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K02 - Role of Research Institute in Influencing Lasting Impact on the National Level

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Eighteen years ago, Astronomy was a foreign concept in Thailand. Then, the National Astronomical Research Institute (NARIT) was founded. Today, Thailand is on the path of becoming world renown research institute, bolstering Southeast Asia's largest optical and radio telescope with robotic telescopes around the world and members of many international collaborations. This level of achievements under such a short time scale has rarely been observed anywhere in the history, if at all. In order to accomplish this, the role and responsibility in which a research institute serves its public had to be reconsidered from the ground up. By taking the public's science awareness as its sole responsibility, NARIT has opened a new path for which research institutes can operate, justifying its existence and gaining lasting public support. The success of NARIT in establishing astronomy as a new core science in the context of developing country perhaps can shed a light that utilizing astronomy as a tool to push forward human capacity and technological development for the public is a viable strategy in gathering lasting support for a research institute.

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