

THE ASIA-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION CENTER : ITS DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS



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To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of Dhurakijpundit University, the Asia-Pacific Development Communication Center highlights its achievements.

Introduction

In the advent of globalization schemes among private, government and non-government organizations, Dhurakijpundit University, embracing the idea of being part of the international community, did not hesitate to expand its **community service** mission not only within the country but extensively to its

neighboring countries by establishing and supporting a regional center called Asia-Pacific Development Communication Center (ADCC).

The unprecedented growth of the Center has brought amazement and envy among other educational institutions in Thailand who happened

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to know about the existence of ADCC, the Center keeping a low profile.

The following discussion provides a developmental account of ADCC's beginnings, its present status, and future prospects. These lessons learned from experience can provide insights to other institutions who are in the stage of organizing, following through or enriching their educational extension service deliveries.

In the Beginning

How ADCC was established was well-based and well-planned. Through the joint initiative of Dr. Muangtong Khammani, former Vice President for Research and Development and Dr. Lertlak S. Burusphat, Vice President for Administrative Affairs, both having served at the UNDP Asia and Pacific Program for Development Training and Communication Planning (DTCP) for a substantial number of years as training specialists, formally organized ADCC in July, 1991. In their experience at DTCP, they saw the dearth of quality programs in training and communication for sustainable development. With the capacity of the University in communications technology and its available pool of expertise in communication and training, this feasibility was turned into action with the strong support of the

late President Dr. Sawai Sudhipitak, sharing the same vision.

The first year, 1991 was devoted to setting up the office, staffing, planning curricula and strategies for promotion and marketing. A two-page brochure was designed and mailed out to UN organizations and other international NGOs. Its maiden output was the international seminar conducted in December 1991, a powerful springboard for the subsequent activities. The office was located on the fifth floor of the President's Building with a four-member management staff, who were at the same time, attached to the instructional/administrative functions of the University. The Center was headed by Dr. Muangtong Khammani as the Director and an 11-member Board of Advisors chaired by the late Dr. Sawai Sudhipitak.

In the year that followed (1992), the first courses: Communication Planning; Training Planning, Management and Methodology; Media Technology Planning, Production and Utilization; Project and Program Management and Development Communication Research were conducted and the Center continued to expand and strengthen its capacity and has recently gained recognition as a Regional Center of

Excellence. The following table presents the Center's accomplishments for the last six years (1992-1997).

(a) Enhancing Regional Communication and Training Skills in HIV/AIDS

Outputs for the Year 1992-1997

A. Training Courses

Aspects	Total
1. Number of Course Participants Served	630
2. Number of Countries Served	21
3. Number of Sponsoring Organizations Served	51
4. Number of Regular Courses Conducted	29
5. Number of Tailor-Made Courses Conducted	29

B. Seminars

In addition to the training courses, two international seminars were conducted with the cooperation of UNFPA and other UN organizations in Thailand: **Seminar in Development Communication: Application and Prospects for the Asia-Pacific Region**, 16-18 December 1991, and **Seminar on Population and Environmental Protection: A Challenge for the Communication Strategist**, 7-9 December 1993.

C. Consultancies

Consultancy services were provided by ADCC upon request of:

1. UNICEF, Laos - **Malaria Control Communication Program**, December 1992 - December 1993
2. AIDSCAP/USAID -

Prevention, August 1994 - July 1996

(b) **IEC Materials Development Workshop**, January-May 1996

ADCC staff have provided individual consultancy services for AIDSCAP Asia Regional Office on program evaluation and on-site training in Communication for HIV/AIDS Prevention; UNFPA, Laos on-site training in Project and Program Management, and UNDCP East Asia on material development for IEC in Drug Demand Reduction.

The Present

The Asia-Pacific Development Communication Center continues to maintain its status as a center of excellence in training in development con

cerns particularly in communication, training and program management in health and population, HIV/AIDS prevention, environment, agriculture, education, entrepreneurial development and other related areas. To implement these programs effectively, a wide network in development areas is secured for field trips and firsthand information of current practices in the field. Many of these cooperators are Royal projects, government organizations, non-government organizations, institutions of higher learning, and other development projects with a wide variety of excellent projects and programs by which participants from other countries could learn from the Thai experience.

The Center is a model cost-effective management. Among the present five-member management staff, only the Secretary is fulltime. The Director is also the Vice President for Administrative Affairs of Dhurakijpundit University, the two Deputy Directors and the Program Officer are lecturers attached to the Faculty of Humanities of the University. The training rooms are shared and support services are provided by the University system.

Past participants are updated with ADCC's activities and positive feedbacks are received from them on how

they have put to use the concepts, attitudes and skills learned from the particular course they have attended. Visits by the Center management are also made to some countries to assess the impact of the courses provided and to gather inputs on current and future training needs. This information is necessary in the constant updating of the courses' contents and course offerings.

The following organizations continue to sponsor participants to the courses either as part of country projects on bilateral agreement, the organization's own project, or individual sponsorships:

1. United Nations: UNFPA, UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, ILO
2. Development Agencies: NO RAD, Netherlands, USAID, DANIDA Danish Red Cross, British Council, GTZ, SIDA
3. Development Banks : ADB, WB
4. International NGOs : CARE, ACTIONAID, BFW, AF, IPPF, WUSC, PLAN Int.
5. Implementing Organizations: FHI, COWI, IRDP, UDSP, SPRDP, CEDPA, SAEP, TAL Int., Mahaweli Authority, SEARCA
6. Private Organizations: DPU, IFCT, People's Bank, SMIT

7. National Governments: Either in part or full, the governments of the participants have contributed to their scholarship.

Lessons Learned

The following aspects on training management have contributed to the strength of ADCC:

1. A pool of facilitators who understand the nature of the participants and the job situation for which the concepts and skills acquired would subsequently be transferred when participants return to their workplace.

2. A cooperative network for field experiences. Participants come to Thailand to learn of the Thai experience.

3. A service - oriented and friendly yet professional staff. Participants appreciate information and assistance extended to them to facilitate their adjustment to a new environment.

4. A well-designed curriculum with lots of room for interaction. The content should not be overstuffed with concepts. Handouts should be given to take home in case of later need for reference materials.

5. A quality delivery. Satisfied participants are the best promotion channels through word-of-mouth.

Future Prospects

There is no intention to expand the service area at the moment in terms of course offerings or countries served. However, there is a need to reach out more extensively to neighboring countries such as Laos, Indonesia, Cambodia and Myanmar. The Center tries to sustain its current clientele with its average of 10 courses per year, considering that 70% of the workload of the ADCC staff is primarily devoted to the academic instructional function of the University. □□