

Development of Cooperative Procedures in Nongbualamphu Province Project

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to find the suitable method for development of the cooperative procedures in Nongbualamphu Province. The participatory action research (PAR) was employed in this study. It was divided into 3 stages: (1) the study of background data of Nongbualamphu Province, including current situation and roles of cooperatives/groups/ community organization and checking registered population by surveying both primary and secondary data from 2 groups/organizations, which were 124 registered and non-government cooperative groups. (2) Idea-sharing forums were set up for understanding between groups/organization leaders to evaluate interest and fix directions of work of the network by doing the workshop in each group employing the SWOT and AIC analysis. (3) The back up of the research team and the project evaluation by workshop meeting and report writing.

It reveals that (1) most of the population are farmers and rice is their major crop. Most groups/ community organizations are occupational groups with 53 cooperatives altogether. The network linking activities are already found in many groups/organizations, for example, linking businesses of cooperatives and farmers, loaning networks, money-deposit networks and other networks found during the idea-sharing forums. In addition, interesting issues about expectations, problem conditions, strong and weak points of groups/ community organizations in Nongbualamphu Province were found during the workshop meeting for idea-exchanging and interest evaluation on September 28-29 and November 4, 2005.

The survey result of the information of the poor shows that there are 498,513 people in Nongbualamphu Province and 25,874 of the population registered or being poor, which is 5.2% of the total population. The population of Muang Nongbualamphu District was the largest group which registered and the second largest group which registered was the population of Suwannakuha District. The research team had categorized the problems according to their severity and found that the most severe problem was no lands to cultivate and the second severe problem was private debts. The problems were also categorized according to the cooperative members who were troubled, which were 3,236 registered cooperative members, 1,737 non-

government cooperative members and members who joined the project, that were, 1,967 registered cooperative members and 1,187 non-government cooperative members.

The network linking project of the Nongbualamphu research team had found and established new networks according to the purposes of the project, which were 1) learning network, the first network established during the project and a result of November 17–18, 2005 meeting. 2) Business network, a result of learning network, which is divided into 2 groups: 2.1) along the way network, the network that already exists and is run continuously. The groups/organizations are members of learning network. When they exchange ideas within the network, they can develop their group's network both in learning and business under the cooperation of the Nongbualamphu Province learning network such as Laffa Network, Fish Transforming Network, Wickerwork Network and Product Transforming Network. 2.2) new network, which was newly established as groups/Nongbualamphu Province Organization had seen the importance of network linking and gathered to build networks according to their economics and ways of life base such as rice or fabric network.

The result of the network has affected the poor-living solution, that are, 1) expense reduction that happens in groups/organizations as individual in groups/organizations in activities such as the purchase of raw material from groups/organizations that are members of network, the together training, the usage of learning sources from groups/organizations that are members of network. 2) The increase of income, the work of the network has increased the income from activities such as selling products to groups/organizations or have the groups/organizations that are network's members sell the products. 3) The opportunity expansion such as the increase of raw material sources, markets and knowledge exchanging.

The research has found great phenomenon in problems both from the researchers and environmental factors such as time, responsibility and political cultures problems. In addition, the result of the research is beneficial to the researchers in the following points: 1) The construction of value network from supply links chain of products and services of the groups/organizations. 2) Members of cooperatives should rely on their managers. 3) Informal leader finding 4) Attitudes of groups/organizations towards the government 5) shopping tour, a visit to leaders of groups/organizations to in depth interview and exchange information. 6) The use of cultures/traditions as part of the activity helps those who attended the meeting enjoy the activity.

The research team has some suggestions to improve the research steps as follow:

1) The research step should be flexible and not too specific. 2) Giving emphasis on learning process. 3) Indicating specific group/organization agent. 4) setting the proper length of time 5) selecting local research team who has potential in data, work-coordinating and has enough time in order that the work flows continuously 6) evaluating and improving every step of work to adapt the activity to serve unexpected situation 7) developing the bigger networks in both area and activity aspect to rely on themselves and have power in negotiation.