

Research Title:	The Roles of Thai Senior Citizens in Local Development Participation
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The objectives of this research were to 1) examine the roles of Thai senior citizens in local development participation 2) study the factors affecting the roles of Thai senior citizens in local development participation, and 3) explore the problems and obstacles of Thai senior citizens on local development participation. This study is a qualitative research and the key informants consisted of 48 male and female senior citizens aged 60 years old or over residing in the northeastern, central, northern and southern regions; 4 family members of some senior citizens; 4 neighbors or community members; 4 community philosophers; and 4 community leaders, totaling 64 participants. The tools used for data collection were in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant and non-participant observations. The data were analyzed using content analysis.

The findings were as follows:

1. Regarding the roles of Thai senior citizens in local development participation, it was found that:

1.1 For family aspect, senior citizens played an important role in general household management, being a consultant/advisor, teaching grandchildren, and encouraging the family members to take part in community activities.

1.2 With regard to educational aspect, senior citizens played a role as the President of the School Education Board, a member of the Curriculum/Project Evaluation Board, an advisor/expert, and a guest speaker at various schools and organizations.

1.3 As for community development aspect, senior citizens played a role as a leader/volunteer in the community, the Chief of Village Health Volunteers/Deputy Chief of Village Health Volunteers, the leader of the Elderly Club, the Head of Village Water Supply, the Head of Community Kitchen, the President of the Community (Hospital) Health Development and Management Board, and a local philosopher.

1.4 Regarding religious and cultural aspect, senior citizens had a chance to act as a lay temple officiator, the President of the Temple Committee, the President of the Cremation Association, a leader/volunteer, and a speaker in various important temple events.

2. Regarding the factors affecting the roles of Thai senior citizens in local development participation, it was found that:

2.1 For personal factor, the value of senior citizens should be promoted so that they view themselves important. Moreover, senior citizens should try to understand what roles are appropriate for them, so that they can act as a role model and pass on their experience to their family, community and society correctly and appropriately.

2.2 For family factor, family members should pay respect to senior citizens, accept all their roles, and provide cooperation in sending them to or picking them up from the activities organized by the community or other organizations.

2.3 For educational factor, sub-district administrative organizations/ municipalities, and community leaders must take part in planning and proposing the budget to set up the project to develop potential, knowledge and expertise of senior citizens, as well as jointly build networks with organizations, from both the government and private sectors.

2.4 As for community factor, sub-district administrative organizations/ municipalities should create a budget plan to promote activities for senior citizens to develop their own roles at least once a month. In addition, community leaders should give senior citizens an opportunity to express their opinions or needs for attending activities. Moreover, senior citizens' activities in various roles should be observed and monitored.

2.5 As for religious and cultural factor, sub-district administrative organizations/municipalities, community leaders and families should organize more religious and cultural activities for senior citizens. This will provide an opportunity for senior citizens from different villages to meet and join community network.

3. With regard to the problems and obstacles of Thai senior citizens on local development participation, it was found that:

3.1 For personal problem, senior citizens who were retired government officials didn't plan about what position they would be, what they would do and how

they would adjust themselves to the community. Moreover, they thought they would become a burden to people in the community if they wanted to join activities.

3.2 Regarding family problem, families had works to do and some families of senior citizens moved from other provinces, so they were not familiar with community activities. Thus, they missed the community activities.

3.3 Regarding educational problem, both the government and private sectors gave little importance to the roles of senior citizens in being guest speakers and advisors. Moreover, the limitations in senior citizens' participation in activities were age and occupation.

3.4 As for community development problem, the leaders failed to consistently coordinate and provide information. Moreover, only a few community activities were organized, and most of them were repeated activities.

3.5 For religious and cultural problem, some groups of senior citizens had problems traveling to attend the activities. Moreover, there was a problem of lacking public relations and communication.

3.6 Some groups of senior citizens lacked the opportunity to be registered as senior citizens or didn't receive welfare they deserved.

3.7 The external organizations, from both government and private sectors should take part in consistently developing the quality of life of senior citizens. In the past, services or visits were rare or were provided only for the members, so some groups of senior citizens lacked an access to some activities.