

THE EFFORT TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT MUST INCLUDE CHANGES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

By Walter L. Williams

The effort to save the environment is usually presented as a necessity for developed countries to change their polluting practices. Developing countries, in contrast, are seen as unwitting victims of global warming, having done little to contribute to climate change. However, an accurate assessment shows that many practices by people in developing countries also contribute toward global warming. While it is certainly true that developed nations bear a heavy responsibility for environmental destruction, there are several practices that are commonly done in developing countries that contribute in significant ways to the problem. Rather than seeing environmental revitalization as the responsibility of developed nations, a more effective approach is to realize that people in all countries contribute to pollution, and need to make drastic changes to save the earth. This is not meant to remove responsibility of developed nations to lead the effort. What it does mean is the necessity of all nations, and every person, to be responsible for helping to save the earth.

I am an anthropologist, and have spent the last year doing ethnographic research while living in a small village in northeast Thailand.

When I first came I noticed that people use lots of plastic bags, without conserving. Whenever local people get enough money, they purchase the same kinds of large gas-guzzling automobiles that are so common in the United States. But what is most damaging to the environment is the practice of people to burn their trash and yard sweepings. In the small village where I am living, there is no trash collection. People daily sweep their yards and pile the leaves in various parts of their yard, put their garbage onto these piles of leaves, and set them on fire. Particularly when they burn plastic, the fumes permeate the air of the village. As a result of all these small fires going on at different houses, the air of the village is polluted, and the village is made hotter.

In my house, I do not burn. Instead, I started a compost box, to put the leaves from the yard and kitchen refuse. I showed this compost box to the mayor, and he liked the idea. I next talked to the monk at the local Buddhist temple, and he agreed that I could make a compost box at the temple, as a demonstration project for the village. The idea is to show the villagers how to do this composting, so that they can make compost boxes in their own yard. The monk said the previous monk tried to do a compost pile at the temple several years ago, but no one brought their trash or yard refuse, so the monk stopped doing the composting. I said that even if no one else brings their trash, the temple should still do composting for its own grounds. I explained that burning is bad for air pollution, that it makes the temperature in the village hotter, and that it is bad for the environment of the whole world. The monk thinks composting is a good idea, but like everyone else in the village he burns daily. I hope I can at least get him to change his behavior.

Besides composting, the other part of the effort to cut down on burning involves recycling. I talked with a man in the village, and he agreed to start taking items for recycling. A recycle center in the city, about fifteen kilometers from this village, pays for used metal, glass, cardboard, paper, and plastic bottles. Another nearby government recycling center accepts plastic bags for recycling. I separate my trash into the different categories, and every week he comes by and takes these items to the recycle center. He talked with other people in the village, and several of them agreed for him to come by each week and take their items for recycling. But, he complains, no one except me will separate their recycled items. So he has to do the smelly and unpleasant task of going through their garbage to pick out the recyclable items. He does not like this and may stop doing it because it is so unpleasant. The amount of money that he is paid by the recycling center is such a small amount that it will not be worth it to him to do the recycling unless the job is made easier for him. I want to talk to the mayor of the village and see if he can convince the villagers to separate their materials into recycling categories.

In villages just like this one, all over the world, people daily burn their trash and yard sweepings. A large proportion of humanity still lives in villages, and if they can be convinced to compost biodegradable garbage and to recycle, that will be a major improvement for the world's future. The effort to save the environment has to be directed toward people in small villages as well as people in cities.

The other major environmental problem in this village is the large number of cows and water buffaloes. Isan people have been raising cattle for thousands of years, and cows are an integral part of their culture. Buffaloes were formerly used to pull plows, but today farmers used mechanized tractors instead.

MASTER PLAN TO IMPROVE LIFE IN BAN SOUA KIN WAW

By Dr. Walter Williams

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Ban Soua Kin Waw has wonderful people, but it has several problems.

PROBLEMS

1. Ban Soua Kin Waw is hot and dusty, with bad air pollution, due primarily to burning trash, and windblown dust from traffic on dirt roads and from the rice fields.
2. Many of the young men do not have jobs, and they spend their time unproductively, wasting time smoking and drinking heavily. This smoking and drinking destroys their health, and contributes to family problems.
3. The village is not beautiful, the streets and concrete/barbed wire fences are ugly, and at night the streets are dark and scary.
4. The people are in heavy debt, and need a better financial base for making money than rice farming.

5. Knowledge of English and computers, skills very necessary for the future, is very low.

This Master Plan is designed to address these problems, with several recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE LIFE BETTER IN BAN SOUA KIN WAW:

1. Convince people to stop burning leaves and trash, and instead to recycle and compost.
2. Set up a project for the unemployed young men, to get them to do the work for improving the village.
3. Establish a project to make Ban Soua Kin Waw beautiful, planting trees and vines, and install more street lights to make the village safer and inviting at night. .
4. Pave the roads inside the village, as soon as possible.
5. Start a night market, and other projects to help people financially.
6. Establish a long range campaign to change the economy from rice farming to tree farming, fish raising, expanded concrete work, and other sources of income.
7. Start a public health campaign to convince men to stop smoking because it destroys their lungs, and to stop drinking too much because it destroys their livers.
8. Encourage better English instruction in the schools, and in the village.
9. Establish internet connections and encourage people to learn to use computers.

The leader who accomplishes these changes will go down in the history of this area as the most effective and forward-thinking leader of many generations. Here is a plan to accomplish these changes:

STOP BURNING TRASH:

Air pollution is a big problem in Ban Soua Kin Waw, due partly to the smoke from fires. In cities and towns garbage is collected and placed in trash dumps, but every day in Ban Soua Kin Waw people burn their trash and the leaves that they sweep up from their yard. Burning is bad for three reasons. First, the smoke is bad for peoples' lungs and health. Second, the fires make Ban Soua Kin Waw hotter. Third, burning is bad for the environment and leads to global warming. All over the world, people in villages just like Ban Soua Kin Waw burn their trash every day. That was not a problem in the past because human population was not too big; 75 years ago there were only 2 billion people in the world. But in the past generation there was a huge population explosion, and today there are over 6 billion people in the world. With such a large increase in the number of people, practices that were done in the past can no longer be tolerated. Of course people still need to cook their food by fire, though cooking with gas is cleaner than burning wood, but the smoke from burning trash and leaves must stop. We cannot control other villages, but we can control ourselves. Instead of burning, this is what should be done with leaves and trash:

1. Show people how to make a compost pile or compost box, and put all their leaves, yard sweepings, plant food scraps, tissue paper, and wood chips in it. These natural materials that degrade quickly are called biodegradable. This box must be covered with a plastic lid or cover and watered to keep it moist. It must be open at the bottom to allow worms and bugs from the earth to come into the pile. It is very important that people be taught not to put any plastic, metal, or glass, in this compost box, because those manufactured items do

not degrade quickly. After a few months, the box can be lifted up a little bit, so that the oldest garbage on the bottom level can be taken out by a shovel. Composting produces very good dirt for plants, and can be spread into the soil around the house or taken to the fields to use as fertilizer. Compost is much better than using chemical fertilizer, which has many chemicals that are harmful to health.

I have talked with the monks at the Wat, and they have agreed to stop burning trash and leaves. I will make a compost box at the east entrance to the Wat, so that people can see how a compost box works. This can be a model for people to build compost boxes at their homes. Once I build this compost box, the mayor needs to publicize about it so that people can come and learn how to do composting at their home.

2. Leftover meat and bones can be used as food for dogs or cats, or buried in the ground to fertilize plants. It could also be put deep within the compost pile to prevent it from smelling.

3. Encourage people to separate their glass, metal, plastic, cardboard, and paper for recycling. It is especially important not to burn plastic, because the chemicals in it send harmful fumes into the air. Som does recycling now, but when he goes to each house he has to pick through their smelly garbage to get the items for recycling. It is hard and unpleasant work. The mayor should teach people to put their recycle materials in bags, and leave at their front gate every Monday for Som to pick up. Make it easy for Som to expand his recycle business, so that he can recycle more.

4. At this point Som does not take plastic bags, because he cannot sell them to the recycling center. But I have asked him to take plastic bags as well, and he has agreed to take the plastic bags to Kaedam, where a government office recycles plastic bags, if the mayor can help him by convincing more people to separate their glass-metal-plastic bottles-cardboard-paper. If the mayor approves, Som will allow a sign to be put at the corner, outside his house, saying something like this:

“To protect the environment and to prevent air pollution in our village, please do not burn your trash, but compost plants and kitchen waste, and bring all unwanted glass, metal, plastic, cardboard, and paper here, for recycling.”

If money is available, it would be nice to put recycle barrels at different locations around the village, and encourage people to throw their glass, metal, plastic, cardboard, and paper in there. There should also be trashcans, with a sign saying: “Please keep Ban Soua Kin Waw clean. Throw trash here, not on the street.”

Another idea is to encourage Som to start his own recycling center in Ban Soua Kin Waw, and take recycling from other villages. If he does this, it will be necessary to find a place that is out of sight, to hide the ugly piles of materials.

ESTABLISH A YOUNG MEN’S GROUP TO WORK WITH THE MAYOR

Many of the young men sit around with nothing to do, smoking and drinking too much. I have talked with many of them, and they are not happy because without jobs they have nothing to do with their time and are bored. They worry about not having any money, and drown their sorrows by drinking. Because whiskey is expensive, this only makes their financial problems worse. The young women, in contrast, have plenty to do by working in their homes, and they tend to stay in school longer. So the young men are the

ones most in danger of alcoholism, lung cancer, and depression. I recommend that the mayor should pay particular attention to changing the situation for the young men, trying to convince them not to smoke [which destroys their lungs] and not to use drugs. It will not be realistic to get them to stop drinking entirely, but it is possible to convince them not to drink so much [which destroys their liver if too much alcohol is ingested].

When I lived in Java, I saw the way the young men were treated, and they were not sitting around doing nothing as is often the case here. They were kept very busy because the village leaders gave much responsibility to the young men. Every young man in the village entered the young men's group (called a "sinoman") once he stopped going to school. A young man remained active in this group until he got married, usually around age 30. If a member got a job, he did not participate as many hours in the sinoman as those without jobs, but he still did things with the group during his free time. The sinoman elected their own leaders, and those leaders were treated very respectfully by everyone in the village. Those sinoman leaders worked very closely with the mayor of the village, and they followed him everywhere he went and attended meetings with him. In many cases the leader of the sinoman later became the mayor when he got older, because he had already learned a lot from watching the mayor so closely.

The sinoman was given the responsibility to do much work to police the village at night, to build public buildings, and to keep the roads and sidewalks in good repair and beautiful. If the young men are given something meaningful to do with their time, and receive recognition and respect for their efforts, they will not spend so much time drinking. The secret is to give them the responsibility for the end results, so they are not just doing labor, but they are also working in decision-making with the mayor of the village. If the mayor can inspire them to get involved, much of the work required to improve the village can be done by this group of young men. They will be happier if they have a purpose in life by doing important work for the good of the village. Here are the projects which I think the young men could do which would be most helpful in making life better for people in this village:

1. MAKE BAN SOUA KIN WAW BEAUTIFUL

The first project of the young men's group should be to plant trees and vines along the sides of the streets in the village, to make the streets beautiful. Trees are good because they produce the oxygen that we breathe, and they can serve as windbreaks to prevent a lot of dust blowing into the village from the rice fields. Having lots of trees in the village also keep the climate cooler. The school already teaches the children how to plant seeds and nurture the seedlings so they can grow. The mayor should ask the schoolteachers to teach both the students and the young men how to plant seeds and grow young trees and vines. Use some of the land at the school, or at the wat, to plant seeds and grow the young seedlings until they are big enough to be planted by the roadsides. Also ask the teachers to encourage the students to take young trees home to plant in their yards.

When people come to my house, they always like my garden and compliment me for making the yard beautiful. People like a scene of beautiful plants and trees. Yet, as one walks around this village, the streets and concrete block fences with barbed wire, are very ugly and unwelcoming. I suggest that people will feel happier, and have a pride of place, if this village is made beautiful. This can be done fairly easily by planting vines to grow over the fences and ugly barbed wire, and planting trees along each side of the

street near the fence. Plant trees that grow big, so that they will shade the street. If the streets are shaded, that keeps the sun from heating up the pavement in the road, and that will help to keep the village from getting so hot. To see an example of this principle, look at the dirt road between Bunlut Piegau's house and the Wat pond. I think it is the most beautiful road in the village, with bamboo shading both sides. Bamboo could be planted on both sides of a street and the bamboo could later be cut and sold to provide money for the mayor to pay for other projects. The Ban Wat grows a particularly beautiful species of bamboo. I have asked the monk and he has agreed to allow the mayor to take some shoots to plant along the streets. If fruit trees are planted, that will not only shade the street but also provide food for people to eat.

Another way to make the village better is to make the two entrance gates beautiful by planting trees, plants and flowers there. Also, since Ban Soua Kin Waw is known for its construction of spirit houses and monuments, the mayor should ask four of the factory owners to each donate two very beautiful large matching spirit houses or monuments. One spirit house and one monument could be placed on either side of both the south gate and the north gate. There could be a sign below the spirit house and monument saying "Donated by ____" with the name of the factory owner. This would be good advertising for that factory. Having beautiful trees and plants planted at the gates into the village would show a pride of place that will make everyone feel welcome and good as they enter the village.

I have been working with the monks at the Wat to plant more trees and to plan a parklike atmosphere with a nice area to walk and sit near the pond. I have been working to make the Wat more beautiful and inviting for people to come there to relax and meditate. The young men's group can help to make the schoolyard more beautiful, and provide benches for people to come and relax, as a place for people to play after the school is over for the day or weekend.

2. PAVE THE DIRT ROADS

Dust is a big problem in Ban Soua Kin Waw. It is bad for people's health to breathe so much dust. One big cause of dust in the air is due to traffic on dirt roads. The mayor needs to strongly encourage government officials to provide funds to pave the main road coming into the village from Kaedam. Top priority for paving is the section from the south gate to the Wat entrance, second priority is from the Wat entrance to the school, and third priority is from the school to the north gate going to Ban Kocchalun.

If the mayor can convince the government officials to turn over money to the mayor, instead of just hiring an outside road construction company to build the road, then the young men could be hired at very low salaries, to save money, and in the process they could learn a useful skill in road building. There are many experienced concrete workers in this village who could teach them how to make a concrete street, which lasts much longer than an asphalt street. After they are experienced, the mayor should establish "Tiger Road Construction Company" to contract to build roads in other areas. A top priority should be to pave the road from Ban Soua Kin Waw north to Ban Kocchalun, and eventually to Highway 23. If this highway is paved all the way, that would become the

main road into Kaedam, and would make Ban Soua Kin Waw right on a major transportation route. This would greatly improve the financial situation of this area.

3. ADMINISTER A NIGHT MARKET

The night market in Kaedam is on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday from 5:00 to 7:30 . It would help the local economy a lot if the young men's group could run a night market here in Ban Soua Kin Waw on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and keep it open longer hours until 8:30 or 9:00. To attract more people the night market on Saturday could have a Molum group perform popular Isan music, and stay open until midnight, providing people with food to eat and drinks. The current Tuesday night market is located on one of the main streets, which is not good because it blocks traffic and is too small a space for a big night market. It would be better to move this night market to the street west of where it is now, on the street where the 7 store is, because that street does not have much traffic. But for a large night market it would be much better to use the big open space at the football field at the school. The mayor should try to persuade the school headmaster to allow the use of the field in the evenings, by promising that trucks will not drive over the playing area and trash will be removed by the young men's group at the end of each evening.

If a night market is going to be developed, Ban Soua Kin Waw needs more streetlights. Now many sections of the streets are very dark and scary at night. People in Ban Soua Kin Waw are worried about the security of their houses. Research shows that the most effective way to prevent breakins of houses is to install streetlights. Everyone wants more streetlights. Make this high priority to encourage government officials to install streetlights as soon as possible. If much money is not available, ask them to provide just a few lights now, and add more lights later. This project can be accomplished bit by bit.

SHIFT THE ECONOMY AWAY FROM RICE FARMING AND CATTLE RAISING, AND DEVELOP VARIOUS JOBS LEADING TO A BALANCED ECONOMY

Reducing air pollution, making Ban Soua Kin Waw beautiful, paving the roads, and developing a Night Market, will help to improve the quality of life in this village. Beyond these things, the mayor needs to begin a long range campaign to shift the local economy from rice farming and raising cows and buffaloes, to other sources of income. The profitability of rice farming has been going down for years, and will only get worse in the future. If it were not for the profits from breeding cows and buffaloes, most rice farmers would be poor today. Most people do not realize this, but as Thailand industrializes, the profits from breeding cows and buffaloes will fall drastically. To save Ban Soua Kin Waw from terrible poverty in upcoming years, it is necessary to train people to work in other kinds of jobs now. Rather than hoping for one large factory to locate here and provide everyone with jobs, I strongly recommend that several types of ways for villagers to make money should be developed in order to bring a balanced economy for Ban Soua Kin Waw. Here are my ideas for ways to improve people's financial situation, while also being protective of the environment.

1. PRODUCE PRODUCTS TO SELL AT THE NIGHT MARKET

Rather than invite in vendors from other villages and cities, it would be better to encourage the people who live in Ban Soua Kin Waw to start small businesses selling household items, toiletries, clothes, hardware, toys, etc. The mayor should encourage the young men, and all other villagers as well, to produce various different products to sell at the night market, including the following:

A. The mayor should encourage people to make more small gardens at their homes, using their compost boxes to provide natural fertilizer for growing a variety of chemical-free vegetables and fruits to eat and to sell at the night market.

B. The mayor should bring in someone to teach people who are interested how to raise fish and frogs. They could then build small ponds in their yards to raise fish and/or frogs or lizards to eat and to sell.

C. The mayor should encourage people to raise more chickens and ducks to eat and to sell. Turkeys should also be imported and raised. The turkey is an American bird that has very healthy meat, and it has less fat and more protein than cow or pig. Ban Soua Kin Waw could lead the way in turkey production in northeast Thailand.

D. The mayor should bring in someone who knows how to raise insects, to teach villagers to raise insects to eat and sell. I predict that in future generations, insects will become a major food source for the world's hungry people. But many people do not like the idea of putting a whole insect inside their mouth. I think if someone can figure out a good way to raise bugs, grind them up and sell as a powder, to be added to soups and mixed in rice, this powder would make insect eating much more popular. Insects are very high in protein, and there are so many insects in the world that human consumption will not lead to their extinction. It is much better for the environment if people eat plants and small animals (insects, fish, chicken, ducks, turkey, seafood, frogs, lizards) and avoid eating big animals like cows or pigs. This insect powder could be sold to restaurants and grocery stores.

2. MANUFACTURE MORE THINGS OUT OF CONCRETE

Build on the one existing area of success: concrete construction. The best thing that has happened economically to Ban Soua Kin Waw in the last decade has been the rise of the factories making concrete monuments and spirit houses. This was a brilliant innovation by those who pioneered this kind of manufacturing, and it marks the first step in a shift away from dependence on rice farming. The limitation of these factories is that every factory in the village is producing exactly the same things. Right now there is bitter competition between the factory owners, because the market for spirit houses and monuments is only so big. To reduce rivalry, I think the mayor should try to persuade the factory owners to expand to other markets. More jobs can be created if Ban Soua Kin Waw people will make many other kinds of things out of concrete. Since Ban Soua Kin Waw now has many skilled workers in concrete, I recommend that the mayor should encourage these skilled workers to start their own businesses. For example, concrete can be used to make pots for plants, shelves and furniture for houses, Buddha statues and other forms of art to sell. Ask the art teacher at the Ban school and at Mittaphab High School to advise on art to make and sell.

Are there any local resources for making concrete or bricks here? I see a lot of clay in the dirt. Can local clay, sand, rock to make gravel, and the materials that make up cement be used to make bricks or cement rather than paying to bring in from outside?

3. ESTABLISH A CONCRETE HOUSE BUILDING COMPANY

In my experience building my house here, I had many problems with my house construction because of poor construction techniques by workers. If Ban Soua people could establish Tiger Construction Company, and do high quality house building, they would be in demand all over this area. The traditional style of building houses in Isan is with wood, but as wood has become so scarce the price of wood is very expensive. A much cheaper way to build a house is with concrete blocks, and even cheaper is by spraying liquid cement onto a wire mesh frame. I have experience building houses in America, and many ideas for house design. I would be interested in working with house builders here to teach workers how to build beautiful good quality houses that are less expensive than the traditional Isan wood house. I think Tiger Construction Company could make a lot of money building houses. That money could then be used to finance other projects to benefit the village.

4. ESTABLISH A HOME FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO CANNOT TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES

Build a home for old people who cannot take care of themselves, and hire villagers to take care of them. Pay for this project by offering to take in elderly people from other parts of Thailand, but they must pay for these services. This project might best be done in collaboration with Ban Macca, and located there, since that village has Kaedam Hospital nearby.

5. ESTABLISH A HOME FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

Build a large dormitory and convince the government to establish a home here for children who do not have parents to take care of them. Ban Soua Kin Waw is a wonderful place to raise children, and those children would benefit from the stable village life with lots of old people around to help look after them. Hire local people to work at this center, and encourage the elderly people to get involved in caring for these children.

6. SWITCH FROM RICE FARMING TO TREE FARMING:

Trees are necessary for life. If all the trees in the world were cut down, we would die from the lack of oxygen. Trees keep the climate cooler. Yet, despite their importance, forests are disappearing rapidly. Trees are being cut down at alarming rates, in order to make pastures for cows to eat the grass, and to provide wood for peoples' houses, and for cooking and heating. Thailand is typical of what is going on in many countries. In Thailand thirty years ago there were many forests, but today 80% of all those trees have been cut down. That means that for every ten trees that grew thirty years ago, today only two trees are growing. This same thing is happening all over the world. Deforestation is a major problem facing the future of the planet. If more trees are not planted now, within a few decades the earth's climate will drastically change. Every person in the world needs to be made aware of this crisis, and to try to do what we can to increase the number of trees. Here is a plan for what can be done in Ban Soua Kin Waw:

1. Plant trees along the sides of all roads within the village, as specified earlier.
2. Encourage people to grow more trees around their houses, so that the shade of the trees will keep their house cooler in the hot weather, and serve as windbreaks to cut down on dust being blown in from the rice fields.
3. Encourage people to conserve wood, and not cut down existing trees in their yard or in their fields. If they do need to cut down a tree, encourage people to plant at least one new tree elsewhere to replace the tree that was cut.
4. Encourage people to build their houses entirely out of concrete block or sprayed cement, rather than using wood on the second floor.
5. Encourage people to grow trees on their farm lands. They can plant trees, and later sell the wood when the trees mature. It is much better for the environment to have tree farms, instead of farming rice and raising cows and buffaloes.

5. STOP RAISING COWS AND BUFFALOES:

Cows and buffaloes are bad for the environment for three reasons. First, scientists have recently discovered that when cows eat grass they burp up methane gas. There is so much methane gas rising in the air today that it is destroying the ozone layer of the atmosphere. The ozone protects the earth from harmful radiation from the sun. As the ozone is destroyed, the earth is warming at an alarming rate. In the past this issue of cows burping methane was not a problem because the number of cows was not so large. However, in recent decades there has been a huge increase in the number of cows in the world. There are over 7 billion cows in the world today, mainly because people are eating so much beef. It is important to try to encourage people to stop eating big animals like cows and buffaloes (and also pigs), and instead to eat small animals (insects, fish, chickens, ducks, turkeys, frogs, lizards, etc.) which are not so damaging to the environment.

The second reason cows and buffaloes are harmful to the environment is because they need large pasturelands to eat. It makes economic sense for rice farmers to have cows and buffaloes eating the leftover rice plants. But since rice farming is no longer profitable the attendant cattle raising will also have to change. If the goal for Ban Soua Kin Waw is to convert more ricefields into tree farms, then cows and buffaloes have to be kept away from the small trees. It is important to try to persuade as many people as possible to sell their cows and buffaloes while the prices are still high, so that then they can plant trees instead of rice. This will be a gradual process, and not everyone will agree. But it is important to try to persuade as many people as possible that their long range prosperity will be better by having jobs and growing trees on their lands, rather than spending all their time growing rice and taking care of cows and buffaloes thus leaving little time for a job .

The third disadvantage is when cows and buffaloes are herded through the streets of Ban Soua Kin Waw, they leave their dung on the street, making the street ugly. Eventually, it will be good to ban cows and buffaloes on the main streets, and restrict them to the outskirts of the village.

Because cows are so damaging for the environment, the project of the local government to provide cows for people is not a good idea. It is nice that the government officials want to help people economically, but the money spent on cows and buffaloes should instead be used to train people how to use computers and other skills for the future economic development of Thailand. It would be better for the government to provide

seed money for a poor person to start a small business. Convince the government officials to help Ban Soua Kin Waw in other ways besides providing more cows. Though breeding cows is currently profitable, the focus on buying and selling cows does not help the economic development of this province. It is better to use that money for other things to help people.

DEVELOP COMPUTER LITERACY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING

The future economy will be growing most rapidly around the internet and computers. It is a very good idea to make a good internet network so that people can easily use the internet in this village.

The Ban Soua Kin Waw school has a computer with internet, and Mittaphab school has many computers, but those computers are not utilized after the school day has ended. A computer not being used all the time is a wasted resource. Try to convince the schools to allow use of the computers in the evenings and weekends. Someone will have to be hired to oversee this, so the computers are not damaged.

Only a small portion of the internet is in Thai language. The vast majority of the internet is in English. It is very important to improve the quality of English instruction in the schools, so that students can have access to the wider resources of the internet. The best way to do that is to increase the hours per week that students are speaking English.

Practice every day is the most important. I have many ideas on how to improve English learning, and will be happy to do these things. For example, it would be good to make signs to put up all around the village, written both in Thai and in English. At the two gates to the village, have a sign saying “WELCOME TO BAN SOUA KIN WAW” and as people leave have a sign saying “WE MISS YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE” and directions “KAEDAM 7 KILOMETERS” MACCA 3 KILOMETERS KAEDAM HOSPITAL 4 KILOMETERS MITTAPHAP HIGH SCHOOL 1 KILOMETER.

Having signs posted throughout the village will help people learn English.