



รูปแบบการแก้ไขปัญหาความยากจนร่วมกันโดยอาศัยบทบาท  
ของวัฒนธรรมชุมชนและการมีส่วนร่วมของมหาวิทยาลัย:  
กรณีศึกษาของจังหวัดพิษณุโลก ประเทศไทย

Collaborative Poverty Reduction Model with Roles of  
Community Culture and University Engagement:  
A Case Study of Phitsanulok Province, Thailand

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## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้นำเสนอกรณีศึกษาการลดความยากจนในจังหวัดพิษณุโลก ประเทศไทย โดยผ่านการมีส่วนร่วมอย่างเข้มแข็งจากมหาวิทยาลัยและโครงสร้างทางวัฒนธรรมที่หลากหลายของชุมชนท้องถิ่น โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์หลักคือการพัฒนารูปแบบนวัตกรรมสำหรับการลดความยากจน โดยอาศัยการมีส่วนร่วมของมหาวิทยาลัยและวัฒนธรรมผ่านการวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบมีส่วนร่วมจากผู้มีส่วนได้ส่วนเสียที่หลากหลาย ได้แก่ นักวิจัย เจ้าหน้าที่ขององค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น ผู้นำชุมชน ข้าราชการ และตัวแทนภาคประชาสังคม ผลการวิจัยพบว่า วัฒนธรรมชุมชนมีบทบาทสำคัญในการผลักดันให้เกิดความสำเร็จในการจัดการกับความท้าทายความยากจน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในการจัดตั้งคณะทำงานที่มีประสิทธิภาพ โดยที่วัฒนธรรมชุมชนมีบทบาทในการกำหนดค่านิยม ความเชื่อ และแนวปฏิบัติในการแก้ปัญหาที่เป็นแนวทางในการปฏิสัมพันธ์ร่วมกัน นอกจากนี้ อิทธิพลของจารีตของชุมชนยังช่วยส่งเสริมการทำงานกลุ่มที่มีเป้าหมายและค่านิยมร่วมกัน จากการวิจัยตามแนวทางการทำงานร่วมกันนี้ทำให้ได้รูปแบบนวัตกรรมสำหรับการลดความยากจนที่สามารถแก้ปัญหาความยากจน ตามความต้องการเฉพาะและความซับซ้อนของแต่ละชุมชนได้ ทั้งนี้ จากกระบวนการวิจัยพบว่า ปัจจัยสำคัญในการแก้ไขความยากจนคือการมีส่วนร่วมของหลายภาคส่วน โดยมหาวิทยาลัยมีบทบาทสำคัญอย่างยิ่งในการประสานงานและส่งเสริมความพยายามในการลดความยากจนที่เป็นระบบและยั่งยืน

**คำสำคัญ:** รูปแบบการแก้ไขปัญหาความยากจนร่วมกัน การมีส่วนร่วมของมหาวิทยาลัย การวิจัยเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบมีส่วนร่วม

## Abstract

This research presents a compelling case study on how collaborative poverty reduction efforts in Phitsanulok Province, Thailand, benefit from the active involvement of universities and the rich cultural fabric of local communities. The main goal is to develop an innovative model for poverty reduction by harnessing the strengths of both university engagement and community culture. To accomplish this, the study adopted a participatory

action research methodology, ensuring the meaningful participation of diverse stakeholders, such as researchers, local government officials, community leaders, civil servants, and civil society representatives. The findings revealed that community culture plays a pivotal role in the success of university engagement when addressing poverty-related challenges, particularly in the formation of effective working groups. These cultural elements shape the values, beliefs, and problem-solving practices that guide collaborative interactions. Additionally, the influence of traditional customs reinforces community culture, fostering cohesive working groups with shared goals and values. By adopting a collaborative approach, the study's model exhibits significant potential for sustainability and scalability, allowing for tailored solutions that consider the unique needs and complexities of each community. The key lies in involving multiple sectors and stakeholders, with universities playing a crucial role, to promote well-coordinated, systematic, and enduring poverty reduction efforts.

**Keywords:** Collaborative poverty reduction model, University engagement, Participatory action research

## Introduction

Despite a significant decrease in poverty rates throughout Thailand in recent decades, the issue persists, casting a shadow of concern over both urban and rural areas. While the poverty rate declined from 65.2% in 1988 to 9.8% in 2018, the country continues to grapple with persistent inequality, as evidenced by the wealthiest 20% owning over half of the nation's wealth (World Bank, 2019). In rural regions, poverty predominantly stems from limited access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure, as well as the prevalence of low-paying, insecure employment opportunities. In major cities, urban poverty poses its own set of

challenges, with migrants enduring difficulties in securing decent work and affordable housing. Despite notable progress, Thailand faces the formidable task of addressing inequality comprehensively and ensuring universal access to essential services and economic opportunities for all its citizens.

Thailand's population is estimated at 69.9 million, with approximately 9.78 million living below the poverty line, according to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) (2020). Although poverty rates have declined over the past decade, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an increase in poverty levels, with 660,000 more people living below the poverty line in 2020. The NESDC highlights concerning trends of growing inequality in income, education, public health, and social welfare, with the number of people living in poverty increasing from 4.3 million in 2019 to 4.8 million in 2020, representing a significant rise of 500,000 people. Rural areas, where access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities is limited, are particularly affected. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with many low-income households experiencing job losses, reduced income, and increased expenses related to healthcare and necessities. NESDC report emphasizes the importance of effective policies and interventions to tackle poverty and inequality in Thailand. A comprehensive approach is necessary, including measures to improve access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, along with social safety nets for vulnerable populations. Collaboration between government agencies, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders is essential to develop and implement sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and promote equitable growth in Thailand.

The poverty rate in Phitsanulok province, based on consumption expenditure, varied significantly from 2017 to 2020. In 2017, around 64,000 people lived in poverty, with a rate of 5.02%. However, the rate increased to 8.87% in



2018, meaning around 113,000 people were living in poverty. The rate then decreased in 2019 to 4.81%, which indicated that approximately 61,000 people were living in poverty. Finally, in 2020, the poverty rate dropped to 1.30%, indicating approximately 17,000 people were living in poverty (National Economic and Social Development Board 2020). These fluctuations could be due to factors such as changes in economic conditions, employment opportunities, and government policies. To effectively address poverty in the province, policymakers and stakeholders need to continuously monitor poverty rates and identify contributing factors to develop sustainable poverty reduction strategies.

The Thai People Map and Analytics Platform (TP-MAP) (2022) reports on Phitsanulok Province showed that a portion of the population lived in poverty. Out of 184,909 households and 494,269 people, 13,075 households and 37,426 individuals were classified as poor, with 13,690 "target poor people" registered for state welfare. Both Bang Rakam and Noen Maprang Districts had the highest number of poor households and individuals, with Sai Yoi sub-district in Noen Maprang District having the highest number of impoverished households and individuals. The sub-districts of Chum Saeng Songkhram and Wang Itok in Bang Rakam District were also identified as having high poverty rates. These three sub-districts were the target area of this study.

The Thai government has implemented initiatives and strategies to combat poverty in Phitsanulok Province, such as the Poverty Eradication Committee, which follows the principle of sufficiency economy. Other committees with different approaches have also been created. However, this research suggests that a collaborative approach involving people, civil society, government organizations, and academics is necessary. Universities and academics can utilize data to identify evidence-based strategies for poverty reduction in the region. The involvement of universities and academics in

poverty reduction efforts can help to bridge the gap between research and practice. This is done by providing evidence-based recommendations and collaborating with local stakeholders. Universities can also play a critical role in designing and implementing effective interventions to address the poverty in Phitsanulok Province. Through partnerships with government agencies and civil society organizations, universities can also help to ensure that poverty reduction efforts are sustainable and achieve long-term impact.

This study asserted that the involvement of universities and academics is imperative in addressing the persistent issue of poverty in Phitsanulok Province. This can be achieved by collaborative efforts with various stakeholders, to create sustainable and evidence-based solutions for the reduction of poverty. The study adopted a participatory action research approach that involves community members, stakeholders, and researchers to identify the root causes of poverty. This will enable the team to develop and implement evidence-based poverty reduction strategies. The study aimed to collect and analyze poverty-related data and work closely with community members and stakeholders to ensure their needs and priorities are reflected in the poverty reduction strategy, which would lead to the development of sustainable solutions tailored to the community's unique needs.

This research introduced three crucial and pertinent concepts that are interconnected with this study as follows: community culture, poverty reduction, and university engagement associated with poverty reduction. The details are as follows.

### **Community Culture**

Community culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that define a particular group of people who live or work together in a particular place. Scholars such as Mary Jo Hatch, Clifford Geertz, and Émile

Durkheim, provide different perspectives on this concept, but they all agree that community culture is essential for social order and cohesion. It encompasses everything from shared values and beliefs to language, food, and customs, and is shaped by a wide range of internal and external factors.

One definition of community culture comes from scholar Mary Jo Hatch, who defines it as "the shared values, beliefs, norms, artifacts, and practices that define a social group and its members." (Hatch, 1993). According to Hatch (1993), community culture is shaped by both internal and external factors, including historical events, geography, and social structures. It can be said that community culture is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses everything from shared values and beliefs to language, food, and customs. It is shaped by a wide range of internal and external factors and is essential for social order and cohesion.

This study now focuses on the studies of Clifford Geertz and Émile Durkheim. Both of them made significant contributions to the study of community culture, albeit from different disciplinary perspectives. Geertz, as an anthropologist, focused on understanding the symbolic meanings and interpretations that shape social behavior within a community. He emphasized the importance of deciphering the symbolic systems, such as rituals, myths, and religious practices, that guide individuals' behavior and contribute to social order and cohesion. Geertz's concept of "thick description" aimed to capture the layers of meaning and context in cultural phenomena, analyzing not only observable behaviors but also the underlying symbols, values, and beliefs that inform those behaviors. His work highlighted the intricate relationship between culture, meaning, and social structure, emphasizing the role of symbols and interpretations in shaping individual and collective identities (Geertz, 2020).

On the other hand, Durkheim, as a sociologist, focused on the role of community culture in maintaining social solidarity and regulating individual behavior. He argued that shared beliefs, values, and moral norms create a collective conscience within a community, binding individuals together and ensuring social cohesion. Durkheim distinguished between "mechanical solidarity" in traditional communities, where individuals share similarities and engage in similar practices, and "organic solidarity" in modern societies, where interdependence and cooperation are necessary due to diverse roles and functions. Durkheim's study emphasized the importance of community culture in fostering social integration, providing individuals with a sense of belonging and a moral framework for understanding the world and their place in it (Durkheim, 1997).

While Geertz approached the study of community culture through the lens of anthropology, focusing on symbols and interpretations, Durkheim approached it from a sociological perspective, emphasizing the role of shared beliefs and values. Both scholars recognized the significance of community culture in maintaining social order, cohesion, and stability, albeit from different angles. Their works continue to shape the understanding of community culture and its role in human societies, providing valuable insights into the complex dynamics of social life.

In conclusion, both Clifford Geertz and Émile Durkheim have made significant contributions to the study of community culture from their respective disciplinary perspectives. Geertz focused on symbolic systems and interpretations, while Durkheim emphasized shared beliefs and values. Both scholars recognized the importance of community culture in maintaining social cohesion and order. Their works continue to shape our understanding of the complexities of social life.

## Role of community culture in poverty reduction

This study argues that community culture plays a vital role in poverty reduction efforts. It provides a shared identity, values, and norms that can help create a sense of belonging and empower individuals and communities to act. By promoting inclusive practices and providing a supportive environment, community culture can contribute to reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. One way in which community culture can help to reduce poverty is by promoting economic development. When communities have a strong sense of identity and shared purpose, they may be more likely to engage in entrepreneurship and other forms of economic activity that can generate income and create jobs (Bourdieu, 1986). Another way in which community culture can help to reduce poverty is by promoting social inclusion and reducing discrimination. When communities embrace diversity and promote equal opportunities, marginalized groups such as women, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities are more likely to have access to resources and opportunities that can help to lift them out of poverty (Kabeer, 2005).

Community culture can also promote sustainable development by promoting the use of traditional knowledge and practices. By valuing and preserving local knowledge and practices related to agriculture, food production, and natural resource management, communities can promote environmental sustainability and reduce their vulnerability to climate change (Berkes, 1999). Finally, community culture can help create a sense of ownership and responsibility for poverty reduction efforts. By involving community members in the design and implementation of poverty reduction programs, communities are more likely to take ownership of these initiatives, and work to ensure their success (Narayan, 1999).

Arguably, community culture plays a vital role in poverty reduction efforts. By promoting economic development, social inclusion, sustainable development, and community ownership, community culture can help create an enabling environment for poverty reduction and promote sustainable development.

### **Poverty reduction**

According to the World Bank (2021), poverty reduction is critical for achieving sustainable economic growth and reducing inequality. The World Bank states that reducing poverty can also contribute to improved health outcomes, increased access to education, and greater political stability. Furthermore, reducing poverty can help to promote social inclusion and reduce the risk of conflict and violence (World Bank, 2021). Reducing poverty is essential for sustainable development, promoting inclusive growth and improving human development outcomes. It is a critical element for achieving various global targets, including the United Nations SDGs aimed at eradicating poverty in all its forms by 2030 (United Nations, 2021).

Research has shown that poverty reduction programs can have a significant impact on individuals, communities, and society. For example, a study conducted by the World Bank found that poverty reduction efforts in Ethiopia resulted in improvements in education, healthcare, and access to clean water, among other benefits (World Bank, 2019). In another study, The Grameen Bank in Bangladesh pioneered the concept of microfinance, providing small loans to poor people who did not have access to traditional banking services. The bank also provided training and support to help borrowers start their own businesses. A study by the United Nations Development Program found that the Grameen Bank had a significant impact on poverty reduction in Bangladesh, particularly for women, who made up most of the borrowers.

In addition, Esther Duflo is an economist and co-founder of the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). Her research focused on evaluating the effectiveness of various poverty reduction interventions and policies. Duflo (2017) conducted numerous randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to assess the impact of interventions, such as conditional cash transfers, education programs, and healthcare initiatives on poverty reduction. Her work has contributed to evidence-based policymaking and understanding the mechanisms through which poverty reduction programs can be effective.

Furthermore, Abhijit Banerjee, an economist and co-founder of J-PAL along with Esther Duflo, have also made significant contributions to the study of poverty reduction programs. His research team often utilizes randomized evaluations to examine the impact of specific interventions on poverty outcomes. A study of Esther Duflo and Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee (2014) covered a wide range of topics, including education, health, and social safety nets. He has provided insights into the design and implementation of effective poverty reduction programs, which shed light on how they can be tailored to specific contexts and populations.

While Amartya Sen, a Nobel laureate economist, extensively studied issues related to poverty and development. His groundbreaking work on the capability approach has had a significant impact on poverty analysis. Sen argues that poverty should not be solely measured in terms of income and consumption but should also consider individuals' capabilities and freedoms to live a meaningful life. His research emphasizes the importance of expanding opportunities, enhancing education, healthcare, and social inclusion as key elements in poverty reduction efforts (Sen, 2014).

These scholars, among many others, have contributed to the understanding of poverty reduction programs through their research, evaluations,

and theoretical frameworks. They have provided valuable insights into the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions aimed at combating poverty.

Furthermore, poverty reduction is crucial for promoting social stability and reducing conflict. Poverty can lead to feelings of hopelessness, frustration, and anger, which can fuel social unrest and instability (World Bank, 2021). Therefore, poverty reduction programs can play an essential role in creating a more peaceful and stable society. Overall, poverty reduction is critical for promoting sustainable development, reducing inequalities, improving human development outcomes, and promoting social stability.

In conclusion, poverty reduction is crucial for sustainable economic growth, social inclusion, and global development. Research by scholars like Esther Duflo, Abhijit Banerjee, and Amartya Sen have provided valuable insights into effective poverty reduction programs. These efforts improve education, healthcare, and access to basic needs, ultimately promoting social stability and reducing conflict. By addressing poverty, we can achieve sustainable development, reduce inequality, and create a more prosperous society.

### **University engagement and poverty reduction**

There is a growing recognition of the role that universities can play in poverty reduction efforts. According to a report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), universities can contribute to poverty reduction through research, teaching, and outreach activities (UNDP, 2013). Universities can conduct research that informs poverty reduction policies and strategies, and they can teach students about poverty and its causes. Additionally, they can engage in outreach activities that directly benefit poor communities, such as providing technical assistance and/or conducting capacity-building programs (UNDP, 2013).

Furthermore, a study by Bozeman and Youtie (2016) found that universities can serve as important partners in poverty reduction efforts by leveraging their resources, expertise, and networks. Their study highlighted several examples of successful university-community partnerships aimed at poverty reduction, which included the establishment of community development centers, and the provision of training programs for low-income individuals.

In Thailand, Naresuan University in Phitsanulok Province is actively involved in poverty reduction through its academic programs and community engagement initiatives. The university offers programs in fields like social work, public health, and community development, which equips students with the necessary knowledge and skills to address poverty-related issues. The university has also established partnerships with local organizations to carry out research and development projects aimed at reducing poverty. Additionally, the university has established community engagement initiatives, like the Naresuan Volunteer Program and the Naresuan University Community Outreach Program, to work directly with local communities on poverty-related issues. The university's commitment to poverty reduction and community engagement has made it a significant partner in the region's efforts to promote social equity. The research focuses on the role of university academics in poverty reduction in Thailand.

### **Benefits of the university engagement for poverty reduction**

The university engagement for poverty reduction can bring several benefits to communities and regions. Examples of its potential benefits supported by academic research, are shown as below:

Universities can provide technical assistance, training, and capacity building to community-based organizations and local governments, which can help to increase the capacity of these organizations to design, implement, and evaluate poverty reduction programs. According to Kim and Bagheri (2019),

universities can contribute to poverty reduction efforts by providing training and capacity building to local government officials, civil society organizations, and community leaders, which can help strengthen their ability to develop and implement effective poverty reduction strategies.

Universities are home to experts from various fields who can collaborate to address poverty reduction from multiple angles. As noted by Bozeman and Youtie (2016), universities can leverage their resources, expertise, and networks to support poverty reduction efforts. By bringing together experts from diverse fields, universities can develop interdisciplinary approaches that address the root causes of poverty, including issues related to health, education, employment, and social exclusion.

Universities can engage with communities and stakeholders to ensure that their voices are heard and that their needs and priorities are reflected in poverty reduction strategies. According to Cottom et al. (2020), community engagement is an important aspect of poverty reduction efforts, as it can help ensure that programs are tailored to the unique needs and contexts of the communities. Universities can facilitate community engagement and empowerment through various means, such as participatory action research, community-based learning programs, and community outreach initiatives.

To conclude, university engagement in poverty reduction brings valuable benefits, which include capacity building, multi-disciplinary approaches, and community engagement and empowerment. By collaborating with local organizations, leveraging expertise from diverse fields, and involving communities, universities can play a crucial role in addressing poverty and fostering sustainable and inclusive development in communities and regions.

It needs to be noted that this study examined the framework for addressing poverty in Phitsanulok Province through a collaborative approach,

which involves community culture and university engagement. This study adopts a multi-dimensional perspective that recognizes the significance of community culture and the potential contributions of universities in the reduction of poverty.

The research framework includes several key elements: (1) Understanding and valuing the local community's culture, values, norms, and practices that shape their experiences of poverty; (2) Collaborative efforts between universities, community-based organizations, local governments, and other stakeholders to design, implement, and evaluate poverty reduction programs; (3) Capacity building initiatives to enhance the capabilities of community organizations and local governments in effectively addressing poverty; (4) Participatory approaches that promote community engagement, ensuring the inclusion of local voices, needs, and priorities in poverty reduction strategies; (5) Utilization of interdisciplinary expertise and resources from universities to develop comprehensive and context-specific poverty reduction approaches. Through this framework, this study aimed to provide insights and recommendations for an effective and sustainable poverty reduction model in Phitsanulok Province, Thailand.

## Objectives

This research aims to achieve two objectives, namely:

1. To develop an experimental collaborative model of action for poverty reduction in Phitsanulok Province with the involvement of Naresuan University.
2. To propose a model of poverty reduction in Phitsanulok Province based on the concept of community culture and university engagement.

The framework of this study is shown below.

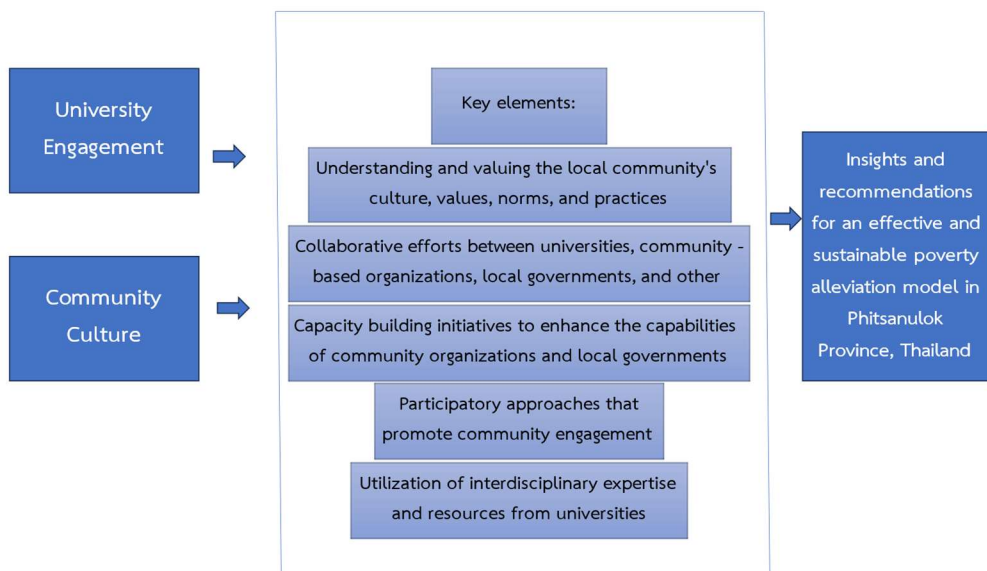


Figure 1. Research framework

To achieve objective 1 and adhere to the research framework, the research team devised a methodological approach in sequential steps (refer to Figure 2).

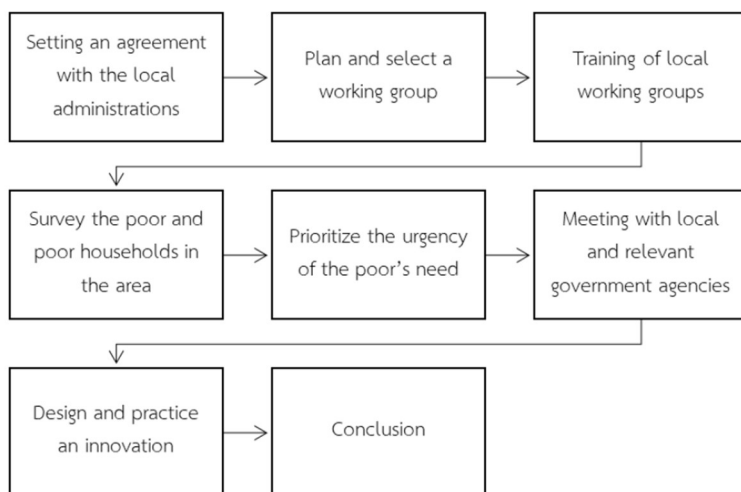


Figure 2. Participatory action research process

From Figure 2, details are as follows.

**Step 1:** Setting an agreement with local administrations.

The researchers provided a thorough explanation of the study, which created an understanding and awareness of its importance with the local administrations in the study areas, which are Sai Yoi, Chum Saeng Songkhram and Wang Itok sub-districts. The steps taken to reduce poverty, were forming work groups, launching the project, and holding regular meetings between all involved parties were also outlined. While data analysis methods are not explicitly mentioned in this step, it is implied that the researchers would gather and analyze existing data on poverty in the area, which would support their explanations and outline the steps taken to reduce poverty.

**Step 2:** Plan and select a work group.

The research team utilized a participatory action approach, which emphasized collaboration with various stakeholders, including local leaders and inhabitants, to identify impoverished households and prioritize urgent corrective action. An Area Working Group (AWG) was established in each village of the research area to gather and verify data on impoverished households. The process of selecting working groups in the study area prioritized individuals who possess relevant experience in collaborating with communities and/or local government organizations, and who have applied to work alongside the research team. This selection criterion is aimed at ensuring that the chosen members possess a strong background in engaging with and understanding the specific dynamics of the target communities. By considering applicants with firsthand experience in community-based work, the research team sought to enhance the effectiveness of the working groups in carrying out the objectives of the study.

The selection process considers the applicants' demonstrated ability to navigate the complexities of community engagement, as well as their familiarity

with the operations and challenges faced by local government organizations. Through this careful selection, the research team aimed to build a team that could effectively collaborate with and contribute to the desired outcomes of the study. The researchers assigned a task force to investigate unrecorded data to obtain the most accurate and up-to-date information. The outcomes of this research include increased knowledge and skills among working groups in poverty reduction, creating human capital potential and a network of operations at the local level. The study's database is also useful for sharing information with local government agencies, and monitoring progress in tackling poverty among poor households in the research areas. Data analysis methods were employed to gather and verify the information of impoverished households. This involved quantitative analysis of poverty indicators and qualitative analysis of community input and experiences.

**Step 3: Training of the AWG.**

The research team facilitated knowledge transfer and skill-building among the AWG through the provision of training sessions focused on research tools and techniques. This capacity-building initiative enabled the teams to enhance their competencies and expertise in research and innovation for poverty reduction, thereby enabling them to undertake effective poverty reduction intervention.

**Step 4: Survey the poor and their households in the research areas.**

The research team and working group collaborated to assess poor households using data from the PPP CONNEXT Application. This effort aimed to develop an action plan for surveying and evaluating poverty reduction strategies, as well as assessing the involvement of agencies and sectors in addressing this problem. The AWG conducted the survey and review process to provide accurate information to the research team.

Data analysis involved quantitative techniques such as descriptive statistics to identify patterns, trends, and characteristics of impoverished households.

**Step 5:** Prioritize the urgent needs of the poor.

To address the challenges faced by poor households, it was crucial to prioritize their urgent needs for assistance by conducting a thorough assessment of the situation, identifying the most pressing issues, and developing strategies to address them. This required considering factors such as the severity and prevalence of poverty, availability of resources, and specific needs of the poor households. The research team and the AWG employed a participatory approach, utilizing tools such as the Citizen Score Card to assess household requirements, and generate a list of their level of urgency. This method fosters community engagement, ownership, and collaboration among stakeholders, while promoting transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in service delivery.

Data analysis involved aggregating and analyzing the Citizen Score Card data to identify priority areas, and determine the severity and prevalence of poverty indicators among different households and communities.

**Step 6:** Meeting with local and relevant government agencies.

Collaboration between government agencies and community stakeholders was crucial in creating an effective and sustainable poverty reduction strategy. To do so, the research team and the AWG organized a meeting where government agencies involved in poverty reduction were given information on the ranking of households in need of assistance. The purpose was to facilitate a comprehensive referral system for poor households, enabling targeted interventions that effectively address their needs. By providing vital information, the research team and the AWG can assist government agencies in addressing the needs of the poor households, by improving their overall well-being, and promoting social inclusion.

**Step 7:** Design and implement an innovation that is suitable for the context of the target group.

The goal of the approach was to promote collaboration among stakeholders, researchers, working groups, civil society, citizens, and government agencies, to effectively address poverty in the area. The participatory approach aimed to foster a culture of collective responsibility and leverage the collective knowledge and resources of stakeholders towards the common goal of poverty reduction. By ensuring a comprehensive and targeted effort, this approach may improve the overall well-being of the community.

**Step 8:** Conclusion.

The research team and the AWG endeavored to tackle poverty in the area by adopting a participatory approach that engaged a diverse range of stakeholders. This process entailed a comprehensive assessment of the poverty situation, identification of the most pressing issues, and the formulation of strategies aimed at addressing them.

## Synthetic Research Results

This study presents its research results. Details are as follows.

The research process yielded valuable insights on poverty in the area through a comprehensive assessment that involved triangulating data from various sources. This included the PPP CONNEXT Application database, reviews of agencies and sectors involved in poverty reduction, and analysis of the number and classification of poor households. This multi-faceted approach reduced the reliance on any single data source, minimizing potential biases and enhancing the reliability of the findings. The resulting up-to-date and comprehensive information serves as a solid foundation for evidence-based policymaking and program development, enabling targeted interventions and efficient resource allocation.

To facilitate easy access to the database of poor households, an information system named D-UP/NU Line Official was established. The study revealed limitations in the accessibility and usefulness of existing databases, prompting the development of this user-friendly platform. The information system not only provided up-to-date information but also allowed for easy searching, recording, and reviewing of the data on poor households. By leveraging information technology, the system exemplifies how poverty reduction efforts can be enhanced.

Drafting ordinances tailored to ameliorate poverty in the area was another research outcome. Through collaborative efforts with relevant government agencies and working groups, policies and regulations were developed to promote poverty reduction and enhance the livelihoods of poor households. These ordinances were specifically tailored to address challenges identified during the research process, such as restricted access to education, healthcare, employment, and financial services. By establishing a legal framework, the commitment of local government organizations and stakeholders to poverty reduction was reinforced.

A comprehensive menu mechanism was developed to address the diverse and complex needs of poor households. The mechanism encompasses various types of assistance, which include education, health, employment, housing, and finance, with specific measures and guidelines tailored to individual needs. This approach ensures effective and efficient allocation of resources, and provides a practical and comprehensive model for poverty reduction that can be replicated in similar areas facing comparable challenges.

By incorporating community culture and university engagement into a collaborative poverty alleviation model, it is possible to create sustainable and effective solutions that addresses the specific needs of the target community.

This study would like to present a collaborative poverty alleviation model that incorporates the roles of community culture and university engagement (see Figure 3 below).



Figure 3. A collaborative poverty alleviation model that incorporates the roles of community culture and university engagement.

Short-term problem solving involved utilizing social capital to mobilize resources and distribute essential items such as rice, fish sauce, and milk to help address the people's immediate needs. while long-term strategies are necessary for sustainable poverty reduction.

The creation of job opportunities was recognized as a vital long-term solution. The research team assisted individuals in gaining a livelihood by providing support, such as modern equipment and renovations to their businesses. By providing support to individuals, the team anticipated the creation of sustainable job opportunities that will facilitate long-term poverty reduction.

Once the work group had been trained, they began the process of identifying and prioritizing the needs of the poor households in the area. This included reviewing the poor household data and gathering additional information through community outreach and engagement. Based on this information, the work group designed innovative solutions that were tailored to the specific needs and context of the target group. Throughout the process, close cooperation and communication with local administrative authorities and relevant government agencies were maintained to ensure consistency with existing policies and programs and effective leveraging of resources and expertise.

## Discussion

The discussion of this study focuses on two key aspects: the institutional setting of the collaborative poverty reduction model, and the role of community culture in poverty reduction. Exploring these aspects provided valuable insights for academic circles and the public alike.

### **The institutional setting of the collaborative poverty reduction model**

The proposed collaborative poverty reduction model under the concept of university engagement in poverty reduction, recognized the persistent issue of poverty in rural areas of Thailand. To ensure sustainable and successful outcomes, ongoing evaluation, monitoring, and stakeholder feedback were necessary. This study argues that the institutionalized process for solving poverty problems under the concept of university engagement involves several essential steps.

Firstly, establishing a partnership for poverty reduction efforts in the target area through a joint agreement with local administrative authorities, sets the foundation for collaboration. This institutional setting ensures the

commitment and involvement of relevant stakeholders. Next, the planning and selection of a work group at the area level, which consisted of representatives from the community, local administrative authorities, and university researchers, further strengthened the institutional framework. This composition ensured a comprehensive approach that incorporated diverse perspectives and expertise. Training the work group to identify and prioritize the needs of the poor in the area, while being sensitive to cultural factors and community norms, solidified the institutionalized process. This training equipped the work group with the necessary skills to gather and analyze data, which enabled evidence-based decision-making.

The preparation and sharing of information on the poor with local administrative authorities and relevant government agencies, guided by the inputs of the work group and community members, enhanced the institutional cooperation and effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts. Designing innovative solutions that aligned with the cultural context and specific needs of the target community was a crucial step. By leveraging traditional knowledge and practices, as well as incorporating technological solutions, the institutionalized model ensured that interventions were culturally appropriate and contextually relevant.

Finally, continuous monitoring, evaluation, and feedback from the community and stakeholders contributed to the institutionalized process's effectiveness. This feedback loop ensures that the model remained adaptive, responsive, and accountable to the needs and aspirations of the community it serves.

In addition to the institutional setting of the collaborative poverty reduction model, the discussion also highlighted the significant role of community culture in the formation of the work groups. The cultural practices, traditions, and customs of rural communities in Thailand shape the values, beliefs, and practices that guide interactions and problem-solving approaches.

The role of community culture in the formation of the work groups is a critical aspect that deserves further discussion, as it directly links to the research conclusions. This study recognized the significant influence of community culture on the success of the work groups, and their ability to address important issues related to poverty reduction.

### **The significant role of community culture in poverty reduction**

Community culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the values, beliefs, and practices that guide how individuals interact, work together, and solve problems within a community. In rural areas of Thailand, the influence of traditions and customs are deeply ingrained in community culture and can impact the formation of the work groups. The cultural practices within these communities provide a shared sense of identity and purpose among community members, which in turn contributes to the formation of the work groups that are cohesive and effective in achieving common goals. When individuals share common values and goals, they are more likely to come together and form a cooperative that can effectively address poverty-related challenges.

By leveraging community culture, the work groups can draw upon the wealth of traditional knowledge and practices that exist within the community. This cultural knowledge can be integrated into poverty reduction efforts, ensuring that interventions are culturally appropriate, and resonate with the target community. Incorporating these cultural elements enhances the acceptance and effectiveness of the proposed solutions.

Community culture fosters a sense of community ownership and engagement. This is due to individuals being more likely to actively participate in work groups that align with their cultural values and aspirations. This high level of involvement and collaboration strengthens the institutional framework established for poverty reduction efforts. The role of community culture in the

formation and success of work groups is crucial in addressing important issues related to poverty reduction. By recognizing and leveraging community culture within the institutionalized model, solutions can be tailored to align with the cultural context, needs, and aspirations of the target community. This ensures greater acceptance and effectiveness of poverty reduction interventions, which ultimately contribute to sustainable and impactful outcomes.

In short, the findings of this study highlight the significance of community culture in the collaborative poverty reduction model, which emphasizes the importance of incorporating cultural elements into the work group's strategies and interventions. By doing so, the model can better address the specific needs and challenges faced by the community, that leads to more successful and sustainable poverty reduction efforts. In conclusion, the institutional setting of the collaborative poverty reduction model, along with the recognition of the role of community culture, holds great value for academic circles and the public. Understanding the institutional framework and the impact of community culture, contributes to the knowledge and discourse surrounding poverty reduction efforts in the rural areas of Thailand. By emphasizing these aspects, this study provides insights that can inform future research, policy development, and community-driven initiatives.

A comprehensive system for managing and analyzing data of poor households was developed, which enhanced the research team's ability to formulate evidence-based interventions. Additionally, proposed ordinances tailored to the unique challenges identified during the research process were created, that served as a legal framework to promote poverty reduction and uplift the livelihoods of impoverished households.

A mechanism system was devised to effectively address the diverse needs of poor households, which encompassed key aspects such as education,

health, employment, housing, and finance. This mechanism provided a practical and comprehensive model for poverty reduction, that integrated community culture and university engagement.

Through the collaborative efforts of various sectors, the research team envisioned Naresuan University becoming an active supporter of poverty reduction endeavors. By actively promoting and stimulating the concept of university engagement in poverty reduction, not only in Phitsanulok but also in other provinces, the university can significantly contribute to the broader national agenda of poverty alleviation.

## Research recommendations

Based on the research outcomes, this study suggests three potential research recommendations.

Firstly, further research should be conducted to explore additional factors that contribute to poverty in the area which may not have been captured initially. This deeper understanding of poverty can enhance the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts.

Secondly, evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed poverty reduction policies implemented by local government organizations, is crucial. This evaluation will help identify areas for improvement and refine the policies to ensure their efficacy in reducing poverty in the area. Additionally, analyzing the impact of the information system, specifically the LINE Official Account named D-UP/NU Line Official, on poverty reduction is essential. This analysis will provide insights into the effectiveness of leveraging information technology that will enhance poverty reduction efforts. Furthermore, studying the long-term impact of job creation initiatives is important to assess their effectiveness in reducing poverty and to identify areas for improvement. Further research may

contribute to the enhancement of creating sustainable job opportunities for impoverished individuals.

Lastly, an analysis of the effectiveness of the menu mechanism, a practical and comprehensive model for addressing poverty in the area, can help identify the most effective measures and guidelines for poverty reduction, and offer insights for further improvement. These research recommendations aim to contribute to the ongoing efforts of poverty reduction in the Phitsanulok and other areas.

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