

# **EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR GRASSROOT LEADERS**

**BY  
DR. SAK PRASANDEE  
BODHISASTRA UNIVERSITY FLORIDA USA.**



# **Presentation topics**

- 1. The Interest in educational development for grassroots groups Leaders**
- 2. The meaning of the word grassroots and grassroots group leaders.**
- 3. Status of leaders and grassroots groups**
- 4. Experience in organizing education for grassroots leaders**
- 5. Model of educational development for grassroots leaders**

# **1. The Interest in educational development for grassroots groups Leaders**



- The speaker emphasized that the current education system in Thailand primarily serves state and private sector labor needs. Government investment aims to produce officials, while private investment seeks employees for business organizations. This system caters to around 3 million public sector workers in a population of approximately 66 million, leaving roughly 50 percent of students with access to vocational and higher education.**

## 2. Meaning of the word grassroots and grassroots group leaders.

- **"Grassroots" is considered a term coined by Senator Albert Jeremiah Beveridge in 1912, reflecting the people's strong desires. In Thailand, it refers to citizens in the lower socioeconomic class, including farmers and laborers. Attempts to replace it with "glass root" were unsuccessful. Grassroots leaders, estimated at 1.8 million, are part of various organizations, working with or independently from the government.**



### **3. Status of leaders and grassroots groups**

- Grassroots group leaders, numbering around 726,500, span diverse organizations. While their strengths lie in cooperation with the government, their limitations include dependence on political entities, hindering independence. These leaders, working on a populist approach, receive some support for education from government sectors.**



**Group organizations that are at the grassroots level, which are a large networks as follows :**

- (1) Community organization groups (อช.) under local administrative organizations. Ministry of Interior, The total number of organizations in the entire country are approximately 285,000 organizations.**
- (2) Community Organization Council Under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, approximately 8,000 organizations**
- (3) Community welfare funds groups at the sub-district level, totaling 7,500 organizations.**
- (4) 1.5 million village health volunteers (อสม.) are group leaders at the village level, approximately 80,000 villages,**



**(5) Volunteers to protect natural resources and the environment (ทสม.), there are approximately 300,000 people, with approximately 40,000 people at the leadership level.**

**(6) Village and Urban Community Fund Groups, there are approximately 80,000 villages. One fund has approximately 80,000 group leaders.**

**(7) Civil society organization groups, surveyed by the National Economic and Social Development Council approximately 130,000 organizations**

**(8) Cooperative groups and farmer groups, approximately 11,000 groups.**

**(9) Community enterprise groups have 85,000 organizations**



- **Not including the village headman, sub district headman , village headman, and assistant village headman, members of local government organizations and others.**
- **If we count the total number of groups above, there are approximately 726,500 groups or approximately 726,500 group leaders. If leading with directors with approximately 5 people per group, there would be approximately 3.6 million leaders.**
- **This number is likely to be duplicated, because one person may be a leader in many groups. When divided into 50 percent, it should be grassroots leaders in the field of community organization groups, approximately 1.8 million people**



- **Group of leaders of these grassroots organizations can be grouped in many ways, such as groups established by the government and work according to government orders, such as community development volunteer groups (ฉช), Public health volunteer groups (ฉสม), etc., groups established by government agencies, but they work independently from government service, such as community organization council leadership groups (สภาองค์กรชุมชน), community welfare organization groups (กองทุนสวัสดิการชุมชน), and groups that organize themselves outside the government, such as civil society groups (ประชาสังคม), etc.**



## 4. Experience in organizing education for grassroots leaders

- The Presenter has founded **Bodhisattva University, USA**, since 2017, is an alternative religious educational institution, in the united states, non-profit educational organization, and did not request certification from the Thai government
- We have 2 Stages of development:



- **Phase 1: Providing education to the people at the grassroots level. Non-profit, because the presenter's name is grassroots group leaders, Including grassroots groups need a degree to apply for a job, need a profile, and most of them are elderly volunteers. From 2017 onwards, there were approximately 2,000 people who graduated, including BA, MA, and PhD degrees.**
- **Phase 2: From 2022 onwards, the university has gone to cooperate with the Senate Political Development and Public Participation Commission, on behalf of the Political Development and Public Participation Subcommittee, and established a working group called New Way Politics Institute to provide education to the people in the course of political science and moral politics.**



- **Course: moral Political Science and wisdom and community management courses focus on local campaigns, there is additional learning about new political concepts, creating social awareness, civil society, social change leaders, social enterprise ,alternative education, politics in the current country, etc., is a 4-month course with hands-on activities, or presenting students' successful experiences to write as a mini thesis. The course charges a graduate registration fee of only 2,000 baht.**



- **Studying:** They can use an experience transfer system, to make the study period shortly, and to transfer to the University at USA. It is not a degree study program in Thailand. To avoid breaking the law of higher education. Meanwhile we try to use a cloud-based education system or cyber University, To be an education in the virtual study, that is anywhere, anytime, without having to build the building and enormous amount of people and many resources.



- **Currently, there are approximately 1,000 people who have graduated from 4 generations, and for the year 2024, we have more local learning center in various provinces, it is expected that there will be approximately 2,000 students of this fifth generation.**
- **Our graduates began to organize other groups, coordinate and connect into networks.**
- **Looking at the number of grassroots leaders, we still have a lot of work to do, In order to reach the majority of the grassroots people, and also have to overcome the barrier of thinking about education in order to become a government sector, and being an employee of a private business.**



## **5. Model of educational development for grassroots leaders**

**From the experience of Ngos , government sector 20 years, be a trainer of various organizations 40 years, working in independent education for about 10 years, including starting to focus on education to develop grass roots to create citizenship. We may summarize the basic important patterns as follows.**

**(1) Providing education for grassroots groups must have determination with ideals for an equal society, social class reduction. It is not an education business.**

**(2) Must be different from mainstream education, must go against the trend and create new alternatives to the people and society.**



**(3) Must be firm in the direction of work, by reducing fear of problems from the traditional educational concept system, pressure from traditional educators, influential people, and politicians.**

**(4) It is a short-term study, using in the experience transfer system. It is not an education like high school students that they have to study everything and every subject.**

**(5) to have low expenses or give free lessons, or almost free to motivate people to study**



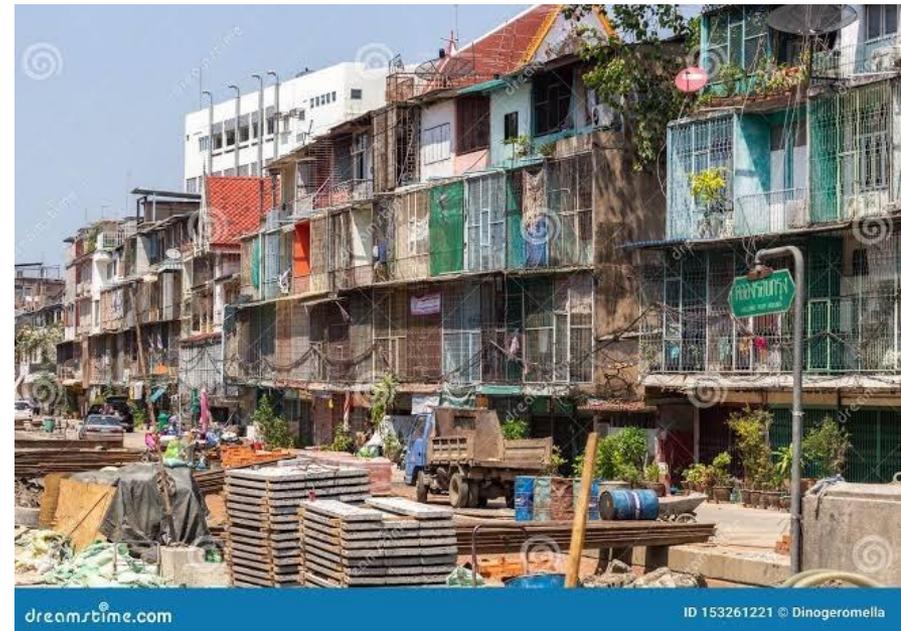
**(6) It is an online study system, or cyber university system, to be able to study anywhere, anytime.**

**(7) It is learning by doing, to create real learning, really experienced and allowing experiences to be used in learning.**

**(8) Using senior citizens as teaching volunteers, because these people have experience, intelligence and want to take advantage of the opportunity, and also hopes for the good to the country.**



- **I think the need for a good country, no social gap and an equal society, creating opportunities for all citizens will be the future of our country. I hope that others educational institutions should think like us. There will be other academics who think like us, for continued cooperation and work together in the future.**



**Thank you for your  
attention  
and  
Sa Wad Di**

