

Banpu takes part in sustainable educational development for Thailand:

Ten continuous years of support developing model schools in three Northern provinces.

Education and skill development are vital to prepare children and young people for a highly competitive society. It will affect their future work and lives. However, many students in rural areas are not receiving adequate education compared to those in urban schools, where learning resources are recognized as much better, more accessible and teachers are more qualified and experienced. Providing equal education opportunities is essential. Cooperation from both government and private sectors is required to improve the nation's education system.

Recognizing these constraints, Banpu Public Company Limited, a leading Asian energy company, initiated the *Banpu Education for Sustainability* or "*BES*" CSR program in 2004. Under this project, Banpu has continuously provided support to six schools in three Northern provinces for the past 10 years in order to promote improvement in education in the country. The Company firmly believes that learning is the power behind change and development.

Banpu applies its corporate shared value "Banpu Spirit" to sustainable development in education.

The BES program is one of Banpu's after-process CSR activities, emphasizing the promotion of education and learning among children and young people. This is hoped to lead to a constructive change and the sustainable development of people and society in the future. This is also in line with Banpu's business credo: "an industry will be strong only when it is developed in tandem with social and environmental responsibility" as well as its core value, the "Banpu Spirit", which consists of Innovation, Integrity, Care, and Synergy.

The BES project focuses on developing supported schools to become community learning centers in order to help create Synergy in the community. The schools have been also encouraged to implement a student-centered learning environment. In addition, Banpu has also helped develop teachers' capabilities with new and different teaching methods as well as

supporting students to learn independently inside and outside of the classroom. This is a great example how the Company is using Innovation to support sustainable educational development.

Over 10 years, the BES project has provided around 28 million Baht to six schools in the North, namely, Sobprabpittaykhom School, Maethapattasuksa School, Maethawittaya School in Lampang Province, Wiangjedeewittaya School in Lamphun Province, and Chiang Muan Wittayakhom School and Bansra School in Phayao Province. The financial grants provided have been used to improve these schools' teaching equipment, hire accredited native English teachers and organize continuous extracurricular activities for students, teachers, and parents.

Banpu Head of Corporate Affairs, Ms Udomlux Olarn, stated that the Company strongly believes in sustainable development in business, society, and the environment. "This is consistent with one of 'Banpu Spirit' values - Care. Banpu cares that all groups of stakeholders are recognized, especially the communities that live near or around our business operations", she said.

She went on to explain, "We (Banpu) have supported the BES project for 10 years and are proud to see impressive results from all six schools. The results are not only generated from Banpu's financial support but also comes from the dedication of teachers, school management teams, the collaboration with parents and most importantly, the students' commitment and eagerness to learn. We, in good spirit as a company, seek Synergy in all that we do for substantial results and ongoing sustainability."

Synergy from all sectors creates sustainable development in education

Collaboration and dedication from all sectors throughout these years have assisted students under the BES project to gain necessary skills. These include academic and life skills, ethics, and appreciation of social & environmental responsibilities. Students are helped to communicate with foreigners and the schools are also seen as the community learning centers of Northern Thailand. These schools are also models, setting a local benchmark in terms of improved teaching plans and extracurricular activities for other nearby schools.

Furthermore, Wiangjedeewittaya School in Li District of Lamphun Province, has been chosen from the Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC) to be one of the Education Resource Information Centers (ERIC) of Lamphun, which aims to support a variety of new teaching plans for teachers and students in Li District, Ban Hong District, and adjacent areas.

One other school, the Maethapattasuksa School in Mae Tha District, Lampang Province, promotes the 'Zhang River Conservation' student group. This project encourages adolescents to use their scientific knowledge to protect and manage the water resources of their communities. So far, all six granted schools were selected by OBEC to be 'master' schools in its Laboratory School Project.

Mr. Sawang Boonmakad, Director of Wiangjedeewittaya School, one of the other schools receiving support from Banpu since 2005, said that the goal of their school was to develop students holistically with both academic and life skills including social & environmental responsibilities.

"Since Lamphun Province is an industrial center and an area attracting tourists to Northern Thailand, our school focuses on enhancing English skills. Banpu support over these 10 years has allowed our school to hire native English teachers so that our students have a better chance to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Our students have now gained more confidence communicating in English." He explained.

Ms. Melisa Chedd, the Wiangjedeewittaya School's English Teacher, said, "From my teaching experiences, Thai students have both intellectual ability or IQ, and emotional ability or EQ. They also have the ambition and enthusiasm to learn. However, Thai students need encouragement to communicate and share their ideas. If Thai students get support in the right direction, it will strengthen their knowledge and skills, and increase their ability to compete with their peers."

Ms. Parichat Lhanhak, or Guggig, an 11th Grade Student of Wiangjedeewittaya School, said that she really enjoyed her English class after having studied the Mini English Program and planned to apply to the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. "One of many reasons I love

English classes is that our native English teachers really pay attention to students. They encourage us to join in and try hard, both in class and outside the classroom. I used to be very shy. Now, I am more confident in speaking with foreigners. I also won many competitions, which made my friends and me very proud.”

The success of these secondary schools in Northern Thailand is an example showing that private companies like Banpu can give the ongoing practical support needed, to result in the sustainable development of students, teachers and schools. The schools under the BES project have become role-models for other nearby schools, leading to the improvement of the education system in the rural and remote areas equal to the standards set in the cities. Importantly, it is believed that collaborative efforts from both public and private sectors will help develop a robust education system and create competitive advantages for Thailand as a whole.