

Guidelines for Bringing the Values of the Elderly to Strengthen the Community Economy: A Case Study of Ban Khao Daeng Community, Kui Buri, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand

Worophong Sangpud

Faculty of Public Administration and Social Studies, Stamford International University,
Thailand

E-mail: worophong.sangpud@stamford.edu

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Abstract

This research mainly aimed to extract the knowledge from the elderly to create benefits in economic activities under the joint operation of the community and the elderly. Its objectives were to search for knowledge reflecting the values of the elderly in the area and to make strategic recommendations. The qualitative research consisting of the in-depth interview process and the process of organizing group meetings was conducted. The results showed that the values of the elderly in the area could be extracted in two main issues: 1) Value of participation in various activities, especially religious activities and traditions, and 2) Value of being a successor of local wisdom reflected in the form of professional knowledge, such as the recipe for making local shrimp paste, processed seafood, fishery products. These could be processed into products with the participation of the elderly, and the development of the area to be a community-style tourist attraction in order to make the household into an economic market. Tourists could walk and shop for household products within the community, reflecting the community's identity in itself. Therefore, the researcher suggested building strategies for cooperating with the community and creating a community economic market under the Committee of Community Economic Promotion and Development to drive goods and services through a household industry model with the hope of generating income distribution in local areas as this was in line with to the 20-Year Strategic Plan in Thailand.

Keywords: Value of the Elderly, Promotion, Community Economy

Introduction

Ban Khao Daeng Community, Kui Buri, Prachuap Khiri Khan, is a community where villagers are mainly engaged in fishing. The livelihood of villagers in the area is quite simple through a village-style economy, that is, relying on fishing and processing fishery products for distribution in the surrounding areas. This area is well-known for fresh and clean seafood ingredients because the fishery system is village-style, boating to catch fish. It is focused on living rather than on industry. Economic activities in the area also simply aim at responding to the villagers' way of life rather than competing economically. As a result, the identity of the natural area in the community is hardly damaged by the economic activities of the villagers. That is the spatial advantage of this community. The researcher believes that the environment around the community surrounded by natural sites can also be evolved into ecotourism very well. Moreover, if it is blended together with using a model of cooperation in the community to build up tourism under the restrictions of tourists, drawing out the elderly's potential for a selling point of local wisdom such as local seafood products and

processing marine products under the participation of the elderly in the area, it will generate higher incomes for the villagers in the community and become a unique identity of the strength of the Khao Daeng community. The researcher also believes that almost every household in Ban Khao Daeng community had elderly members who mostly possessed local wisdom from generation to generation. It is also felt that creating values for the elderly to participate in economic activities under the community's cooperation enables them to take part in the income and community development and feel about not being devalued, which affects their mental and physical health. This is in line with the research by Tangcholathip et al. (2010: 45) titled "The Value of the Elderly: Reflections of Perspectives from People of Two Ages, Population and Society". The elderly's experiences are regarded as a potential component that can be used continuously for their job. That is because their experiences may be beneficial for that job. Therefore, taking the elderly mainly as a mechanism for society or community will help them feel that they are valuable enough to make others see their importance. This is consistent with the academic article of Chaisinthop (2011) titled "Mental Conditions of the Elderly." She said that the elderly's acknowledgement of their value will result in better mental feelings and their emotional states or mental disorders will be better. It also encourages self-esteem with respect and recognition of family members. Thus, the creation of guidelines for supporting the elderly has become important issues for all sectors in the country, and it is required to push the elderly into showing their potential and self-worth as a starting point for the development of social bedrock and economic system, especially in the local regions with the increasing number of the elderly under the modern era. According to the summary of an increasing situation of the elderly population in Thailand 2020, Thai Elderly Research and Development Institute Foundation (2021: 48-49) titled "Aging Thai population." It is predicted that the number of the elderly is tending upwards to become an aging society in Thailand. By 2025, the number of the elderly will increase up to 15.68%. It is said that the population who was born during 1963-1983, also known as the "Million-born population," aged between 35-55 years, is becoming a large wave of human beings to gain the status of the word "Elderly" (Yossena, 2016: 2). Therefore, Thailand will become the elderly society completely. According to the 2013 Situation of the Thai Elderly Study, the Thai Elderly Research and Development Institute Foundation (2014: 20), titled "Age Structure of the Thai Population," it is predicted that by 2040, the elderly rate will be higher than the birth rate. It is expected that the childhood population will decrease to only 13%, and the elderly population will increase to 32%. Therefore, Thai society must attempt to find out mechanisms to create the income stability and to enable the elderly feel that they are valuable. The value here includes the value for family and society forging the elderly's self-worth. This may be reflected in their experiences and knowledge (At-Am, 2010: 169) to be passed on to the new wave of society. Therefore, this research aimed to study what the values of the elderly in Ban Khao Daeng community are and in what ways they can be reflected and how they can be used as part of the development of income for the elderly, their family, their community or their society. The present study focused on the dimension of bringing the values of the elderly to use and contribute to the strengthening of the economy at the community level. The area for conducting this research was Ban Khao Daeng, Kui Buri, Prachuap Khiri Khan.

Research Objectives

- 1) To study the body of knowledge reflecting the values of the elderly to be the mechanism for strengthening the community economy
- 2) To study the guidelines and recommendations for enhancing the value of the elderly to be the mechanism of community economic development in terms of policies and implementation

Research Method

Regarding the research methodology, a qualitative research method was utilized, using an in-depth interview and a focus group discussion to analyze the sufficient data of suggestions, policy, and crystallization of the elderly values.

Table 1: In-depth interview

Elderly people in the community	
The elderly in Community Moo 2	Two persons
The elderly in Community Moo 3	One person
A group of elderly workers from government agencies in the area	
Elderly staff	One person
RPST Hospital staff	One person
Local government staff	Two persons
Representatives of villagers in the community	
Village representatives	Two persons

Table 2: Focus group Discussion

Types of participants	Number
Government official representatives	Three persons
Community representative and leader	Two persons
Elderly representatives	Seven persons
Academic representatives	Three persons

However, both qualitative and documentary methods were equally required. The researcher conducted a review of the concepts, theories, and literature related to the elderly and the definition of being an elderly person, including the literature and research related to the community economy and other related research works.

Research Results

Self-esteem of the elderly

For the elderly in Ban Khao Daeng Community, Kui Buri, Prachuap Khiri Khan, the values of the elderly in the area could be summarized in two aspects: 1) The values of the elderly were reflected in their participation in various activities, and they were assertive, especially in religious or traditional activities. 2) The values of the elderly reflected in their experiences of occupations, expertise, memory, and accumulated learning, were called “body of knowledge.” It could also be used to create the body of knowledge further to generate income, such as knowledge about making shrimp paste. Its recipe was derived from grandmother, grandfather, and grandmother generation, and knowledge of dried sea fish. Production without the use of chemicals was a technique taught by elderly people, including knowledge of cooking different types of seafood. Moreover, many elderly people had different knowledge and abilities. Some older people were good at agriculture. Some had knowledge of fishing equipment (tack nets, trawl nets), and they could use their knowledge and skills, gave advice and ideas to future generations to use in their careers. It was an experience passed on from generation to generation in sharing cultural values tradition, preservation of religion, etc. One of the older people who gave the information argued that these bodies of knowledge should be produced as information for the people in the community. This would be the basis for the new generation to use it in their careers but concerned about the cost of operation.

Strength of the community economy

Within the community of Ban Khao Daeng, there were community leaders who were a mechanism for suggesting economic activities in the community. However, the problem was that it did not last long before being canceled or stopped. This might be because the management process in the community was unclear. This required the participation of people in the community to help encourage common opinions. From the interviews of the sample group, it was found that the elderly should be encouraged to play a role in the discussions, opinions should be given to enable older people to express their needs and wants: What economic activity would you like to do? The rest of the community came up with a way to use what the elderly had to offer to assess their ability to perform or could be adapted to activities generating income to the community. The interviewees also hold the view that the community management process using the participation of people in the community would create incentives leading to spatial development under the elderly' proposals and opinions about economic activities. For example, the community tried to apply the wisdom of the elderly and let young generation create the charm of product, find out the strengths of the products or the strengths of the production process, such as creating attractiveness of seafood products: shrimp paste of Ban Khao Daeng, dried shrimps of the community, and find out the channels to promote and distribute these products to tourists who visits the community. If it has been developed up to the creation of a production group by older people, it would lead to the answer to the country's important question to drive the creation of long-life learning area and creativity according to the economic and social development plan of Thailand. Meanwhile, the government support was still an important mechanism as mentioned in reinforcing the community. The vital point was that the community could help other sectors develop and change. However, patience and joint concrete actions in which both parties, namely, the elderly, must cooperate in the development, and the community has to take action.

External environment factors

Through the attitudes of Thai society, older people are often considered to be a group of people who should be respected and provide care assistance. Adapting the elderly to the current social situation can be complicated, such as technical issues. It is another crucial point for the world of the elderly and the new generation to learn together. Nevertheless, the unfamiliarity of the elderly may require a learning period. The new generation needed to understand and teach the elderly the advantages of technology and how to use it, stimulate the elderly to feel so interested that they can adjust. Therefore, taking time and patience of any activities with the elderly were required. At the same time, various social changes had an effect on the current families that become smaller and more distancing from older people. However, there was also technology as a link to the relationship or enable the elderly to open their eyes to the world through online media. Moreover, information from the online world might motivate the elderly to take the initiative in one activity. Overall, we believed that Thai society still views the elderly as people who are respected, as honored, cared for, and not seen as a burden to society.

Internal environment factors

Villagers and elderly people in the community believed that environmental factors in the community could create economic activities and incentives to create activities together, starting to bring back local wisdom to create economic activities according to their aptitudes. There were guidelines for the elderly to teach or suggest the product development, such as processing seafood products in different styles from the generation to generation gained knowledge. Making shrimp paste with a unique taste of Ban Khao Daeng was recommended by villagers and elderly people to use aloe vera plants to make processed local products, such as dried licorice, crispy licorice, to increase income for households in the community. It was

also found that the area's natural integrity with the sea and mountains surrounding the community, and a canal for boat tours. Many visiting tourists often defined *Ban Khao Daeng* as Guilin of Thailand. This strength could be the guidelines for integrating tourism development into ecotourism together with local wisdom through community products under the cooperation of the elderly and people in the community.

Guidelines for bringing the values of the elderly to strengthen the community economy.

For the Ban Khao Daeng community area, the primary value for the elderly is local wisdom on occupations under the context of being a local fishing community, such as making shrimp paste using the Khao Daeng village process, dried seafood according to a recipe passed down from the previous generation including seafood processing. These should be developed as a mechanism to create community economic activities by distributing goods to tourists visiting the region. It was important to show how unique the products of the Khao Daeng community are. This indicated that the systematic process to produce information on knowledge was transferred from the elderly. This knowledge was also transferred as textbooks or digital media for public relations, such as recipes for making shrimp paste, dried seafood recipes without chemicals, seafood curry recipe. These things would be helpful to the next generation to make money in the future and be connected with those visiting the region to see the capacity of the elderly people in the region. The main turning point was that people in the community first needed to see the values of the elderly together. Leaders had to advise each household to talk to the elderly in their family to bring something together and take the knowledge gained from the elderly in the family to build on economic activities. The findings of the study were also noteworthy that the elderly had positive attitudes or opinions in many aspects, such as the point of view of suggesting that they would like to make interesting processing of local indigo plants, worth buying to eat or pushing it to be another unique product of the community. Therefore, it was necessary to build beliefs among the elderly that they are still beneficial to the household and the community using their experience, methods, and knowledge to build on. However, the mechanism of the household was the starting point to drive the best results, showing that elderly people were beneficial to community and family in order to set the plan for creating a concrete work together through creative and sustainable products or services.

Conclusion and Discussion

From the research results, the researcher found that the values of the elderly in the area of Ban Khao Daeng were reflected in the form of knowledge of local wisdom, occupations in the context of the area, such as the bodies of knowledge of making shrimp paste from a recipe passed down from generation to generation, dried sea fish processing, including other processed seafood. There were also suggestions for processing local plant leeks that could be used as raw materials in various foods. Meanwhile, the area of Ban Khao Daeng was also found that there were complete environmental features classified as an ecotourism area. If the strengths of the area and the wisdom of the elderly were used to create economic activities in the community through the participation of the villagers and the elderly in the community, it could generate revolving income from the visiting people. The researcher, therefore, proposed the guidelines for bringing the values of the elderly to the economic strengthening of Ban Khao Daeng community by creating two important strategies, namely strategy for building cooperation in the community and strategy for creating a community market according to the details in Figure 1.

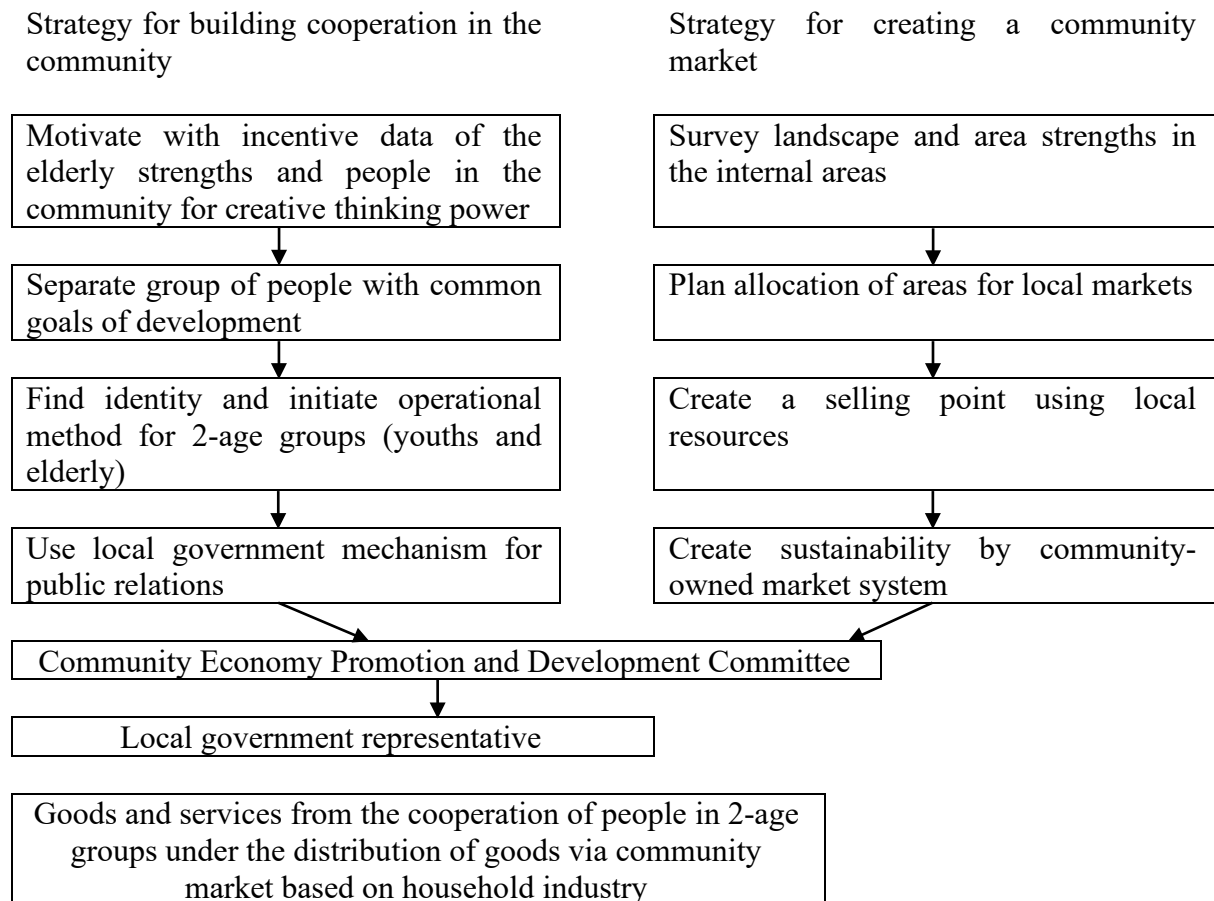


Figure 1 Guidelines for bringing the values of the elderly to strengthen the community economy

Community Collaboration Strategy: To incentivize the strengths of the community with the elderly and people in the community to empower ideas

There was the stimulation of the motivation by having community leaders explain to the community the value of the environment in the community that could be used to generate income for the people in the community. This was a way to brainstorm ideas of elderly people and villagers in the community about the community identity by extracting the domain of knowledge existed in the past to bring about the community economy growth. The development of the community was based on the knowledge of the elderly and villagers, which was in line with Prayuth Panichnok (2009: 215) that the elderly people's value development was based on the cooperation at all levels from household level to local government sectors. Their wisdom was often lost over time. Therefore, brainstorming was necessary to suggest things that can be rehabilitated as products or services. In this regard, the cooperation with all sectors (public, private, local government sectors) might be encouraged to bring the elderly people's values and experiences to the utilization as one of the mechanisms of the community economic system.

Community Collaboration Strategy: To separate groups of people in the community who need to develop together

There was the observation of the elderly and villagers' participation in the area by concentrating on the group of people who want to develop together first. This was in line with the research of Kitathorn, Kamollimsakul & Watcharakiattisak (2017: 81). The development of a group of people with consistent opinions and wishes to develop together first would make it easier to start concrete action in the Ban Khao Daeng area. There should

be the models for the establishment of a driving group in the form of Community Economic Promotion and Development Committee under the cooperation of the elderly in the community or representatives and villagers who voluntarily join to be the committee members, consisting of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Director and Secretary. It was to collaborate in establishing the structure of functions and responsibilities and creating a variety of cooperation by focusing on different groups in the community. For example, the youths in the community were encouraged to participate in expressing opinions, and stimulate motivation to participate in activities to create a variety of age ranges.

Community Collaboration Strategy: To Find out identity and create methods of operation with two ages (Young and Older)

There was the accumulation of knowledge in the local area and the wisdom of the elderly by brainstorming ideas of people with two age-categories to extract the strengths of the area for building on the economy, to create community products by upholding the identity of the wisdom of the elderly, and to set a collaboration plan. This was because the picture of the lack of use of the elderly's potential partly comes from the idea of younger people who often overlook the ability or potential of the elderly. If the collaboration was created between people of two age-groups, it would bring great benefits to community development with the values of the elderly. This was consistent with May-am's research (2010: 176) on the issue of promotion and appreciation of the elderly. In this respect, cooperation could be requested from educational institutions in the area to initiate creative innovation and help develop an identity with the community. There were representatives of people of two age-groups in the community as a mechanism to push forward. Prasertsorn, Phaetrat, Seniwong Na Ayudhya & Ritanasak

(2021: 101) confirmed the lessons learned on community development at Ban Pa Tao, Tak Province that for good community development, all parts of the community, community leaders, the elderly and people in the community must take part. Moreover, for having creative development, the center of the movement must rely on youth groups.

Strategies for building community cooperation: To Use local government mechanisms to help publicize

There was the arrangement for the local government representatives to be a part of the Community Economic Development Committee to create a connection between the community and the perception of outsiders through the bureaucracy. This was similar to the study of Suriyawong, Huannaklang & Bunpap Common (2021: 54-55) who said that the government sectors should support the community by publicizing the community strengths to get outsiders more through various channels. This would bring more tourists into the community. In this regard, the guidelines for public relations should be laid out in the form of special activities to promote the community economy, such as the local community market, community tourism folk wisdom products, local food, etc., by applying the value of the elderly as one of the mechanisms of the public relations through various media together with local government sectors.

Community Economic Market Building Strategy: Explore the Local Landscape and Internal Area Strengths

There was the plan for an area utilization to develop a community economic model that must be agreed upon within the community, promoting the role of the elderly as mentors, building cooperation with community organizations to bring benefits in all social dimensions, such as temples, schools, and national parks. This was in line with the study of Noisangiam & Wattanakit (2021: 78) who said that the participation process helped communities understand the values of the area and cherish the nature. It was also the process to help communities understand the environmental changes associated with building infrastructure to support future tourism activities.

Strategies for creating a community economic market

There was the promotion for households in the community to create their main economic activities by using their homes as a market, allocate the area in front of the house to be a shop by providing an agreement to use the community area in order not to cause pollution from waste arising from economic activities and make an area plan by defining the zones for goods and services, allowing visitors to have the convenience of using the service. This is similar to Pinchumphonsaeng (2016: 92) who has advised on how to use community space to create a community market under the context of community identity, and to make it attractive until it becomes a tourist attraction and economical source according to the current popularity of tourists.

Strategies for creating a community economic market: To create market strengths by relying on the resources of the area

There was the promotion for the creation of secondary activities with the use of the area's resources as a point of interest, such as community boating activities, squid fishing activity including building a network for households to earn income from the community Home Stay model, emphasizing the model of ecotourism. This was in line with the study of Wisetsunthornsakul, Na Thalang, Chitthaworn & Tangbenjasirikul (2020: 30) who stated that the development of community potential for allowing tourists should bring the identity of the community obtained from the community's resources or culture in order to create activities for the tourist attentions.

Strategies for creating a community economic market: To create sustainability with a community-owned market system

There was raising the community's awareness of the value of resources in the community, promoting the community to participate in creating. For example, the establishment of a community market cooperative system to be used as a mechanism for everyone in the community to have the right to access resources and joint development. It was also used as a center for exchanging knowledge of the diversity of lifestyles among various groups of people in the community. The key point was to bring the values of the elderly through professional knowledge as a mechanism for creating the economic activities, whereas the community process must be created through consensus, joint proposals, discussions, and mutual recognition. All community economic activities could be possessed by everyone as a community member in the creation of the development. This was consistent with the research of Prasertsorn, Phaetrat, Seniwong Na Ayudhya & Ritanasak (2021: 102) on the operational elements for community benefit. This emphasizes the process of participation because the participation of community members in every group would help all sectors drive and develop the community.

Suggestions

1) This research was the guidelines for extracting the values of the elderly and applying them for the benefit of households and communities in the view of integration with economic activities. The extracted strategies could be applied to the local community in general or used as the guidelines for improving communities that would like to improve the quality of life for the elderly. It reflected the importance of extracting the guidelines for coordinating the benefits of the elderly and the development of economic activities under community cooperation. This was different from research on strategies for bringing the values of the elderly to society in a creative way based on ensuring good quality of life for people of all ages participating in the research. The research reflected the development of the state's role as a macro-holistic caretaker of the population's quality of life. Therefore, there should be the study of the link between the role of value development or the quality of life of the elderly through the cooperation of community members and the role of value development or the quality of life of the elderly by the state. They were compared with the concrete results in

terms of benefits to the elderly and the results applied to the highest aging society in the next few years. This also included technology issues with the elderly for communication and access to community services because in the future, technology will become a part of every proportion of the country's population and technology mechanism may be a part of the development of society to see more values of the elderly.

2) There should be further studies in community development with innovative ways of using mechanisms of the elderly as the strengths of the area by doing a comparative study in two communities in order to bring out the strengths and weaknesses for setting guidelines of community development in the future.

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