

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH USOM ADVISORS  
PREPARED BY  
NAI JIN RAKGARNDDEE, THE DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL ARD OFFICE  
(To be delivered in the Orientation of Palads Changwad ARD 1965)

---

A good understanding is essential in group work, whether among the same race or different ones. However, understanding can be achieved within the same race rather easily because of a similarity of customs, practices, language and attitudes, as well as other circumstances. Regarding group work in participation with foreigners, it sometimes is not easy to understand each other, due to the differences in customs, circumstances, administration, condition of each country, opinions and characters. Besides, an interpretation from one language to another problem. Even though both parties have a mutual desire to achieve the same work goals, it is often found that advice or opinions of foreign advisors are suitable to be applied in their own country but not practical in Thailand. It is a fact that they lack knowledge of our history, way of living, geographical situations, customs and practices, natural sources, people's ability, finance, economic condition, administration and others. Some of them study articles about our country before they come to Thailand and, in addition, find out and study more during their stay here. However, it is natural that only these things can not persuade them or make them think and feel like a native and it is unfair to blame them.

In order to improve these difficult situations, I would like to suggest that an orientation for USOM officers be arranged by USOM and for Thai officials by the RTG. Aside from technical knowledge, the subject of "A Group Participation" is recommended.

I would like to say that there is no particular book regarding "A Group Participation". This article is written from my own experiences and research from books on psychology, practice and etiquette ; it does not, of course, cover every point. I offer this article as a guideline for you to discover the fundamental reasons and find the best way to work with USOM advisors.

I. A STUDY OF THEIR ORIGINAL PLACE

There are differences in each country with respect to customs, administration, nationalism, responsibility, culture, attitudes and others.

Customs : The following should be studied - social activities, dining etiquette, customs, religious practices. There is no definite rule regarding these subjects, it depends on how they believe and what they are used to. A belief of one race may not agree with that of another ; but, with understanding, any conflict can be removed with tolerance.

For Westerners, sitting with legs crossed ; patting the shoulders and putting an arm around the back ; a man guarding a woman, who is not his wife, by putting his arm around her back are recognized as good etiquette, but it is not so in Thai practice.

It is wise to know where a person came from in order to adapt ourselves in getting along with them. The English people are conservative and reserved, but Americans are easy-going and casual. Nevertheless, Americans came from various different nationalities such as English, German, etc., and observations should be made in individual cases.

English people recognize formal dress and grand receptions, whereas Americans prefer sport shirts and buffet suppers. Besides, table manners of these two countries are different and no one can say which is better.

Religion : It is better to know which religion they believe in, in order to avoid arguments on this subject.

Administration : It is generally known that Americans seek liberty. In the older days, Roman Catholic Popes were in power. Religious wars broke out and nearly the whole of Europe was under The Pope's administration. Europeans who sought peace and liberty moved to the place now called America and the United States of America has been established under a policy of real democracy by the people who loved freedom. Our democracy is developed from the Absolute Monarchy. It is not easy to change the attitude of Thai officials and the Thai people from Feudalism to democracy. A primary development in this regard is to change the attitude of Government officials.

The above statement indicates that Americans regard organization as an important role in developing a country. I was once questioned by an American in the United States as to why Thailand, which has not for centuries been occupied by a powerful country, was underdeveloped ? Is it due to the disorganization of the administration ? These questions indicate that Americans take their democracy as a basic principle. An organization plays a big role in developing the country ; however, there are many other causes to help accelerate the progress of the country. Two hundred years ago the majority of settlers in the United States were well-educated and the country has,

most of the time, been in peace. Thailand had been continuously fighting until the Reign of King Rama V of the Chakri Dynasty when external and internal wars were entirely suppressed. Then, the country was faced with problems of colonial countries. However, developments in administration, education, industry, communications, etc., have gradually been launched.

Besides, being an agricultural country, the progress of Thailand is not as rapid as that of industrial countries. We lack technical knowledge, funds, and raw materials for industry.

Foreign advisors normally give a suggestion in accordance with their own particular knowledge and experience without taking into consideration the background of Thailand. Therefore, it is necessary to get together and to have understanding.

Responsibilities towards the Country : It is natural that one has responsibilities for his own country ; the people in developed countries have more. It is the desire of every nation to build up her people with responsibilities. The impressive and remarkable speech of the late President Kennedy is "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country".

If the same speech were delivered to the Thai people, it would not be accepted very well in this country because of differences in administration, living and responsibilities towards the country. Even though we are people of the same race in the same country, our responsibilities towards our country are different in conformance with our knowledge. It has been learned with great pleasure that many American officials show great enthusiasm and work with their heart and soul in order that our country can achieve the most benefit, but, conflicts sometimes occur between American officials and Changwad Governors who are also willing to do their best for their country. Such problems will not arise if both parties have good communications, discussions and respect for each other. They should recognize their duties and responsibilities. Thailand has been independent for a long time, and an order from the people of other countries is sometimes unbearable. If some American Advisors would be a little considerate, it is believed that there will not be any misunderstanding.

Other conflicts in opinions between the Governor and the American advisor regarding the activities of Palad Changwad ARD have occurred, due to lack of communications.

Pride for one's country may also cause problems. Before China was divided into camps, Chinese in Thailand had great pride towards their country and felt that China was the biggest country in the world ; China has the largest population in the world (regardless

of her poverty). The Westerners are also proud of themselves and their properties. There are competitions among the States in America who owns the "most" and the "best". New Yorkers are proud of their highest building (Empire State), citizens of San Francisco are proud of their longest bridge (Golden Gate) and the people of Miami like to talk about their longest road to the sea.

Moreover, the area of the United States of America covers almost half of the continent ; all the buildings and products are huge. Production in America is big because the American idea is big. These circumstances influence the lives of the American people. We should not, therefore, be annoyed when Americans talk big sometimes. Their attitudes are due to two fundamental reasons : (1) The influence of environment in their country and (2) the sense of responsibility towards their country and the work which they are assigned for. We should consider that the American people are not harmful, in fact, they mean good to us : they do not use force as some countries did in World War II which left the Thai people with bitter memories.

Duties and responsibilities : In carrying out any kind of work to achieve the objectives, there must be something to hold onto : some recognize customs and practices ; some recognize the leader ; some recognize the Monarch ; but the American people, as I understand it, hold onto duties and responsibilities ; they believe in the most effective and economical implementation within a minimum time. They have high regard for people with initiative and inventiveness.

Regarding the ARD Program, all relevant USOM personnel have been working very hard in order to achieve its objectives. They have a sense of responsibility which may be due to : (1) their nature and (2) the pride for the assignment from their President. Their actions might sometimes interfere but we must realize that they try every possible way to avoid failure of the program. A conflict in opinion may occur in a meeting, but we are always able to solve problems. Many times we argue during an inspection trip to the field operation due to the lack of technical knowledge on the part of the Changwad engineering staff. However, mistakes are bound to happen with new jobs and inexperienced workers. Finally, with participation between Thai and Americans, we have from time to time solved our problems.

As stated above, an American regards duties and responsibilities. How about us ? At present, we hold on, loosely, to discipline under The Civil Service Act. It is advisable if we believe in this same principle, i.e., be strict on duties and responsibilities. The amount of conflicts might lessen if we work on the same principle.

National character : Each nation has got her own character. We learned that Chinese are hard-working people, and so are Japanese. I hesitate to identify the character of Americans : hard-working ? daring ? However, it is evident that Americans love liberty and freedom, and that they also have the courage of their convictions to achieve success.

Attitude : According to a theory, attitude is awareness of one of the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch). One's attitude cannot be adapted by others except by one-self ; others can help the adaptation by applying education, content, research, examples, etc.

The attitude of each person, each race and each country is different, depending upon the knowledge, opinion, living conditions, geographical situation and events. Working together is one way to study another's attitude. In 1959, as the Governor of Changwat Udonthani, I suggested that equipment be supplied to the people in road and well construction. One of my American friends who is an expert in rural development did not agree because it is not part of rural development principles. The target of community development is to inspire the people with enthusiasm for self-help, the government provides technical knowledge only. This attitude might be applied in one country successfully, but conversely in another country. However, if we understand the fundamentals of each country, principles are flexible.

Furthermore, I suggested, some time ago, to accelerate development with machinery and equipment implementation ; but my suggestions were turned down.

However, after a few more years in Thailand, that American friend of mine changed his attitude and started the ARD Program in 1964. He deserves our compliments that he is willing to study our country by traveling a lot and collecting all the facts and fundamental information.

## II. PARTICIPANTS' DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A job description for each participant is necessary in order to avoid overlap of work. From your experience regarding the ARD operation, you are aware that there are three committees participating in this program ; i.e., the North-East Development Committee, COOP, and the Jin Committee. Project operations are carried out by :

1. Administration :

The Governor as the Project Director  
Palad Changwad ARD as the Deputy  
Secretary  
Accountant

2. Engineering :

Chief Engineer  
Engineering Technicians  
Maintenance Mechanics  
Equipment Operators

3. Advisory Officers

USOM Development Advisors  
USOM Engineering Advisors  
Sea Bes Team

When the ARD operations first started, problems arose rather often. After the handbooks of Guidelines for the ARD Program were distributed, the situation was a little improved. We hope that problem will be solved when the job description of the ARD staff is completed. Please study your job description carefully and thoroughly, apply it to yourself and advise others to do the same.

III. THE STUDY OF HABITS, TASTES AND HOBBIES

People who work together or live together should study one another's habits and act on compromise.

A study of the character of colleagues can be done in many ways, i.e., conversation, entertainment, and psychology. However, the longer one stays together, the better one knows each other.

The question is "how should one act when he knows his colleagues' character" ? Compromise and flexibility are the answers. In other words, if the colleagues do not behave, you should compromise or share your sympathy, or hold your peace as the case may be.

Regarding the taste of people, a different man has a different taste. It is wise to know your colleague's taste and please him by bringing up the subject he likes. The taste is a media between two parties.

#### IV. FRIENDLINESS AND CASUALNESS

Friendliness and casualness between supervisors and their men, friends and colleagues play a big rôle for the success of work. Junior officials are willing to work heart and soul if senior officers treat them as human beings.

Friendliness and casualness among friends give familiarity and understanding. The same feeling can also be applied among colleagues.

I would like to remind you that foreigners who came to work here sacrificed themselves for the benefit of our country. Someone who has left his family behind is lonely sometimes. Besides, the language is another problem. If you are friendly with them, take them as members of the family, they would feel better and it is another way to encourage them in work with us.

Friendliness helps calm down conflicts and arguments and it always leads to understanding and success in the end.

#### V. DEVOTION

Devotion in helping colleagues shows generosity and it is one way to build up friendship. However, it should be borne in mind that the devotion be shown at a suitable time, and as required, such as : to devote time in entertaining as a host, to devote time in taking them for sightseeing and providing conveniences.

It is deemed necessary to devote oneself to one's colleagues, to make them happy, by giving understanding, sympathy, and being willing to work together. I am confident that if such feelings occur among the workers, the ARD program will effectively and efficiently reach the success.

The Thai people are normally kind and helpful without expectation of a reward, and you should keep it this way. The expectation of a reward, even though it is not obviously shown, spoils self-respect and may possibly hurt the people's feeling.

#### VI. SINCERITY

Whether friendship among people will last long or not, it depends upon sincerity. Sincerity is a genuine feeling. The following are examples of sincerity : when one helps others from troubles no matter how difficult it is ; when one shares sympathy to sorrowful persons ; when one helps others to achieve success, when one has love for and worries about others.

Sincerity is essential in group work. Unity can be achieved due to sincerity. No doubt, in working together, unity is also necessary as it creates brain and power.