



# การศึกษาต้นทุนชีวิตเพื่อเสริมสร้างพลังทางสังคม และวัฒนธรรมชุมชนของเด็กและเยาวชนไทยภาคเหนือ

A Study of Life Assets for Enhancing Social and  
Cultural Power of Children and Youth in Northern Thai Communities

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## บทคัดย่อ

บทความวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ในการศึกษาต้นทุนชีวิตของเด็กและเยาวชนไทยภาคเหนือ เพื่อนำผลจากการศึกษาไปสนับสนุนการออกแบบกระบวนการในการเสริมสร้าง พลังทางสังคมและวัฒนธรรมชุมชนให้กับเด็กและเยาวชนทั้งในระดับนโยบายและระดับ ปฏิบัติการ โดยมีกลุ่มตัวอย่างเป็นเด็กและเยาวชนไทยภาคเหนือที่มีอายุระหว่าง 12-18 ปี จำนวน 1,653 ราย ซึ่งได้จากการสุ่มจังหวัดเพื่อเป็นตัวแทนของภูมิภาคด้วยการสุ่มอย่างง่าย การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลใช้วิธีการทางสถิติเชิงพรรณนา เพื่อวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลต้นทุนชีวิตของกลุ่ม ตัวอย่างจากเครื่องมือแบบสำรวจด้านทุนชีวิตเด็กและเยาวชนไทย ซึ่งประกอบไปด้วย 5 พลัง คือ พลังตัวตน พลังครอบครัว พลังสร้างปัญญา พลังเพื่อนและกิจกรรม และพลังชุมชน รวมถึงตัวชี้วัดต้นทุนชีวิต 48 ตัวชี้วัด ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ในด้านต้นทุนชีวิต 5 พลังนั้น พลัง ตัวตน ได้รับค่าเฉลี่ยมากที่สุด (ร้อยละ 70.91) รองลงมาคือ พลังครอบครัว (ร้อยละ 69.98) พลังเพื่อนและกิจกรรม (ร้อยละ 68.48) พลังสร้างปัญญา (ร้อยละ 62.97) ส่วนพลังชุมชนมี ค่าเฉลี่ยไม่ผ่านเกณฑ์ (ร้อยละ 51.66) ในด้านตัวชี้วัดต้นทุนชีวิตไม่ผ่านเกณฑ์ 15 ตัวชี้วัด โดยตัวชี้วัดต้นทุนชีวิตที่มีความอ่อนแอมากที่สุด 5 อันดับแรก คือ ฉัน ได้รับมอบหมาย บทบาทหน้าที่ที่มีคุณค่า และเป็นประโยชน์ต่อชุมชน (ร้อยละ 42.02) ฉัน ร่วมทำกิจกรรม บำเพ็ญประโยชน์ในชุมชนเป็นประจำ (ร้อยละ 45.84) ฉัน มีเพื่อนบ้านที่สนใจ และให้กำลังใจ ฉัน (ร้อยละ 47.35) ฉัน อ่านหนังสือด้วยความเพลิดเพลินเป็นประจำ (ร้อยละ 48.32) และฉัน สามารถพูดคุยแลกเปลี่ยนเรียนรู้เรื่องราวเกี่ยวกับสืสือ เช่น วิทยุ ทีวี สื่อประเภทอื่นๆ กับครู เป็นประจำ (ร้อยละ 48.84) ตามลำดับ ผลจากการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นถึงความเปลี่ยนแปลงที่ สำคัญของต้นทุนชีวิตของเด็กและเยาวชนในภาคเหนือในปัจจุบันที่มีความเข้มข้นในพลัง ตัวตนและพลังทางปัญญามากกว่าพลังทางครอบครัวและพลังจากชุมชน ในขณะที่พลังทาง สังคมด้านการถ่ายทอดวัฒนธรรมชุมชน การเป็นต้นแบบ และการให้ข้อมูลด้านการเรียนรู้ เกี่ยวกับคุณธรรมและรวมถึงการมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมต่างๆ ของเด็กและเยาวชนได้รับ ความสำคัญลดลง

**คำสำคัญ :** ต้นทุนชีวิต เด็กและเยาวชน พลังทางสังคม วัฒนธรรมชุมชน

## Abstract

This research article aims to study the life assets of children and youth in northern Thailand in order to use the results from the study to support the design of a process for enhancing social and cultural power for children and youth at both policy and operational levels. The samples consisted of 1,653 Northern Thai children and youth aged between 12-18 years who were randomly selected by provinces to represent the region. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to analyze the life asset data of the sample group from the Thai Child and Youth Life Asset Questionnaire which consists of 5 powers: self, family, wisdom, peer, and community, including 48 indicators of life assets. Regarding 5 powers of the life asset; power of self received the highest average (70.91%), followed by power of the family (69.98%), power peer (creative activity) (68.48%), power of wisdom (62.97%), and power of community which had an average of 51.66 percent (not pass the criteria). Among all indicators, there were 15 indicators showing as “Failed”. The top 5 indicators, that were the weakest, were “I was assigned a role valuable and beneficial to the community (42.02%)”; “I regularly participated in community service activities (45.84%)”; “I had neighbors who were interested in and encourage me (47.35%)”; “I read books with pleasure on a regular basis (48.32%)” and “I could talk, exchange, and learn about media such as radio, TV, other types of media with teachers regularly (48.84%)”, respectively. The results of the study show significant changes in the life assets of children and youth in the North today who have more confidence in power of self and power of wisdom than power of the family and power of community. While the power of community culture transmission, role model, and the provision of learning information about the virtues and involvement of children and young people in activities have decreased in importance.

**Keywords:** life assets, children and youth, social power, community culture

## Introduction

The paradigm of children in Thai society are of mixed nature, with children often being perceived as small adults and a citizen who should be protected. This can be seen from the concept of children presented in the article entitled “Thai children's lives and the care of society” by Rajanukul Institute (2009) that has a view on children in Thai society that “Every child is born with a strong bond around them. Relationships are important in building love and this love will create life immunity for children from the beginning. The immunity that comes from love, the bond around the child will increase according to the care of the parents, good community environment and closeness to nature. The concept of child nurturing is a bond that must be taken care of, and responsibility is considered a community culture that connects people with people, people with society, and people with the environment together by transmitting, passing on to each other and living together with the family institution in Thai society for a long time. It can be seen from in the past, Thai society was an extended family having a strong community, having reconciliation, living together with love, having a good relationship with each other, knowing how to share have joint activities. There can be considered good Thai life assets that already exists (Tripathi, 2010). However, various modern technologies are used as tools to help parents take care of their children. Traditionally, the culture of raising children in Thai society has been closely tied to extended families and strong relationships with members of the community. But when urbanization took over, resulting in smaller Thai families, the bond between family members began to diminish, community lacks strength, activities between peers and various forms of non-formal learning among children and youth are also reduced. The current life assets for children and youth are therefore weakening in many ways. The

paradigm relating to children and child-rearing today, therefore, has changed from what it used to be. Parents increasingly turn to electronic media as a nanny for their children, so the gap between family members is increasing. Children in today's Thai society, therefore, grow up to be teenagers who lack love and warmth which eventually lead to social problems. This can be seen from the disclosure of statistics on crimes committed by children and youth on the rise. The drug problem is making a serious challenge. As a result, children and youth in each community are not given the opportunity to continue their education, breaking away from the education system and entering the vicious circle or the cycle of life with poor quality (Viphavapinyo, 2012).

According to the 2017 Child and Youth Development Report, it was found that children and youth in the age range of 13-17 years old, which is the adolescence period. There was a statistic of suicide and an increased risk of developing depression. Most of the reasons are due to the inappropriate use of the Internet and online media creating the problem of online gaming addiction and gambling (Department of Children and Youth, 2018). Also, the survey of the life assets of children and youth aged 12-18 years, only in the northern area, consisting of Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Nakhon Sawan and Uthai Thani, which is a survey in five powers; namely, power of self, power of the family, power of wisdom, the power of peer (creative activity) and power of community by the Moral Center (Public Organization) found that "power of community", which is classified in external life asset that affects the development of children and youth's power of self, is the indicator with the lowest percentage (54.46 percent) and is at a level that does not pass the criteria (Tripathi, 2019). Later, during the outbreak of COVID-19 from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2021, a survey of 183,974 children and adolescents under the age of 20 was conducted by self-assessment of mental health through the Mental Health Check-in application

of the Department of Mental Health. It was found that 28.0% of children and adolescents were at high stress, 32.0% at risk of depression while the other 22.0% was at risk of suicide. In addition, the survey results on “What Gen Z has to say to Thai society” (Nida Poll, 2021) also indicated that children and youth were required to study online at home. This is to reduce the opportunity to do activities that will normally help strengthen the life asset in terms of power of peer (creative activity) and power of community. Two powers usually create a good social and cultural relationship for children and youth. Opportunities to participate in these activities mostly occur through the school.

These key issues reflect the weakening of community culture in Thai society and have resulted in child and youth development activities ranging from the policy level to the activity and program level. The goal is to develop children and youth to have a good quality of life appropriate for their age in terms of physical, mental, emotional, social and wisdom health in line with the 21st century skills as well as being creative citizens who can adapt to keep up with changes in the global context, having responsibility for oneself, having a conscience towards the public, and participating as a powerful partner in the social development process, which is the main goal of the 2nd Child and Youth Development Plan 2017 - 2021, and is related to environmental factors such as family, community and education which is the important life asset of children and youth. Additionally, life assets are cognitive development and mindfulness towards oneself and the environment in which the child lives closely such as home, community and school in order to create social immunity in dealing with various problems or risky situations. All are similar to Tripathi (2013) who explained that the life assets are similar to the customs, cultures and traditions that are good in Thai social communities, and they make children grow and nurture to be strong mentally, socially, intellectually and able to live in society

peacefully. We are all born with a certain level of life assets both internal assets which are the basic assets that have been ingrained since birth that enable them to live, and external assets derived from the relationships of people in the community's cultural way of life, such as the formation of family, academy, and the environment in the community, etc.

Based on such information, it is necessary and urgent to rely on a database on environmental ecology or the life assets of children and youth in different areas to form and develop the design of a process for building social and cultural power in both communities at the policy and operational levels in order to keep up with the current situation because the life assets is considered the foundation of morality that starts from self and family for living together in society happily. Therefore, if children and youth have good life assets, they will be able to grow up to be strong citizens of the country. The research team therefore created a project "Study of the life assets of children and youth in Northern Thailand" was established to collect, analyze, and synthesize data from the tool of the survey designed by Tripathi and team, and Child and Youth Health Program, The Health Promotion Foundation 2008. The survey is a study of internal and external life assets of five powers, consisting of power of self, power of the family, power of wisdom, power of peer (creative activity), and power of community, which are ways to know about the ecosystem of children and youth in weaknesses or strengths, in order to be able to use it to strengthen the child's immunity at the right point and the results from this study can be used as information to support the design of a process to strengthen social and community culture for children and youth both at the policy and operational levels, as well as the process of driving morality for children and youth in various forms.

## Objectives

1. To study the life assets of children and youth in northern Thailand.
2. To use knowledge obtained from the findings to support the design of processes for empowerment in society and community culture for children and youth at both policy and operational levels.

## Conceptual Framework

In the study of the development and potential of children and youth, it is necessary to consider the child's context to the level of social mechanisms due to the current Thai society which has undergone rapid changes, especially the changes in technology that affect children and youth in both positive and negative ways. Considering problems that arise and fixing them later may not prevent problems from occurring. Therefore, various proposals were created to strengthen the prevention of those problems. Creating a tool to explore the life assets of Thai children and youth is another proposed option.

Life assets, formerly called developmental assets, is an educational approach that considers the innate, protective factors or positive psychological, social, and cultural attributes that affect thought processes, decision-making, and behavior patterns (Boorasuksakul, 2015). Many countries have focused on youth research on positive factors, such as the United States that has occurred since 1989 by research institutes in the United States surveyed 300,000-400,000 young people and developed 40 scorecards while creating techniques for those working in the field of youth to be skilled in order to increase the effectiveness of youth to pass the criteria as much as possible. There is also research in Canada, France, Russia, China, Japan, Vietnam, etc. In Thailand, Treepatri (n.d.) has applied the concept of life assets to develop Thai children and youth by

developing a youth life assets assessment form in accordance with the Thai cultural context.

Trepati (n.d.) defines the meaning of the "life assets" as cognitive development and mindfulness on themselves and the environment in which children live closely, such as homes, communities and schools dealing with problems or various risk situations and has also expanded the meaning of "life assets of Thai children and youth" (Developmental Assets; DA) to mean factors or good qualities that include mental, social, and cultural aspects that affect thought processes, decision-making, and behavioral patterns as a result of obtaining enrichment taking place from birth to adulthood. This increase in the life assets of children and youth is inevitably influenced by factors in the children themselves, and from external factors such as family, school, friends, and community. If the factors can be controlled and strengthened appropriately, they will affect the development of good life assets for children and youth to grow up with quality and be able to live in society in peace and with sustainable health (Tripathi, et al., n.d.).

To achieve this goal, Tripathi has established a tool to explore the life assets of Thai children and youth to match the social and cultural context of Thailand. This explored both internal and external costs of the child which consists of 5 powers: self-power, family power, wisdom power, friend and activity power, and community power as follows:

1. Power of self is the integration of self-worth, the power to build faith and self-confidence, and the power to create life skills, which are to live in a peaceful society, help others, have a clear standpoint, love justice, have no racial discrimination, be honest, have responsibility, and have self-discipline that do not involve risky behavior.

2. Power of family is a power of love, care, discipline and exemplary living, positive follow-up and assistance, positive speech in the house, warmth, and safety.

3. Power of wisdom is a power of determination to increase intellectual power, and is encouraged and promoted in the learning process both within and outside the educational system including local wisdom.

4. Power of friends and activities is the power to challenge activities among friends that is beneficial to society, community, discipline among friends such as an exercise, sport, extracurricular recreation.

5. Power of community is a power of people who live together with generosity, understanding, friendship, discipline and being a good role model, positive speech, volunteer, warmth and safety in the community and joint activities.

He sees that this tool will be useful in monitoring youth from the environment and risk factors. This will allow us to know the weaknesses of the youth's life assets in various fields and lead to the development or strengthening of those assets.

Lotrakul, et al. (2009) gave the meaning of "The life assets" (Developmental Asset) means an index that measures the factors affecting the development of school-aged children that focus on the value (a positive- based). Life asset survey tool is a tool used for surveying school-aged children both individually and in small groups. There is a quick and easy way to survey and rate which testers can rate by themselves. The information obtained can give context to 5 aspects: 1) perspective about oneself, 2) perspective on society, 3) perspective on family relationships, 4) perspective on school, and 5) perspective on society.

From the definitions above, they can be concluded that "life assets" or "developmental asset" refers to cognitive skills and consciousness towards oneself and the environment in which the child lives closely. It is a factor that creates or affects the composition of both psychological, social and cultural

characteristics in order to create social immunity in dealing with problems or various risk situations that affect the development of children and youth.

## Method

The population in this study is Thai children and youth aged between 12-18 years old who are studying in secondary schools under the Office of the Basic Education Commission Secondary Education Area and under the local administrative organization in the northern region, and a simple random sampling of the provinces was used to represent the region which the Center for Morality (Public Organization) prepared both statistical method for OBEC and DLA school selection and IRB approval for the whole country and has concluded from the survey response of the target group of 1,653 people, representing 96.55 percent of the total sample of 1,712 people as in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Population

Region	Province	No. of School		Population		Sampling		Total Sampling	Total Sampling of the region
		OBEC	DLA	OBEC	DLA	OBEC	DLA		
North	Chiang Rai	41	5	31,028	6,911	464	103	567	1,712
	Phichit	30	7	17,197	2,116	257	32	289	
	Nakhon Sawan	37	13	32,024	2,765	479	42	521	
	Sukhothai	27	11	19,011	3,394	284	51	335	
	รวม	135	39	99,260	15,186	1,484	228	1,712	
						114,446			

**Note.** By examining the reliability of the tools in this research, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is used, which must have an alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 to demonstrate the reliability of research tools (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The coefficients Cronbach for each factor

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
Life Assets (48 items)	0.947
Power of Self (15 items)	0.854
Power of the Family (8 items)	0.893
Power of Wisdom (11 items)	0.868
Power of Peer (creative activity) (6 items)	0.763
Power of Community (8 items)	0.880

**Note.** The study of "life assets" which consists of 5 powers, namely power of self, power of the family, power of wisdom, power of peer (creative activity) and power of community of children and youth aged 12-18 years were analyzed as follows:

If a score is more than 80 percent, there will be a very good life asset (Grade A). 70.00-79.99 percent will have a good life asset (Grade B). 60.00-69.99 percent will have a life asset passing the criteria at a moderate level (Grade C). Moreover, if the score is less than 60%, there will be an unqualified life asset (Grade F) as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Life Asset Criteria

Life Asset Level	Percentage of responses (Percentage of points)	Interpretation
Life asset level is relatively low, and should increase or enhance the life assets more	< 60.00 (Grade F)	Failed
Life asset level is moderate and additional life assets should be reinforced.	60.00 – 69.99 (Grade C)	Passed
Life asset level is good.	70.00 – 79.99 (Grade B)	Passed
Life asset level is very good.	>80.00 (Grade A)	Passed

**Note.** The data were collected from online surveys establishing a data system and analyzing life asset data for children and youth in Northern Thailand. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, percentage and standard deviation to analyze the general characteristics of the samples and life assets of the sample. The analysis was based on the Life Asset Survey for Thai Children and Youth, designed by Tripathi and team, and Child and Youth Health Program Office of Health Promotion Foundation 2008, both individually (48 items) and each aspect (5 powers), classified by school size and school affiliation.

## Synthetic Research Results

### The results of the research study on the life assets in five areas (48 items)

When considering the life assets for five areas of the 1,653 samples collected, they were found that power of self was the highest means (70.91%), followed by power of the family (69.98%), power of peer (creative activity) (68.48%), power of wisdom (62.97%) and power of community (51.66%), respectively.

There is a consideration of each of 48 life asset indicators, it was found that 15 of the indicators were “failed”. The top 5 most vulnerable indicators of life assets were: I was assigned valuable roles and beneficial to the community (42.02%), I regularly participated in community service activities (45.84%), I had neighbors who were interested in and encouraged me (47.35%), I read books with enjoyment regularly (48.32%), and I was able to talk and exchange ideas, and learn about media such as radio, TV, other media with teachers regularly (48.84%), respectively.

The top five strongest indicators of life assets were: I dared to reject risky behaviors (such as sex, drugs, violence and bad media) (86.19%), I was empathetic and care of others (80.22 %), I wanted to study well, not taking advantage and sharing with others (79.45 %), I gave great importance to promote social equality such as the disabled, the elderly, male/female/LGBT, etc. (78.30 %), and I was responsible for what I did (no matter what the result) (76.93 %), respectively, as in Table 4 and Table 5.

**Table 4:** The strength of life assets indicators and the top five weakest

Items	The Life Assets of Children and Youth	Percentage
<b>The top 5 most vulnerable life assets</b>		
34	I can talk and exchange ideas, and learn about media such as radio, TV, other media with teachers regularly.	48.84
32	I regularly read books with pleasure.	48.32
42	I have neighbors who are interested and encourage me.	47.35
45	I regularly participate in community service activities.	45.84
44	I have been assigned a valuable role and benefit the community.	42.02

The top 5 strongest life assets		
10	I dare to reject risky behaviors (such as sex, drugs, violence and bad media).	86.19
8	I empathize and care about the feelings of others.	80.22
28	I want to study well, do not take advantage, and know how to share with others.	79.45
2	I give an importance to promote equality in society such as the disabled, the elderly, male/female/queer gender, etc.	78.30
5	I am responsible for what I do (whatever the outcome).	76.93

**Table 5:** The results of the research study on the youth life assets

Items	The Life Assets of Children and Youth	2021
	Power of Self	70.91
10	I dare to reject risky behaviors (such as sex, drugs, violence and bad media).	86.19
8	I empathize and care about the feelings of others.	80.22
2	I give an importance to promote equality in society such as the disabled, the elderly, male/female/queer gender, etc.	78.30
5	I am responsible for what I do (whatever the outcome).	76.93
6	I adhere to good behavior.	74.63
1	I believe helping others is very valuable.	72.88
9	I'm learning and able to adjust to being around people with opinions or life difference well.	71.85
11	I try to resolve conflicts intellectually rather than emotionally (not violent).	70.14
15	I feel satisfied with my life.	69.07

Items	The Life Assets of Children and Youth	2021
7	I always have a plan and a decision before I do it.	68.16
14	I have clear goals in life.	65.01
4	I always speak the truth even though sometimes it's hard.	64.91
12	I can control the situation that happens to myself e.g. Good control over anger when arguing or arguing.	64.29
13	I feel that I have value.	63.18
3	I dare to stand up for what I believe such as daring to offer opinions although sometimes they have different opinions from others.	57.94
	<b>Power of the Family</b>	<b>69.98</b>
19	I feel safe, warm, and happy in my family.	76.33
21	I have parents who are good role models to follow.	75.18
18	I have parents who encourage and support me with learning.	74.67
16	I have love, warmth, care, and positive support from my family.	73.20
22	I have parents who encourage me to do what I like or want to do.	71.87
20	I live in a family with clear rules and rationale and has been supervised to follow.	66.28
23	I can talk and exchange ideas, and learn about media such as radio, TV, other media within the family on a regular basis.	61.48
17	I can comfortably consult and seek advice from my parents, no matter how big or small.	60.86
	<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>62.97</b>
28	I want to study well, do not take advantage and know how to share with others.	79.45

Items	The Life Assets of Children and Youth	2021
26	I am in an educational institution with clear rules and regulations and has been supervised to follow.	70.68
29	I pay attention to study regularly.	69.13
31	I love and bond with my educational institution.	68.10
24	I am in a caring institution with good support and assistance to students.	67.59
27	I have teachers who encourage me to do what I like or want to do.	66.55
25	I feel safe in academia.	65.03
33	I want to know community wisdom and culture.	55.50
30	I do my homework or review lessons every day.	53.52
34	I can talk and exchange ideas, and learn about media such as radio, TV, other media with teachers regularly.	48.84
32	I regularly read books with pleasure.	48.32
	<b>Power of Peer (creative activity)</b>	63.48
35	I have a close friend who is a good role model and leads me to do good.	74.33
36	I regularly do creative activities according to my own preferences and satisfaction such as doing art, playing music, drawing, etc.	68.50
40	I have the opportunity to attend a creative media event with a friend.	64.13
39	My friends and I regularly invite each other to do good activities.	63.38
37	I play sports or exercise regularly.	56.75
38	I regularly participate in religious or ceremonial activities.	53.78

	Power of community	51.66
48	I have adults other than parents who are good role models to follow.	59.83
46	I feel warm, happy, and proud of the way I live in my community.	57.91
41	I have relatives or adults, besides parents, I was able to consult and ask for help with peace of mind.	55.80
43	I feel that people in the community value children and youth.	52.63
47	I have neighbors to watch and supervise the behavior of children and youth in an appropriate framework.	51.91
42	I have neighbors who are interested and encourage me.	47.35
45	I regularly participate in community service activities.	45.84
44	I have been assigned a valuable role and benefit the community.	42.02

**Note.** From the study of the life assets survey of children and youth in northern Thailand in 2021 compared to the previous study (2009, 2013 and 2019), there were interesting changes in the results from the three previous studies that family power was in the greatest percentage. However, the 2021 study of the life assets of Thai children and youth in the North was found that self-power was the highest average (70.91%), followed by family power (69.98%), peer power (68.48%), wisdom power (62.97%), and community power (51.66%), respectively.

## Discussion

The life assets, formerly called developmental assets, are a study approach that considers constructive factors, protective factors, or good mental, social, and cultural characteristics that affect thought processes, decisions, and expressions in various behavioral forms (Search institute, 2012 cited in Boorasuksakul, 2015), causing social immunity in dealing with problems or risky situations, and affects the development of the mind, society, intelligence,

allowing one to live in society with strength. The life assets consist of power of self, power of the family, power of wisdom, power of peer (creative activity) and power of community, which will be a constructive factor or a positive factor in the mind, emotion, and society that will shape a child to grow and live in society happily. But if children and youth have low or without life assets, they are often at risk and will result in social problems. From the consideration of the life assets of children and youth in Thai society above, a guideline was developed to find ways to prevent and solve various problems by studying the life assets with a survey designed by Tripathi, et al. and Child and Youth Health Program, The Thai Health Promotion Foundation. The survey was done in a regional and overall survey of the country by starting to measure positive power with the overall life assets across the country since 2008, and when the results of the survey in 2009, 2013, 2019 and 2021 were considered for comparison to find the relationship of personal factors from the Life Asset Survey of Northern Thai Children and Youth. Therefore, the results can be discussed as follows:

1) According to the study of the life assets of children and youth in Northern Thailand in 2021, compared to previous studies (Lortrakul, et al. 2009; Tripathi, et al., 2013; Tripathi, et al., 2019), it was found that in the studies of the past 3 years, power of the family has positive power, the highest and at a good level. Next, it was followed by the power of self, the power of wisdom and the power of Peer (creative activity). As for the power of community, it is the power that has the lowest percentage of every year, and in 2019, it did not pass the criteria. In the year 2019, the study results were lower than those in 2009 and 2013 in all powers when compared with the last study results. It was found that an interesting change, that is, in the results of the past three studies, power of the family has the largest percentage. However, for the study of the Life Asset Survey of Thai Children and Youth in the North of 2021, it was found that power of self received the highest average, followed by power of the

family, power of peer (creative activity), power of wisdom and power of community, respectively. In power of self, there were top four life assets: “I rejected risky behaviors (such as sex, drugs, violence, and bad media)”; “I empathized and cared about the feelings of others”; “I valued with the promotion of equality in society such as the disabled, the elderly, male / female / alternative gender, etc.” and “I was responsible for what I did (no matter what the result is)”, respectively. In terms of power of wisdom, that is, “I want to study well, do not take advantage and know how to share with others” which is ranked three in the top five, showing a significant change in the life assets of children and youth in the north where power of the family is not an important factor. The increase in power of self and power of wisdom in a study shows that children and youth in the north have more confidence in power of self and power of wisdom than power of the family.

Among the five most vulnerable life asset indicators: “I was assigned a role that was valuable and beneficial to the community”; “I regularly participated in community service. I had neighbors who were interested in and encouraged me”; “I read books with pleasure on a regular basis”; and “I could talk, exchange, learn about media such as radio, TV, other types of media with teachers on a regular basis”, respectively. However, the weak life assets in three past studies, with only one indicator, “I read with pleasure on a regular basis” was changed. In contrast, “I could discuss and learn about media such as radio TV, other media with teachers on a regular basis” which used to be the weakest indicator from all three times the score has increased. There is also another interesting point. In the terms of learning morality by themselves, children and youth had the most self-learning style of learning morality, followed by learning from learning and doing school activities, learning together with friends, learning from family members as role models, and learning through online media, while learning from the community/society is the least.

When taken into account together with the answers to the life assets questionnaire for all five powers, it appears that children and youth have the most confidence in their own power, followed by power of the family, power of peer (creative activity), power of wisdom while having confidence in the power of community at the bottom of the list. Thus, it shows a significant change in the life assets of children and youth in the North where at present, power of the family and power of community may not be an important factor which when taken into account together with the survey of the life assets in the past periods, it shows the consistency of the data in terms of the weakness of power of community in being a model and providing information on learning about the morality and participation in activities of children and youth in the community is constantly being reduced as well.

2) The knowledge obtained from this study can be used to support the design of processes for social and cultural empowerment for children and youth at both policy and operational levels. The information from this study will lead to a debate on the situation of children and youth on the issue that “Confidence in identity power that replaces power of the family and power of community will create changes in society and Thai culture in the future.” As the study shows, the situation of power of the family and power of community is being decrease in strength together with children and youth groups have ideas and confidence to grow with the power of self and power of wisdom. This is, therefore, an important issue that society should consider because even though power of self is a manifestation of self-esteem—it is the power to build faith and confidence, the diminution of the power of the family, which is the power of love, empathy, discipline and exemplary living, positive follow-up and appropriate assistance, good word use in the house, warmth, and safety. Also, the lack of connection with power of community, which is the power of groups

of people who live together with generosity, friendliness, understanding, disciplined and good role model, loving speech, volunteer spirit, warmth and safety within the community and activities together which is a good culture in Thai society may cause impacts on risk factors in various aspects, both in children and youth, families, and society accordingly. From such situations, it is therefore an important factor that various institutions in Thai society should realize and give importance to create strong life assets in all five aspects for them as well as pushing the results from the study of the life assets of children and youth to design processes for strengthening social and community culture for them both at the policy and operational levels in order to lead a policy to develop children and youth in Thailand to be sustainable.

## Research Recommendations

Nowadays, the term “life assets” has received increasing attention and has been included in the lexicon of Royal Academy as well as developing a tool kit to survey the life assets for children and youth to cover children and youth of all ages (from birth to 25 years old) and has been translated into various languages such as English and Japanese. This tool has intentionally been used for research in many countries around the world. It has also been included in the human development curriculum in educational institutions to develop positive energy for children and youth, schools, and communities as well. “Life assets for children and youth” from all sectors in society are therefore helping children and youth, families and societies to use the life assets as an important tool in building a strong community culture to drive Thai society, which will result in strong immunity for the future of the nation.

Recommendations related to this research are as follows:

## **Policy recommendations**

1) Relevant agencies should take the results of this survey into consideration and analysis in order to set goals and plan to develop the life assets for vulnerable children and youth to improve the quality of life of Thai youth to have the potential and readiness to grow into quality adults.

2) Relevant agencies should encourage educational personnel, such as teachers, to study about enhancing the life asset for adaptation in the care, surveillance, and support of children and youth in their own educational institutions and communities to have strong life assets.

3) Relevant agencies should support campaigns for creative activities related to cost of living in all areas.

### **Practical recommendations on enhancing the life assets for Thai children and youth**

1) Creative activity projects should be organized to strengthen the life assets for children and youth in all areas.

2) Leader youth camps should be organized to strengthen the life assets of the five powers by emphasizing the participation of community members and affiliated organizations.

### **Suggestions for further research**

Children and youth should be educated to cover all types of education, including general education, vocational education, and alternative education, non-formal education and children who are disadvantaged in education.

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