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NONFORMAL EDUCATION

FOR LOW-INCOME WOMEN

IN NORTHEAST THAILAND

USAID Grant No. AID 493-0022-T

A Project of:

The Northeast Regional Training Center

Division of Land Settlements

Department of Public Welfare/Ministry of Interior

(Government of Thailand)

and

The Overseas Education Fund

Washington, D.C.

FINAL REPORT

CEF

The Overseas Education Fund  
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## INTRODUCTION

"Nonformal Education for Women in Northeast Thailand" was a one-year pilot project implemented from November 1980–October 1981 by the Northeast Regional Training Center (NERTC), Division of Land Settlements, Department of Public Welfare DPW, Government of Thailand), with technical assistance from the Overseas Education Fund (OEF, Washington, D.C.). Funding for the joint project was provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development/Thailand.

The project final report is written for three purposes:

1) to provide a concise record of project activities; 2) to assess project results for the Department of Public Welfare and USAID/Thailand, and 3) to offer guidance for future programs designed to strengthen women's participation in development efforts. The report was prepared by the OEF Director of Program Implementation, Dr. Suzanne Kindervatter, who served as technical advisor for the project.

Following this introduction, Part I presents a brief project overview, summarizes major outcomes, and recommends specific follow-up actions. Part II gives a more detailed review of project activities; Part III analyzes project outcomes. The final section of the report, Part IV, discusses implications for on-going activities and dissemination of the nonformal education approach used in the project. The appendices include relevant background data and samples of data collection instruments.

For the Overseas Education Fund, and the OEF Technical Advisor, work with the "Nonformal Education for Women in Northeast Thailand"

project was particularly satisfying. The Thai project staff demonstrated an exceptional dedication and enthusiasm for the activities at the village level. The NERTC staff (particularly the Center Director), DPW/Bangkok, Nikom Lam Phaow, local officials at Amphur Sahassakhan (particularly the Nai Amphur), and USAID/Bangkok all provided support beyond initial expectations. The village women of Nikom Lam Phaow were willing to trust an experiment in education, unlike anything they had previously experienced. All these individuals contributed to achieving the project's success; and to them all, OEF would like to express sincere admiration and appreciation.

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the "Nonformal Education for Women in Northeast Thailand" project was to help improve the socio-economic conditions of women and their families in the Lam Phaow Land Settlement in northeast Thailand through a nonformal education program. The nonformal education approach developed by the Overseas Education Fund (OEF) is designed to motivate and organize women to take individual and collective action for personal, economic, and community development. Implementation of the one-year project involved three phases:

Phase I (Nov.-Dec. '80)	Recruitment and Training of Village Women (from 10 villages) as Learning Group Leaders
Phase II (Feb.-June '81)	Formation of Learning Groups: Meetings and Activities of Learning Groups in Villages
Phase III (July-Oct. '81)	Project Evaluation, Revision of Nonformal Education Materials, and Planning for Continuing Activities

The project was carried out by three Thai staff members under the supervision of the Director of the Northeast Regional Training Center for Land Settlements (NERTC). OEF provided a project Technical Advisor and a handbook of nonformal education activities adaptable to the Thai context. The Technical Advisor, on-site during Phases I and III, trained Thai staff, assisted in recruiting and training village women as learning group leaders, organized the production of learning materials, coordinated project evaluation, and guided planning for project follow-up.

In the subsequent sections of the report, these activities and their outcomes are discussed in considerable detail. The highlights are presented below, under project "conclusions" and "recommendations."

### Conclusions

The project proposal and agreement included three specific objectives the project was expected to accomplish:

1. Enabling approximately 120 rural low-income Thai women to develop attitudes, skills, and capabilities needed for participating in and initiating activities for income generation and community development;
2. Enabling Thai women to develop support and action groups for identifying and sumounting obstacles to their participation in development processes and benefits; and
3. Strengthening the capabilities of the DPW to implement non-formal education activities which meet the needs of rural women.

After Phase I, the project Technical Advisor met with U.S. AID staff in Bangkok. An AID official, reflecting on the newness of the nonformal education approach for the target group and on the social, economic, and cultural realities of land settlements in northeastern Thailand, commented that the project would be noteworhy even if only a few of the original ten learning groups met regularly and took some collective action. Keeping this perspective in mind, the project results are exceptional. The conclusions summarized here are drawn from Parts II and III of the report.

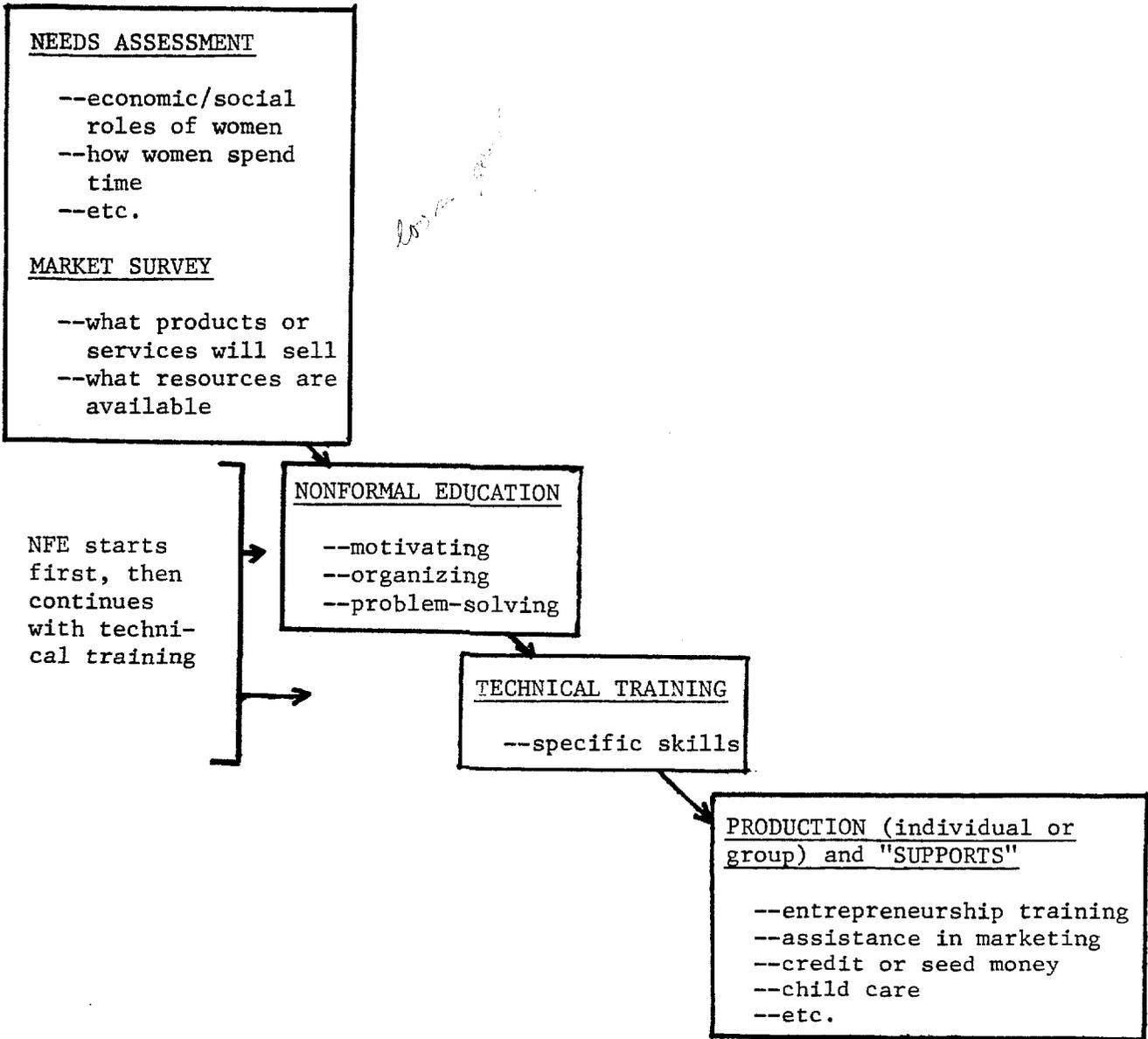
1. The 10 original village learning groups, each coordinated by two village women, all continued to meet over the life of the project.
2. The total number of women who participated in the learning groups was 226. The average attendance at each learning group meeting was 19. *Do they carry on?*
3. Each of the 10 groups met 10 times during the February-May 1981 period. All the groups completed the entire program curriculum. Leaders met twice a month with project staff.
4. In response to the question, "What did you like about the program, how did it help you?", 38 out of the 50 participants interviewed after the program said they were now more interested and confident in expressing their ideas. Also, 41 stated that their family relationships had improved as result of the program. *why?*
5. Of the 10 learning groups, 6 groups had taken cooperative action to increase family income or to improve their communities by August 1981. These actions have included: raising chickens, raising pigs, building fences around houses, selling sweets, and improving the local temple and school. The demand of work in the fields was an obstacle to the initiation of more activities between March and August 1981.
6. In addition, 9 out of the 10 groups developed ideas and written plans for cooperative activities and requested outside financial assistance for implementation. These activities include: raising chickens (Blocs 16, 17, 42, 41, and Ban Nonamgiung); constructing a loom for weaving cotton cloth (Bloc 6, 12, 13); building a village meeting hall (Ban Huesuetan); and starting a village child care center (Bloc 16, 17). Funds for training materials for some groups have been provided by the project budget. Assistance is also being sought by the NERTC and DPW staff from the DPW revolving fund. The initial funds were disbursed through the NERTC.
7. The learning/action groups have identified and made contact with individual and organizational resources to assist them in carrying out their plans. The Thai project staff member from DPW/Bangkok has put women from Blocs 16 and 17 in touch with the Christian Children's Fund for funds for a community child care center. Also, local individuals who can provide needed technical assistance have been contacted: a village chief who knows how to build looms; a Peace Corps volunteer with some background in animal husbandry; and a woman who has a successful egg-production business. In addition, the Director of Nikom Lam Phaow is attempting to secure looms from another nikom where they are not currently in use.

8. The Thai project staff are currently revising the project's NFE handbook. The target date for completion is early 1982. *Finished yet?*
9. The NERTC is considering ways to include the NFE handbook program in its course offerings for nikoms in the northeast. *Did they in this?*  
The Center Director has proposed conducting training for settlers as learning group leaders, with a staff trainer from the same nikom also attending the training. In this way, the trainer could continue to provide guidance to the settler learning group leaders after they return to their nikoms.
10. In September 1981, responsibility for follow-up support for the 10 learning/action groups begun during the project was formally transferred from the NERTC to Nikom Lam Phaow. The Director of the nikom received a written statement from NERTC describing the planned activities for each group, and he subsequently assigned staff members to provide needed on-going support to the groups.
11. The project provided some insights into factors that appear to contribute to effective learning groups. Generally, the groups that were especially active had these characteristics in common: a group leader with status, by virtue of age or education; members from a village with a "better than average" (for the land settlement) standard of living; a mix of younger and older women; and support of the village headman. These factors would be important to consider in planning other development programs in northeast Thailand (see p.28 for more discussion).
12. The nonformal education approach utilized in the project was clearly effective in motivating and organizing women to participate in income generation and community development activities. However, women need more training in areas such as marketing of goods, basic small business management techniques (accounting, etc.), and credit mechanisms. OEF has recognized this need in projects in other countries as well and has been developing appropriate training materials. Such training packages could effectively be incorporated into future income generating projects in Thailand. More specifically, OEF currently views the non-formal education handbook program as one component in a four-component approach to promoting participation in small enterprise:

OEF'S APPROACH TO

PROMOTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SMALL ENTERPRISE

(on- or off-farm employment activities)



Recommendations

The project has been successful in accomplishing its objectives. Certain follow-up actions can further strengthen the institutionalization of the nonformal education program in the Department of Public Welfare and can provide needed information on factors that help promote sustained activity, particularly for small production groups, at the village level. In addition, consideration deserves to be given to wider uses of the nonformal education approach, possibly as a component of large-scale development projects.

*Is DPW ready to take it?*

Five organizations contributed to the effectiveness of the project; by taking a few additional steps, these organizations can maximize the benefits for those the project was designed to reach. Recommended actions for each of the organizations involved with the project include the following:

Northeast Regional Training Center for Land Settlements (NERTC)

1. In September 1981, the NERTC made plans for completing revisions of the project nonformal education handbook by early 1982. It is important for the Director of the Center to ensure the handbook's completion, since the handbook can be used as the curriculum for an on-going NERTC training program and as a resource for other parts of DPW as well. Important considerations for revision, already discussed by the Technical Advisor with project staff, are elaborated on p. 18 of this report.
2. After the handbook revisions are completed, firm plans can be made for the next implementation of the program at the NERTC. Depending on who the trainers for this program will be, additional staff training may be needed.
3. The handbook and other NERTC training programs have generated a variety of nonformal education materials (e.g., posters, flannel boards, puppets, story cards, etc.). As of September

*Has NERTC done it?*

*Have they been replicated?*

1981, these materials were not centralized and easily accessible to trainers at the Center. Therefore, the NERTC might consider setting up a "training materials resource center or library" in one of the rooms at the Center. This resource center would enable trainers to see a full range of training materials and then choose those most appropriate for their purposes. Also, such a resource center would save time; materials would not be lost and would not have to be recreated.

*To it materials library*

Department of Public Welfare

1. Considering that the project handbook is a resource for the Department as well as NERTC, DPW should provide the support and encouragement needed to bring about the completion of handbook revisions.
2. After the handbook is completed, DPW staff could meet to consider its usefulness for other nikoms and for other Department programs. The project demonstrated the effectiveness of the handbook as a nonformal education and community development "tool." For other staff members to be able to use this tool, plans would need to be made for: training in handbook use and implementation of the handbook in specific DPW programs. OEF would be available, if needed, to assist in these training activities.
3. During her most recent visit to Thailand, the project technical advisor met informally with staff members of the Department of Nonformal Education, Ministry of Education (where she previously worked). These individuals expressed interest in the handbook as a resource for their own programs. Perhaps the DPW could arrange a sort of "trade": DPW could provide training in the handbook and the Nonformal Education staff might provide training in an areas such as general adult education principles and methods.

*Did it take place as planned? Part, why?*

*Does it work? How?*

Nikom Lam Phaow (Lam Phaow Land Settlement)

1. The project brought the village women's learning/action groups to the point of initiating collective production and income generating activities. The follow-up support that the Nikom Director and his staff offered to provide will be important in helping the groups solve problems as they carry out their plans. The Nikom should follow through on its commitment by providing on-going staff monitoring of the groups' activities.
2. The Nikom can learn much about the operation and problems of small-scale self-help production groups from its work with the women's groups. The Nikom should keep careful records of what happens to each of the nine groups and analyze the implications for marketing, management, etc. OEF would welcome the

opportunity to work with the Nikom in this impact evaluation process.

3. In cooperation with DPW, Nikom Lam Phaow could assist in disseminating information on the handbook program and materials to other land settlements.

#### Agency for International Development/Thailand

1. The AID Human Resources Division demonstrated support and interest in the project throughout its implementation. Additional meetings with DPW staff would help assure the completion of the handbook revisions and future application of the program.
2. During one of her visits to the AID Mission in September 1981, the OEF technical advisor met with an AID staff member working in fish pond development who was interested in the handbook methodology. AID's support of the women's nonformal education program was in part an investment in the production of materials useful for other programs. AID might now consider the applicability of the handbook for agricultural sector programs, as a means to motivate and organize village-level participants for project activities. OEF would be interested in exploring how the handbook could be incorporated in these other programs. *motivation discussion*
3. Part III of this report points out that the effect of the project on family income and living conditions cannot be determined immediately after the project activities end. Yet, this impact evaluation is the real test of the project's success. AID should consider contracting OEF for a follow-up assessment of the women's learning/action groups to determine longer-term outcomes. Such an assessment would provide useful information for planning other AID projects.
4. As discussed in "Conclusions/#12," women's income generation activities are more likely to be successful if the women participate in training for small business management as well as in the handbook program. AID might consider negotiating a grant to develop and test such training materials with Thai organizations.

#### Overseas Education Fund

1. OEF should maintain contact with the NERTC, DPW, Nikom Lam Phaow, and AID to follow-up on the plans for continued handbook utilization and for group activities in Nikom Lam Phaow.
2. Considering that an impact evaluation of the project is desirable (see AID/#3, above), OEF needs to pursue negotiations with the AID Mission so that the evaluation can be carried out in mid-1982.

3. Based on what has been learned about the handbook program in Thailand and in other countries where it was used in 1981, OEF should proceed with plans to publish a revised English version of the handbook at the earliest possible date and to incorporate the methodology into the income generating projects to which OEF provides technical assistance.

## II. REVIEW OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The three phases of the project, already listed in Part I of the report, are described more fully in this section.

### Phase I: Recruitment and Training of Village Women as Learning Group Leaders

During the first two months of the project, the OEF Technical Advisor was on-site to assist the Thai staff in launching the project activities. Since the three Thai staff members had little background in participatory nonformal education approaches, Phase I began with training the staff to use the OEF handbook. Concurrently, the staff and advisor set criteria and recruited twenty women from ten villages to serve as learning groups leaders. Finally, the village women attended a two-week intensive training program to prepare them to function as learning group leaders.

*find out if these women understand the handbook.*

The experience of Phase I provided some insights into how northeastern Thai women would respond to the handbook activities and into prospects for project effectiveness. These insights already have been extensively documented in the report of Phase I (January 1981), so they will not be discussed again here. The Phase I report also provides extensive information on socio-economic characteristics of the Lam Phaow Land Settlement and women in the settlement; on how the project came about; and on the recruitment and training processes. Because this information helps put the final report in context, the Phase I report is included in its entirety in Appendix A.

Generally, the Phase I report concluded that the nonformal education approach was useable for and by northeastern Thai village women, but that certain cultural, social, and economic factors of life on the land settlement might impede collective action and problem-solving efforts. Phase II was approached optimistically, though cautiously, by all the collaborating organizations.

Phase II: Formation of Learning Groups: Meetings and Activities of Learning Groups in Villages

In January 1981, the Thai project staff and village learning group leaders made personal contact with women in their villages to set up the ten learning groups. The groups began meeting in February and continued through May. In all, each group had ten meetings, with an average of 19 women attending each meeting (the highest attendance was 35 and the lowest was 5). The full attendance record is included on the following page.

During the training of learning group leaders in Phase I, the village women leaders used the same materials and followed the same sequence of activities as they would be implementing in their own groups. Then, from February to May, the learning group leaders met again with project staff to review the activities for each group meeting a short while before it was to be held. Three out of the twenty group leaders changed during the project, mainly because of personal problems or disinterest.

The meetings were usually held in the evenings, in the leader's home, a temple, or a village hall. This is the series of topics

"Nonformal Education for Women in Northeast Thailand"

Record of Learning Group Meetings\*

Group	Date	Participants	Date	Participants	Date	Participants	Date	Participants
Bloc 6	Feb 6	14	March ?		April ?	20	May 8	20
	Feb 14	14	March 20	15	April ?	20	May 11	20
	Feb ?		March 27	20				
Bloc 7	Feb 6	21	March 12	13	April ?	13	May 7	21
	Feb 14	21	March 17	24	April ?	21	May 11	27
	Feb ?		March 28	21				
Bloc 12	Feb 2	25	March 12	33	April ?	32	May 7	33
	Feb 12	28	March 19	35	April ?	32	May 11	33
	Feb 25	30	March 26	35				
Bloc 13	Feb 6	20	March 9	15	April ?	10	May 7	15
	Feb ?	15	March 17	12	April ?	10	May 12	20
	Feb 25	14	March 23	15				
Bloc 16	Feb 2	20	March 11	19	April ?	22	May 6	23
	Feb 10	22	March 17	23	April ?	24	May 13	23
	Feb 25	22	March 24	23				
Bloc 17	Feb 4	20	March 11	13	April ?	18	May 7	18
	Feb 11	24	March 17	25	April ?	17	May 13	22
	Feb 25	14	March 24	18				
Bloc 41	Feb 2	17	March 21	19	April ?	17	May 7	17
	Feb 11	14	March 28	17	April ?	20	May 14	22
	Feb 27	5	March ?					
Bloc 42	Feb 3	15	March 13	12	April ?	13	May 6	15
	Feb 13	13	March 20	12	April ?	13	May 14	15
	Feb 17	13	March 29	12				
Ban Nonangiumg	Feb 3	20	March 12	20	April ?	10	May 6	10
	Feb 10	20	March 19	20	April ?	10	May 19	17
	Feb 25	20	March 26	15				
Ban Huesuetan	Feb 2	18	March 12	20	April ?	20	May 6	20
	Feb 10	20	March 16	20	April ?	20	May 19	20
	Feb 25	20	March 23	20				

\* This chart was originally included in the report for Phase II. However, April was left out of the chart and has been added here.

considered by the ten groups at each meeting:

Group Meeting 1	Introduction to the Program; Women and
Group Meeting 2	Self-Awareness and Goal-Setting
Group Meeting 3	Planning to Reach a Goal and Group Cooperation
Group Meeting 4	Community Problem-Solving
Group Meeting 5	Community Leadership
Group Meeting 6	Family Relationships and Family Finances
Group Meeting 7	Recognizing Individual and Team Accomplishments (action-taking)
Group Meeting 8	Personal Rights
Group Meeting 9	Planning for Continuing Group Activities
Group Meeting 10	Legal Rights

The nonformal education handbook of activities used for the learning group meetings is based on the premise that motivation and lasting change depend on people's full involvement in defining and solving their own problems. Each meeting includes guidelines for one or more activities and for materials to be used in those activities. The activities each focus on a general theme common to women's lives, but learning group participants themselves determine the specific content.

For example, one activity deals with "saving and borrowing." The activity starts with a "stimulus": an exercise, using a flannel board and figures, that involves women in defining their current family expenditures and their unmet financial needs. They then identify possible ways for saving and borrowing money to meet some of

these needs. Examples of options from a variety of settings are included in the leader's instructions. In the "stimulus" part of each activity, most of the learning materials used are locally produced: drawings, photos, stories, taped dramas, role plays, etc. The handbook provides samples of these materials and directions for how to create them. After the "stimulus," the activity moves to "discussion," during which the women identify problems and issues based on their own experiences. The activity then concludes with "action-taking": deciding on individual and/or group initiatives related to saving and borrowing. The general pattern followed for the "saving and borrowing" activity -- stimulus, discussion, action-taking -- is used for all the activities included in the program.

Generally, the learning group leaders experienced few problems with the actual use of the handbook activities and materials. However, the preparation meetings with project staff prior to the meetings proved invaluable, since most of the women had minimal literacy skills and found the handbook somewhat difficult to follow. In addition, the leaders found some of the materials inconvenient to prepare, and others appropriate for some groups but not for others. For instance, some groups very much liked using the cassette tape recorder for making their own "problem-posing" stories, while others were somewhat intimidated by it.

Over the course of their learning group meetings, the groups completed all the meetings included in the handbook except a second meeting on "women and work." This meeting was to involve the women in following up on options identified in the previous meet-

ing and then planning action together. However, these important activities may have been included too early in the sequence, before the groups had had time to develop an identity and cooperative spirit.

Also, the groups completed the entire program in approximately half the time anticipated. Leaders reported that the women were not active in discussion in some meetings, though discussion is considered a major part of the program. This was particularly the case in activities on "community problem-solving." Women seemed more interested in their own immediate problems than in the problems of their communities. The project staff was less interested in this facet of the program, also, which might have had an effect. One other change from the original program plan involved a change of sequence of the activities. This occurred principally because of scheduling resource persons and did not interfere with program effectiveness. The activities are designed to be used in sequence or in a "pick-and-choose" fashion.

The discussion above points out a number of "learnings" that need to be given serious attention in revising the handbook for continued use in Thailand: 1) the handbook format and language need to be simplified; 2) a core set of easy-to-use materials should be included in a materials "kit", and for some activities, two alternative materials could be offered to provide a choice; 3) the "women and work" meetings might lead more quickly to action if included later in the program, to give the group a chance to take shape; and 4) better training in discussion for learning group leaders

and better discussion guidelines are needed; in fact, some activities might require supplemental content to provide greater stimulation for thought. (Note: Based on OEF's use of the handbook in other cultures, however, the Thai women seem less inclined to discuss. Thus, if the program does successfully lead to action, the limited discussion may be more of a cultural variable than an obstacle to program effectiveness.) The four suggestions noted here have already been discussed by the Technical Advisor with the Thai project staff.

The discussion of Phase II has provided a composite picture and better discussion guidelines are needed; some activities might require supplemental content to provide greater stimulation for thought. (Note: Based on OEF's use of the handbook in other cultures, however, the Thai women seem less inclined to discuss. Thus, if the program leads to action, the limited discussion may be more a cultural variable than an obstacle to program success.) The four suggestions noted here have already been discussed by the Technical Advisor with the Thai project staff.

The discussion of Phases II has provided a composite picture of the activities and processes involved in the implementation of the learning group program. The more specific activities of the ten separate groups will be included in the examination of project outcomes in Part III of the report.

Phase III: Project Evaluation; Revision of Nonformal Education Materials; Planning for Continuing Activities

During August and September 1981, the Technical Advisor returned to Nikom Lam Phaow to assist staff with evaluation and future planning. The collection and analysis of evaluation data took the bulk of this

period, though the Thai staff did begin some handbook revisions. Meetings were also held with NERTC, DPW/Bangkok and Nikom Lam Phaow staff to establish plans for continued use of the handbook and for on-going support for the groups initiated during the project.

The following section of this report deals more completely with the project final evaluation and with its findings.

### III. ANALYSIS OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

#### Evaluation Methodology/Sources of Data

The process used for the project evaluation needs to be understood in the context of OEF's participatory evaluation approach. OEF has long recognized that evaluation is integral to effective development work. In accord with Board-defined philosophy, OEF has adopted a "participatory project evaluation system"--a system in which the beneficiaries of OEF-assisted projects, namely members of local organizations and low-income women, are actively involved in project analysis and decision-making. Over the last year, OEF has worked to develop new procedures which effectively promote a greater involvement of beneficiaries in evaluation activities. By combining "participation" with "evaluation," OEF has created a system which contributes to:

- strengthening local capabilities for self-reliance;
- enabling the group to confront problems which occur in implementation and to make needed adjustments;
- guiding the future projects of OEF and of other organizations;
- creating approaches for enabling project beneficiaries to take a more active role in project identification, design and implementation, and thus ensuring that projects are more responsive to their needs.

The process OEF follows for a project final evaluation includes three parts: an evaluation planning workshop; data collection; and a data analysis workshop. For the women's nonformal education project, the project evaluation plan was developed by the Technical Advisor and project staff during the first phase of the project, the period

of project start-up and training of learning group leaders (November-December 1980). Subsequently, the staff and twenty learning group leaders collected specific data over the life of the project, conducted post-project interviews with village women, and participated in several other evaluation activities when the Technical Advisor returned to Thailand (August/September 1981). These activities included meetings with the village women and learning group leaders to discuss their views on the project and the project approach. Finally, the project staff, Technical Advisor, and NERTC Director held an analysis meeting on September 9 to review the data gathered and to explore outcomes, problems, and future plans. The findings from this meeting have been incorporated into this report.

The project evaluation plan was designed to assess changes both in village women's attitudes and action-taking for income generation and problem-solving, and in the training capacity of the Northeast Regional Training Center/Department of Public Welfare. The following chart presents the sources and means of data collection utilized during the project and after the project activities were completed:

Evaluation Data: Sources and Instruments

<u>Source</u>	<u>Instruments Used During Phases I and II</u>	<u>Instruments Used During Phase III</u>
1. Village Women Learning Group Participants	a. Attendance record (see p. 14)	a. Post-test questionnaire (Appendix B) (Structured interviews conducted by Thai project staff individually with 50 women; 5 women were randomly selected from each of the 10 groups, out of a total of 226 participating; thus, a 22% sample)  b. Discussion meetings with each of the 10 learning groups, three Thai project staff, and the OEF technical advisor, in the villages (Appendix C).

Evaluation Data: Sources and Instruments (continued)

2. Learning Group Leaders	a. Twice monthly meetings between leaders and project staff	a. Structured discussion meeting with 20 learning group leaders, project staff, and OEF technical advisor (31 August 1981) (Appendix D)
3. Thai project staff and NERTC Director	a. Monthly reports submitted by the project coordinator to the OEF technical advisor	a. Series of discussion and planning meetings between project staff, NERTC Director, and OEF technical advisor
4. Village Headmen	a. Occasional visits to individual headmen by project staff	a. Unstructured interviews in three villages with village headmen, project staff, and OEF technical advisor
5. Concrete changes in Village Women's Behavior and Action-Taking Efforts and NERTC Staff/Programs	a. Observation by OEF technical advisor (Phase I) and project staff (Phases I and II)	a. Observation by OEF technical advisor

The data gathered from all these sources were compiled and are analyzed in the next section.

Achievement of Project Objectives

The project proposal and agreement included three specific objectives the project was expected to accomplish:

1. Enabling approximately 120 rural low-income Thai women to develop attitudes, skills, and capabilities needed for participating in and initiating activities for income generation and community development;
2. Enabling Thai women to develop support and action groups for identifying and surmounting obstacles to their participation in development processes and benefits; and
3. Strengthening the capabilities of the DPW to implement non-formal education activities which meet the needs of rural women.

This section examines in turn the accomplishment of objectives related to low-income Thai women (objectives 1 and 2) and to the NERTC/DPW (objective 3).

Effect of the Project on Low-Income Thai Women

Data from all five sources listed above are very consistent in showing that the project has had a positive effect on women's attitudes and on their involvement in collective action. In all, 226 women participated in the nonformal education program, 106 more than the 120 originally projected.

In terms of change of attitude, 76% of the village women interviewed after the program gave the following responses to an open-ended question asking what they liked about the program: "I became more confident; I'm not afraid now to speak up in meetings and give my ideas. I liked the opportunity to express my ideas." This change in attitude, as well as a corresponding change in behavior, was also commented on by the learning group leaders during their group interview, by village headmen, and by project staff. Even members of the maintenance staff of the NERTC--drivers and cooks--remarked on the change during casual conversations with the OEF technical advisor. As villagers themselves, they pointed out that these women had had few opportunities for their ideas to be listened to and valued; the effect of having such a forum encouraged the women and helped them believe their thoughts were worth sharing. A question may be raised about potential problems of promoting these changes in the context of northeastern Thai/Issan culture. However, all the village headmen said they liked the women's more active participation; in addition, 94% of women interviewed explained that their family relationships had improved as a result of the program! And leaders from six villages noted that the program had "increased harmony in their villages."

The project also appears to have helped the participating women gain specific skills and capabilities for undertaking group income generation and community development activities. In response to questions related to how the program helped them, many women mentioned that they had developed skills for problem-solving and for working in a group. These skills were evident in the activities that the groups have already launched or planned to launch in October 1981.

All 10 of the original village learning groups continued to meet over the life of the project, and 9 of these groups had organized cooperative income generation activities as of September 1981. In addition, during the period the learning groups were actually meeting, 6 out of the 10 groups had already initiated and completed other activities. The women noted that more activities could have begun, but their time was limited by the demands of agricultural work (particularly as day-laborers in paddy fields). The extent to which the women implemented joint activities as a result of the project is noteworthy, considering the lack of a self-help and cooperative tradition among the villagers.

A list of activities undertaken by each village (bloc) group is presented below. The number of women from each village directly involved with activities during the learning group meeting period ranged from five to about twenty. The total number who planned to be involved in activities as of October 1981 is 156; the specific number for each village is noted in the chart. (Note: The activities undertaken in Phase II were actually observed by the OEF Technical Advisor, although some were not mentioned by the sample interviewed.)

Group-Initiated Income Generation  
and Community Development Activities

<u>Bloc</u>	<u>Activities Undertaken</u> <u>During Phase II</u>	<u>Activities Planned During</u> <u>Phase III</u>
6	-----	Loom; Weaving Production Group (15 women)
7	-----	-----
12 and 13 (combined)	Sale of sweets	Loom; Weaving Production Group (30-35 women)
16	Chicken-raising Sale of sweets Built fences to improve village	Chicken-raising Community Child Care Center (with bloc 17) (24 women)
17	-----	Chicken-raising Community Child Care Center (with bloc 16) (10 women)
41	Helped improve school and temple grounds on Mother's Day	Chicken-raising (17 women)
42	(same as Bloc 41)	Chicken-raising (13 women)
Ban Nonamgiung	-----	Chicken-raising and egg production (18 women)
Ban Huesuetan	Chicken-raising Pig-raising Construction of fish pond	Construction of a village hall (24 women, and many husbands)

The groups gave careful consideration to the potential for profits in determining the activities they wished to pursue. The groups interested in chicken-raising estimated that individuals could make about a 100 baht profit (approx. \$5/US) on each 20 chickens (net). The "weaving

groups" figured that twice as much could be earned from selling cloth as from working in the cassava field for the same period of time (1,340 baht net versus 510 baht, or approximately \$67/US versus \$25/US).

(Note: The average wage for day laborers is 30-35 baht or approximately \$1.75/US.)

In response to requests from the groups, a small amount of seed money was provided for the activities planned in Phase III. In addition, the women identified local institutions and individuals who could provide "technical assistance" for their efforts, including a village headman who can build looms, a Peace Corps volunteer with a background in animal husbandry, and a village woman with a successful egg production business. An outside resource was identified to assist with the community child care center in Blocs 16 and 17: the Christian Children's Fund, which gives grants and technical support for these village-level efforts.

The NERTC Director stipulated that for seed money to be granted, a group had to have a detailed and well-thought-out plan of action. These plans were partly formulated during the discussion meetings held among each group in its respective village, the project staff, and OEF technical advisor. From the viewpoint of the technical advisor, these meetings were a fascinating demonstration of what the women had learned from the nonformal education program as well as certain gaps in their learnings.

For example, in the discussion with groups from Bloc 12 and 13, the issue arose of how 35 women could jointly work in a weaving (loom) production group for the sale of a denim-like cotton cloth. After extended deliberation, the group identified the possibility of having two looms in operation (because of limited funds to purchase looms), with each woman spending a set period of time at a loom and sharing the profits. In Ban Nonangiumg, discussion centered on the marketability of chickens. The group finally decided that a small demand existed for chicken meat, but a larger demand existed for chicken eggs; thus, they opted for a combined chicken and egg production activity.

These discussions, and those in other groups, followed a similar pattern. When the groups hit upon a problem, they immediately turned to the Thai project staff. The staff, in turn, initially took responsibility for the problem and sometimes were stumped by how to solve it. Then, they turned it back to the group, and together a solution seemed to evolve. The tradition of the "benefactor" and "recipient" in Thai culture is strong. However, this experience shows that those who are traditionally "recipients" of assistance can assist themselves when they are encouraged to do so. The experience points out another learning, that both the village women and Thai staff are still not really accustomed to problem-solving. In each instance, their initial reaction seemed to be "we can't do it." However, with encouragement and sometimes a bit of prodding, they discovered that often a way could be found.

The planning process for income generation activities for each group also shed more light on the usefulness of the nonformal education methodology. In planning their activities, the women came up

against questions of: marketability of goods and services, access to resources, the availability of credit, how to set up and manage a small enterprise, acquisition of needed skills, and the availability of market outlets. The nonformal education program is effective in motivating and organizing women to take action; however, plans for income generation activities would probably stand more of a chance of being followed through if women received specific training and/or technical assistance in the areas noted above. This could be added to the handbook or included as supplementary material.

An interesting and important question, and one the OEF technical advisor and project staff discussed together, is why some of the ten learning groups were more active than others. What are the variables that seemed to contribute to a high degree of group solidarity and activity? A number of factors were considered: group leaders, economic situation of the village, education level of the women, proximity to the training center and to other resources, support of village headmen, previous experience with group activity, and group composition. The staff and advisor identified some "hunches" about what seems to make a difference.

First, the status of the leader appears to be important, either in terms of age or education. Most of the groups observed by the technical advisor had "natural leaders," usually older women who often dominated the discussion. However, the actual organization of the group was done either by an older woman or a younger woman with education. Second, the groups from villages with a "better than average" standard of living were most active--"better than average" in this context is a very relative term since most of the villagers are very poor. Third, a mixture of older and younger women in a group

seemed to have a positive effect. And, fourth, interest of the village headman did seem to count. While findings are tentative and need to be explored further, they may be useful considerations for planning other nonformal education programs involving women.

This section has discussed the ways the project influenced the attitudes and cooperative action-taking capabilities of low-income Thai women in Nikom Lam Phaow. The initial results of the project are clearly positive. However, the full test of effectiveness would be a post-project impact evaluation, to determine whether groups have followed through on their plans (and why or why not) and whether increased family income and other gains are actually experienced.

#### Effect of the Project on the NERTC/DPW

The project strengthened the human resources of the NERTC, DPW, and Nikom Lam Phaow, and also added new methods and materials to the NERTC training repertoire.

Three Thai women worked as project staff: a staff member from the NERTC, a staff member from DPW/Bangkok, and a staff member from Nikom Lam Phaow. Only one of these women had had any experience with participatory approaches in nonformal education. The project gave them an intensive course in this area, from methods of training trainers, to utilizing learning activities and materials, to methods of evaluation. As a result of the project, all three seem more comfortable with the approach, though still a bit wary. It is sometimes hard to change well learned patterns of lecturing, giving information, and assuming experts know best. However, all three trainers

talked about how much they had learned about and come to appreciate the village women through the project. Without a doubt, the caring and conscientiousness of the staff members was a major contributor to project effectiveness.

The project also introduced many alternative training materials and training activities to the NERTC. For the learning group meetings, it appears that some of the materials were put aside, partly because of perceived inconvenience. However, some of these materials are easy to produce and easy to use and could enable the Center to employ more diverse (and interesting) approaches in the villages.

The nonformal education handbook used for the project was originally written in English and translated into Thai. The staff and village leaders found the format and some of the language confusing, and these factors will be addressed in the revision process. The handbook revision is targeted for completion in early 1982. In the meantime, NERTC training staff are adapting some of the handbook activities for other training programs. In terms of future use, the NERTC Director has proposed that the handbook program be incorporated in the Center's offerings as one of its regular programs. The patient support of the Director was also another important contributor to positive outcomes.

Ideally, the NERTC could have benefited more if additional staff had had some direct experience with the handbook. However, the village women themselves chose not to have men involved in their program, and their wishes were honored.

With the participation of the DPW staff member in the project, a link between the project in Lam Phaow and programming in Bangkok was

made. Staff of DPW, including the Director of the Division of Land Settlements, are interested in broader use of the handbook after it has been revised.

The land settlement administrative office at Lam Phaow was also affected by the project. The Nikom Director has formally accepted responsibility for follow-up with the groups of women who made plans for income generation projects and received seed money. In addition, he expressed interest in the nonformal education approach because it appears to be a means to catalyze the self-help processes that are part of the land settlement "philosophy."

Finally, organizational growth through the project did not occur just in Thailand. The Overseas Education Fund gained new insights into building effective programs for low-income women and appreciated this opportunity for mutual learning.

#### Summary of Project Impact on First-Level Beneficiaries

In addition to specifying three clear project objectives, the project agreement included a list of impact indicators for changes in the village women and in the NERTC/DPW. A comparison of the projected versus actual impacts is given below as a means to summarize project outcomes:

#### Project Impact on First-Level Beneficiaries

<u>Beneficiary Group</u>	<u>Projected Impact</u>	<u>Actual Impact</u>
I. Rural Low-income Women in Northeast Thailand	1. At least 100 women will have participated in the handbook activities.	1. The total number of participants was 226.

2. The women will express greater confidence in themselves and greater awareness of their potential.

3. The majority of the women will have taken some action to increase their incomes.

4. The women will have initiated at least 10 community development activities.

5. The women will have greater knowledge of resources and services available to them.

6. At least one half of the women will have specific plans to meet as support/action groups after the program ends.

7. The women will have a greater and more positive knowledge of their personal potential and rights.

2. Out of the 50 women interviewed at the end of the program (a 22% sample), 76% said they were now more interested in and confident in expressing their ideas. NERTC staff and village leaders also commented on this change in the women.

3. Six of the ten learning groups had taken cooperative action to increase family income by the end of the project. In addition, a total of nine groups developed plans for activities to be implemented after the program. (Note: Sixty four percent of the post-project interviewees stated that they could not take action earlier because of demands of work in the paddy fields. Also, the women commented on the lack of "start-up" funds.)

4. Women in three village initiated community development activities during the program. On the whole, the women seemed more interested in meeting their immediate family need for increased income.

5. The planning for post-project income generation activities included identifying local resources. Women became aware of individuals and agencies that could be of assistance in many areas, and actually made contact with them.

6. Nine out of the ten groups have planned on-going activities (small amounts of seed money have been provided for these activities in response to the women's requests).

7. Thai project staff reported that the women were particularly interested in the handbook activities which encouraged expression of their ideas and which dealt with legal rights.

Project Impact on First-Level Beneficiaries (continued)

II. Department of  
Public Welfare

1. At least two women staff members will be trained and serve as project supervisors.
  2. At least 20 village women will have been trained as nonformal education facilitators.
  3. DPW at Lam Phaow (NERTC) will have implemented the handbook activities with a minimum of 10 groups of participants and will have evaluated the results.
  4. The DPW will know new and effective methods for recruitment, training, materials development, and evaluation.
  5. Following implementation of the handbook activities, a revised handbook will be produced which integrates the experience of the program.
  6. The NERTC will have plans to use the revised handbook with new groups of participants and for follow-up activities with the initial participants.
1. The following were trained and worked with the project: one NERTC staff member; one DPW/Bangkok staff member; and one Nikom Lam Phaow staff member.
  2. Twenty village women were trained and functioned as facilitators for the handbook program.
  3. The 10 original learning groups all continued over the life of the project. The final evaluation was conducted in August-September 1981.
  4. During the project, the Thai project staff were introduced to and made use of new procedures in each of these four areas.
  5. DPW and NERTC plan to have the handbook revised by early 1982.
  6. The NERTC Director has made a commitment to add the program to training center offerings. The Director of Nikom Lam Phaow has formally accepted responsibility for follow-up with the 10 groups that began during the project, and has assigned his staff specific tasks.

#### IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTINUING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The one-year nonformal education program to involve low-income northeastern Thai women in development efforts has produced notable results in a relatively short period of time. At the end of the twelve-month period, specific accomplishments are in place and the potential for accomplishing even more looks promising.

Over the course of the project, more than 200 Thai women participated in a six-month program and 156 have become newly involved in income-generating and community development activities. The NERTC has gained a new training program to add to its growing curriculum, as well as trainers with up-graded skills and a variety of adaptable training materials. From the project, Nikom Lam Phaow has inherited nine active village-level learning/action groups which may set the tone for other self-help efforts in the land settlement. And DPW/Bangkok will have an educational handbook for use in other programs in other parts of the country.

However, the accomplishments of this project, though significant, must be considered intermediary gains toward the overall goal of promoting increased family income and improved living conditions for land-settlement residents. To ensure this broader and more ambitious goal is achieved, follow-up needs to be done with the women's groups that began activities during the project. Questions need to be asked and answered which will better enable judgments to be made on the project's ultimate effectiveness: Did the groups follow through on their plans, and why or why not? What problems did they encounter along the way, and how did they deal with them? What factors seem to promote and hinder success? In addition, efforts need to be

made to share the nonformal education approach with other groups and agencies seeking methods to strengthen women's participation in development.

Five organizations, in effect, contributed to this project, and each of these organizations can play a constructive role in follow-up and/or dissemination. The NERTC, DPW/Bangkok, Nikom Lam Phaow, U.S. AID/Thailand, and the Overseas Education Fund each has a responsibility to build on the potential of the project and to assure concrete improvements for the land settlement's low-income families.

In Part I of this report, under "recommendations," follow-up actions are suggested to all the collaborating organizations. These suggestions are made in the belief that a bit more effort on all parts will maximize the benefits for those the project was designed to reach.

APPENDICES

- A. Phase I Report: Women Working Together for Personal, Economic, and Community Development: A Nonformal Education Project for Women in Northeast Thailand, January 1981.
- B. Participant Evaluation Interviews.
- C. Questions for Learning Group Meetings.
- D. Responses from Meetings with Learning Group Leaders.

Respondents: 50 Participants  
Group: 5 Randomly Selected  
 from each of 16  
 Groups (interviews con-  
 ducted individually by  
 Thai project staff)

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

1. Why did you attend the program?

- 33 To get more knowledge
- 25 It seemed interesting
- 19 I thought it would be useful
- 11 Because my friends attended
- 10 To socialize with my friends
- 7 I was curious about the purpose of the program and what I would gain
- 4 To work together in a group
- 3 I thought it would be fun
- 2 I want to be able to teach my children
- 2 I hoped to get some seed money
- 1 I want to develop the village
- 1 I want to improve my family
- 1 I like to attend any training course because it's useful

2. What did you like about the program? How did it help you?

- 24 I became more confident; I'm not afraid now to speak up in meetings and give my ideas
- 14 Having the opportunity to express my ideas
- 18 Learning to solve problems by myself
- 11 Getting ideas for a better life
- 8 Participating in activities where we were very active
- 6 The games were fun
- 4 I learned very much
- 3 Using the cassette recorder
- 2 Socializing, being with friends
- 2 Learning to build a loom and weaving
- 2 Learning to help friends and the village
- 2 Making plans for the child care center
- 2 Attending the additional course for candy making
- 1 Exploring possibilities for selling things
- 1 Getting the idea of making a loom to benefit the family
- 1 Using my mind
- 1 Learning to work together
- 1 Lecture about laws
- 2 Now we have a women's group in the village, and the women leaders are recognized by the village head

3. What did you not like about the program? How should it be changed?

- 20 Nothing, it's fine as is
- 12 Shorten the time (have meetings daily or weekly)
- 12 Improve the leader (the leader should have more knowledge)
- 3 Too many short topics
- 2 The leader was good
- 1 Some sections of the handbook are very good
- 1 Some meetings weren't useful
- 1 The program has the proper purpose
- 1 Have two leaders (note: two groups had only one)
- 1 The leader did not give enough time
- 1 Make all names in the handbook Thai names
- 1 I thought we would receive some seed money, but we didn't

4. What goal did you set in the program? What are you doing to achieve it?

- 11 To save money, then to learn to make a loom for making and selling cloth
- 10 I lack the money (seed money or credit) needed to achieve my goal
- 5 To set up a women's group, to be more active in the village
- 11 To raise chickens
- 3 To sell candy (after the harvest)
- 3 To study "beauty" and dressmaking
- 3 To make clothes to use and sell
- 3 To grow chilies to sell
- 2 To start a child care center
- 2 To raise pigs
- 1 Will help with what others decide to do
- 1 To use the ideas from the program very much
- 1 To solve problems by myself
- 1 To raise ducks
- 1 To teach my children ideas from the program
- 1 To make decorations for the house
- 1 To grow and sell papaya
- 1 To grow and sell cassava
- 1 To grow vegetables
- 1 To make a fish pond

5. What problems did your group decide to solve? What have you done together to solve the problem?\*\*\*

<u>Group Problems</u>		<u>Village Problems</u>	
30	No problems in the group	5	Promoting more cooperation in the village
7	"Prathet Lao" problem (talked to men in village)	3	Improving the temple
2	Some women didn't cooperate	3	Discussed plans for child care center with village head
1	Difficulty in understanding purpose of program	3	Built fences around houses

\*\*\*Most respondents thought this question referred to group rather than village problems.

6. What other activities has your group done together?

32	Nothing, because the rains came and we must work in the paddy fields
7	Raising chickens
3	Sold candy
2	Planned for work with the loom
2	Organized temple and school improvement activities for mother's day
1	Made plans to sell candy.
1	Helped make better relationships in the village
1	Prepared soil to grow chilies
1	Raised pigs
1	Made a fish pond

7. Since the program, what have you done to:

a. Increase income--

29	Nothing, because the rains came and we must work in the paddy fields (same as the first answer in "6" above)
5	Made a fish pond (for eating and selling fish)
4	Sold candy
4	Sold cassava
4	Raised chickens
1	Learned to make candy and fish sauce
1	Made a new cassava garden
1	Raised silk worms
1	Grew vegetables

b. Save or borrow money--Saving

- 29 Some saving
- 19 No saving

Borrowing

- 17 Never borrow
- 14 Some borrowing
- 9 No borrowing
- 4 Borrow from the cooperative
- 2 Borrow from friends
- 1 Borrow from the bank

c. Improve family relationships--

- 41 Relationships are better than before
- 5 My husband understands me more now
- 1 I talked with my family about the program
- 1 Relationships between my parents and my own family are better

d. Solve village problems--

- 29 Nothing
- 1 Planned a child care center
- 1 Worked together to improve the village
- 1 Built fences around the houses in our village
- 1 Gave food to the monks

e. Make other changes to improve life in your home or village--

- 28 Things are better than before
- 12 The village is cleaner, more orderly
- 3 I am teaching new ideas to my family
- 2 The house and village are more beautiful
- 1 The changes are good
- 1 Made flower gardens
- 1 Everyone now helps in the village

8. How many meetings did you attend? If you did not attend all the meetings, why did you stop attending?

(Note: All but two respondents answered that they had attended all meetings, though according to the attendance records some had not. Therefore, the attendance records, rather than responses to this question, were used to get an accurate picture of the patterns of participation.)

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR LEARNING GROUP MEETINGS

1. As a result of the training, what income-generation activities has your group done?
2. About how many were involved in these activities?
3. Where did you get the capital needed for these activities?
4. Have you worked together to solve any village problems? If so, what?
5. Will you continue to work together? What do you plan to do and how?

(Note: The responses to these questions are incorporated into the analysis of outcomes in Part III of the report.)

MEETING WITH LEARNING GROUP LEADERS1. What did the group like best about the program?

<u>Village</u>	<u>Responses</u>
6	The participants like themselves better; "what work" game.
7	More confident to go to government offices and express ideas.
12, 13, 41	How to work as a group.
16	Playing games.
17	Meeting 1 - "Maria's letter." (a learning material)
42	Meeting on women and the law.
Huesuetan	How to solve problems.
Nonamgiumg	Last meeting (look at past accomplishments of group).

2. What did the group not like?

<u>Village</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Nonamgiumg	Had trouble marketing cloth.
Huesuetan, 42, 16, 17, 13	Nothing.
41, 6	Meeting on self-awareness.
12, 7	Using the cassette recorder.

3. Was the program useful? How? What changes have happened in the participants? The village?

<u>Village</u>	<u>Responses</u>
6	More confident to give ideas.
16	More confident to give ideas and to think about the possibility of self-improvement.

Appendix D, pg. 2  
 Meeting with Learning Group Leaders  
 Continued

42, 12, 17	Increased the harmony in the village, promoted participation in more village activities.
13	Participants are more alert, ideas seem clearer.
Huesuetan	Participants are more active in the village, have a women's group.
Nonamgiumg, 7, 42	Increased harmony in village, confidence in expressing ideas.

4. What problems did you have in your group?

<u>Village</u>	<u>Responses</u>
6	Meetings went over expected time, leader changed.
12	Didn't like cassette (because older women).
13, 42, Huesuetan	Nothing
16, 17, 41	First meeting was a waste of time, but after that the program got better. (#41: Husbands initially misunderstood purpose of meeting, were concerned that it might be a "Pathet Lao Seminar.")
Nonamgiumg	Didn't like director of training center coming to talk about cooperatives (can't offer help with the real problem of marketing).

5. How would you improve the program?

<u>Village</u>	<u>Responses</u>
12	Don't use tape. Try to write or use another method.
41	Don't use writing--too difficult.
Others	Nothing