A Summary of
Background of Equivalency Programme (EP) in Thailand
Regional Workshop on Equivalency Programmes and Alternative Certified Learning
for Achieving EFA and Promoting Lifelong Learning
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ONIE defines equivalency programme (EP) as an alternative education organized for individuals who miss formal schooling. It provides a chance to learn and access to certification which is equivalent to existing formal education both general and vocational streams.

Thailand recognizes the value of human resource and strongly believes that “The total intellectual assets of the country are defined by its people’s intellectual capabilities”. Hence, Thailand pays attention to education as a means of human resource development and expects Thai people to become intelligent and integrity persons who must know not only modern or western knowledge but also Thai wisdom and know how to acquire knowledge through self-learning so that they can learn continually at any time and any place throughout their lives. In view of this, Thailand has established law and legislation at different levels to support the provision of formal and non-formal education namely; the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540 (A.D. 1997), the National Education Act B.E. 2542 (A.D. 1999) and the Amended Act B.E. 2545 (A.D. 2002), the Policy Statement of the Council of Ministers 30 December B.E. 2551 (A.D. 2008) and the Promotion of Non-Formal and Informal Education Act B.E. 2551.

EP curriculum in Thailand is called Basic Education Curriculum (primary level, lower secondary level and upper secondary level). The core curriculum is developed by Non-formal Education Development Division, the central unit of ONIE. It is a standard-based curriculum. CLC teachers/facilitators, then were trained to develop school-based curriculum for every subject they are going to teach based on the standards specified in the core curriculum. Then, they develop lesson plan, teach, assess learning, give grade and report the results.

In terms of materials development, since EPs are flexible, learning and teaching materials must be diverse. Non-formal Education Development Division produces textbooks specifically for EP learners. However, EP facilitators are encouraged to produce their own materials for the learners or they can make use of existing materials like newspapers, magazines, audio visuals, ICT, local wisdoms, learning sources in the community or materials generated by learners. In some cases, facilitators can use learning materials from network parties like public health centre, agriculture extension station and public library.

In terms of innovations and methodologies to deliver effective equivalency programmes (EPs), ONIE develops and adopts diverse innovations and methodologies namely; 1) the
promotion of non-formal and informal act 2008 to promote all parties both GOs and NGOs to pay more attention to the delivery of EPs, 2) the equivalency transfer of educational results, knowledge and experiences, 3) the equivalency determination of educational levels, 4) educational coupons for promotion of lifelong education, 5) bringing the local wisdom into use for educational management and administration and 6) development of learning sources to facilitate learning.

To make EP comparable to formal education and gain recognition from the society and community, ONIE has set up EP education standards especially in terms of curriculum, leaning and teaching. Quality assessment of EP is undertaken at least once a year by the internal assurance team. Self-assessment report (SAR) is documented and disseminated to relating units and organizations and improvement after each quality assurance evaluation must be identified in the next SAR. Furthermore, once in every five year, the educational establishment is expected to be evaluated by the external evaluator team.

Accreditation of educational achievement covers the evaluation of holistic knowledge and experiences of the individuals in terms of their knowledge, skills, ethics, morality and core value. Normally, after one lesson, facilitators must measure learners’ outputs in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills, they can evaluate learners through quiz, test, exercises, other assignments like project work or report, demonstration, performance and so on. Facilitators may provide formative test after finishing each lesson and by the end of the semester or term, they provide final examination which is developed by Non-formal Education Development Division, then scores obtained from formative tests and final exam are summed for evaluating the learners’ performance.

After learners finish the course or each education level and their performances meet the requirements of the level they enrolled, learners have privilege to obtain certificate which is equivalent to formal education. Some educational establishments may organize graduation ceremony to gain public recognition of EPs and to do public relations of the EP programmes.

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SICED

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Research Report

EQUIVALENCY TRANSFER OF EDUCATIONAL RESULTS,
EQUIVALENCY TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE AND
EQUIVALENCY DETERMINATION OF EDUCATIONAL LEVELS
IN NON-FORMAL BASIC EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THAILAND

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Continuing Education and Development,
Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education, Supported by
Office of the Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Education APPEAL/UNESCO
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Executive Summary

This study aimed to study the implementation of the equivalency transfer of educational results, the equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience and the equivalency determination of educational levels. It also attempted to identify factors affecting the effectiveness of the three means of equivalency transfer. Lastly, it interested in studying the benefits of the three means of equivalency transfer.

The descriptive-survey method of research was used. The study included respondents namely; administrators, teachers/facilitators and NFE graduates of eight selected district non-formal and informal education centres. documentation study, in-depth interview and focus group discussion were employed to obtain necessary data related to the research objectives set in this study.

The instrument used was a researcher-constructed guideline for in-depth interview and focus group discussion.

For data treatment/analysis, “percentage” was used for quantitative data while “content analysis” was used for qualitative data. In addition, data obtained from the respondents namely; administrators, teachers/facilitators and NFE graduates were triangulated.

Findings:

Based on the data gathered, the findings are presented as follows:

1. The Implementation of Equivalency Transfer of Educational Results (ETER)

   The equivalency transfer of educational results is designed for NFE learners, who drop out/transfer from formal or non-formal to non-formal with the learning results or subject areas not less than 60 percent in harmony with Non-Formal Basic Education/EP Curriculum. The maximum credit hours requesting for equivalency transfer of educational results will not exceed 75% of all credit hours being registered for the whole curriculum of each educational level.

1.1 Accomplishment Rate of the Equivalency Transfer of Educational Results (ETER) at National and Institutional Level

   There is no record of applicants and accomplishes at national level. This may be because the equivalency transfer of educational results is only the in-between process of learning. It normally is one of the routine activities of the educational establishment/institution, not the record showing NFE graduates. If the application is accepted, the applicant will know how many more subjects they have to enroll to finish that certain
educational level. According to the regulation, all NFE learners must enroll for one semester before they could graduate any educational level.

At institutional level, as a whole, there are 828 applicants while 792 or 95.65 percent succeeds in this equivalency transfer. The largest number of applicants are learners at upper secondary level (419 persons), next is lower secondary level (360 persons) and last is primary level (49 persons). There are two major causes of the unsuccessful applicants, they are; 1) number of subjects in the prior educational record did not cover 60 percent of the contents of the educational level applied by the applicants and 2) applicants did not have the resign document from previous school when they applied with NFE institution.

Muang Nakhon Ratchasima District Non-Formal and Informal Education Centre (NIEC) has the largest number of applicants (498 persons) while 472 or 94.78 percent succeeds in this equivalency transfer. This is because Nakhon Ratchasima Province is a big army base of the country so there are a large number of conscripts who bring their educational results to apply for equivalency transfer of educational results.

Furthermore, at Muang Chonburi District NIEC and at Bangkok Noi District NIEC, there are no records of applicants and accomplishes. This is because these two centres are dominant in equivalency determination of educational levels and do not open for equivalency transfer of educational results so Ban Bung District NIEC of Chonburi Province and Suan Luang District NIEC of Bangkok were selected to study on equivalency transfer of educational results.

It can be concluded that the equivalency transfer of educational results provides benefit to a large number of NFE learners.

1.2. Good practices

The study reveals that there are many good practices found, they are as follows:

1) Effective guidelines prepared by Non-Formal Education Development Division (NFEDD), Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE)

2) Clear steps for undertaking equivalency transfer of educational results prepared by Non-Formal Education Development Division (NFEDD), Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE)

3) Knowledgeable administrators and working staff at the district non-formal and informal education centre (DNIEC) regularly capacitaited by NFEDD through annual workshop to obtain feedbacks and develop more effective plan for the following year.

4) Equivalency transfer of educational results of special target groups
a. Equivalency transfer for conscripts - after finishing military service, conscripts could use the certified document from the military unit to apply for 3 subjects namely: 1) Life Skills Development 1, this is because the conscripts are well trained both physically and mentally and are considered as healthy person, 2) Social and Community Development, this is because the conscripts in service often undertake or participate in many public activities relating to social and community development and 3) Occupation Development, this is because the conscripts receive monthly salary while they are in military service for two years.

b. Equivalency transfer for health volunteers - health volunteers could use the certified document to apply for 2 subjects namely; 1) Life Skill Development 1 and 2) Social and Community Development, this is because health volunteers are persons who have good health and are responsible for promoting good health campaign in the village and community. Health volunteers with six-month experience could apply their knowledge and experiences for primary level while 1 year and 1 year and 6 months could apply for lower secondary and upper secondary respectively.

c. Equivalency transfer for local leaders - experiences of the local leaders could be used to apply for one subject which is Social and Community Development because roles and responsibilities of the local leaders concern mostly with social and community development. Local leaders with 1-year experience could apply their knowledge and experiences for primary level while 1 year and 6 months could apply for lower secondary level.

d. Equivalency transfer for workforce being recognized by national standard on skill development - workforce could use the certified document to apply for different subjects in accordance with 1) the level of skills development test they have passed e.g.

- Level 1 (Basic) could apply to transfer for
  - a) Occupation Development
  - b) Mathematics and
  - c) Science

- Level 2 (Intermediate) could apply to transfer for
  - a) Occupation Development and
  - b) Mathematics

- Level 3 (Advanced) could apply to transfer for
  - a) Occupation Development and
  - b) Mathematics

and 2) other working experiences obtained in and outside the country can also be transferred.

e. Equivalency transfer for members of community enterprise group – the applicants could use certified document to apply for 2 subjects namely; 1) Social and Community Development and
2) Occupation Development, this is because roles and responsibilities of these members concern with social and community development and occupation development. Members with 1-year experience could apply their knowledge and experiences for primary level while 1 year and 6 months and 2 years could apply for lower secondary and upper secondary respectively.

1.3 Suggestions from informants/respondents

The informants/respondents, however, provide some useful suggestions for the betterment of the operation of the equivalency transfer of educational results as shown below:

1) Qualifications of the applicants
   - It should be clearly specified that the applicants must be at the age of 16 and above. Because those who are lower should attend formal school as stipulated in the compulsory education law.

2) Regulations for undertaking equivalency transfer of educational results
   - The expiry date of the prior educational results should not be limited, especially the ones from continuing education because testing could be administered to check the actual capability/performance of the applicants, if they could not meet the criteria set, they have to enroll that subject.

3) Effective administration
   The operational institutions must set up effective administration system for the following:
   a) Public relations – clarity, duration and various channels of public relations must be undertaken
   b) Counseling system for the learners
   c) Cycle of PDCA (Plan, Do, Check and Act) in the working system of the institutions

1.4 Factors Affecting Effectiveness of the Equivalency Transfer of Educational Results

The effectiveness of the equivalency transfer of educational results depends greatly on the following;

a. Guidelines for operating team and for the applicants, evaluation instruments and record sheets for committee evaluators and report forms for the operating district non-formal and informal education centres

b. Knowledgeable administrators and working staff of the operational institutions

c. Effective administration system of the operational institutions namely; public relations, counseling system and PDCA cycle
2. The Implementation of Equivalency Transfer of Knowledge and Experience (ETKE)

The equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience is designed for NFE learners who have knowledge and experience obtained from non-formal and informal learning. NFE learners can apply for the evaluation of equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience, if “Pass”, the learners can obtain grade 1-4, if “Fail” the learners must enroll for that subject accordingly.

2.1 Accomplishment Rate of the Equivalency Transfer of Knowledge and Experience (ETKE) at National and Institutional Level

At national level, there are 42,782 applicants while 40,793 or 95.35 percent succeeds in this equivalency transfer. The largest number of applicants are learners at primary level (35,434 persons), next is upper secondary level (3,781 persons) and last is lower secondary level (3,567 persons).

At institutional level, there are only two district NIECs operate equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience. Only few institutions operate this type of equivalency transfer, this may be because 1) the procedure is complicated, 2) the institution lacks of personnel to be specifically responsible for and promote this activity and 3) one application can be transferred for only one subject, unlike the equivalency determination of educational levels, one application can be transferred for one educational level which is more interesting for those who already have permanent and successful occupation. In addition, at institutional level, as a whole, there are 23 applicants of the two centres while 20 or 86.96 percent succeeds in this equivalency transfer which is designed only for general NFE learners not for those who have permanent and successful occupation. The largest number of applicants are learners at upper secondary level (22 persons) and next is lower secondary level (1 person) while there is none at primary level. The major cause of the unsuccessful applicants is that, they did not have sufficient knowledge and experiences to pass the test offered by the operating institution – the test comprises both written and practice components. In response to this, the teacher will suggest the applicant to enroll for that particular subject.

At Suan Luang District NIEC, after the applicants apply for equivalency transfer of educational results, if the applicants have sufficient knowledge and experience in relevant areas, the teacher will suggest them to apply for equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience. In view of this, NFE learners could finish each educational level faster than others, however, it is the regulation of non-formal education system that every learner must enroll at least for one semester.
It can be concluded that the equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience also provides benefit to many NFE learners as clearly seen from the huge number of applicants at national level.

2.2. Good practices

The study reveals that there are many good practices found, they are as follows:

1) Effective guidelines prepared by Non-Formal Education Development Division (NFEDD), Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE)

2) Clear steps for undertaking equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience prepared by Non-Formal Education Development Division (NFEDD), Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE)

3) Knowledgeable administrators and working staff at the district non-formal and informal education centre (DNIEC) regularly capacitated by NFEDD through annual workshop to obtain feedbacks and develop more effective plan for the following year.

2.3 Suggestions from informants/respondents

The informants/respondents, however, provide some useful suggestions for the betterment of the operation of the equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience as shown below:

1) Qualifications of the applicants
   - It should be clearly specified that the applicants must be at the age of 16 and above. Because those who are lower should attend formal school as stipulated in the compulsory education law.

2) Regulations for undertaking equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience
   - Committee for the operation of equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience should comprise 3-5 persons while 1-3 persons are experts in the field requested for equivalency transfer. Bangkok Noi District NIEC suggests enlisting of local wisdoms and retired personnel of various occupations as resource persons/experts whom the centre could invite as committee for equivalency transfer because these people have more free time and easily available for the invitation.

3) Equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience
   - Evaluation of knowledge and experiences must be done through written test and practice test or actual performance. Suan Luang District NIEC suggests compiling of the written tests from the previous final tests of each subject requested for equivalency transfer.

2.4 Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of the Equivalency Transfer of Knowledge and Experience
The effectiveness of the equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience depends greatly on the following;

a. Guidelines for operating team and for the applicants, evaluation instruments and record sheets for committee evaluators and report forms for the operating district non-formal and informal education centres

b. Knowledgeable administrators and working staff of the operational institutions

c. Quality team of experts for evaluation of knowledge and experience

d. Effective administration system of the operational institutions namely; public relations, counseling system and PDCA cycle

3. The Implementation of Equivalency Determination of Educational Levels (EDEL)

The equivalency determination of education levels is designed only for adults with permanent and successful occupation who are interested in pursuing higher education level in Non-Formal Basic Education. They can finish each education level in one semester.

3.1 Accomplishment Rate of the Equivalency Determination of Educational Levels (EDEL) at National and Institutional Level

At national level, there are 4,136 applicants while 3,178 or 76.84 percent succeeds in the equivalency determination. The largest number of applicants are learners at upper secondary level (2,516 persons), next is lower secondary level (1,135 persons) and last is primary level (485 persons).

At institutional level, as a whole, there are 695 applicants while 577 or 83.02 percent succeeds in this equivalency determination which is specifically designed for those who have permanent and successful occupation. The largest number of applicants is learners at upper secondary level (421 persons), next is lower secondary level (202 persons) and last is primary level (72 persons). The major cause of unsuccessful applicants is that, they did not have sufficient knowledge and experiences to pass the test offered by the operational institution – the test comprises both written and practice components including portfolio. In response to this, the teacher suggests the applicant to review all components and apply again next semester.

Bangkok Noi District NIEC has the largest number of applicants which are 456 persons while 399 or 87.5 percent is successful. This is because Bangkok Noi District NIEC is in Bangkok where education is more recognized and popular than in the provinces so there are many people who are interested in applying for equivalency determination of education levels.
In addition, at Ban Bung District NIEC and at Suan Luang District NIEC, there are no records of applicants. This is because ONIE has declared that only muang district of every province and Bangkok Noi of Bangkok are authorized to operate the equivalency determination of educational levels.

It can be concluded that the equivalency determination of educational levels provides benefit to a large number of NFE learners.

3.2. Good practices

The study reveals that there are many good practices found, they are as follows:

1) Effective guidelines prepared by Non-Formal Education Development Division (NFEDD), Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE)

2) Clear steps for undertaking equivalency determination of educational levels prepared by Non-Formal Education Development Division (NFEDD), Office of the Non-Formal and Informal Education (ONIE)

3) Knowledgeable administrators and working staff at the district non-formal and informal education centre (DNIEC) regularly capacitated by NFEDD through annual workshop to obtain feedbacks and develop more effective plan for the following year.

3.3 Suggestions from informants/respondents

The informants/respondents, however, provide some useful suggestions for the betterment of the operation of the equivalency transfer of knowledge and experience as shown below:

1) Qualification of the applicants
   - It should be clearly specified that the applicants must be at the age of 20 and above because this alternative is designed to serve adults who have permanent and successful occupations. It seems impossible for the younger to possess permanent and successful occupation.

2) Documents for application
   - Portfolio is the most important document or key document that describes the potentiality of the applicant. Most of the applicants are new to this task assigned so it is suggested that close guidance for the preparation of portfolio is necessary. Writing portfolio instead of typing it is a great advantage for teacher/committee to evaluate the writing ability and creative thinking of the applicant.

3) Evaluation and evaluation instruments
   a. It is suggested that proportion or ratio of multiple choice test and writing test should be considered attentively while answer sheet should be properly designed for adult learners.
b. To serve decentralization, it is suggested that all evaluations should be finalized at the provincial level not at the central level.

4) Committee for operation of the equivalency determination of educational levels
   - It is suggested by respondents of Bangkok Noi District NIEC that enlisting of local wisdoms and retired personnel of different occupations as resource persons is an advantage because these people have more free time available for the invitation as committee for the equivalency determination of educational levels.

5) Guidance and registration
   - Public relations of the programmes are still insufficient, different means of public relations should be employed for promotion of equivalency determination of educational levels. Moreover, close counseling and tutorial activities for applicants must be undertaken.

6) Conclusion seminar
   - It is suggested that conclusion seminar is a very meaningful activity for NFE graduates especially those who graduate through equivalency determination of educational levels. The benefits from this activity are presented below:
     a) Teacher can add necessary activity including lessons concerning personality and social manner development.
     b) Sharing ideas and experiences among the graduates can raise close friendship.
     c) Meeting can also raise awareness of socialization and good attitude towards non-formal education.

3.4 Factors Affecting Effectiveness of Equivalency Determination of Educational Levels

The effectiveness of the equivalency determination of educational levels depends greatly on the following:

a. Guidelines for operating team and for the applicants, evaluation instruments and record sheets for committee evaluators and report forms for the operating district non-formal and informal education centres

b. Knowledgeable administrators and working staff of the operational institutions

c. Quality team of experts for evaluation of knowledge and experience

d. Effective administration system of the operational institutions namely; public relations, counseling system and PDCA cycle
4. Benefits of the Equivalency Transfer of Educational Results, the Equivalency Transfer of Knowledge and Experience and the Equivalency Determination of Educational Levels

NFE graduates utilize their knowledge and experiences obtained from the learning to pursue higher education, raise their social status and upgrade their work position respectively.

Recommendations:

To improve and promote the operation of the equivalency transfer of educational results, the equivalency transfer of knowledge and experiences and the equivalency determination of educational levels in Non-Formal Basic Education, the following recommendations are offered:

1. For Operational Institutions

To obtain quality equivalency transfer, every operational institutions should;

1.1 regularly capacitate the working staff and the invited experts/evaluators.

1.2 promote effective administrative system namely; public relations, close counseling system and tutorial activities for the applicants/learners and PDCA approach for working system.

1.3 set up quality team of experts/evaluators for various occupational backgrounds.

1.4 enlist local wisdoms and retired persons from different occupations.

1.5 develop institutional evaluation instruments for each type of equivalency transfer.

2. For Non-Formal Education Development Division (NFEDD)

NFEDD should;

2.1 regularly organize meeting among the operational institutions to obtain feedbacks for improving the guidelines and manuals, evaluation instruments, record sheets and report forms until the operation of equivalency transfer of each operational institution is stable, then regular meeting is suggested to be undertaken only within the provincial area.

2.2 decentralize, encourage and empower the provincial offices to independently manage all types of equivalency transfer.

3. For APPEAL UNESCO

APPEAL UNESCO should;

3.1 be the focal organization to advocate the significance of equivalency transfer for promotion of equivalency programme (EP) for lifelong learning.
3.2 organize workshops for developing manuals and guidelines for promotion of equivalency programmes and disseminate in the region to encourage member countries to implement equivalency programmes (EPs).

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