Chapter 7

Sustainable Community Enterprises in Thailand:
An Approach Developed Based on Experience and How New Technological Solutions Can Enhance Implementation

Prapeeporn Sawasduang
Rajabhat Valaya Alongkorn University, Thailand

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, a method is described that has been developed working with local village communities in Thailand to create sustainable community enterprises principally based on local knowledge and resources. Characteristics of local communities in Thailand are described, before research methodology and the approach used is discussed. The importance of incorporating local intellectual capital is noted. A community enterprise learning model developed and validated using case study work carried out in the Central Region of Thailand is described. The community learning process has been evaluated and refined. The work may be more generically applicable, and can form the basis for a broader co-operation with similar groups conducting studies in other countries. The success of this work relies on personal contact, however new technologies can be employed to support and upgrade the entire activity.

1. THAILAND: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

All my life I have been interested in the development of my country and its people: an interim report of my work has been published in AJIBIM Sawasduang (2013). I grew up in Bangkok so I guess you could call me a city girl but then after graduation I worked for quite a few years in a provincial university and obtained a good understanding too of country life. My studies in Thai culture and in community development brought me into direct contact with local citizens and my activities have been focused on working with these citizens as they follow a path of learning and self development. The objective of this

learning is that local citizens empower themselves to organize and direct community activities in a more focused and long term value driven way. Let me begin by first saying a few words about my country and about the importance of village communities in its economic development.

The United Nations (2012) stated in a recent report that "as a middle-income country with strong growth, Thailand is determined to leap frog in development status. The ultimate goal is its transformation into a developed, first-world nation, capable of sustaining long-term quality growth and lasting prosperity". To this end, the Royal Thai Government has been resolute in seeking to consolidate the nation's independent standing and to move toward "net contributor status" on the world stage.

The transition of the country from a predominantly agrarian economy into a mixed agrarian, industrial and developing knowledge economy has taken place very rapidly, and it must be borne in mind that Thai people have their roots in local village communities. The promotion of local village enterprises as a source of value growth is one way in which this village culture can, and should, be preserved.

Wikipedia (2013) states that Thailand, officially the Kingdom of Thailand, is a country located at the centre of the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. It is bordered to the north by Myanmar (Burma) and Laos, to the east by Laos and Cambodia, to the south by the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia, and to the west by the Andaman Sea and the southern extremity of Myanmar. Thailand was originally a farming country and this may often be seen in the faces of the rural population.

The country is a kingdom and a constitutional monarchy with King Rama IX, the ninth king of the House of Chakri, who has reigned since 1946, as monarch, making him the world's longest serving current head of state.

Thailand is the world's 51st largest country in terms of total area (slightly larger than Spain), with a surface area of approximately 513,000 square kilometres and the 21st most populous country, with approximately 64 million people. The largest city is Bangkok, the capital, which is also the country's center of political, commercial, industrial and cultural activities. About 75% of the population is ethnically Thai, 14% is of Chinese origin, and 3% is ethnically Malay; the rest belong to minority groups including Mons, Khmers, and various hill tribes. The country's official language is Thai. The primary religion is Buddhism, which is practiced by around 95% of all Thais.

Thailand experienced rapid economic growth between 1985 and 1995 and is a newly industrialized country. Exports, which account for about 65% of GDP, consist mostly of manufactured goods (electronics, vehicles, machinery and equipment) and agricultural products. Thailand also has significant tourism, with well-known tourist destinations such as Ayutthaya, Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Ko Samui, Krabbi, Pattaya and Phuket.

The country has never been colonized and has invaluable traditions and culture. Local wisdom is available in every local area of Thailand. Knowledge and experience related to daily living, occupations and culture has traditionally been passed on from generation to generation. This knowledge and experience is still useful for people in the present day because it deeply relates to their way of life. If this local wisdom is well looked after and promoted, it can be a very good sources of knowledge and information, and can provide guidelines for improving the quality of life and for development of people.

It is always difficult to state national characteristics as each individual is unique but in general terms you can say that the main characteristics of Thai people are as follows. They often have a cheerful smile, are fun-loving, helpful, tolerant, and patient. They love freedom, are determined and family oriented. They are often shy to express opinion, unpunctual, materialistic, self-centred, passive, lacking in ambition and seek to avoid conflict

Related Content

A Technology-Focused Framework for Integrating Knowledge Management into Strategic Innovation Management
Marc Henselewski, Stefan Smolnikand Gerold Riempp (2009). *Knowledge Ecology in Global Business: Managing Intellectual Capital (pp. 306-328).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-focused-framework-integrating-knowledge/24929

How Internet Shutdowns Affect the Entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir
(2021). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management (pp. 0-0).*
www.irma-international.org/article//273904

Fallacies in Decision Making From an Asian Perspective
Michael Sonyand Neeta Baporikar (2021). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management (pp. 117-132).*
www.irma-international.org/article/fallacies-in-decision-making-from-an-asian-perspective/279814

Implementation Concerns of Scholar-Practitioners: A Pilot Study of the Link between Research and Practice
Claretha Hughes, Jai Wang, Wei Zhengand Laird McLean (2010). *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management (pp. 32-46).*
www.irma-international.org/article/implementation-concerns-scholar-practitioners/46019

Transition from Manual to IT-Based Documents Transacting Business Process: Performance Measurements System as the Key
Parthasarathi Banerjee (2005). *Global Information Society: Operating Information Systems in a Dynamic Global Business Environment (pp. 66-93).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/transition-manual-based-documents-transacting/18936