

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDG CURRICULUM AND THE KING'S PHILOSOPHY TO ENHANCE THE COMPETENCIES OF GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL

Chisa Gunyaviriya
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand
E-mail: chisa.gu@ssru.ac.th
Metha Harimtepathip
Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand
E-mail: metha.ha@ssru.ac.th

Abstract

This qualitative research aims to develop a training curriculum that integrates the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) with the King's Philosophy to enhance the competencies of government personnel. The study applies document analysis as the primary methodology, drawing from academic literature, royal initiatives, and curriculum development models. The research addresses the growing need for civil servants to cultivate inner competencies—such as self-awareness, ethical awareness, empathy, and collaborative mindset—in response to complex and rapidly changing societal challenges. The findings suggest that synthesizing the five dimensions of IDGs (Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting) with principles from the King's Philosophy—particularly the concept of development from within ("explosion from within")—can lead to a curriculum framework that supports both personal transformation and systemic impact. This curriculum is designed to strengthen public sector performance by aligning internal growth with national goals. The research contributes to the discourse on transformative leadership and human-centered governance by offering a model for inner capacity building through education policy and public administration training.

Keywords: Inner Development Goals, Government Competency, King's Philosophy

Introduction

In recent decades, the world has entered an era of rapid transformation and complexity across economic, social, environmental, and spiritual dimensions. Major global disruptions—including climate change, economic inequality, public health instability, and a decline in ethical leadership—have prompted the international community to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a strategic framework for holistic development (United Nations, 2015). However, according to Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Council (2020), several SDG targets remain unmet due to the lack of integration between external policy mechanisms and internal capacity development.

To address this gap, the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) were introduced as a complementary framework that emphasizes cultivating internal human capacities. These include qualities such as mindfulness, empathy, critical thinking, self-awareness, and deep listening—capacities that empower individuals to engage with the world in more ethical and transformative ways (Inner Development Initiative, 2023). IDGs are organized into five key dimensions: Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting.

In parallel, Thailand has developed a locally rooted knowledge system known as the King's Philosophy, including the 23 Royal Working Principles and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. These principles advocate for development grounded in ethical reflection, systemic understanding, and balance with nature (Sumet Tantivejkul, as cited in Chapter 2).

of particular relevance is the concept of “development from within” (ระเบิดจากข้างใน), which resonates strongly with the IDG ethos and provides a culturally embedded model for inner transformation.

Government personnel serve as critical agents in public policy execution, institutional innovation, and national development. Yet traditional training often prioritizes technical skills over inner competencies. Recent studies have shown that civil servants with high levels of spiritual health—defined not by religion, but by self-understanding, life purpose, and ethical grounding—tend to exhibit more sustainable leadership and collaborative capacity (Rattikan Chongvisal, et al., 2021; WHO, 2011; Fisher, 2011).

This study therefore aims to develop a curriculum framework that integrates the IDGs with the King’s Philosophy to enhance the inner competencies of government personnel. By employing qualitative document analysis, the research explores how this integration can strengthen the personal transformation of civil servants and support a more human-centered approach to sustainable governance.

Research Objectives

1. To study and analyze key concepts and frameworks related to the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) and the King’s Philosophy in the context of enhancing government personnel competencies.
2. To develop a conceptual curriculum model that integrates IDGs and the King’s Philosophy for the purpose of strengthening the internal capacities of civil servants through inner transformation.

Scope of the Research

Population Scope

This study focuses on academic documents, research articles, and curriculum models related to the Inner Development Goals (IDGs), the King’s Philosophy, and public administration training in both Thai and international contexts. Key documents include national reports, policy frameworks, conceptual models, and scholarly literature relevant to the competencies of government personnel.

Variable Scope

The primary variables examined in this study are the five dimensions of the Inner Development Goals (Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting) and selected principles from the King’s Philosophy, such as "development from within" and the Sufficiency Philosophy. These are analyzed in relation to core government competencies such as ethical leadership, emotional intelligence, collaboration, and systemic thinking.

Time Scope

The research was conducted between January and June 2025, covering documents published primarily from 2015 to 2024, with a focus on materials that reflect post-SDG developments and contemporary applications of inner development frameworks.

Literature Review

The literature relevant to this study can be categorized into three key domains: the Inner Development Goals (IDGs), the King’s Philosophy, and government competency

development. These frameworks intersect around the notion of inner transformation as a foundation for sustainable public leadership.

1. Inner Development Goals (IDGs)

The IDGs were developed as a complementary framework to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to address the internal capacities needed for societal transformation. According to the Inner Development Initiative (2023), the IDGs consist of five dimensions—Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting—which collectively enhance an individual's self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, and capacity for action. These capacities are seen as essential in navigating complex social challenges and leading with integrity in the 21st century.

Recent studies have emphasized that IDGs provide a systematic approach to soft skills development, especially for professionals in the public sector (Inner Development Initiative, 2023). The integration of experiential learning models, such as Kolb's (1984) cycle of experience-reflection-conceptualization-application, further reinforces the transformative potential of IDGs in education and leadership training.

2. The King's Philosophy and Royal Working Principles

Thailand's indigenous development framework, rooted in the King's Philosophy and the 23 Royal Working Principles, highlights ethical reflection, self-reliance, and harmony with nature. The concept of "development from within" (ระเบิดจากข้างใน), as articulated by King Rama IX, underscores the importance of cultivating internal strength before enacting external change (Tantivejkul, as cited in Chapter 2). This principle aligns closely with the foundational assumptions of the IDGs.

The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, another central pillar of the King's Philosophy, promotes moderation, reasonableness, and resilience. These values are especially relevant in fostering responsible leadership and emotional balance among public servants (Office of the Royal Development Projects Board, 2020). Integrating these values into training curricula is therefore considered essential in the Thai context.

3. Government Competency and Inner Capacities

Traditional public sector training in Thailand has largely emphasized technical and administrative skills. However, scholars such as Rattikan Chongvisal et al. (2024) and Fisher (2011) have argued that sustainable leadership requires spiritual and ethical dimensions as well. Chongvisal, et al. proposed a model of "spiritual health" in civil servants, comprising insight, connectedness, mindfulness, and life purpose. These components mirror several IDG dimensions, especially in the domains of Being and Relating.

Studies also show that when inner capacities—such as emotional regulation, humility, and reflective practice—are fostered through structured programs, civil servants are better equipped to handle ambiguity, collaborate across sectors, and make value-based decisions (WHO, 2011; Milliman, et al., 2003).

Taken together, the literature indicates a strong theoretical and practical alignment between the IDGs and the King's Philosophy in promoting ethical, compassionate, and competent public leadership. While IDGs offer a global, secular framework for inner development, the King's Philosophy grounds this transformation in Thailand's cultural and moral heritage. This synthesis provides a compelling basis for curriculum development in the Thai public sector.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology using document analysis as the principal method. The purpose is to explore and synthesize key concepts, principles, and frameworks from the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) and the King's Philosophy to develop a curriculum model aimed at enhancing government personnel competencies. This method allows the researcher to extract deep meaning, patterns, and philosophical consistencies across diverse texts while grounding the analysis in real-world contexts relevant to public sector training.

Research Steps

1. Defining the research framework: Establishing research questions and objectives based on the intersection of IDGs, the King's Philosophy, and public sector competency development.
2. Selecting relevant literature: Identifying academic sources, royal development documents, curriculum guidelines, and conceptual frameworks published between 2015 and 2024.
3. Document review and coding: Systematically reviewing documents to extract key themes related to inner development, ethical leadership, and curriculum design.
4. Synthesizing findings: Organizing insights into a conceptual framework to guide curriculum development that is culturally grounded and aligned with IDG principles.
5. Model formulation: Designing a curriculum prototype that integrates findings and proposes structured learning experiences for civil servants.

Data Collection

The data corpus includes primary and secondary sources such as academic articles, royal speeches, national policy documents, and curriculum development reports. Emphasis was placed on materials that directly address inner capacities in leadership, ethics in public service, and training innovations in both local (Thai) and international contexts. Notable sources include the Inner Development Initiative (2023), the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy publications, and curriculum frameworks developed by Chongvisal, et al. (2024).

Data Analysis

Thematic content analysis was employed to categorize data into recurring conceptual patterns. Themes were coded under five IDG dimensions (Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, Acting) and mapped against elements of the King's Philosophy such as self-reliance, listening-based leadership, and "development from within." Cross-comparative analysis was then used to identify philosophical convergence and potential curriculum integration points. Triangulation was achieved through reviewing diverse document types (scholarly, governmental, and philosophical) to enhance validity and reliability.

Research Results

The research yielded four key findings related to the development of a curriculum integrating the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) and the King's Philosophy for government personnel training:

1. Theoretical Convergence Between IDGs and the King's Philosophy

The analysis revealed strong philosophical alignment between the IDGs and the King's Philosophy. Both frameworks emphasize ethical awareness, inner transformation, and responsibility toward society. The IDG dimensions—Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, and Acting—correspond closely with the King's values of moderation,

listening-based leadership, self-reliance, and “development from within” (Tantivejkul, 2022; Inner Development Initiative, 2023). This convergence establishes a firm theoretical foundation for curriculum integration.

2. Relevance to Civil Service Competencies

The study found that both frameworks address essential soft skills and inner capacities needed by civil servants in the 21st century, such as critical thinking, emotional intelligence, empathy, collaboration, and ethical decision-making. These competencies are often underdeveloped in conventional public sector training programs but are increasingly recognized as vital for systemic transformation (Chongvisal, et al., 2024; WHO, 2011).

3. Curriculum Design Principles

Based on the synthesis of documents, five curriculum design principles were identified:

- 1) Self-awareness as a foundation,
- 2) Ethical reflection as a core process,
- 3) Relational development through dialogue,
- 4) Collaborative action learning, and
- 5) Purpose-driven leadership development.

These principles ensure the curriculum remains both practically relevant and philosophically grounded.

4. Proposed Curriculum Framework

A conceptual curriculum model was constructed, comprising five modules aligned with the five IDG dimensions and interwoven with key elements of the King’s Philosophy. For example, the “Being” module integrates mindfulness and the practice of sufficiency; the “Relating” module incorporates compassion-based dialogue and public empathy; while the “Acting” module focuses on courageous leadership and service orientation. This structure supports the cultivation of internal capacities that reinforce ethical public service.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest a strong theoretical and practical rationale for integrating the Inner Development Goals (IDGs) with the King’s Philosophy in curriculum development for government personnel. This integration addresses an often-overlooked dimension in public sector reform: inner transformation. While the traditional approach to civil servant development focuses on technical skills and compliance, this research emphasizes the cultivation of inner capacities as a foundation for ethical, adaptive, and human-centered governance.

The alignment between the IDG dimensions and the King’s Philosophy reveals a deep convergence of values. For example, the IDG dimension of *Being*, which promotes self-awareness and integrity, parallels the King’s principle of “development from within,” which emphasizes the importance of personal stability and reflection before societal transformation. Likewise, the IDG dimension of *Relating*, which highlights empathy and compassion, is consistent with the royal emphasis on listening to people’s needs and working in harmony with local communities (Tantivejkul, 2022).

From an educational perspective, the research supports the application of transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000), which views education not merely as the transmission of knowledge, but as a process of challenging assumptions, fostering reflection, and enabling identity transformation. By embedding reflection, dialogue, and experiential learning into the curriculum, the proposed framework moves beyond cognitive development and toward the shaping of ethical character and emotional resilience.

Moreover, the study underscores the growing need for government personnel to possess inner competencies in navigating uncertainty, working collaboratively, and making morally informed decisions. This is particularly relevant in the post-COVID and climate crisis era, where policy implementation often requires adaptive leadership, emotional intelligence, and public trust (Fisher, 2011; WHO, 2011). The curriculum model developed in this study provides a timely and culturally appropriate response to these challenges by offering a human-centered paradigm for public servant development.

Another important point of discussion is the contextual relevance of the King's Philosophy. While the IDGs offer a globally recognized framework, their integration with locally rooted philosophical systems like the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy enhances cultural resonance and long-term adoption. This dual anchoring—global framework, local wisdom—strengthens both the legitimacy and sustainability of the curriculum in the Thai bureaucratic system.

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that inner development is not a peripheral concern but a core competency for the public sector in the 21st century. The integration of IDGs and the King's Philosophy offers a viable path forward in reimagining civil servant training as a transformative process—one that begins within and ripples outward to institutions and society.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for the Application of Research Results

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for practical implementation:

1.1 Public sector agencies should consider adopting the proposed IDG-based curriculum model as part of their professional development programs for civil servants, especially in roles requiring leadership, ethical decision-making, and stakeholder collaboration.

1.2 Training institutes and civil service academies should integrate the principles of inner development and the King's Philosophy into their core curriculum design to strengthen emotional intelligence, moral judgment, and reflective practice among participants.

1.3 Policy-makers are encouraged to support educational policies that emphasize inner transformation, aligning national competency standards with global frameworks such as the IDGs and culturally grounded values such as the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Future studies should conduct pilot testing and action research to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed curriculum in real training contexts, measuring both behavioral changes and institutional impact.

2.2 Comparative research could be conducted to examine how IDG-based training frameworks operate in different public sector contexts—such as local governments, health services, or education systems.

2.3 Additional inquiry is recommended into how the integration of spiritual health and inner development influences ethical resilience and leadership sustainability in the face of systemic crises such as pandemics or climate-related disruptions.

Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to express their sincere gratitude to the We Oneness Foundation and the Inner Development Goals Thailand Network for their support and collaboration throughout the research process. Special thanks are also extended to the Thai

Health Promotion Foundation (ThaiHealth) for providing the research grant and institutional backing. The authors deeply appreciate the insights and contributions of scholars, public servants, and curriculum developers whose works were analyzed in this study. Their dedication to inner transformation and public service excellence continues to inspire this work.

References

- Fisher, J. (2011). The four domains model: Connecting spiritual health with overall wellbeing. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 32(1), 21–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2011.549311>
- Inner Development Initiative. (2023). *Inner Development Goals framework*. <https://www.innerdevelopmentgoals.org/framework>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.
- Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A. J., & Ferguson, J. (2003). Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 16(4), 426–447. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810310484172>
- National Economic and Social Development Council. (2020). *Progress report on the implementation of sustainable development goals in Thailand*. Office of the Prime Minister.
- Office of the Royal Development Projects Board. (2020). *The King's philosophy for sustainable development*. Government Publication.
- Rattikan Chongvisal, Metha Harimtepathip, Tharakorn Kamonprempiyakul, Itthisak Leryosapornchai, & Wichai Phokthawi. (2024). *The study and development of the Inner Development Goals curriculum in Thailand*. We Oneness Foundation.
- Sumet Tantivejkul. (2022). Royal philosophy and sustainable development. In *Royal Development Projects Documentation* (as cited in Chapter 2 of the research report).
- Tantivejkul, S. (2022). Royal working principles and development from within. In *Documentation of the Royal Initiatives* (as cited in Chapter 2 of the research report).
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. United Nations.
- World Health Organization. (2011). *Spiritual well-being and holistic health promotion*. WHO Press.