

Present Status of the Public Information Activities in Thailand  
Vidhaya Rajatatibodee  
Office of Atoms for Peace, Thailand

---

### Introduction

Nuclear energy utility in Thailand has been operated for a certain period of time. It has been increased since 1962 when the Office of Atomic Energy for Peace (OAEP), or the present Office of Atoms for Peace (OAP), first operated the Nuclear Research Reactor. Nuclear energy has been developed for usage in various fields, for example, medical application, agricultural application, and industrial application.

Since the subjects concerning nuclear energy are complicated and difficult to understand, Public Relations and Public Information for these subjects are necessary, which OAP has been proceeding constantly similar to other governmental offices.

From the accident at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986, OAP's Ongkarak Nuclear Research Center Project has faced a great number of difficulties. OAP has tried to offer the public more about nuclear information and create several activities for local people in Ongkarak area of Nakornnayok Province. Everything seemed good until the accidental incident of Cobalt-60 in Thailand itself in the year 2000. Taking this accident, the NGO attacked the ONRC Project terribly. Therefore, OAP has to initiate more Public Information activities.

### Status of the Public Information Activities in Thailand

During the past year, OAP has hired Pro-link Ltd. Company, a private company, to operate several kinds of activities via radio, television, and newspaper media as followed:

#### **Television Media**

- A 3-minute documentary program "Enriched with Nuclear Technology" (*Roo Fuang Ruang Technology Nuclear*), broadcast on Channel 3 every Thursday from 11.25 am. to 11.30 am. The documentary was produced and broadcast from July – December 2002, a total of 24 episodes.
- A 3-minute documentary program "Enriched with Nuclear Technology" (*Roo Fuang Ruang Technology Nuclear*) in a game-show style, broadcast on Channel 3 every Thursday from 11.25 am. to 11.30 am. This program gave an opportunity to students from different schools to participate in the game to win a scholarship. It was produced and broadcast from December 2002 – April 2003, a total of 16 episodes.
- A 3-minute documentary program "Enriched with Nuclear Technology" (*Roo Fuang Ruang Technology Nuclear*), broadcast on Channel 11 every Saturday during 06.30 pm. to 09.00 pm. The documentary was produced and broadcast from July 2002 – April 2003, a total of 40 episodes.

In conclusion, there are 80 episodes of documentary produced for television media.

#### **Radio Media**

- A 1-minute documentary program broadcast every Monday and Friday at 10.05 am. via “Cooperative Helping” (*Ruam Duay Chuay Kan*) program on FM 96.0 MHz from September – October 2002 and from January – March 2003, a total of 44 times.
- A 3-minute special report broadcast every Monday to Friday during 07.30 am. to 08.00 am. (after morning news) on FM 92.5 MHz from June 2002 – May 2003, a total of 96 times.
- A live program broadcast every Monday to Friday during 05.30 am. to 03.55 pm. on FM 98.5 MHz from July – September 2002, a total of 66 times. The host of this program corresponded with audiences and presented some information of OAP in a certain period of the program.

In conclusion, a total of radio-broadcast programs are 206 times.

#### **Publication Media**

- A special scoop, in special articles, published during July 2002 – May 2003, a total of 6 times.
- News or pictures in newspaper published during June 2002 – April 2003, a total of 6 times.

The company operated television and radio broadcast as well as publication altogether to make repetitive PR so that general people can recognize and understand nuclear subjects more and more.

When the contract was terminated, OAP currently hires Team Consulting and Management Ltd. Company to operate as followed:

#### **Television Media**

A 3-minute documentary program will be produced and broadcast on ITV (Freedom Television) from February – July 2004, a total of 40 episodes.

#### **Radio Media**

A 1-minute documentary program will be produced and broadcast by 2 radio stations from January – May 2004, a total of 66 episodes.

#### **Publication Media**

A newspaper article, of which the size is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of newspaper page, will be published from November 2003 – August 2004, a total of 12 times.

For ONRC, OAP has operated several training programs to offer nuclear information to teachers and students in Nakornnayok Province. The important activity that has recently been proceeded in late September is a working seminar in the topic “Human Relations and Psychology in Communicating Nuclear Information with Education Administrators”. Administrators from primary schools in Ongkarak District, Nakornnayok Province were invited to join the seminar with OAP senior officials to exchange their opinions. The conclusions are very useful, for example, Nuclear Information Services should be prepared with informal language and focused on young people, or academic institutes in Nakornnayok Province should increase educational activities to inform nuclear knowledge, etc.

During the past September, OAP hired Rajabhat Institute of Suan Dusit to survey the public opinions toward OAP. It can be concluded that OAP is fairly known (59.41 %). About the OAP information, 88.73% of surveyed people have been informed via television, newspaper and radio respectively. However, they are not satisfied with subjects, knowledge, and amount of the information (43.24%). The OAP prominence is Nuclear Research (13.09%). The weak point is insufficient PR for the OAP information (45.50%), consistent with proposals to improve OAP by operating Public Relations via several media about the Office's working procedures.

For the ONRC topic, it is fairly known (34.80%). People understand the ONRC role and duty that it is a Center of Research, Develop and Apply Nuclear Energy for National Development (first place). However, they thought the ONRC establishment might be dangerous.

### **Evaluation of FNCA PI Activities in Thailand**

OAP adopted the questionnaire of the FNCA countries to survey opinions of high school (Mathayom 6) students from schools in Bangkok and environs, and Ongkarak District, Nakornnayok Province. There are 1,120 examples, 744 boys and 376 girls at the average age of 17 – 18. Most of the students like to learn subjects concerning with science (60.27%), and used to learn about “radiation” and “radioactive” (87.11%). Most of them have never been to Radiation Research Institute (67.61%) but they are used to X-Ray radiation treatment (68.12%)

There are some interesting topics in the questionnaire that can be concluded as followed:

- The most interesting topic for students is **their own life in the future, Science and High Technology**, and **Energy and Environments** respectively.
- They are informed with scientific and technological news via **television and radio, newspaper**, and **Internet** respectively.
- About their interest toward the radiation topic, most of them are **slightly interested** (77.59%), and **understand the definition of radiation a little** (82.92%).
- When they hear the word “radiation”, most of them agree about **utility** (57.82%), **the trend for future utility** (72.43%), and **danger** (68.18%). If they hear the word “radiation”, most of them will think of **X-Ray Radiation Treatment, Nuclear Power Plant**, and **Cancer Treatment** respectively.
- About the radiation utility in different sections, students know some radiation usage for Agricultural and Medical Application. However, they know a little radiation usage for Industrial Application.
- About the **definition** of Nuclear, most of them understand that it is an origin of energy (54.04%), and think that Thailand should have solar energy (46.64%) and nuclear energy (27.65%) as the origins of energy in the future.

### **Conclusion**

OAP has operated much PI of Nuclear Energy but the result is still unsatisfactory. Therefore, advanced Public Relations is needed especially the subjects of ONRC that has already received the Construction Permit to build the Nuclear Research Reactor.

---