

The Process of Self-Reliant Community Planning: A Comparative Study between the Prototype Communities in the Central Region of Thailand and Pilot Communities in Bangkok*

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: 1) to study and compare the process of self-reliant community planning between the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok; 2) to study the problems and obstacles in the process of self-reliant community planning; and 3) to propose guidelines for the effective process of self-reliant community planning. This research used the qualitative method where data was collected by documentary study and in-depth interview. The researcher found that the process of self-reliant community planning of the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok overall was similar. Nevertheless, there were some different steps, for example, problems and obstacles of the process of self-reliant community planning regarding data collection, lack of opinion leaders, the public awareness of villagers, the attitudes of government agencies, and lack of external supports. Guidelines for

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the effective process of self-reliant community planning were proposed in two ways: a) activities to the self-reliant community planning, and b) the creation of a learning process to self-reliant community planning.

Keywords: *The Process of Self-Reliant Community Planning, Prototype Communities in the Central Region of Thailand, Pilot Communities in Bangkok*

กระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนพึ่งตนเอง: กรณีศึกษาเปรียบเทียบระหว่างชุมชนต้นแบบ ในแถบภาคกลางกับชุมชนนำร่องในกรุงเทพมหานคร*

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการวิจัยเรื่องนี้ คือ 1) ศึกษาและเปรียบเทียบกระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนพึ่งตนเองของชุมชนต้นแบบในแถบภาคกลางและชุมชนนำร่องในเขตกรุงเทพมหานคร 2) ศึกษาปัญหาและอุปสรรคของกระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนพึ่งตนเอง และ 3) เสนอแนวทางการกระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนพึ่งตนเองที่ดี ผู้วิจัยใช้วิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ (Qualitative Methods) โดยใช้การศึกษาจากเอกสาร (Documentary Study) และการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก (In-depth Interview) ผลการวิจัย พบว่า โดยภาพรวมกระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนของชุมชนต้นแบบในแถบภาคกลางและชุมชนนำร่องในกรุงเทพมหานครมีความเหมือนกัน แต่พบความแตกต่างกันในบางขั้นตอน ปัญหาและอุปสรรคการจัดทำแผนชุมชน ได้แก่ การเก็บข้อมูล ขาดผู้นำทางความคิด การขาดจิตสำนึกสาธารณะ ขาดการสนับสนุนจากภายนอกและทัศนคติของหน่วยราชการ สำหรับแนวทางกระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนที่ดีพบ 2 แนวทาง คือ จากกิจกรรมไปสู่การจัดทำแผนชุมชนพึ่งตนเอง และการสร้างการเรียนรู้ไปสู่กระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนพึ่งตนเอง

คำสำคัญ: กระบวนการจัดทำแผนชุมชนพึ่งตนเอง ชุมชนต้นแบบในแถบภาคกลาง ชุมชนนำร่องในกรุงเทพมหานคร

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Introduction

The self-reliant community plan originated during the period of the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan in 1999. It began when Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives received support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for agriculturist development, which had the important target of stimulating agriculturists to prepare their master plan. In order to reach the target, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, in cooperation with the Villages Foundation and the Network of Thai Wisdom, extended the agriculturists of the Network of Thai Wisdom to develop the community master plan for life and local development. Under this process, the community managed to survey and collect data in order to know both the potential and the weak points in order to create a community plan for self-development by building the participation of all involved parties. The Myrieng Community, Chawang District, Nakornsritammaraj Province is one example of a community that has its own community master plan for concrete activities, both in community enterprise and in learning development (The Four Regions Network of Self-Reliant Community Master Plan, 2008, pp. 9-12).

In 2002, the concept and concrete activities of the master plan of the self-reliant community were widely expanded through the success of the Myrieng Community, which worked closely with the Villages Foundation to develop innovation in local development by using the community master plan as a tool for fixing the community development direction and to make the people understand more clearly through data collection. In order to identify problems, they cooperated by building a community plan. After that, they operated the plan, for instance, with respect to a rubber smoking plant, a rice noodle plant, a rubber wood transformation plant, etc. The Myrieng Community master plan became a learning center and a prototype model for the community master plan. At the present, the Myrieng model has expanded all over the country.

In 2003, the Community Organization Development Institute (CODI) proposed guidelines to support and extend the results of the self-reliant community master plan to the local community. Thus, there were discussions on the local development guidelines of the community master plan to be with the core leaders

who had the experience of preparing the community master plan in many communities all over the country. It was concluded that the community master plan should be the strategy for solving social problems and alleviating poverty. After that, there was a national seminar on “Withee Palangthai (Thai Power Way): to a self-reliant community” from January 21st to 23rd, 2003. During the seminar, concrete examples of the community self-reliant master plan were presented, as well as a summation of lessons and experience with the success of community master plan of some selected areas, which led to strategic support for areas in many districts in the community master plan regarding preparation to solve poverty problems.

The communities in Bangkok adopted this concept for implementation as well, and it has been expanded to 20 communities as pilot communities, which have been classified by the CODI (Community Organization Development Institute). Although the communities in Bangkok have different social and economic problems from those in rural areas, particularly the prototype model communities, it is doubtful that the process of the self-reliant planning of the pilot communities in Bangkok is different from that of the prototype communities. There were any problems and obstacles to the process of planning, and how effective was the process of the self-reliant community planning likely to be. Those are the research questions that the researcher will focus on in the present study.

Objectives

- 1) To study and compare the process of self-reliant community planning between the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok
- 2) To study the problems and obstacles in the process of self-reliant community planning
- 3) To propose guidelines for the effective process of self-reliant community planning

Literature Review

- 1) Dependence versus Self-Reliance

The concepts of dependence and self-reliance are opposite. According to Ronald Bunch (1995), when the only progress villagers see is accompanied by aid, the villagers can easily become convinced that they are incapable of making progress themselves. This feeling of inadequacy, in turn, creates dependency and subservience, robbing people of their self-respect. Aid could also blind people to the need to solve their own problems and could also divert people's attention from underlying demographic, institutional, or political problems. Additionally, Shaffer (1989) stated that national political leaders have created instructional challenges through top-down policies and cumbersome legislative regulations that focus interests more on corporate allies and granting huge tax benefits instead of rebuilding community infrastructure. When the only viable alternative for citizens' livelihood is dictated through heavy political rhetoric, the individuals of that community become disenfranchised from outside political influence. There have been various commentators that have pointed to a lack of resources for public involvement, a lack of genuine political will, concern over the impact on representative democratic positions, and widespread public apathy towards planning and local policy matters. These are all seen as playing a part in a general failure to involve and engage communities in the planning process. According to Alinsky (1971), Selman, (2000), Lowndes and Wilson, (2003), and Friedman, (1992), the mainstream top-down models of economic development have failed to address the massive problems of world poverty and environmental sustainability. They proposed the empowerment approach, which is fundamental to the process of alternative development and places emphasis on direct democracy and autonomy in the decision making of territorially organized communities, local self-reliance, and experiential social learning that begins with the people in the community. Galtung et al. (1980) discussed self-reliance as development on the basis of a country's own resources, involving its population based on the potentials of its cultural values and traditions. Rahman (2000) defined self-reliance as a state of mind that regards one's own mental and material resources as the primary stock to draw on in the pursuit of one's objectives, and found emotional fulfillment not only in achieving the objectives but in having achieved them primarily by using one's own resources. In addition, Preiswerk (1980) indicated that communities and individual people define their own development according to their own needs, values, and aspirations. Local-level

development provides a major force in activating the utilization of local resources (land, water, labor) and therefore constitutes one of the most effective methods of promoting people's participation in determining their own development. The need for local alternatives and self-reliance has been voiced in more explicit terms by other scholars. For example, Brett (1998) has called for cooperatives, while Sandbrook (1985) has emphasized the need for small-scale community solutions.

2) Consistency of self-reliance and the concept of community development

As mentioned above, the concept of self-reliance is based on the demand of people in the community and on using resources within the community. It is consistent with the philosophy of community development according to which people are a human resource that has potential ability in terms of ideas, labor, skills, and abilities. If those potentials are found and taken for benefits, it could make the community successful. Thus, the objectives of community development are to encourage each person or each group in the community to know how to use his or her abilities for self-help and participation, and to create development for the community by using the felt-needs or initiatives of people in the community. Therefore, community development has to encourage people to analyze problems, determine their needs by themselves and collectively find the ways to solve problems, and to use resources within the community and support necessary resources from outside the community. According to Warren (1978), Booth & Fear (1985), Christianson (1989), and Dykemen (1990), output means not only having a plan for community development but also building people's potential in the community.

3) Community development through participatory planning

Community development through participatory planning could solve the complex problems of communities more successfully. There are examples that confirm such success from many researches, such as those of Fonchingong & Fonjong (2002), who studied the concept of self-reliance in community development initiatives in the Cameroon grass fields. They found that community members' participation initiatives collective mobility and using resources within the community were able to improve quality of life. Kabumbuli & Kiwazi (2009: 154-160), who studied participatory planning, management, and alternative livelihoods

for poor wetland-dependent communities in Kampala, Uganda, found that solving problems by participatory planning affected the management and alternative livelihoods of the people. Parker (2008: 75) studied parish and community-led planning, which showed that the participatory planning process by local government and government agencies encouraged and supported people in the community to participate in the planning process. This is an example which shows the success of participatory planning by government agents, local government, and community cooperatives. There has been research that has confirmed the success of participatory planning, such as that of Amdam (1997), who studied empowerment planning in local communities. Nour (2011) studied the challenges and advantages of community participation as an approach for sustainable urban development in Egypt. Ha (2001) studied the development of a community-based approach to urban redevelopment. Moran (2004) studied the practice of participatory planning at Mapoon Aboriginal settlement.

Methodology

This study used qualitative methods in which data were collected by documentary study and in-depth interview. Study areas were selected by purposive sampling from communities in the central region of Thailand, where there were initiative prototype models of self-reliant planning. Three communities are included: Hua Pai district, Sing Buri province, Bangchaocha district, Ang Thong province, and Prayabunrue district, Ayuthaya province. There were twenty-four key informants in total that were selected by purposive sampling, comprising three core leaders of self-reliant planning, three community leaders, three community development employees of the local administration organization, six local administration organization administrators, and nine representatives of local producer groups.

While the pilot communities in Bangkok were the initiative communities which adopted the concept of the self-reliant community plan to implement were also selected by using purposive sampling. There were three communities, which comprised Samakkhee Ruamjai, Bangkhen district, Pracha Rabuetham, Dusit district

and Suan Rern, Bang Sue district. Key informants were eighteen persons consisting of nine chairmen and members of communities, six core leaders of self-reliant community planning, and three employees of the Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district offices.

In addition, there were four interviewees from public organizations that comprised two employees from the Department of Community Development and two employees from the Community Organization Development Institute, as well as three scholars that were experts in community development from universities.

For the data analysis, the researchers used three methods: content analysis, analytic induction, and typology and taxonomy.

Results

Regarding the study of the process of self-reliant community planning between prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok, the researchers found the following results:

1. The process of self-reliant community planning of the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok

1.1 The process of self-reliant community planning of the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand had the following steps:

1) Searching for core leaders and team building

The community leaders had experience with planning since the Social Investment Fund (SIF) supported agriculturists to make up plans as facilitators that helped villagers to understand the concept of self-reliant community plan. After that, they looked for core leaders and volunteers to be a working team for carrying out of the self-reliant community planning.

2) Sharing of ideas

Then community meetings were organized for motivating villagers to discuss the problems that had occurred in the community.

3) Studying the history of the community

The community history was studied collectively through three groups of people of different ages: children, adults, and the elderly, which made the villagers view the past and the real identity of the community and feel proud of their community.

4) Data collection

Core leaders and volunteers collected data regarding the income, expenditure, and debt of the villagers in each household using questionnaires which they collectively designed.

5) Analyzing and synthesizing data

After the data collection was completed, core leaders organized forums to show the data to the villagers and asked them to participate in analyzing and synthesizing the data in order to find the ways to solve problems through community forums.

6) Creating a draft for a self-reliant community plan

Ways to solve problems were addressed in the plan and divided into three stages; first, what the community was able to do by itself; second, what the community collaboratively did with government agencies; and third, asking government agencies to allocate budgets.

7) Criticizing the draft of the self-reliant community plan

Core leaders asked the villagers to collectively consider the verification beyond the purposes of the communities' needs, and the feasibility and appropriation of plan implementation. Next was the prioritizing of the importance of activities and how to make the plan successful.

8) Plan implementation

After criticizing the draft of the self-reliant community plan, the core leaders and villagers collectively formulated projects, activities, a budget, and responsible persons for the goal and objective attainment of the self-reliant community plan.

9) Plan revision

After plan implementation, there was a planned revision to improve the activities and implementation continuously in changing situations.

10) Evaluation and lesson summary

An evaluation of the successful plan along with any problems and obstacles was made, and knowledge was created for other communities to study and learn from.

1.2 The process of self-reliant community planning of the pilot communities in Bangkok had the following steps:

1) Preparing leaders and villagers

- Organizing community meetings for explaining and selecting the Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee, which was conducted by employees of the Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office.

- Building team work as self-reliant community planners.

- Making action plans for determining the direction of self-reliant community planning.

- Publicizing news through several channels in the community, such as public relations boards and a public address system to carry out the self-reliant community plan.

2) Building a learning forum for understanding

- The Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee invited villagers to attend a learning forum for acknowledging the self-reliant community plan.

- Creating a consensus that the Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee as the core leaders would carry out the self-reliant community plan.

- Collective reviewing and analyzing their lives from the past to the present and toward the future. After that, they collectively constructed the questionnaire to collect the data.

3) Surveying data

- The Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee divided areas for collecting the data.

- After that, the initiative data were collected, classified, and summarized.

4) Analyzing the data

- The Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee organized forums for presenting the collected data to the villagers.

- Collectively analyzing the data to find any causes of problems.
- Collective prioritizing and finding ways to solve problems.

5) Observing the successful community

- The Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee collaborated with scholars and developmental partnerships to observe the process of self-reliant community planning with a successful community.

6) Creating a draft of the self-reliant community plan

- The Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee collectively made a draft of the self-reliant community plan by formulating strategies, programs and projects, and by selecting participants and allocating a budget.

7) Criticizing the draft of the self-reliant community plan

- The Self-Reliant Community Planning Committee organized forums by inviting villagers to present the draft of the self-reliant community plan for reviewing and improving details.

- Some details of projects and responsible persons were added.

8) Presenting the self-reliant community plan to the Board of the District of the Self-Reliant Community Plan

- The Self-Reliant Community Plan Committee presented the approved self-reliant community plan to the Board of the District of Self-Reliant Community Plan which was appointed by the district office.

9) Approving the plan and budget

- The Board of the District of Self-Reliant Community Plan approved the self-reliant community plan and sent it to the Office of Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office for approval of the budget.

10) Plan implementation

- The working teams and participants in each project carried out activities that addressed the implementation of the self-reliant community plan.

11) Monitoring and evaluation

- After the projects and activities were carried out for a while, working teams would monitor and evaluate the plan implementation.

12) Reporting

- The Self-Reliant Community Plan Committee reported the performance results of the self-reliant plan to the Board of the District of the Self-Reliance Community Plan monthly.

- The Board of the District of the Self-Reliant Community Plan reported the performance results of the self-reliant plan to the Office of the Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office monthly. Then, they presented it to the administrators of the district office for approval.

Nevertheless, the researchers found that some of the steps in self-reliant community planning of the pilot communities in Bangkok were different. Samakkee Roumjai community, Bang Khen District, had the Board of the District of Self-Reliant Community Plan which was appointed by the Office of Bang Khen District, which was in charge of coordinating the self-reliant community plan with the Samakkee Roumjai Community Committee to carry out the self-reliant community plan. On the other hand, Suan Ruen community, Bang Sue District, and Pracha Rabuetham community, Dusit District, had no Self-Reliant Community Plan Committee or the Board of District of Self-Reliant Community Plan. However, they had to present projects and programs and also submit performance reports directly to the district offices.

1.3 Comparison of the process of self-reliant community planning between the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok

After studying the process of the self-reliant community planning of the two study areas, the researchers compared the process of self-reliant community planning and found some steps that were different as follows:

1. Preparation step

The researchers found that the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand had community leaders that had experience in collecting data for community planning since the Social Investment Fund (SIF) encouraged agriculturists to have a working plan for problem solving and self-improvement, disseminating knowledge, and helping villagers to understand the concept of self-reliant planning by themselves and to motivate them to participate in the process of self-reliant planning. While the pilot communities in Bangkok, employees of the Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the Bang Sue District office, the Dusit District office, and the Bang Khen District office were the initiative facilitators to disseminate knowledge and help the villagers to understand the concept of the self-reliant community plan, they also encouraged villagers to think collectively, implementing and problem solving.

2. Knowledge and understanding of the self-reliant community planning step

The researchers found that the prototype communities used the knowledge, skills, and experience of leaders to disseminate and learn about the community history through three groups of people of different ages, children, adults, and the elderly, which helped the villagers know about the way of life in the past, the changes in the present, as well as observing successful communities. While the pilot communities in Bangkok, the employees of the Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office organized forums to study the way of life of the past and the changes in the present, and they supported the observation of outside communities.

3. Approving the plan and budget step

The researchers found that the villagers of the prototype communities in the central region, Thailand participated in approving the draft of the self-reliant community plan and budget. While the pilot communities in Bangkok, the Board of

the District of Self-Reliant community planning would consider and approve them, then submit them to the Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office for approving the budget.

4. Monitoring and evaluation step

The researchers found that in the prototype communities in the central region in Thailand, community leaders and core leaders organized a community forum which required the villagers to participate in monitoring and evaluation continuously. This was the same as with the pilot communities; however, the prototype communities created a lesson summary which they learnt by themselves, while the pilot communities in Bangkok had to submit the performance results to the office of the district.

The comparison of the process of self-reliant community planning between the prototype communities in the central region, Thailand, and the pilot communities in Bangkok is summarized in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Comparison of the Process of Self-reliant Community Planning between the Prototype in the Central Region, Thailand, and the Pilot Communities in Bangkok

Different Steps	The Prototype Communities in Central Region, Thailand	The Pilot Communities in Bangkok
1. Preparation step	Community leaders as initiators and facilitators to teach villagers by themselves	Employees of the Office of Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office as initiators and facilitators to teach villagers
2. Knowledge and understanding step	Using knowledge, skills, and experience of community leaders to disseminate and learn the community history through three groups of people of different ages	Employees of the Office of Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office organized a forum to study the way of life from the past to the changes in the present, and supported observing outside community
3. Approving plan and budget	Villagers participated in approving the draft of the self-reliant plan and budget.	The Board of the District of Self-Reliant Community Planning would consider and approve them, and then submit them to the Community Development and Social Welfare Section of the district office for budget approval.
4. Monitoring and evaluation step	Community leaders and core leaders organize meetings for villagers to participate in the monitoring and evaluation and to create a lesson summary.	Reporting directly to the district office

2. Problems and obstacles of the self-reliant planning

The researchers found problems with and obstacles to the self-reliant planning, which were divided into the following issues:

1. Data

- Villagers did not want to provide verified data about income, expenditure or debt because they feared that the government agency would tax them. That made the collected data unverified.

- The villagers did not make a household accounting. Thus, they did not know about their income, expenditure, or debt.

- Data could not be collected from some villagers because the majority of them had to work.

- Data collectors did not have the techniques to ask the villagers.

2. Leaders

- Lack of opinion leaders which affected the initiative thinking, knowledge, understanding, and motivation of villagers to participate in the process of self-reliant planning.

- Lack of volunteer-minded leaders that cared for the public and could use the self-reliant plan to solve the communities' problems effectively.

- Change of leadership could affect villagers' motivation to participate in activities.

3. Public awareness

- Villagers did not want to participate in meetings. They preferred to work and did not consider interests if they didn't not gain.

4. External supports

- Local government organizations already had development plans, so it was not necessary to address a community plan integrated with the plan of local government organizations.

- Lack of budget support for organizing community forums, leaders, and core leaders to observe the success community.

5. Attitudes of government agencies

- Government agencies worked on their mission and were result-based. This made the self-reliant community plan become the government agencies' plan.

- Government agencies worked on a time line. They had to operate beyond the budget that they were allocated. This meant that self-reliant planning was not encouraged or supported.

- Understanding and adopting the concept means people's participation in local government organizations.

3. The guidelines for the effective process of self-reliant community planning

Besides the process of self-reliant community planning that the researchers studied in the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok, the researchers found two guidelines for the effective process of self-reliant community planning which might improve the process of self-reliant community planning as follows.

The first approach was called "activities to the self-reliant community planning," which means that the self-reliant community plan was initiated by local leaders, who disseminated and taught the real practices to the villagers by themselves. For example, regarding the fertilizer-making activity, local leaders that had knowledge about fertilizer making disseminated it to the villagers for practice. That as a self-reliant activity and was based on the self-sufficiency economy, which they tried to do by themselves until it was successful. The important data for self-reliant planning were found from real practice.

The second approach was called the "learning process creation to self-reliant community planning," which means before beginning the self-reliant community planning, the learning process had to be created first. Next, there would be self-reliant community planning which had the following process.

1. Community Identification

This was identifying what type the community really was. For example, it was identified by natural resources, such as water shade or forest, or identified according to the governance structure of the local community or identified by socio-economic conditions, whether it was township community, city-rural community, or rural community.

2. Stakeholder Identification

After community identification, those concerned with self-reliant planning should be considered by stakeholder identification.

3. Process of Learning

The people that created the process of learning were community leaders or outside facilitators, such as employees of the Office of Community Development or the Community Organizations Development Institute, which organized forums to increase the understanding and knowledge of the villagers' concerning the causes, importance, and benefits of the self-reliant plan, and the process of self-reliant planning and self-reliant plan management.

4. Self-Reliant Community Planning

Community leaders and outside facilitators collaborated to organize community forums for the villagers to discuss the problems in the community and to brain storm to identify problems, prioritize problems, and find out ways to solve them. Household data were collectively analyzed to define activities to solve problems by identifying what activities could be use internal resources, and what activities could be carried out in collaboration with other organizations in the form of a developmental partnership, such as local government organizations, and what activities needed a supporting budget from government agencies.

5. Plan Implementation

The plan was implemented through the collective organizing of groups or local leadership groups.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Villagers could collectively define a time line for monitoring and evaluating each activity. For example, they could organize forums for discussing problems on the sixteenth of each month. Additionally, a time line could be used for evaluating the performance of the plan. After that, it could be summarized as a lesson summary and used for improving the activities of the concerned group to find out new activities and solutions.

Discussion

From the results that answered the research objectives of the three questions, the researchers were able to summarize and discuss the results as follows:

1. In general, the process of self-reliant community planning between the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok was similar. Nevertheless, there were some different steps were employed: 1) preparation readiness of people in the community; 2) building knowledge and understanding about the process of self-reliant community planning; 3) considering and approving the plan and the budget; 4) monitoring and evaluation, so that the prototype model communities in the central region of Thailand had leaders who had knowledge and experience, and core leaders that mobilized the process of the self-reliant community planning at every step.

However, the pilot communities in Bangkok had employees of The Community Development and Social Welfare Section of Bangkok district offices collective planning with community committees and volunteers. From this, the findings showed that leaders and government agencies as both leaders and facilitators were the key factors in the process of self-reliant community planning creation. According to Greenwood & Levin (1998), facilitators help individuals to develop into competent, self-reflective, mature individuals that constitute a learning community, value diversity within this community, and influence their collective future in positive ways.

Further, the researchers found that the prototype communities in the central region of Thailand had social capital and that the people in the community had good relationships and collectively built-up groups within the community. This is another factor that makes the process of self-reliant community planning successful. According to Perkins, Hughey, & Speer (2002), who studied community psychology in social capital theory and development, social capital would be a connection to create cooperation networking. In addition, Gedikli & Bahar (2009: 115-130), who studied the role of leadership in the success of participatory planning process in Turkey, found that participatory planning process can be achieved in localities with social capital. There were civil organizations, relationships built

up within a community, and also stakeholders that jointly viewed problems and created a vision for the future.

While the pilot communities in Bangkok, the officers of The Community Development and Social Welfare Departments of the Bangkok District Offices would be initiators of the self-reliant community plan, they encouraged and supported the people in the community to participate in the process of self-reliant planning. According to the research of Gedikli and Bahar, the leadership of government agencies played the main role in the process of community planning, as an initiator and coordinator with other government agencies, to encourage and support the process of community planning. Nevertheless, this research found some steps in the process of self-reliant community planning between the prototype model communities in the central region of Thailand and the pilot communities in Bangkok. The same factors drove the people in the community to participate in the process of self-reliant planning. This is consistent with a study of Orly & Blair (1997), who surveyed participants in several strategic planning programs, and found that the level of public involvement affected planning outputs.

2. The problems and obstacles of the self-reliant community planning consisted of the data regarding income, expenditure, and the debt of each household being incomplete and unverified. The researchers found that this was consistent with the work of Parker (2008: 75), who studied Parish and community-led planning and found problems in collecting data from the people in the community. Even though questionnaires were cooperatively created by the villagers for community planning, the interviewers did not have a proper technique for interviewing and avoiding conflict with the villagers. Therefore, it was difficult to access the data and the data were incomplete. It was clear that this would require more appropriate methodologies, time, and skill.

Other issues were a lack of opinion leaders and leaders that were voluntary minded; and changes in leaders also affected the ability to mobilize the activities continuously. The villagers did not want to participate in community meetings because they had to work. These issues reflect the idea that the process of self-reliant planning will be successful only through the leaders, core leaders, and the collaboration of villagers. According to Pornvilai Lertvicha (1989), groups or

community organizations will be successful if they have strong leaders and committees. Members of groups have to sacrifice for the public interest more than for their self-interest. Deriving support from government agencies and coordinating with other agencies would benefit the developmental activities of member groups.

Lastly, lacking support for setting up community forums and local government organizations, villagers made plans to ask for a budget, but they already had a developmental plan. The government agencies that were in charge of encouraging and supporting self-reliant community planning emphasized their missions and performance by working on the budget framework. That was not in line with the objectives of self-reliant planning, which required the villagers to solve problems by themselves.

The researchers found that the administrators of local government organizations thought that they had legitimacy from elections to formulate policy, plans, and projects for the people in the community, and neglected people's participation in decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation. If government agencies and local government organizations understand the concept and principles of self-reliant planning, encourage villagers' collective decision-making, implement and support what the community needs, make problem-solving more accessible to communities' needs, plans and project will be more effective. According to Kabumbuli & Kiwazi (2009: 154-160), who studied participatory planning, management and alternative livelihoods for poor wetland-dependent communities in Kampala, Uganda, government approaches to the problem of wetland encroachment have largely failed because they are confrontational, and are not consistent or participatory. This study was crowned with the formulation of action plans to address problems that were locally identified and prioritized. The problems were identified by the people, and possible solutions were crafted by the people themselves. They have also formed an implementation structure which will be managed and controlled by themselves. The people express and analyze their realities and priorities regarding the natural resources in their area. If the government evicted the people from the wetlands to restore their ecology quickly, the people would fall into worse poverty and would be deprived of a livelihood. There is, therefore, a need to start working with people to devise alternative livelihood strategies. They need skills or the

opportunity to use some of the skills that they have. The study has shown that people need to be assisted to identify what they need in terms of skills and other inputs, and to establish a local structure for addressing these needs. People need to be assisted to feel that they are not only part of the problem of wetland degradation, but also part of the solution. Additionally, the participatory planning in this study was consistent with a study of Wang-on (2009), who stated that the principle of community planning was participation-based and was carried out by villagers. It included the process of building relationships among villagers. Community plans had to be part of the management system that made people take part in it, and encouragement from government agencies would build the learning process and decision making of the community.

3. The researchers found two approaches for the effective process of self-reliant community planning. The first approach was practically based, where members of groups practiced closely with local leaders. This made them see the problems and learn, and was taken to be the data for self-reliant planning. This approach shows that the key factor is leaders that have local knowledge. They are human capital that have knowledge, skills, and attitudes concerning self-reliant activities. It could create careers and ideas for villagers to realize self-reliance. According to Thaveesak Nophakaysorn (1998), the key component of a strong community is capital. This capital could be divided into physical capital, such as good-quality human resources, both formal and informal potential leaders together with people that are public-minded, generous, and ready to work; financial capital, including equipment, location, natural environment; and cultural capital, which is comprised of local knowledge, experience linking people in a community, and good quality of life. According to Anyanwu (1992), self-help enables the local people to look inwards by rallying local resources and efforts. This is especially appropriate to the concept of community development, which stresses the importance of people increasing their sense of responsibility, and looking at external assistance as just supplementary, but never replacing popular initiatives or local efforts. This emphasis is on democratizing with reliance on what people can do for themselves. The principle of self-help incorporates into the community development process the means of offering ordinary citizens the opportunity to share in making important decisions

about their living conditions. According to Kirtsana Wongsasun et al. (1999), quoted the target of the self-reliant theory of His Royal Majesty the King, that being self-sufficiency, has made our life more comfortable.

The second approach emphasized learning, beginning with planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. According to the Community Development Department (2007: 1-21), emphasized that community empowerment was people centered. It should begin with people by encouraging, supporting, and motivating them to learn and participate. Using the community planning process as a tool for creating knowledge, learning, empowering community-enabled activities to mobilize the community management system by themselves. This is consistent with the concept of the trans-active planning model of Friedmann (1973, 1987, and 1992) Transactive planning focuses on how people's experience can be used to form policy. The planning is not carried out by experts for the object of the plan, but in face-to-face dialogue between those involved and interested. The planning process transforms knowledge into action through an uninterrupted sequence of relationships between people. The planning is not divorced from other social action, in which the aim is to gain control over social processes that affect one's welfare. Trans-active planning emphasizes a broad grass-roots mobilization to gain the strength to take greater responsibility for one's development and to influence the conditions under which one is working. Freidmann argues that knowledge and action can be linked through critical understanding and radical practice, and that the planning process is a far-reaching process in which everyone can participate.

Conclusion

A self-reliant plan in the context of this paper is a plan that is initiated by villagers. They collectively analyze, create alternatives, and define ways to solve problems which truly come from the villagers' needs until plan implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Whether the participatory planning process created will be successful depends on community leaders, the collaboration of villagers, and the encouragement and support from government agencies and local government organizations. According to the results of this research, the processes of self-reliant planning generally were similar, but there were some different steps. Nevertheless,

the different processes were able to reach the same result regarding the self-reliant plan.

The challenge to self-reliant planning concerns the problems and obstacles that this research found. There were incomplete data, unverified data, lack of techniques for collecting data, lack of opinion leaders, and a lack of volunteers and changing leaders. These would affect activities continuously. The villagers did not pay attention to their participation in community forums and lacked support from local government organizations. All of these could cause the self-reliant planning to be unsuccessful. However, this research found two guidelines for efficient self-reliant planning. The first approach was real practice oriented with local leaders. This made them view problems and learn which data to use for collective planning. The second approach was learning-process oriented. It began with collective planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating. Even though the process of self-reliant planning had different steps, the important thing that made villagers learn and build their potential for solving problems in the community was based on the self-reliant concept more than internal dependency only.

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