

**THE ROLE OF AIESEC (Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences
Economiques et Commerciales) AS A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THAILAND (2009-2019)**

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Abstract

World politics and international development have undergone a radical transformation mostly because of increasing globalization and the unique characteristic of this transformation is the increasing number and type of NGOs. In this global revolution, NGOs play the important role in negotiation, especially in advocacy for human right and peace. AIESEC is one of the NGOs that gives and played the important role in achieving world peace. AIESEC instructs its participant to have impact on society and youth are required to contribute towards Sustainable Development Goals and tackle the issues that they are most considerate. One of the issues is lacking of education in Thailand. This thesis is aimed to explain the role of AIESEC as NGOs in improving education quality in Thailand. In analyzing the role of AIESEC towards Thailand's education quality, the author was using the concept of Role of Non-Governmental Organization by David Lewis. By using this theoretical framework, this research proved that AIESEC take a role as a partner in Thailand Government by conducting project called Sawasdee Thailand Project in order to help improving education quality in Thailand, especially in rural area of Thailand.

Keyword(s) : Education Issue, NGOs, AIESEC, Thailand

A. BACKGROUND

World politics and international development have undergone a radical transformation mostly because of increasing globalization. A unique characteristic of this transformation is the increasing number and type of stakeholders organized into interest groups or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Their influence on public policy at local, national, and global levels and in nearly every aspect of policy-making and international relations has made them dominant actors in the development arena. These non-state actors have even been recognized as having a significant role in the international system.

In this global revolution, NGOs play important role in negotiation, especially in advocacy for human right and peace. They also play the leading roles in coping with disaster, humanitarian aid and etc. In the

Global Policy Forum on June, 1999, it explained that NGOs have crucial participation in international system. NGOs contribute in value's ideas and information which can effectively advocate things for a positive change. NGOs also facilitate essential capacities in emergency condition and development efforts. All of those things that are already mentioned generally can lead to increase accountability and legitimation from the global governance.

Furthermore, it can be described that NGOs and community participation grew rapidly after the adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1996 and the end of the 1991 Cold War Era. NGOs became a new form of community participation in public relations, which on international level, are based on the personality of international law from individuals and the rights of the people to self-

determination, which has expanded the path beyond the decolonization process of the past century to protect the right to democracy.

The growth of NGOs in this world is increasing positively over years. In the 1909, there were 176 NGOs. Then, in the 1993 it increased to 28.900. This number always increases, especially in the early 1990. As an example: the growth number of registered in “north” OECD developing countries were 1.600 in 1980 and became 2.970 in 1993 and the amount of budget that they spent increased from 2,8 billion US\$ to 5,7 billion US\$ (Chandler, 2004). One of the NGOs that have been developing rapidly in this society is AIESEC.

AIESEC is an NGO that was established in 1948. For 70 years since its establishment, this NGO has significant development. On September 2018, AIESEC reported in

their Global Annual Report that it had more than 36.000 members worldwide spread in more than 120 countries and territories. In doing their activities, AIESEC collaborates and makes partnership with more than 7,929 organizations in the world, starting from multinational cooperation to small businesses, non-profit organizations to government and also the United Nations. Finally, this fact makes AIESEC to become the largest organization that is organizing and driving youth in the world (Editor).

The focus of AIESEC activity is creating the world peace by the leadership skills that are already possessed by any leaders in this world. In their official press, AIESEC International mentioned that some of the alumni of AIESEC became the leader in the global perspective such as President of Finland 1994-2000 Martti Ahtisaari (The Nobel Peace Prize Recipients in 2008), U.N

Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator 1992-1994; State-Secretary for Foreign Affairs 1994-1999; President of U.N General Assembly 2005-2006; Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs 2006 Jan Eliasson, Chancellor of Germany 1982-1998 Helmut Kohl, Poland Minister of Finance 2006; President of Polish Financial Supervision Authority since 2007 Dr Stanislaw Kluza, Croatia Minister of Finance 1997-2000 Borislav Skregovic, President of the U.N Conference on Trade and Development 1996-2000 Alexander Erwin and etc.

In order to achieve world peace, education is one of the factors that can help to make world become better because start from better education, people can get more knowledge and get educated. However, the education system in Thailand still lacking and the quality of education in Thailand

still bad. It can be proved by Thailand's educational system is ranked 35th among 40 countries included in the 2014 report entitled "Learning Curve, Lessons in Country, Performance in Education" published by Pearson Education. In the latest Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) score results in 2016, Thailand is ranked 55th out of 72 countries in the overall results. Also, in maths and science aspect, Thailand is ranked 54th, and 57th for reading from overall countries. (Fernquest, 2017)

To ensure that efforts to achieve world peace are realized, AIESEC pours its vision of peace in its blue print. The vision of AIESEC itself is peace and the fulfillment of humankind's potential. In its practice, AIESEC also instructs its participants to have impact on society. Youth are required to contribute towards Sustainable Development Goals and

tackle the issues that you are most passionate about. Therefore, the target of this global volunteer program is developing countries. Young people are sent to volunteer to help and contribute to realizing Sustainable Development Goals. AIESEC also said that their organization ultimate goal is to shape everything we do around what the world needs. And we have committed to creating a youth movement to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030. (Editor, DEVELOP YOURSELF AND THE WORLD, 2018) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing

- in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. (Editor, Sustainable Development Goals, 2019)

Hence the goal toward peace, just, and inclusive society just became one of the focus for the development of the new agenda. Some people might have an argument on how this entity work in implementing this goal to achieve the ideal target in the country that affected by conflict, or on how they can assist the government to rebuild their nation from the impact of the internal or external conflict toward the sustainable national development.

From here we know that actually the programs offered by AIESEC are

to help making the world peace since they implement some SDG's points in their program. One of the programs provided and offered by AIESEC in helping to bring about world peace is Global Volunteer. Global Volunteer is a cross-cultural experience for young people who want to gain personal development and impact on the world (Editor, If we don't change the world, then who will?, t.thn.). Global Volunteer is an opportunity for a young person to develop Leadership Qualities of self-awareness, solution orientation, empowering others and world citizenship while by living a cross-cultural volunteer experience. In the product a young person volunteers abroad on social impact projects that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. (Editor, DEVELOP YOURSELF AND THE WORLD, 2018)

In the global volunteer program, youth plays a very important role in

realizing world peace because indeed the target for participants is young people who have a high level of leadership who also want to help in realizing world peace. They partner with academic institutions, civil society organizations, private sector and the government to provide young people global volunteer experiences on projects contributing to the SDGs, through which they can develop themselves while impacting local communities and organizations. AIESEC has partnered with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program to produce a guide of daily actions and activities that can be carried out to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also UNV and AIESEC launch the Young Person's Guide to 'Changing the World' to help you achieve the SDGs. (Global, 2017) AIESEC also said that their deadline to accomplish the 17 goals is in 2030,

which means they still have 11 years to change the world's future. The SDGs are a roadmap to the future we all long for. Right now, many things in the world are messy and unfair, but they don't have to be. "We can change that as long as we do something about it. The intention is not enough. We must ACT." said an activist of AIESEC. (Lainfiesta, 2017) Other programs offered by AIESEC are Global Talent, Global Entrepreneur, and YouthSpeak.

In December 2015, AIESEC's young global leaders and representatives from 126 countries and territories gathered at the United Nations Headquarters to promote and drive youth participation in the implementation of the Global Goals for Sustainable Development. AIESEC's goal is to engage and develop every young person in the world since this is a milestone for them to achieving its organizational

mission and vision of Peace and Fulfillment of Humankind's Potential. (AIESEC, 2015)

B. THE ANALYSIS

In the analysis of role of Non-Governmental Organization, AIESEC has been a lot of things to realize it. In here, AIESEC take a role as a partner with the public schools and universities which means that they indirectly take partnership with the Thailand Government through Ministry of Education in Thailand since public schools and universities are the highest class in Thailand education system and they have the biggest authorities and influence to the education in all over Thailand, even in rural area.

THAILAND'S EDUCATION CURRENT CONDITION

According to UNESCO's 2017/8 Global Education

Monitoring (GEM) Report, there remain substantial challenges to the quality of education in Thailand:

- 99% complete primary education, but only 85% complete lower secondary education.
- 50% are not taught in the language spoken at home.
- 12% do not achieve a minimum proficiency level in mathematics at the end of primary.
- 62% of out of school lower secondary school adolescents are girls.
- At the end of lower secondary education, only 50% have a minimum proficiency level in reading and only 46% in mathematics.
- Only 45% of schools have basic sanitation facilities – only 60% have access to basic drinking water.

- 80 of the poorest complete lower secondary education compared to 100 of the richest.
- There are 3.9 million adults unable to read a simple sentence
- A third of students aged 13 to 15 years experienced bullying between 2010 and 2015, and 29% experienced physical violence.

Positively, Thailand has the justiciable right to education, meaning that citizens can take the issue to court if that right is violated – something only 55% of countries can say. The accountability of education needs to be improved: Thailand has an accountability system based on test scores, yet learning outcomes have not improved from 2003-2015. The country has not published a national education monitoring Report since 2006, which the GEMR deems crucial for transparency with the

public over progress against the national education plan.

SAWASDEE THAILAND PROJECT

Sawasdee Project is a huge national project held by AIESEC in Thailand. This program is usually held twice per year. This project usually executed in 8 of their entities:

- AIESEC in Assumption University
- AIESEC in Bangkok University
- AIESEC in Chulalongkorn University
- AIESEC in Thammasat University
- AIESEC in Kasetsart University
- AIESEC in University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce
- AIESEC in Mahidol University International
- AIESEC in Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology

All of the universities above are the universities that mainly

organized the project. These all universities become the entities of AIESEC Thailand in running this project since they are such a big university and they can distribute and manage the human resources as volunteers well.

Sawasdee Thailand Project is actually the cross-cultural exchange program that has project in it. Sawasdee Thailand Project was created to provide cross-cultural education and English education for the youth in rural area of Thailand. At first, AIESEC conducted this project in order to help Thai society for prepared them for ASEAN Community especially for ASEAN Economic Forum which already opened on 2015, but now this program is focusing on teaching students in the rural area of Thailand where there is only small chance to learn English properly with limited learning sources. In the same time, AIESEC provide the opportunity for AIESEC Exchange

participants who want to improve their personal and professional skills to join the project and be part of the education of the students in rural area. Living with locals is one of the added values of the project because it is providing an exclusive experience to AIESEC's interns to experience Thailand in the various atmospheres that challenge them to become better leaders. AIESEC can make sure both parties, the volunteers and the students get benefit from this project by developing soft skills of the youth in the rural areas of Thailand and preparing them for ASEAN by organizing many English activities.

This project involved around more than 100 schools in the rural area of around Thailand and it has more than 30,000 students in rural area that engaged in this activities and events. For the management of this project that conducted in Thailand every year, it involved more than 60 AIESECers from

Thailand and collaborates with more than 200 university students involved in the Buddy System. To make this project held effectively, AIESEC engaged participants and it involved 300 exchange participants from around the world. Sawasdee Thailand Project will be carried out in schools and communities/rural areas of Ayutthaya Province, Srisaket Province, Prachinburi Province, Samut Prakan Province, Ang Thong Province. (Thailand, 2014)

The project's objectives are mainly to create the positive impact to the society and provide with ones in a lifetime experiences to both international volunteers and students in the rural area:

- To create the cross-cultural understanding among the youth in rural area in Thailand
- To develop English skills to the students in the rural area

- To experience in Thai culture and Thai education system
- To promote culture diversity to the society
- To contribute the global learning environment to the students
- To promote Thailand and Thai culture to worldwide
- To make an impact on world issues
- To develop young international volunteers to become the leaders of tomorrow with good values
- Most of the students are aged between 7-18 years old
- One or two interns will work in each school. Each class has about 20-30 students
- This project phase will run for a total of 6-7 weeks
- The Interns will mainly focus on sharing their culture and teaching basic English i.e

conversations to students in these remote schools. Most of the Thai students cannot communicate in English. The challenge of the interns is to make them dare to speak English. (Thailand, 2014)

AIESEC'S CONTRIBUTION IN SAWASDEE THAILAND PROJECT

Poverty is a major issue in Thailand. Education is the way to change a country and offer more opportunities to young people to develop themselves. Sawasdee Thailand is designed to provide English Education and Cultural Exchange experience to students and people in rural areas around Thailand. On the last edition of the project we created an impact educating over 20 000 students from over 65 schools in 5 regions of Thailand and now we are aiming an

even bigger impact. This project is aimed to be the platform for the students to be encouraged to speak English through the creative and fun activities. The job description that should be done by volunteers in the Sawasdee Thailand Project are:

- Creating standard teaching materials and activities for 7-18 years old students. All the schools are in the rural area where they have small chance to learn English properly with limited teaching materials; therefore this is a chance for you to bring an impact using your creativity and problem-solving skills. All interns will teach English-based on Thai learning by doing and think outside the box.
- Teaching Basic English using attractive themes to create fun English learning environment in the school, such as sport, music,

culture, cartoon, or food week.

Teach English to Thai teachers one a week

- Providing opportunities to students, teachers and local people to experience your home culture. Training the students and local people to create handicraft from your own country in order to showcase your culture
- Becoming an Ambassador of your country and have a chance to represent it during your teaching activities, English day, our Global Village and other cultural activities, they must bring traditional souvenir
- It is a mandatory to attend all AIESEC activities during project, such as: preparation camp, Evaluation's Day, and English Day + Global Village. They also have to participate in

the evaluation report of the project.

- Live and learn with local people and host families about Thai culture: dances, music language, cooking, heritage sites, sports, games, and handicrafts.

From the phenomenon that can be looked from Thailand, the author knows that poverty is a major issue in Thailand, specifically in the rural area in around Thailand. The only way to change a country and offer more opportunities to young people to develop themselves to prevent the poverty that keep continuing is education. In order to help improving education quality in the rural area of Thailand, AIESEC recruited and fielded the participants from around the world who concern about the education issues for providing the education to people in rural area who aged 7-18 years old. AIESEC does this kind of things by conducting the program called Sawasdee Thailand Project.

Through the Sawasdee Thailand Project in several rural areas in Thailand, AIESEC hopes that it can empower the children to speak English more to practice and improve their skills for better future and create positive impact to Thai society. AIESEC also hopes that this project can be a real proof that AIESEC helps realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the number 4, which is education quality to ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.

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