

Prevention Approaches and Activities

Drug prevention aims to prevent individual from using drugs and attempts to reduce the risk of using drugs by developing a better society. In Thailand prevention work has been implemented both extensively throughout the country and comprehensively in specific areas and groups. Preventive education method which creates the right knowledge and attitude about drugs is disseminated to the public through several means, such as, the media, multi- media, computer games, life education centre, alternative activities, etc.

In proceeding prevention work, target groups are divided into 4 categories, namely, school-based group, communities-based group, workplace group and special group. These groups are considered high-risk groups in our society; therefore, prevention strategies must be specific according to the social and culture of the group.

Significant approaches in drug prevention

1. Extensive prevention

- Publicize about the danger of drugs in order to mobilize the public resistance towards drugs, drug producer, trader and those who are involved with drugs.

- The danger of drugs should be publicized to every group in our society including those inferior group and youth out of school group. The publicity must be

done through various media in order to reach all target groups.

- Prevent the epidemic of new drugs or substances by publicizing and distributing knowledge especially to the high-risk group.

- Create a spokesperson that can educate local people about the harm of drugs in every province and local administration.

- Improve the process and method of publicity by introducing marketing technique.

- Develop and support the production and distribution of knowledge which is suitable to local people and culture by avoiding the publicity of person who involves with drugs.

2. Comprehensive prevention in specific area

- Develop the whole cycle of drug prevention and apply to all target groups especially school-based group, community-based group and workplace group. In addition, prevention work must also be integrated to other measures.

- The role and participation of parents, education institution, religious institutions and business owner on narcotics control work must be emphasized.

- The schools' curriculum, media instrument for teaching and activities that encourage the process of learning, thinking and decision making are very important to the prevention of drugs in school.

The Progress of Important Projects in 1999-2000

1. Villages/Community Free from Drugs Project

This project has continued to expand throughout the country in order to reach 70,281 communities in the future. At present, 8,149 communities were inspected and 4,001 communities have received "free from drugs" flags. In 2001, it is expected that 50 percent of all communities will be inspected and 25 percent of them should be able to pass the inspection.

2. Narcotics Control in Communities with Severe Epidemic Problem Project

The aim of this project is to solve severe narcotics problem in 1,118 communities. In 1999, the procedure of the project has exceeded over 75 percent. It is expected that in the year 2000 fifty percent of all communities will be able to solve drugs problem on their own.

3. Sport Ground for the Youth against Drugs Project

The intention of this project is to build sports ground for the youth and all people in order to encourage them to use their spare time wisely. At the beginning, the project aims to set up 500 sport grounds in Bangkok Metropolitan and 1,000 sport grounds in other parts of the country. However, the project has been widely accepted, therefore, it has been extended. At the moment, there are 4,855 sport grounds countrywide.

4. Four Aged Groups Sports Competition Project

These groups comprise of youths aged 14; 15 to 25; adults aged between 26-44; and elderly aged 45 up. The competition is divided into 3 levels, which are provincial level, regional level and national level. This project has approximately 37,000 participants.

5. The campaign against drugs under the motto “Love our king, care for our offspring, help combating drugs”.

The campaign is disseminated through various media such as television, radio, cut out signs and cinema commercials. The campaign publicity has received cooperation from many agencies such as the Royal Thai Army, the Royal Thai Police, Public Relations Department, Mass Communication Organization, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and Non-Governmental Organizations.

6. The campaign in order to prevent government officers to be involved with drugs.

This campaign is disseminated through television commercials, television programs, cinema commercials, radio programs, posters, etc. Many agencies and organizations also help promoting this campaign.

7. The State-Civil Alliance against Drug Project

This project intends to mobilize the state and civil cooperation in order to support the narcotics control work since drugs problem has become so severe that the government alone can not solve. The project has been implemented comprehensively and the campaign in this project is done through various media. There are volunteers for pilot projects in 5 provinces, namely, Bangkok, Prae, Nong Kai, Pang Nga and Nakorn Nayok. These provinces have selected a community and a school (2 each for Bangkok) in order to set up a narcotics control committee in the community, Friends for Friends group in school and encourage the community to be active on both prevention and rehabilitation activities.

8. Solving Drug Problems in Artist Group Project.

This project intends to praise the good behavior artists who have no records of being involved with drugs. Every year,

these artists would be selected to receive awards in the annual national film awards and the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. For those artists who are involved with drug would be banned from the entertainment business for 2 years. Under this project the club called “No Heart for Drugs” is also established. This club gathers up artists, mass media and youths in order to organize activities against drugs. Up to June 2000, the club has already more than 1000 members and organizes more than ten social functions.

9. Survey project on “the use of narcotics among students and the problem of drug epidemic in education institutions”.

The ONCB and the ABAC-KSC Internet poll of Assumption University have cooperated in conducting a survey on narcotics use among students and the problem of drug epidemic in education institutions. The survey aims to study about the approximate number of students involved with drugs, patterns of taking

drugs, distribution network in schools and the narcotics control work in the education institutions. The survey project covers 32 provinces, including Bangkok, 10 provinces in central region, 7 provinces in northern region, 7 provinces in the northeastern region and 7 provinces in the southern region. The project has already been completed and the data from the survey are now being used to implement effective policies for narcotics control in school.

10. Development of Narcotics Data System in Provincial Level Project

According to the Prime Minister Order No. 141/B.E.2541 (1998), the strategies and roles of agencies responsible for the narcotics control work have been determined especially at the provincial level. Each province needs an efficient narcotics data system in order to implement effective narcotics control policies. The ONCB, as the central agency on narcotics control policies, has hired Mahidol University and National Statistical Office to develop narcotics data system in the

provincial level. In 1999, there have been surveys of problems and needs on narcotics data in 10 provinces, as pilot projects. The draft of narcotics data system in the provincial level has already been presented to relate agencies in every province in order to improve it before putting into real use. The instruction manual for completing provincial narcotics data system and the program data for the province has been completed. Meanwhile, the provincial personnels are being trained to use the data system program.

11. Development of education personnel in order to prevent and solve the narcotics problem in education institution project.

This project aims to explain the concept of narcotics control to the executives in education institutions and rehabilitation centers throughout the country. As a result they would be able to disseminate the knowledge to their personnel. The project has already organized the conference for 6,980 executives nationwide and training for

teachers in 3,490 education institutions, total amount of 10,470 persons.

12. Narcotics Prevention in Bangkok Metropolitan Project.

The aim of this project is to develop the center of narcotics prevention in Bangkok by organizing various activities such as to organize a seminar for the core leaders in the learning center, narcotics prevention education, seminar among related agencies, seminar among districts with serve epidemic problem, seminar for education personnel, etc.

13. Narcotics Exhibition Center Project

The exhibition center has already been established in the Office of the Narcotics Control Board. This center aims to act as a center of information about the harm of narcotics. The exhibition center would be opened to the public in August 2000.

14. Development in Solving Narcotics Problem by the Participation of Family, Community and School

This is a joint project between the ONCB and the Royal Thai Army. It aims to find the most appropriate approach in solving narcotics problem among the youths, especially in those who experiment with stimulant drugs. The ONCB has cooperation with King Mongkut Klao hospital in developing the training course for the soldiers. These soldiers would be trained on skill and knowledge about drugs in order to become trainers. After the training, they are expected to have the knowledge that is necessary to handle drug problems among the youth. Therefore, they would be able to develop an appropriate course and activities for the youth training camp.

Policy and direction for narcotics prevention in the year 2000

1. Proceeding narcotics control work offensively by stressing on prevention strategy rather than solving the problem.
2. Speed up narcotics control work under the Prime Minister Order No.141/B.E.2541 (1998), especially by mobilizing the public to fight against drugs and put pressure on drug criminal. The attention is also given to treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.
3. Extension of important projects, namely Village/Community Free for Drugs, White School and Sport Ground for the Youth against Drugs. Also speeding up narcotics prevention in education institutions along with campaigns against drugs.
4. Support the enhancement of potential and efficiency of the existing treatment and rehabilitation center.