

ASEAN Judicial Dialogue WEBINAR
Judicial Education and Training in the Time of Pandemic: Challenges and Lessons

Working Group on Judicial Education and Training (WG-JET)
Council of ASEAN Chief Justices (CACJ)

Country: Thailand

- 1) Please provide explanation on bodies that formally responsible for judicial training and education to the court (Ministry of Justice, other ministry, Supreme Court, Judicial Council, and so forth). Please elaborate if possible the organizational structure and its function in implementing judicial education and training program.

Judicial Training Institute or JTI is the primary institution responsible for judicial training and education to judges and court staffs in the judiciary. The Secretary-General of the Judicial Training Institute, under the direct supervision of the President of the Supreme Court, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Judicial Training Institute and few judges of the Office of President of the Supreme Court are key personnel in organizing the training programs.

Currently, JTI is located on Ratchadapisek Road, Jompon, Chatuchak, Bangkok, with 19 storey building providing conference hall, seminar rooms, dormitory rooms, dining room, and fitness while other two new campuses are under construction. JTI is divided its official management into 4 academies, 2 centers and 6 sections as following;

Judges Training Academy
Judicial Officers Training Academy
National Justice Academy
Court of Justice Specialized Legal Studied Academy

International Training Center
Skills Development Center

Policy and Planning Section
Instructional Technology Section
Administrative Support Section
Housing Section
Finance Section
Campus Housing Section

- 2) Please provide information on judicial education training and program provided for judges and staff in your judiciary.

In order to be appointed to the higher level, judges need to accomplish the compulsory training program of each level. The JTI's **Judges Training Academy** is responsible for organizing 8 main training programs for judges each year. The main training programs consists of

- (1) one-year course **judge-trainee** training program
- (2) 20 days **Junior Judge** training program,
- (3) 20 days **Judge of Court of First Instance** training program
- (4) 20 days **Presiding Judge** training program
- (5) 45 days **Chief Judge** training program
- (6) 15 days **Appellate Court Justice** training program
- (7) 10 days **Appellate Court Presiding Justice** training program
- (8) 10 days **Supreme Court Justice** training program

The longest training program is the **judge-trainee** training program. After the judge-trainees are recruited by the Judicial Commission, they have to attain the one-year training program arranged by Judicial Training Institute (JTI) under supervision of the Board of Training Program and the Evaluation Board.

Judge-Trainee Program is consisted of three parts;

Part 1: Orientation at JTI, 1-month duration

Part 2: Academic Study at JTI, 4 months duration

Part 3: Trial practice in Court, 7 months duration

Orientation part for one month has its main contents as following;

- Judge properly behaviour and routine
- Court of Justice and public expectation
- Civil and Criminal trial
- Judicial proceeding and trial preparation
- Court order and examination
- Pre-trial conference
- Hearing and evidence examination

After finished orientation part, Judge-Trainees will observe the civil/criminal trial in court for half month, then switched to observe criminal/civil trial in another court for same period of time prior to start academic study part at JTI.

Academic study part for four months, has its main contents, as following;

- Civil/Criminal trial performing
- Fact and problem analysis
- Court hearing and proceeding
- Pre-trial conference

- Petty cases
- Warrant, summon and bail process
- Sentencing process and conviction
- Post-trial process
- Proceeding for appeal and role of all justice agencies
- Legal and general knowledge
- Practice writing Judgment
- Study visit activities
- Over time activities, such as, academic article writing, English and computer program usage and sport

After finished academic study part, Judge-Trainees will be sent to the court again for six months to be trained by tutor in civil/criminal trial, prior to a final examination.

In addition, Judge-Trainees will be imprinted ethics, morality, and appropriate way of living of ancestral justices by having senior judges as instructors. However, each Judge-Trainee who completed this program, needs to pass the test on positional evaluation, involved in knowledge and morality, as following;

- Paper test; with at least 60% score
- Trial proceeding evaluation: individual performance and competency evaluation; with at least 60% score of each
- Ethic, moral, physical and mental status

Those who complete the training program with satisfactory result will be approved by the Judicial Commission and Tendered to His Majesty the King for royal appointment to be junior judges.

After working for a period of time, judges need to attain trainings at JTI according to the main training programs that all the judges need to accomplish in order to strengthen and expand continuing education for all judges, and enhance judicial performance on an individual and institutional basis. Each and every main training program will be following with the study visit, where the participants are able to visit government and/or public departments/ organization.

Not only the main training program, if judges are appointing to a special position such as Secretary of the Court or judges in the Criminal Court for Corruption and Misconduct Cases or judges in Specialized Courts, they also need to attain the particular training program of such position upon appointment.

The JTI's **Judicial Officers Training Academy** responsible for organizing 5 main training programs and 5 specific training programs each year, which the main training programs are

- (1) Judicial Officers Orientation training program
- (2) Judicial Officers Professional level training program
- (3) Judicial Officers Senior Professional level training program
- (4) Primary level Managerial (Director) training program
- (5) Higher level Managerial (Director) training program

And training programs for specific position are;

- (1) Legal Officer Professional level training program
- (2) Legal Officer Senior Professional level training program
- (3) Case Affairs Officer Practitioner level training program
- (4) Case Affairs Officer Professional level training program
- (5) Case Affairs Officer Senior Professional level training program

The JTI also provide **soft skills trainings and skills development program** for judges and staff such as communication skills, digital literacy skills, etc. Such soft skills training or skill development courses are available for all judges and staff to register and join virtually or physically. Some courses had very well response with almost 8,000 participants joined.

Online e-learning platform also provided for the judicial officers including e-learning provided by JTI itself, the Office of the judiciary, and also the Office of the Civil Service Commission.

- 3) Please provide explanation of themes and methods of training prioritized by your judiciary, especially during the pandemic.

Each training that JTI organizes for judges and officers are usually consists of 60 – 150 participants, normally all the participants have to come from over the country to stay at JTI's building during the training until they accomplish their courses. During the pandemic, the training method is shift from face-to-face training to online training by using video conferencing platforms to assist the online training. The main platform that JTI currently use for compulsory training courses is Zoom Meetings while other platform such as Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex Meetings and Court of Justice's internal Live Stream are used from time to time.

Facebook Live is another online platform suitable for public broadcast. JTI has used Facebook Live platform with the trainings program that is possible for one way communication and the target audience are staff over the country or public such as soft skills training or Dharma Lecture.

To effectively work with online platform in which the lecturers cannot see all participants at glance, JTI advises our lecturers and speakers to perform more responsive classroom. Group discussion is also well encouraged to the class especially in the subject that involve in practical problems/issues in the court proceedings that participants were facing.

JTI has started online study visit with our courts and other organization. On the virtual visit we found that it is not only cost and time effective but also high responsive in which all participants could clearly listen to the speaker while they virtually visit the place or process of work and able to ask the speakers more questions. Some organization we visited even showed several working sites at one time, for example, the Immigration Bureau virtually presented the immigration

process at 3 borders of the country in one visit, the participants in this case really like the virtual visit as they could perceive more information to have better understanding of the mission of the organization they visited.

- 4) Please provide explanation on the experiences of your judiciary in implementing judicial training and program in the time of pandemic. Please elaborate on the changes that you incorporated and the effects to the implementation of judicial education and training in your judiciary.

During the pandemic, everyone needs social and physical distancing. Our participants are satisfied with the virtual classroom where they can strengthen knowledge and stay safe at their own places.

Even though most participants like the virtual classroom, some are not. Video conference might lead some participants exhausted as some course took 20 days with 6 hours per day from 9.00 – 16.00 hrs. To reduce video conference fatigue among the participants is one of the challenges that we need to face and overcome. To Enhance perceptions of group participation and the participants' sense of belongings, divining time for small group discussion in breakout rooms where participants can throw in their ideas and present to lecturer and other groups might energize them. However, in the soft-skill learning/training, we found that interactive games really help participants to stay alert.

JTI also holds some training courses for senior judges where video conference technologies are new and found difficult to them. The challenge is how to encourage them to willingly use the technology to participate in the classroom. As mentions, the main training courses at JTI are compulsory courses which judges need to accomplish before appointing to the higher level. During pandemic, judges are required to participate in the virtual classroom whether they like it or not. Most senior judges come with positive thinking and keen to learn new technology to participate in class, some may feel being force and not comfort with the technology. Letting senior judges, who are the participants in the class, design the class and activities they would like to have in the virtual class might make them feel as a part of the class and enjoy the class with their own designed.

Same thing occurred to some of our senior lecturers. Where the experiences of senior judges are vital in some training course or topics, JTI so needs such senior judges to be our lecturers, however, they are habitually new to video conference technology and do not have equipment to perform the online class. Some senior lecturers give up with video conference technology. Some are trying hard with help, advice, and support from JTI's IT team. JTI sometimes allowed senior lecturers to use facilities at JTI's building with solid COVID-19 safety measures but this option might come at last or even be impossible during the high restriction periods. Encouragement on senior lecturers to learn and adjust themselves to familiar with the technology and give lecture from their own offices/places is another matter to

challenge JTI to maintain our valuable senior lecturers.

- 5) Please provide ideas or innovations that your judiciary is currently implemented or will be implemented in the future in conducting training during pandemic and beyond.

Flipped-classroom is the model that can be implemented in JTI's training course. Participants will be asked to watch recorded video or study some materials at their pace before joining the class to discuss the topic. The flipped-classroom model can be used in the discussion of current issues in court proceeding which the participants need to share their experiences with lecturer and other participants in the class to see whether other participants from other courts across the country are facing the same issues.

JTI is also considering improving our online assessments on both informative and summative assessment. The assessment in some course is very crucial especially in judge-trainees training program where the participants need to pass all type of assessments including essay writing, speech/oral report, panel discussion, role playing, etc. It is quite challenging to the assessor to give score or grade to the participants when they are not seeing each other especially in the ethical and moral behaviour assessment.

We are also establishing our new partnerships where we can do the virtual study visit, not only domestically but also internationally. In this case, the participants are still able to gain knowledge and experience from other organizations even in virtual way.

We are also planning to launch our archive recorded classes where judges can search and learn on the topic they desire anytime and anywhere.

- 6) Please provide explanation of what are the lessons learned of conducting judicial education in the time of pandemic and beyond.

The COVID-19 crisis has become a catalyst to develop innovative learning solutions in a short period of time which also let us know our ability to adapt promptly and make a swift shift to alternative modes of training and assessment to ensure continuity of learning and training in times of crisis.

We realized the important of remote learning and need to increase the investment in both digital technologies and staff's skill to continuously improve the quality of remote learning and to promote its acceptance.

As virtual class and face-to-face training requires different teaching approaches to ensure optimal engagement from participants. We also need to encourage our lecturer to apply new technique to perform the interactive class.

The key question on all these new learning systems and achievements is how can this learning system be sustained to ensure long-term positive impacts and uphold equitable, flexible and effective learning environment for all.