

TABLE 3 : Provincial Development Program Projects, Maharakham Province, 1979\*

Type of Project	No. of Projects	o/o	Amount of Project	o/o
<u>Rural Projects</u>				
1. Communications	20	32.8	7,149,480	43.9
1.1 Rural road repairs (92.5 km.)	19	31.1	3,273,825	20.1
1.2 Rural road construction (7 km.)	1	1.6	3,875,655	23.7
2. Irrigation	20	32.8	4,801,215	29.4
2.1 Construction of flood control dams and earthen dams (2 projects also included maintenance on earthen dams)	7	11.5	2,119,455	13.0
2.2 Maintenance and repairs on flood control and earthen dams	2	3.3	215,980	1.3
2.3 Repair of flood control dam and concrete lined canal	1	1.6	40,000	0.2
2.4 Construction of water tank	1	1.6	900,000	5.5
2.5 Repair of water tanks	3	4.9	329,000	2.0
2.6 Digging of pond	1	1.6	96,000	0.6
2.7 Deepening of ponds	5	8.2	1,099,880	6.7
3. Water Supply				
3.1 Construction of 57 shallow, concrete-lined wells (all well projects in a district listed as single project)	10	16.4	351,000	2.2
4. Occupational Promotion				
4.1 Silk production support (planting mulberry trees and support of silk worm raising)	2	3.3	67,507	0.4
<b>TOTAL Rural Projects</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>85.2</b>	<b>2,369,202</b>	<b>75.8</b>
<u>Projects in Sanitary Districts and Maharakham Municipality</u>				
1. Communications	6	9.9	3,390,000	20.8
1.1 Asphaltting of roads in sanitary districts	5	8.2	1,330,000	8.1
1.2 Construction of bridge in Maharakham municipality	1	1.6	2,060,000	12.6
2. Irrigation				
2.1 Deepening of pond in a sanitary district	1	1.6	280,000	1.7
3. Water Sanitation				
3.1 Construction of drainage ditch in sanitary district	1	1.6	281,113	1.7
<b>TOTAL Projects in Sanitary Districts and Municipality</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>3,951,113</b>	<b>24.2</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL PROJECTS</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16,320,315</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Based on data provided by the Regional Planning Office, National Economic and Social Development Board.  
All project amounts in baht.

for Mahasarakham are somewhat lower than the average, such projects in that province still constituted a very large proportion of the total projects. There is a marked similarity in the emphasis given to road construction and repair projects under the Provincial Development Program and the emphasis given to such projects under the 1976 Tambon Development Program. In 1976, between 50 and 60% of funds allocated to the program in the various regions were used for road and bridge projects.\*

It is obvious that new roads in rural areas often have a positive benefit to the populace of those areas by facilitating access to markets. However, most road projects under both the Tambon Development Program and the Provincial Development Program did not result in new roads but in the improvement of existing roads which had not been maintained because of the lack of local funding for such programs. The conclusion reached by Poot in this connection with reference to the Tambon Development Program are worth quoting:

The need for maintenance is clearly demonstrated by the fact that in many Tambons, funds available for the 1976 TDP (Tambon Development Program) were used to finance maintenance work on roads constructed or repaired under the 1975 TDP.\*\*

If raising of local resources would be possible, proper maintenance of projects could be made a condition for the allocation of public works in future years.\*\*\*

Unfortunately, between 1976 and 1979 no such provision for the raising of local resources was established and, thus, it is likely that road projects were still basically maintenance projects. (It would be interesting to know how many of the road projects in 1979 were for maintenance of roads which had previously been repaired under the 1975 or 1976 programs.)

---

\* These percentages are based upon data contained in Table 2.6 in H. Poot's Evaluation . . ., op. cit., p. 21.

\*\* Ibid., p. 39

\*\*\* Ibid., p. 41.

While a cost-benefit analysis of the road projects undertaken in 1979 would probably show that there was some measureable benefit to the villagers as a consequence of these projects, it is also likely that this benefit was not highly significant given that most of the projects were maintenance projects. It would be far more preferable if local communities could generate a maintenance fund through local revenues, these being supplemented by governmental grants in those areas where incomes are not sufficient to permit the generation of a sufficient fund. However, at the moment neither the Tambon nor the Village has the legal power to tax or borrow against a tax potential. So long as this remains the case, it will be difficult for local communities to maintain rural roads except through funding provided by the Provincial Development Program, or by some other government program.

#### 4.3 Impact of Irrigation and Water Control Projects under the Provincial Development Project

The second largest category of projects was that of "irrigation and agriculture" or "irrigation and water control." For the whole country, such projects accounted for about 1/3 of all projects and about 1/4 of the total expenditures. In the North, there were relatively more of these projects while in the South there were relatively less. In Chaing Mai, irrigation and water control projects accounted for 45% of all projects and 40% of the total amount allocated. In Mahasarakham, the percentages were about the same as the regional average -- 1/3 of both number of projects and amount spent in Mahsarakham as compared with 1/3 of the number and 1/4 of the amount allocated for the whole of the Northeast. In my trips to various parts of the country, I had an opportunity to look at several irrigation and water control projects and, thus, have somewhat more substantive evidence about the significance of these projects for villagers.

On 21 July, I was among a group from NESDB and USAID that was taken to see a tank project in Sathing Phra District, Songkhla which had been built with

funds provided by the Provincial Development Program in the 1979 budget for the program. We were told that this project was budgeted at 900,000 baht and that the tank, when completed, will be 150 x 150 x 2 meters. I have tried to locate this project in the five-year plan for Songkhla Province and the only possible version in that plan which corresponds to the project is a tank which is supposed to be 4 km. long, 20 km. wide and 3 km. deep in Tambon Bo Daeng, Sathing Phra District. The estimated cost of that project was 5 million baht.\* Unfortunately, I did not see the report on the project we saw and so cannot say for certain whether or not the proposed project in the five-year plan was the same as this one or not. Whether or not it was, it is clear that a major change had been instituted in implementing the project as compared with its original conception (if indeed it had been contained in the five-year plan).

Our group interviewed the Assistant District Officer of Sathing Phra regarding this project. He told us that the tank will be part of a larger scheme in which a long canal will be built through this district which is located on a rather narrow stretch of land lying between the Gulf of Thailand and the large lake known as Thale Luang. The major problem in this district stems from salinization of the water which is used for cultivation. It was not clear from what the Assistant District Officer told us whether or not sufficient survey work had been done by competent staff to determine whether or not the new water projects undertaken in the district will actually prevent or reduce salinization.

The sum spent during this year has gone primarily for the hire of tractors from a private company in Haat Yai for removing the dirt from the tank. The present budget provides nothing for the construction of feeder canals whereby the villagers can obtain water from the tank. The Assistant District Officer

---

\* Songkhla Province. Planning and Project Coordination Section.

Phaen phatthana cangwat Songkhla Ph.S. 2520-2524 [Development Plan for Songkhla Province, 1977-1981]. Songkhla, 1977, p. 136.

told us that the feeder canals will be constructed by the Irrigation Department during the next two years (apparently from the Irrigation Department's budget rather than from the Provincial Development Program budget).

According to the Palat Amphoe, some 3,000 villagers will benefit from the project. It was somewhat difficult to see how this figure was arrived at since it was not known exactly how the water from the tank would be distributed. Villagers have not had any previous experience with irrigation from a tank. We were told that no extension services are planned for helping the villagers make the best use of the water, but an irrigation committee will be set up under the auspices of the Irrigation Department. Villagers here, like those elsewhere in the country, will not be charged for the use of the water from the tank.

This project had been proposed by the District Officer. The tank was designed by an engineer (from where was not determined).

Although no manual labor was used for this project, we were told by Mr. Sanong, the chief of the Southern Development Centre of NESDB, that in projects employing labor, the wage rate was B35/day. This rate was B10 more than was paid for labor in projects in the North and Northeast. Even at this higher rate, many projects had difficulty in recruiting sufficient labor because of the availability of jobs at equivalent or higher rates in other sectors. Mr. Sanong said that some of the manual labor work was done by Northerners who came to the South to work.

On 28 July, Mr. Khanung <sup>the</sup> Wanchai, the chief of the Northern Regional Planning Center of NESDB in Chiang Mai, took me (along with a faculty member of the Social Science Faculty at Chiang Mai University) to see several projects which had been undertaken under the Provincial Development Program in Chiang Mai Province. The first of these projects was located in Mae Rim District.

In Mae Rim District -- a relatively wealthy district in the Chiang Mai Plain -- a total of B780,000 had been allocated for rural development projects. This money

was divided between two projects, \$260,000 being allocated for the paving of one kilometer of road in Tambon Mae Sa and \$515,000 being allocated for the construction of a retaining wall on the bank of the Ping River in Village No. 4 of Muang Kaeo Tambon. The road project ostensibly improves access to the market by rural people. In fact, it was unquestionably more to the benefit of wealthy people who commute to Chiang Mai and who have begun to build houses in the area. We did not stop to inquire of any villagers about their feelings regarding this project (to do so would have required a considerable effort). Instead, we concentrated on the retaining wall.

The retaining wall project involved the building of weir-like structures out into the river to divert the flow away from a shore that was slowly being eaten away by the river and the placement of large stones along the side of the bank all the way down the river. According to the report made on the project, the wall was supposed to be 230 meters long, 8 meters high, and 1 meter thick. Of the \$515,000 allocated to the project, 114,000 was used for the cost of labor and the remainder was used to purchase and transport the stones and to purchase the materials for the weirs.

The retaining wall was constructed along a bank which if allowed to continue each flood season to be pushed back still further would eventually destroy the road which runs along the river at this point. We interviewed the Kamman -- a young man -- and another villager, the latter telling us that in his youth the bank had been located many meters away and that, in fact, the river had entirely changed course during his lifetime. The Kamman said that if the road disintegrated, it would halt traffic which is important to the rural economy. He said about 30 trucks use the road each day to transport goods and people to and from Chiang Mai city.

The Kamman said that the plan for this project was developed through consultation with provincial personnel (the provincial planning officer?) and the actual plan was developed by someone in ARD.

The Kamnan said that approximately 60-100 were employed and each was paid ฿25/day. Using the amount spent for labor and this figure on wages, then 456 person/days were devoted to the project. According to the report, the project was carried out between 1 April and 30 May, 1979. The Kamnan, in response to my question, said that there was no trouble in getting enough labor for the project. I had wondered about this, given the proximity of the village to Chiang Mai and the potentiality of higher wages in the city during the dry season.

The Kamnan said that the project was of considerable benefit to many villagers (he did not specify a number) because most villagers produce some garden crops (lamyai, etc.) for the market and thus depend upon the trucks that use the road. It would seem likely from what we could see that the Kamnan was correct in this evaluation.

The Kamnan said that additional money is being requested for next year to add more stones. Stones were also piled along the rim of the road to be used if necessary. It is difficult to make any final assessment of the success of this project until after the floods have come and it can be seen how well the wall withstands the water force. Whatever the final results, the project has certainly benefitted by its proximity to Chiang Mai. It is easy for ARD engineers and other personnel to come out to examine the project.

The other project we looked at in Chiang Mai was in Sankamphaeng District. In Sankamphaeng, a total of ฿429,900 had been allocated for projects under the Provincial Development Program in 1979. The project which we saw was a water tank (ang kep nam) which is fed by a small stream -- Huai Nguak -- in Huai Sai Tambon. This project consisted not of the construction of a new tank, despite the implication of this being the case in the project description, but in the repair of an old water tank.

We were taken to the project by two assistant district officers from Mae Rim and by the Kamnan of the Tambon. According to the Kamnan, no engineer came to look at the tank and all decisions about the nature of the project were made

by local people. Basically, the project consists of a long depression (according to the Project description, it is 300 meters long) much narrower in width (reportedly 10 meters) and rather shallow (? meters) which is fed at the north end by a stream and controlled at the south end by a water gate (which was not yet effectively constructed).

Although all the money allocated for work on the project was supposed to be used for hiring manual labor, the Kamnan reported that a tractor had been hired. He did not know exactly how many people were employed, but there were "many" (mi lai). Labor was paid at the rate of  $\text{฿}25/\text{day}$ .

The Kamnan claimed that about 400 rai would benefit from the water kept in the tank, but he was uncertain how many people would be involved in the benefits. It was quite unclear in looking at the project about how the water would be distributed. Like other water projects I saw, this one had no provision for water management. The Kamnan said that the headman of the local village would be responsible for control of the water gate, but he could not be precise about what type of control would be exercised.

At the northern end of the stream, before the stream entered the tank, we observed a farmer using a generator-driven pump to pump water from the stream into his fields. If such pumps are widely used, it might mean that the distribution of water from the tank would be exceedingly ad hoc.

On August 3rd I travelled to Mahasarakham province in the company of Mr. Frank Gillespie from USAID/Bangkok, Mr. Mongkol Chunnarat, Deputy Head of the Northeast Regional Development Center of the NESDB, and Mr. Nanthachai Wongwanit from the Northeast Regional Development Center. In Mahasarakham we were taken by Mr. Ruchon Bamrunsaeng, the provincial planning officer, and Mr. Damrong Thongphuwong, Palat Amphoe for Muang District, Mahasarakham to see a flood control dam project at Ban Hin Lat, in Tha Song Khon Tambon. I attempted to identify this project in the plan submitted by Mahasarakham province for 1979; it may be a project entitled "repair of water tank at Hin Lat Stream," although this project

is included in a list for Wapipathum not Muang district.\* If this is the project, then ฿1,000,000 was requested for it. According to a report on the project as it had been finally approved -- a report kindly provided to me by Mr. Ruchon -- the actual allocation for the project was ฿600,000.

The project consisted primarily of the construction of a cement weir on a stream and the expansion of <sup>A</sup> catchment area behind this weir. There had obviously been some sort of water control system in existence prior to the initiation of the project. Unfortunately, no villagers were around to interview and the provincial planning officer could tell me little about the project since he had only quite recently been transferred to Mahasarakham. The Palat Amphoe and the official report on the project were the only sources of information available to me in addition to what could be seen visually.

According to the report, the project had been submitted by the district officer of Amphoe Muang and the deputy government of Mahasarakham province. It had been approved by the Provincial Development Committee, as evident from the signatures of the governor as chairman of the Committee, the secretary of the committee, and another member of the committee. The project was scheduled to have begun on 1 April and to have taken 120 days to finish. In fact, when we saw the project, the concrete weir had been completed, but more work needed to be done in enlarging the catchment area and in preparing feeder canals to service the fields of those who would benefit from the project. The weir had been constructed according to a standard model and a detailed drawing was included in the report concerning the project.

The budget for the project was allocated as follows:

---

\* National Economic and Social Development Council. Regional Planning Office and Provincial Office, Ministry of Interior. Phaen phatthana cangwat Mahasarakham pracam pi 2522 ("Annual Development Plan for Mahasarakham Province, 1979"). (Bangkok ?); 2978, p. 33.

Labor

Hire of local labor to dig 6000 cubic meters of earth; 30 persons at ฿15 each cubic meter removed	฿90,000
Hire of labor to build concrete weir; 30 persons at ฿25 per day for 120 days	90,000
Hire of skilled labor for concrete work; 6 persons at ฿50 perday for 120 days	36,000
Hire of foreman, 1 person at ฿25 per day for 120 days	<u>3,000</u>
Total Labor	฿219,000

Other

Cost of materials, etc.	฿309,900
Hire of earth-moving equipment to dig 6750 cubic meters of earth at ฿10 per cubic meter	67,500
Hire of equipment to crush 240 cubic meters of earth for the wall at ฿10 per cubic meter	2,400
Hire of equipment to crush 120 cubic meters of stones at ฿10 per cubic meter	<u>1,200</u>
Total Other	<u>฿381,000</u>
TOTAL FOR PROJECT	<u>฿600,000</u>

This report estimated that there would be 756 people and 200 households who would benefit from the project and that 2000 rai of land would be served by the project. The Palat Amphoe said that the project would make possible double cropping on land which could be irrigated by the stored water. It was hard to assess whether or not this would be the case; certainly there would be no benefits until some means had been devised to get the water to the people.

From visual inspection it would appear that this project was technologically appropriate. The weir would not permanently dam up the stream, thus causing hardships to people living downstream or create pressure which the dam could not withstand. I was impressed in seeing this project, as I had been in talking with various officials in NESDB and in the Irrigation Department that there has

been marked progress in Thailand over the past few years in devising small-scale irrigation projects which are more appropriate for much of the rural countryside, especially in the Northeast, than are monumental dam projects.

While this project appeared technically very good, I would question whether the social organization exists to make the best use of the project. I asked the Palat Amphoe whether or not there had been any effort to create a local water-user organization which would arrange for an equitable distribution of water from the project. He said that he thought that an irrigation committee existed in the village, but that there had been nothing done in association with the project to ensure that such an organization existed.

The project in Mahsarakham like the other irrigation projects which I had seen in Songkhla and Chiang Mai and other small-scale irrigation projects which I inquired about when in the North and the Northeast, entailed the construction (or repair) of a physical facility without being associated with a social plan for its use. It seems essential that attention be given to the social organization of such projects as well as to their technical aspects. Such social organization can be instituted only through involving villagers as planners of projects as well as beneficiaries.

#### 4.4 Other Projects under the Provincial Development Program

Road projects and irrigation and water control projects accounted for over 80% of all projects and over 85% of all monies allocated for projects in the whole country under the 1979 Provincial Development Program. While the percentages for such projects varied to some extent by region and by province, the fact remains that the typical project under the program was either a road project or an irrigation or water control project. Some monies were allocated for rural electrification and water supply and sanitation projects, and a very small amount of money was allocated for social welfare and occupational promotion projects.

I did not have the opportunity to observe any rural electrification project, but I did interview a number of officials about such projects. It would appear

that rural electrification projects were approved only in those cases where the Rural Electrification Program had already constructed the basic infrastructure and a relatively small amount of money was needed to bring electricity to a particular village. The impact of the rural electrification program itself on rural society needs to be the focus of sustained study. I would hypothesize that when electricity is made available in a village, clear socioeconomic differences between households in the community will appear. Those with sufficient wealth to take advantage of electricity will effect marked improvements in their lifestyles which will contrast sharply with the lifestyles of those who cannot afford electricity. This is not to say, assuming I am correct in my hypothesis, that rural electrification should not be pursued. Rather, I would argue that to prevent major inequities within communities for which electricity is made available, it might be necessary to provide subsidies for poorer households so that these households can also benefit from the electrification program.

I did have an opportunity to obtain some first hand impression of water supply and sanitation projects. In Mahasarakham province, 57 shallow, concrete-lined wells were constructed in the context of ten separate projects -- one for each district and sub-district. The construction of these wells meant that something was done in almost every tambon in Mahasarakham province under the auspices of the Provincial Development Program. This attempt to spread the impact of the Provincial Development Program in Mahasarakham contrasted sharply with what happened in Chiang Mai province where only one or two tambon per district were the recipients of a project. (It should be noted that despite the much higher population in Chiang Mai, Chiang Mai received less money for the Provincial Development Program than did Mahasarakham.)

Each well in Mahasarakham was constructed at a cost of ฿4000 each, with ฿1000 being used for labor and ฿3000 being used for the cost of materials -- the concrete linings and the cement for the top. In theory, it was supposed to take 4 persons working for 10 days at a wage of ฿25 per day to construct the well.

Whether or not this exact amount of work time was required in each case is not known.

I examined one of these wells in the village of Ban Nong Tun, Tambon Khwao, Amphoe Muang Mahasarakham -- a village with which I have considerable familiarity since I first carried out field work in the community in 1963-1964 and I have made many visits to the village since. The well was located on the outskirts of the village in an area lying between the settlement and the rice fields. According to the headman of the village whom I interviewed about the project, only those living in the vicinity of the well would use it. How many people actually use it, I cannot say. I was told by other villagers that other wells in the village -- including two with pumps (one on the wat grounds and the other at the opposite end of the village in the school grounds) -- were preferred to this one. According to the headman, because the well is not very deep, it will dry up in the dry season. The reason the well was not deeper, according to villagers, is that the ground is too hard to dig without special equipment. I suspect that the other wells built under the program are also of this type -- i.e., wells that can be used only during and just after the rainy season.

The headman said that he suggested the project, but at the initiative of someone from the district office who knew that the government would pay for such a project. Since so many of the same type wells were built throughout the province, it is clear that the specific projects were not initiated by villagers themselves but by someone in the provincial office who conceived of these wells as a way of improving the potable water supply in villages.

There is some question about whether or not the well in Ban Nong Tun -- and most probably the other wells also -- really fills a need of villagers. It is true that northeastern villagers have long expressed the need to have more sources of water -- particularly during the dry season. When I first lived in Ban Nong Tun in 1963-1964, there was only one all-year well and another from which water was available in the rainy season and for some period thereafter. Both of these

wells had been dug by villagers themselves. Villagers also had large water jars and oil drums in which they used to store rain water, but the water in these containers was used up within a few weeks after the rains stopped. In 1963 the village received its first outside assistance for improving its supply of potable water. Following a SEATO Exercise in northeastern Thailand, a number of large rain water storage tanks were given to villages in Mahasarakham; Ban Nong Tum was a recipient and the tank was placed in the wat grounds. Subsequently, there have been a number of other government-sponsored projects and village-initiated projects which have markedly improved the water supply in the village. Two wells with hand pumps were constructed, one by ARD and the other one by some other governmental agency (villagers were not sure which one) and four additional concrete-lined wells were built with government support. At least one concrete-lined well was built privately and the two original wells remain. Most recently, villagers themselves contributed a total of \$20,000 to built a quite sophisticated block and concrete rain water storage tank at one end of the salawat in the temple-monastery grounds. This project was initiated by a respected villager who had the tank constructed on the model of one he had observed in another village. This tank was expected to hold five times the amount held by the usual metal rain-water containers found in village wats (Ban Nong Tum also has three of these). Given the sources of water now available to villagers, it would seem that a well which can be used only in the rainy season was not a very pressing need. Several villagers with whom I talked agreed that the project was not very useful for the community.

While it is not legitimate to generalize from a single case, the situation in Ban Nong Tum does lead one to raise serious questions about whether some proportion of projects undertaken under the Provincial Development Program were done more to maintain a government "development" presence in rural communities than to meet actual needs of villagers. Ostensibly, the planning process of the

Provincial Development Program was instituted to make possible the identification of projects to meet true needs of the people through the deployment of available government resources. Apparently, this planning process is not yet fully effective.

Very few of the projects carried out under the 1979 Provincial Development Program were aimed at improving social welfare (health or educational facilities) or at promoting occupational opportunities. I was told by a number of officials that the Provincial Development Program is not really the proper instrument for meeting health and educational needs of villagers; thus, very few projects of the socialwelfare type were approved by Provincial Development Committees even though such projects had sometimes been proposed by local communities. Unless the Provincial Development Program were to be allocated a far larger amount of money, it is probably wise not to spread resources too thin to encompass social welfare projects as well as economic development projects.

Whereas officials felt that social welfare projects probably did not belong in the Provincial Development Program, there was strong sentiment in favor of increasing markedly the number of projects which improve occupational opportunities. Mr. Sanong, the head of the Regional Development Center in the South, and members of the team evaluating the Provincial Development Program in the South felt that occupational promotion projects should constitute a major proportion of projects under the program. Mr. Khanung and Mr. Pradit, the heads of the Northern and Northeastern Regional Development centers both expressed strong agreement with this position. The problem comes in allocating sufficient funding for and identifying such projects.

Mr. Pradit, the head of the Regional Development Center in the Northeast, had a list of such projects which he would like to see undertaken. His list included the promotion of raising more and better chickens, the promotion of papaya production, the development of a substitute for wood in making charcoal (e.g., using animal dung), the promotion of bamboo shoot production (because of

the disappearance of woods where bamboo shoots have traditionally grown wild), the introduction of cashew production, and the promotion of mushroom production. What strikes me about the list is that all projects suggested might well be part of some other governmental program -- e.g., Community Development, Agricultural Extension, and so on. The particular contribution which the Provincial Development Program could make through sponsoring such projects lies in the capability of the program to develop articulated plans for provinces and for the whole region. Nonetheless, if occupational development projects such as those proposed by Mr. Pradit are to succeed, then it would be necessary that there be cooperation amongst all agencies which might be concerned. Community Development Officers, Agricultural Extension Officers, and Mobile Agricultural Extension Units (under the sponsorship of the Northeastern Agricultural Research Station at Tha Phra) are best suited to carry out actual work with villagers. District officials, and particularly District Officers, are in the best position to know where the needs are greatest among the villages in a district. Provincial officials are in the best position to prepare articulated plans and to determine relative priorities for a province. And the officials of the Regional Development Centers are best able to bring a regional perspective on projects and to broker relations between provincial officials and technical specialists.

##### 5. Villagers' Role in the Provincial Development Program: Some Conclusions

The majority of projects funded under the Provincial Development Program during the past year (like projects funded under the Tambon Development Program and those funded under the subsequent drought and flood relief programs) are maintenance projects. That is, funds allocated under the Provincial Development Program are used primarily to repair roads, to shore up existing dams, to repair or rebuild bridges, and so on. Since villages and tambons are not fiscal entities, they lack the legal means to raise necessary funding from local resources to provide maintenance for public works projects. The tambon does have access to a

small amount of money generated by the local land tax, but this fund is insufficient to support all needed maintenance projects and its use is subject to approval by the district officer. Sometimes maintenance is provided through mobilization of labor on the basis of traditional village social bonds or on the basis of corvée-type orders issued by district authorities. Today, however, villagers resent the voluntary donation of labor since they need to use their time to enhance their cash incomes. If villagers are encouraged to participate in the market economy, as they have been since early in this century, then traditional modes of mobilization of labor are inappropriate. Thus, until and unless the village and/or tambon is recognized as a fiscal entity with the power to levy taxes itself and to borrow money, villagers are going to continue to depend upon what government monies are allocated to carry out needed maintenance projects. Even if taxing and loan powers were vested in villages and tambons, it would still be necessary for the government to subsidize maintenance projects in many local areas -- particularly in those with high concentrations of rural poor. Nonetheless, these subsidies would not have to be so large as they are now if the villages and tambons could raise monies themselves.

At present villagers find funding for maintenance projects from several government sources in addition to the local land tax controlled by tambons: Community Development or the New Village Development Program, ARD, and the Provincial Development Program. Since funding for all these programs taken together is relatively low, it is likely that maintenance projects will continue to form a major proportion of all projects carried out under all these programs. In other words, since there will continue to be a significant need felt by villagers for maintenance support, it follows that projects which reflect such needs must often be maintenance projects.

It may be possible for the Thai government to increase the proportion of non-maintenance projects through funding obtained from grants or loans from

such foreign aid agencies as USAID. It must be noted, however, that unless the Royal Thai Government commits itself to increasing the budget for such programs as the Provincial Development Program or unless it alters the structure to permit more funding to be generated by local governmental entities themselves, then a higher proportion of non-maintenance projects can be ensured only so long as foreign aid is provided.

The Provincial Development Program projects have two types of potential benefits for villagers. First, assuming that the projects are designed to meet real needs, then there will be benefits in direct proportion to the degree to which those needs are met. Secondly, insofar as projects include provision to pay for local labor, then there will be benefits in direct proportion to the amount of cash which is pumped into the local economy through wages paid.

Many projects carried out under the Provincial Development Program do meet real needs felt by villagers. If villagers are having difficulty in getting to and from market centers, then the construction of a road or the improvement of a road such that it can carry more traffic will enhance the ability of villagers to get to the markets. If a small dam makes it possible to effect better control over floods which often damage crops, then the dam definitely benefits those whose fields will no longer suffer flood damage. If through a project villagers learn of new cash crops which they can plant or if they gain new skills which they can utilize in wage-paying labor, and if they actually capitalize on this knowledge, then the project will have succeeded in improving local incomes. Unfortunately, not all projects meet real needs, as is evident from the case of the well project discussed above. Projects may also not be designed in such a way as to produce the benefits which were anticipated. As indicated in the several examples of water control and irrigation projects, such projects may be well designed technically, but be inadequately designed with reference to the social organizational aspects of project use. Finally, projects may sometimes be initiated

by officials for their own purposes rather than with reference to actual village needs; in such cases, benefits to villagers may be marginal at best.

There are several implications to these conclusions about the potential benefit of projects carried out under the Provincial Development Program. First, it is essential that projects be designed with reference to real needs of villagers. While village needs can be known in general terms from information gained through the administrative activities of district level officials or through organized research efforts, the needs to be met in specific projects can be determined only through consultations with villagers. These consultations should take place before a project is actually approved. Secondly, projects should be designed to include a social organizational component as well as a technical component. Only when technically satisfactory facilities are actually put to use by individuals or social groups can a project actually produce benefits. Thus, provision should be made in each project for designing the social use of the product of the project.

When projects do succeed in producing benefits for villagers, it is often the case that these benefits have tended to be limited to a minority of those living within a community. Moreover, this minority is not rarely the wealthiest, and not the poorest, segment of the community. For example, irrigation schemes benefit only those whose land lies within the area affected by the project. Even roads are more used by village-based traders and large scale producers of cash crops than they are by those who are primarily subsistence farmers. It would seem reasonable that those who do benefit from projects in ways which directly enhance their ability to gain more income should be expected to pay for part of the costs of the project. For example, if a water tank or dam permits the holding of water which can be used by some villages to produce a second crop which is then marketed, then it would seem reasonable that those who benefit should pay something for the use of water. Funds generated from such payments might then be used to support projects which have benefits for those who were

not beneficiaries of the tank or dam project. At present, such demands for payments are not made because it has long been a practice in Thailand that no charge be made for uses of water drawn from facilities constructed at public expense. If the practice could be changed, then the differences in benefits for the wealthy as distinct from those for the poor resulting from many projects would not be so great.

The poorest segments of village populations often do benefit through the payment which they receive for work on a project. One of the most positive features of the Provincial Development Program, like that of the Tambon Development Program before it, stems from the fact that projects are generally labor intensive and, more importantly, labor is not contributed but paid for. The Provincial Development Program is better constructed than the Tambon Development Program in that projects are more concentrated in poorer areas of the country rather than being rather equally distributed amongst all tambon, rich and poor alike. The Provincial Development Program compares unfavorably with the Tambon Development Program, however, in that the level of funding is so much lower in the former than in the latter. Increased funding for the Provincial Development Program, or for any program in which local labor is paid for work on public works projects, would give the program enhanced appeal in the eyes of villagers. Moreover, if local governmental entities -- i.e., villages and tambons -- had control over funds generated by self-imposed taxes, through loans, and through government grants, they would have the capability of effecting some redistribution of wealth by using these monies to employ poorer villagers in projects similar to those now supported through the Provincial Development Program.

A primary objective of the Provincial Development Program is to effect articulation between bottom-up initiatives and needs and top-down planning and funding. In the first year of the program, the top-down component was very much in evidence, while the bottom-up component seemed to be quite weak. While

villagers may have been very much involved several years ago in the proposing of projects to be included in the provincial five-year plan (it was not possible for me to determine how much they were actually involved), they had little role in the selection of actual projects or in determining whether or not the projects were successful. As Dr. Snit Smuckarn has said in his stimulating paper, "Popular Participation: A Key to Successful Development Programmes:"

Needs for development may be widely different (in Thailand) depending on specific problems and circumstances. Who will know these problems and situations better than the people who live there most of the time? This is one reason why we need a participation of the population in all development projects.\*

Often villagers have all the necessary knowledge to carry out a needed project, but lack only the necessary funds to pay for the project. Even when they lack technical expertise or full familiarity with market forces or with the results of new agricultural techniques, they still are more aware than is anyone else about the particular social, economic, and environmental conditions which provide the context for a project. Officials may become impatient with the delay in time which consultations with villagers would require, but the rewards to be gained from villagers who have a sense of being part of the process and not simply a "target" for the development "arrows" shot by the government will certainly overshadow the relatively minor inefficiencies caused by the delay.

The question arises as to which villagers should be consulted about a project. Government officials often assume that by talking to a headman or a kamnan that village opinion has been obtained. This may or may not be true. When projects are to be undertaken in a community, it would be far preferable

---

\* Dr. Snit Smuckarn, "Popular Participation: A Key to Successful Development Programmes," in Seminar on Rural Employment Programs and Local-Level Planning for the Satisfaction of Basic Needs in Thailand. Bangkok: Department of Labour, Government of Thailand, and Asian Employment Programme, ILO-ARTEP, 28-29 June, 1979, pp. II-4.

for a meeting to be called to discuss the project. Village social patterns, at least those in the North and Northeast, lend themselves well to such a public hearing approach to consultation with villagers. Open meetings at which those most likely to benefit and most likely to lose from a project could attend are preferable to the relatively closed meetings of village development committees or the tambon councils or tambon development committees.

Tambon councils and District authorities (ideally a district planning group) should also be consulted to obtain assistance in determining priorities for projects within these administrative entities.

Villagers should not be consulted only at the beginning of the process when projects are determined but they should also be made aware of the details of how projects are carried out. I held a long conversation with a progressive villager in Ban Nong Tun in Mahasarakham about the Tambon Development Program. He told me that he himself had taken the initiative to have the Tambon Development Committee inform villagers about the actual expenditures for projects under the program in the tambon. It was then discovered that there was a discrepancy between the amount allocated to the tambon and the amount actually spent. My informant was able to persuade the chairman of the Tambon Development Committee to use the additional monies for yet other projects. Without this accounting, it is likely that some members of the Tambon Development Committee might have kept some of the money for their personal uses. While one would hope that projects carried out under the Provincial Development Program would be free of such corruption, it would still make a strong positive impression on villagers if they were provided with detailed reports regarding the expenditures of monies for projects instituted under the program. Such reports given to villagers could be the same as those given to officials responsible for assessing how funds were used for projects. Reports should also be given to provincial assembly members and to members of Parliament. By giving the public access to reports

about government expenditures for local development projects, the public will develop a much better sense of being participants within the Thai political system.

The Provincial Development Program must be seen, I believe, as a particular institutionalization of a process of government-sponsored rural development which has been going on in Thailand for at least the past two decades. Much that has been learned from previous institutionalized efforts -- e.g., Community Development, ARD, the Developing Democracy Program of the late 1960s, and most recently the Tambon Development Program -- has conditioned the structure of the Provincial Development Program. Beyond the structure of the program, it has also been designed to carry out policy objectives which are different than those of the past; in specific, it has the objectives of promoting development primarily among the rural poor and of stimulating greater participation of rural people in the development process. While these objectives certainly were not fully realized in the first year of the program, the trend which the program represents in terms of the larger process would appear to be towards these ends. There are still significant alterations which can be made in the program to enhance its capacity to meet the stated goals. I have attempted in this concluding section to suggest some alterations which I see, on the basis of my study, as being useful to the very important effort to include rural Thai villagers as active participants in the process of rural development.

GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR THAILAND'S RURAL POOR  
A SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

by Charles F. Keyes  
Professor of Anthropology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington  
August 1979

Summary and Recommendations

The Provincial Development Program was formulated by the Thai Government in 1978 and first instituted in 1979. The objectives of the program are to generate rural development projects which are particularly beneficial to the rural poor, to promote greater participation of rural people in the development process than has been the case in the past, and to rationalize rural development through a planning process which articulates bottom-up proposals for projects to meet felt needs with top down coordinated planning and allocation of government resources.

This study reports the results of an assessment of the social impact of the program during the first year of operation. The study is based upon an examination of statistical data, interviews with a number of officials and villagers, and field observations of a few projects carried out under the program. The following conclusions were reached in the study:

1. Many officials, particularly those connected with the Regional Planning Division, National Economic and Social Development Board, Office of the Prime Minister, expressed strong support for the objectives of the program.
2. The program succeeded in effecting a marked improvement in the rational planning of rural development.
  - 2.1. The national structure of the program, being under an inter-ministerial Central Committee for Provincial Development, reflects the importance to the program of cooperation between various governmental agencies concerned with rural development.
  - 2.2. The secretariat functions performed for this committee by the Regional Planning Office of NESDB, and its affiliated Regional Development Centers, ensure that provincial plans are prepared according to the same models and with reference to national and regional development goals and resources.
  - 2.3. The choice of the province as the locus of local development planning is far more effective than having development planning concentrated at the center as has been the case in the past.
3. There remain, nonetheless, significant limitations to the effectiveness of the planning process.

- 3.1. Provincial authorities are not actually competent to engage in highly sophisticated or innovative planning and development of projects. This is so, in part, because all officials involved, save perhaps for the Provincial Development Officer, have many other functions to perform as well. In addition, there is a continuous movement of officials from one province to another, thus creating constant interruptions in continuity of planning activities. Finally, provincial officials are dependent upon district offices to forward project proposals. At present, under the best of circumstances, provincial authorities can collect project proposals, assess these proposals vis-à-vis each other, taking into consideration the sociocultural characteristics of the various sectors of the province from which they have come, assign priorities to the proposals and facilitate the provision of technical assistance where such is required.
- 3.2. The vital role played by the district in linking villagers and provincial authorities is not adequately stressed in the structure of the program. In fact, district officials often perform decisive roles in determining the nature of projects. District officials also have much better knowledge of local needs than do provincial officials. Yet, the role of the district is only vaguely defined in the structure of the program as it presently exists.
- 3.3. Participation by rural people themselves in planning projects to be included in the program is minimal and ill-defined. While project proposals are supposed to originate from villagers, this is clearly often not the case. Moreover, there is essentially no consultation with villagers in the process of selecting actual projects or in assigning priorities to projects.
4. The program has produced some tangible benefits which have reached the rural poor.
  - 4.1. A small proportion of projects, particularly those connected with irrigation, appear to have directly improved the opportunities which some villagers have to increase their incomes.
  - 4.2. Most projects led to the injection of cash into the rural economy through payments for local labor employed on the projects.
5. The benefits to the poor were restricted, however, by a number of factors.
  - 5.1. A majority of projects were maintenance projects (e.g., repairs to existing roads, bridges, irrigation works, etc.) which, on completion could only marginally, if at all, increase income-generating opportunities. Maintenance projects are, of course, important, but there should be regular sources of funding available to carry them out.

- 5.2. Some projects did not meet any pressing needs of villagers in the communities in which they were carried out. Such projects were determined upon in some cases without an adequate understanding of the priorities which villagers themselves place upon meeting their needs. In other cases, projects were selected to suit official rather than villager interests.
  - 5.3. Some projects, especially irrigation projects, which were supposed to increase income-generating opportunities were not adequately designed as regards their social use. In other words, while technically a project might be well-designed, little attention was given to how villagers might organize themselves to realize the benefits of the project.
  - 5.4. At least a few projects tended to increase the income-generating opportunities of the wealthier rather than the poorer members of local communities.
  - 5.5. The amount of wages actually paid to local labor was relatively quite small in most localities and was overall far less than the amounts paid under the Tambon Development Program in 1975 and 1976.
6. The program was not successful, at least in the first year of its existence, in bringing about any significant increase in participation by rural people in the development process.
    - 6.1. Primary functional responsibility for administering the program rests with officials who are under the direct authority of central government agencies, particularly under the Ministry of Interior, rather than with officials who are accountable to local governmental bodies.
    - 6.2. The role of villagers in the program has tended to be seen as solely that of recipient. There are no administrative or planning functions which are clearly the responsibility of such local organizations as village and tambon councils. The bottom-up component of the program, thus, is very weakly developed and the structure of the program heavily emphasizes the role of officials employed by central governmental agencies.

There are a number of ways whereby the program might be made more effective in the realization of its goals. The following changes are recommended:

1. It is recommended that given the constraints on provincial officials that no new functions be assigned to these officials. Rather, it is recommended that the capabilities of staffs of the Regional Development Centers of NESDB be strengthened to make it possible for

- them to assist the provinces in developing new projects, in coordinating the efforts of different provinces in undertaking similar projects, and in facilitating the flow of technical information from technical agencies to the provinces.
2. It is recommended that the critical role played by the district be explicitly recognized in the structure of the program and that district officials be given the tasks of coordinating efforts to assess local level needs and of working with local (village and tambon) organizations in developing proposals, assessing priorities, and evaluating results. It must be emphasized, however, the role of the district vis-à-vis villagers should be an advisory one, not a command one.
  3. It is essential that projects be designed with reference to the real needs of villagers. Only villagers themselves can really know their own needs. Thus, it is recommended that before any project is instituted that an open meeting of villagers to be included in the project be called to discuss the proposed project. This meeting should be organized according to village patterns and not be organized solely so that a government official can inform villagers that a project will be instituted. If village meetings are held prior to the institution of projects, then villagers will become much more active participants in the development process than they have been in the past.
  4. All projects should be designed to include a social organizational as well as a technical component. Too often, projects are conceived of in technical terms (e.g., how a dam is to be built, how a road is to be repaired, etc.) and not in social terms (e.g., how the dam or road is to be used). If every project design includes a social organizational component -- one based on knowledge of local social conditions -- then projects are likely to have much greater benefit for their recipients.
  5. Villagers should not only be consulted at the beginning of a project, but they should also be provided with an accounting of how the project was actually carried out. This accounting would permit villagers to have a clearer understanding of what uses have been made of the government funds allocated for the project. This accounting would also give villagers a more realistic sense of what projects actually cost so that in the future they would be better able to formulate new projects.
  6. Villagers who benefit from projects to the extent that they substantially increase their incomes (e.g., through being able to produce a second crop on land on which they previously could only produce one crop) should be required to pay some form of user fees. These fees could then be used to support projects in the same community for those who did not benefit from the first project. This mechanism would help prevent major inequalities in wealth from developing in local communities as a consequence of government investment in public works projects.

7. It is recommended that funding for projects under the Provincial Development Program be substantially increased. Some of the increased funding might be obtained from external aid agencies. This increase would make it possible to support a higher percentage of projects which are not maintenance projects. It would also result in a greater input of cash into the rural economy through wages paid to local laborers. It is, of course, understood that the increase in funding would be used for projects located primarily in areas of the country (mainly in northeastern and northern Thailand) in which there is the greatest concentration of rural poor.
  
8. It is recommended that in the long run certain types of projects now supported under the Provincial Development Program -- notably maintenance projects -- be placed under the sole jurisdiction of local governmental bodies, i.e., under village and tambon councils. This shift can be accomplished only when and if the village and tambon are recognized as fiscal entities with the power to levy taxes and to obtain loans. Thus, efforts need to be begun to institute the laws and administrative regulations which will make it possible for villages and tambons to become fiscal entities.

## Appendix

## CHRONOLOGY OF TRIP TO THAILAND, JULY 15 - AUGUST 10, 1979

Charles F. Keyes

- 15 July Su Arrive Bangkok
- 16 July M
- (1) Meeting with Provincial Development Program Project Working Group at NESDB: Mr. Siva Sirisoawaluks from the Personnel Division, Office of the Undersecretary, MOI; Mr. Somsak Songsamanote, Regional Planning Division, NESDB; Mr. Chaiyan Maliwan, Office of Policy and Planning, MOI; Dr. Norman Nicholson, USAID-Washington/RS/RAD; Mr. Opart Panya, USAID/Bangkok; CFK
  - (2) Meeting with Dr. Pairat Decharin, Director, Operations Division, Community Development Department, MOI  
Those attending: Siva, Somsak, Chaiyan, Mr. Frank Gillespie, Nicholson, CFK, and staff from CD
- 17 July T
- (1) Meeting with Provincial Development Program Project Working Group at NESDB (same personnel as on 16th)
  - (2) Dinner with faculty from Chulalongkorn University (Dr. Amara Pongsapich, Anthropology; Dr. Preecha Kuwanipat, Anthropology; Dr. Somboon Suksamran, Political Science; Dr. Khien Theeravit, Political Science; Dr. Thiravet Pramuanratkarn, Anthropology; Dr. Chai-anan, Political Science; Ajarn Chaiwat, Political Science), Thammasat University (Ajarn Churairat, Anthropology), Ramkhamhaeng University (Dr. Damrong Thandee, Anthropology), Dr. Paul Lightfoot (Geography, University of Hull; working on internal migration in the NEO), Dr. Vasantha Narendran, CFK
- 18 July W
- (1) Meeting with Mssrs. Robert Queener, Frank Gillespie, Nicholson at AID
  - (2) Meeting with Mr. William Klausner, Ford Foundation
  - (3) Meeting at Lunch with Ford Foundation Group (Mssrs. Klausner, Gerald Fry, Sam Johnson, and two visitors from outside Thailand)
- 19 July Th
- (1) Interview with Dr. Yuwat Vuthimedhi, Chief of Research and Evaluation Division, Community Development Dept., MOI
  - (2) Meeting with Mr. Donald Cohen, Director of USAID/Thailand
  - (3) Dinner with Khonkaen Marketing study team (Dr. Amara Pongsapich, Dr. Pricha Kuwanipat, Dr. Thongroj from Kassetart, Dr. Vasantha Narendran)

- 20 July F
- (1) Meeting with Dr. John D. Shilling, World Bank, on team for World Bank Project supporting the Provincial Development Program (attending: Mssrs. Queener, Gillespie, Nicholson, CFK)
  - (2) Travel to Haatyai/Songkhla with NESDB-USAID group (NESDB: Mr. Vithya Siripongse, Director, Regional Planning Division, NESDB + two staff; USAID: Nicholson, Opart, CFK)
  - (3) Briefing of USAID-NESDB group on provincial planning and provincial development programs in Songkhla Province by Lt. Gov. of Songkhla, Governor's staff from Songkhla, and Mr. Sanong Chantanintorn, Chief of Southern Regional Planning Centre, NESDB
  - (4) Visit to fish hatchery in Songkhla
- 21 July S
- (1) Meeting with Team evaluating the Provincial Development Program in Southern Thailand at the Provincial Office in Songkhla. Team chaired by Inspector from the Prime Minister's Office; secretariat Mr. Sanong from Southern Regional Center; also on team were representatives from the Bureau of the Budget, OPP, ARD, RID, DOLA, and Undersecretary's Office in MOI. Attending meeting were members of the NESDB-USAID group.
  - (2) Site visit of projects undertaken under the Provincial Development Program in Amphoe Sathing Phra, Songkhla Province. Visit led by Mr. Sanong and two Palat Amphoe from Sathing Phra.
  - (3) Dinner with Chairman of the Songkhla Provincial Council, two Palat Amphoe from Sathing Phra, Mr. Sanong, and NESDB-USAID group
- 22 July Su
- Return to Bangkok from Haatyai/Songkhla
- 23 July M
- Formal meeting, held at MOI, to consider the proposals of the Provincial Development Program Project Working Group. Meeting chaired by Mr. Anand Anantakorn, Deputy Under Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior. Those attending: Mr. Pramuan, Director, Personnel Division, Under Secretary of State's Office, MOI; Mr. Vithaya, Director, Regional Planning Division, NESDB; Mr. Mongkol Chunnarat from NE Regional Center, NESDB; two other staff from NESDB; Mr. Phakdi from the Personnel Division of MOI; Mssrs. Queener and Gillespie from USAID/Thailand; and Working Group for Project (Mssrs. Somsak, Siva, Chaiyan, Nicholson, CFK)
- 24 July T
- (1) Meeting with Mr. Gary Luhman and Dr. Ladd Thomas, World Bank team looking at the New Village Development Program
  - (2) Attended USAID staff meeting at which the Northeast Rainfed Agriculture Development Project proposal and the Provincial Development Program Project proposal were presented.
  - (3) Met with Dr. Akin Rabibhadana, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Thai Khadi Center at Thammasat University

- 25 July W Attended meeting held at USAID to discuss draft of PID prepared by Nicholson. Those attending included Mr. Vithaya Siripongse and Mr. Mongkol Chunnarat from NESDB; Mr. Phakdi from the Personnel Office of MOI; Mssrs. Queener and Gillespie from USAID; and project working group (Mssrs. Somsak, Siva, Chaiyan, Nicholson, CFK)
- 26 July Th (1) Travel to Chiang Mai
- (2) Interview with Nai Amphoe of Hang Dong, Chiang Mai Province about Provincial Development Program projects in district. Those attending included Mr. Smutkupt, former Nai Amphoe of Hang Dong, Ajarn Sommai Premchit (Anthropology) from Chiang Mai University, and CFK
- (3) Visit to projects in Hang Dong District constructed under Provincial Development Program. Led by CD officer for district.
- 27 July F (1) Attended Seminar held in Chiang Mai on "Social Development" sponsored by NIDA, the Social Science Association of Thailand, and Chiang Mai University
- (2) Meeting with several faculty in Social Science at Chiang Mai University (Ajarns Kasem, Taipi, Suthep, Sommai)
- 28 July S (1) Interview with Mr. Khanung <sup>the</sup> Wanachai, Chief of Northern Regional Planning Centre, Chiang Mai
- (2) Visit to projects constructed under Provincial Development Program in Mae Rim and Sanpatong District, Chiang Mai Province. Taken by Mr. Khanung along with Ajarn Sommai from CMU.
- 29 July Su (1) Visit to village in Forest Reserve area in Mae Taeng District, Chiang Mai Province in which research is being carried out by Ajarn Chaiyan from the Faculty of Education, Chiang Mai University
- (2) Return to Bangkok
- 30 July M Meeting with Dr. Shilling from the World Bank
- 31 July T Presented lecture at Chulalongkorn University and met with faculty in Sociology/Anthropology (Dr. Amara, Dr. Pricha, Dr. Thiravet, and several others). Also met with Dr. Patya Saihoo, Director of Chulalongkorn University Social Science Research Institute

- 2 Aug Th
- (1) Travelled to Khon Kaen together with Mr. Frank Gillespie
  - (2) Interview with Mr. Pradit Daschai, Chief of Northeastern Regional Planning Centre, Khon Kaen (also attending: Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Mongkol, Deputy Chief of Centre)
  - (3) Visit to NE Regional Agricultural Station at Tha Phra and interview with Dr. Utai Pisone, Chief Research Division
  - (4) Dinner with Mssrs. Pradit, Mongkol, and one other staff person from NE Regional Planning Centre; Dr. Prayoon Wejaparn, Faculty of Education, Khonkaen University; Ms. Christine Gray, Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology from the University of Chicago, carrying out research in Khon Kaen.
- 3 August F
- (1) Travel to Mahasarakham with Mssrs. Mongkol Chunnarat and Nanthachai Wongsanit from the NE Regional Planning Centre and Mr. Gillespie from USAID/Bangkok
  - (2) Interview with Mr. Wuthi-Nan Bhong-Araya, Governor of Mahasarakham Province. Also attending: Mssrs. Mongkol and Nathachai, NESDB, Mr. Gillespie, USAID/Bangkok, and Mr. Ruchon Bamrunsaeng, Provincial Development Officer for Mahasarakham
  - (3) Site visit to two projects in Amphoe Muang District, Mahasarakham Province, constructed under the Provincial Development Program. Visit led by Mr. Damrong Thongphuwong, Palat Amphoe for Muang District. Group included Mssrs. Mongkol and Nanthachai, Mr. Gillespie, and Mr. Ruchon
  - (4) Meeting with Deputy Director of Son Nahkarinwirst University, Mahasarakham. Following this meeting, I remained alone in Mahasarakham while rest of group returned to Khon Kaen
  - (5) Spent afternoon and night in Ban Nong Tun, Tambon Khwao, Muang District, Mahasarakham Province. This village is one in which I originally carried out field work in 1963-1964. Interviewed many villagers about socioeconomic changes in village over the past 15 years.
- 4 August S
- (1) Looked at projects in Ban Nong Tun built under Kukrit Tambon Development Project, under Provincial Development Program, and with support generated by the village itself. Continued interviews with villagers about projects and socioeconomic changes.
  - (2) Meeting with Social Science Faculty (Ajarns Boonlert Sodsuchat, Wichian, Paiboon, Damrong, etc.) at Sri Nakharinwiroth University in Mahasarakham
  - (3) Interview with Cao Khun Ari, Abbot of Wat Maha Chai, Mahasarakham and head of Northeastern Cultural Center in Wat Mahachai

- 5 August Su (1) Continued interviews and observations in Ban Nong Tun
- (2) Returned to Khon Kaen
- (3) Dinner with Ajarn Udom Paksi (Philosophy and Religion), Dr. Yongyut Waitiyakun (Agriculture), Ajarn Surasa Yansawat (Education), Dr. Prayoon (Education) from Khon Kaen University and with Ms. Christine Grey. Ajarn Udom and Dr. Yongyut are in charge of two different KK University committees concerned with research about the N.E. of Thailand
- 6 August M (1) Interview with Mr. Nukum Thongtawee, Chief Engineer for the Regional Office No. 4 of the Royal Irrigation Department (responsibility for Khon Kaen, Loei, Udorn, Mahasarakham, and Roi-et provinces).
- (2) Return to Bangkok
- (3) Meeting at NESDB to discuss revisions to PID suggested by Mr. Vithaya. Meeting attended by Mssrs. Vityha, Somsak, and one other from NESDB and by Mssrs. Queener and Gillespie from USAID/Bangkok, and CFK
- 7 August T Lecture at Chulalongkorn University and meeting with faculty there.
- 10 August F Lv Thailand and return to Seattle