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NETWORK DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROMOTION ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE OF CHIANG MAI PROVINCE, THAILAND

Abstract:

Network Development of Social Welfare Promotion Organizations: A Case of Chiang Mai Province, Thailand

Chiang Mai Province is located in mountainous area of northern part of Thailand. It comprises of 25 sub-counties covering about 1.6 million people. There are many NGOs scattered in those 25 sub-counties working on social activities, but lack of coordination and lack of availability of data base. Even in the same nature of social activity but in different sub-county, there were unequal social welfare promotions to those who have less opportunity to receive social welfares from government programs. Target groups were children and youth, women, disabled people, marginalized people, ageing people, and HIV infected people. Each sub-county has these target groups working within the sub-county independently. No network linkages among NGOs even in the same nature of social activity.

From above difficulties, causes and mechanisms to remedy were needed to explore, so that policy of social welfare promotions can be implemented effectively by The Royal Thai Government. The Government provides Universal Health Coverage to all Thais in which those target groups are included. There were eight programs performed throughout 12 months period, each program contains activities. Each program was participated by 125 participants from those 25 sub-counties, five from each sub-county.

Objectives of this study were:

1. To find out causes of lacking of coordination between social welfare organizations,
2. To find out mechanism to bridge the gap between organizations.

Results from this study, from evaluation, indicated that activities performed within each program could bring attention and cohesiveness among organizations. Participations from those representatives of each sub-county were high among leaders of organizations. Establishment of data base for each target group were agreed to join together undoubtedly in providing information and even more in different nature of social welfare programs. Small NGOs in sub-counties grouped together by virtue of consciousness of serving others in community. This study could be performed in the same nature of target group or different in other provinces, since social welfare promotion programs are nationwide program for all.

Keywords:

Social Welfare Promotion, Universal Health Coverage, NGOs, Network Development, Network Analysis

JEL Classification: D85, I00, I30

Background:

Chiang Mai Province located in northern part of The Kingdom of Thailand, comprises of 25 sub-districts which captures about 1.6 million people. The province is in the middle of mountainous area where minorities scattered in some sub-districts of which in high land areas. Chiang Mai is the center city of northern part of the country. There are non-governmental organizations - NGOs working in social activities, some are foreign organizations, some are national organizations, and some are local organizations. This means some are large and well settled organizations, but some are small and look for supports locally. These NGOs work independently and work according to their missions and purposes, but all of these organizations are registered as, so called Public Welfare Organization under The Social Welfare Promotion Law. They are eligible to apply for funding to supporting their activities within the country. These organizations are working mainly in the following areas of social works: ageing, women gender, children and youth, disabled people, HIV infected, marginalized people, environmental concern, and scared people.

The Royal Thai Government has launched The Universal Health Coverage Program nationwide to all Thai citizens since 2001, and it has been successfully progressive in term of health welfare to Thai citizens. The above groups of people have benefits from the Coverage in health categories. As well as social welfare programs, the Government issued, so-called Social Welfare Promotion Programs to Thai citizens. Those who are under above categories of social works are also eligible to the programs according to their nature and conditions. In fact, not all people in each category understand and realize their rights and their privileges of welfare programs. They may be far away from information, live in far distant remote areas, or information was kept from them intentionally or unintentionally. Moreover, if they know all of information, another difficulty is how could they work and perform social activities together in the same area or different. If they work in different area and far away from each other in those sub-districts, hence, lacking of co-ordinations among the same nature of social activity is also crucial. What kind of mechanism to bring about those in the same nature of social works to come to work together as associate or network, so that benefits would fall to real needy people and welfares could be brought to the real needy people.

Nowadays, networking in society has been very important and useful tool to understand relations among organizations (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). Perhaps society nowadays is so complex and more people to be involved. Complexity of social structures nowadays is very interesting to study. Several fields of social sciences have employed network analysis to explain phenomena and behavior of their natures (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, and Labianca, 2009). Moreover, linkages of organizations and each segment in society, formal and informal, by nature or by chance, are also complicated and need to be studied. Wellman (1983) emphasized the study of network analysis is a fundamental approach to study of social structure.

Understanding of social structure which comprises of nature and character of elements must be considered and clear explanation. Each segment in society does not exist alone; there must be connections between organizations in the same nature of activity. Breiger (2004) studied social networks by using data to analyze interconnections between groups, people, and people to groups.

Social welfare organization network is grouping of organizations for purpose of mutual mission(s) where network should establish a linkage mechanism. Oliver (1998) studied relations between organizations by analysis of networking. Knobe and Yang (2008) employed quantitative application to analyze relations between units in networking system. An effective mechanism to connect organizations together could be such as mailing list to which interested organizations could sub-scribe, a website, discussion board and others. Also, network could serve as a support and information sharing and a forum for discussions and debates between organizations with tools and mechanisms of connections and also provides information that substantiates patterns (Oliver, 1998). Social networking, Wasserman and Faust (1999) studied applications of network in social context and confirmed methods of analysis in their study.

In rural areas in Chiang Mai, those who work in local areas still lack of coordination systematically and comprehensively, so the effect goes to inefficient of social welfare promotion management with unjust and limited number of welfares for less opportunity groups who do not receive proper amount. Moreover, personal rights and right to receive welfare were violated while there was no organization which to look after, remedy, and develop system to manage properly the social welfare promotion. To build up knowledge management to those volunteers as well as development of mechanism for good governance in social welfare promotion management will be also needed, so that information and data could be used and employed among social welfare promotion organizations properly. But, the most important issue is that how and what is pattern of networking between organizations in different region. Northern part of the Kingdom has not the same background as Southern region as well as Northeastern region. Northern region has more minority groups than other regions of which group dialects and their culture are different which effect to welfare supports to them.

Even there are NGO organizations working in those 25 sub-districts fall in target groups depended on objectives and missions of each NGO, there must be central coordination or organization which could pull together all NGOs by having networking. Central committee grouped by participative manner of those NGOs has been working effectively to play as joint decision making body by delegates from those organizations.

Objectives:

1. to promote awareness of the target groups in working as a system,
2. to develop comprehensive activities and co-ordinations in different area within the same nature of social work,

3. to establish mechanism of working together in the same nature of social work.

Research Question:

1. How could all people in each target group realize their rights and benefits?
2. What is the networking model to bring about all social welfare promotion organizations to work together in community?

Population and Sample Group:

There are six target groups in this study: children and youth, women, disabled people, marginalized people, ageing people, and HIV infected people. These target groups scattered in those 25 sub-districts in Chiang Mai Province. Data of this study collected from sample of each target group in those 25 sub-districts by attendance, observation, participations, knowledge management, and training. They are representatives from each target group in each sub-district.

Research Benefits:

First, the network model can be applied to other provinces where social welfare promotion programs are also effective and target groups are also the same. Second, People who are in those target groups will be receiving social welfares equally and as much as they are provided according to their nature. For organizations, strong and sustainable mission of social works could be reached and longer serving to needy people. Third, for government and public programs, the social welfare promotion programs can be reached by right target people, and they will be effective programs to the citizen and productive programs to assist needy people in community.

Research Analysis and Interpretation:

There are 8 activities performed during one year of the project length in order to reach to those above three objectives:

1. workshops for training of the trainers,
2. meeting for building up concept of voluntary mind in social development,
3. meeting for building up understanding and coordinating among members in community,
4. development of continuity, sustainable, and modern data base,
5. meeting for building up awareness of local wisdom and resources for community development,
6. meeting of resources of fund providers domestically and internationally,
7. meeting for building up capability and potential and strategic development of each target group, and
8. monitoring and evaluation.

All above activities can be summarized into four categories which are objectives, process of operations, KPIs, and outcomes. Details of each performed activity could be summarized and presented in each activity.

1. Training of the trainers for each target group

1.1 Objectives of this activity were promotion of learning process and transformation of experiences in social welfare management comprehensively.

1.2 Process of operations were setting up meetings in each sub-district for building up voluntary spirit for social welfare development in community, and conclusion, evaluation, and reporting.

1.3 KPI for success, 80% or higher attendants (28x5) was 140, but attended 157 attendants. Then, leaders were identified and could extend multiple to perform the same training in communities.

1.4 Outcomes of this stage were higher than expected attendants, and participative learning process was reached.

Suggestions from this stage were contents which should include Principles of Participative and Functions of Trainer, and training process.

2. Meeting for building up concept of voluntary mind in social development stage

2.1 Objectives of this stage were promotion of learning process, lesson learned visualizing, transformation of experiences in working of social welfare promotion, promotion of voluntary mind value, and construction of sustainable mechanism.

2.2 Processes of operation were seminar and conference on voluntary mind of welfare development in community, and knowledge management and lesson learned visualizing.

2.3 Success KPIs were 80% or higher, actual attendants were 185 persons whereas target groups together were 160 persons. Lesson of voluntary mind for social development in Chiang Mai was obtained.

2.4 Outcomes of this stage were higher attendants, 185 persons, positive attitude on voluntary mind concept, and commitment on working together in social development programs.

Suggestions from this stage were more meeting at least twice a year, should be more time for discussion, should be more information of speakers, and more communication with other organizations.

3. Meeting for building up understanding and coordinating among members in community

3.1 Objectives of this stage were activity development comprehensively, and construction of sustained mechanism.

3.2 Processes of operation in this stage were: first, presentation of plans and projects, according to nature and problem; second, knowledge sharing of plans and projects; and third, drafting comprehensive plan.

3.3 Success KPIs of this stage were more attendants, 411 persons higher than expected 300 persons, and number of projects to be presented to stage 6th was obtained.

3.4 Outcomes from this stage were indication of problems of which were shown in environmental concern, drug, ageing, HIV infected, quality of life and environment in community, broken homes, disability, women and violence against women, and poverty. Moreover, there were a joint project in communities on warmth family, and strong youth against drug. Data base was arranged for ageing, disabled people, HIV infected, and homeless people. Development of child and youth network, ageing network, women network were interested among attendants.

Suggestion of this stage was differences of meeting process in sub-districts of which nature and background of each location must be concerned.

4. Development of continuity, sustainable, and modern data base

4.1 Objective of this stage were activity development comprehensively, and construction of sustainable mechanism.

4.2 Process of operation of this stage were first, printing directory of NGOs name and all addresses; second, developed website of network; third, develop community radio programs; and forth, newsletter and publications.

4.3 Success KPIs of this stage includes number of medias and publications issued.

4.4 Outcomes were all member of the network received publications and other social medias.

Suggestion from participants was connection of data base with other NGOs.

5. Meeting for building up awareness of local wisdom and resources for community development

5.1 Objective of this stage was promotion of voluntary spirit value to target groups.

5.2 Process of operation were first, selection of hardcore leader of each sub-district, and second, lesson learned visualizing of activities.

5.3 Success KPIs of this stage were number of attendants which was 80% or higher, and establishment of team speakers in sub-district.

5.4 Outcomes were first, knowledge sharing on voluntary spirit concept on social welfare programs in 25 sub-districts but select only 4 sub-districts for presentation, and second, information of funds to support social welfare activities for community needs.

6. Meeting of resources of funds domestically and internationally

6.1 Objectives were members from NGOs representatives knew sources and their requirements for funding, and channel of funding was identified and understood.

6.2 Processes of operating of this stage were looking for sources and information, and presentation of projects from 3 stages to donors for comments and suggestions.

6.3 Success KPIs were attendants from each sub-district attend the meeting 80% or higher, and submission of a project of each sub-district.

6.4 Outcomes of this stage were; first, attendant was 244 persons higher than expected 200 persons; and second, data of sources of fund for social welfare programs which NGO members could apply for.

7. Meeting for building up capacity and potential and strategy development of each target group

7.1 Objectives of this stage were knowledge sharing and lesson learned visualizing on social welfare promotion, and members know how to draft strategic plan according to the nature of each group.

7.2 Process of operation of this stage was seminar and workshop on strategic plan lesson to target groups.

7.3 Success KPIs was attendant which is 80% of target group members.

7.4 Outcomes were; first, attendant was 227 persons which was higher than expected 202 persons; second understanding of strategic plan and ability to draft out the plan, joint participation of thinking and planning together.

Suggestion for this stage should be teaching on strategic lessons for participants, so that they would learn more and be able to expel to their group members.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

8.1 Objectives of this stage were to follow up programs and projects run by target groups, and development of monitoring procedure and instruments-constructed questionnaire.

8.2 Processes of operation were meeting and follow up sequence in which every two months.

8.3 Success KPI was meeting of 6 times a year of the project.

8.4 Outcomes were meeting of committee to follow up and reporting 13 times during the period of the project.

Monitoring of activities should be more concentrated on visits and reports, so that participation could help to see real and active activities.

Table 1. Summary of Attendants of 8 Activities

Activity	Expected Attendants	Actual Attendants	% Higher Attendants	Outcomes
1	140	157	12	achieved
2	160	185	15	achieved
3	300	411	37	achieved
4	-	-	-	web-site, name list, newsletter, booklet, radio program

5	1,000	1,091	9	achieved
6	200	244	22	achieved
7	202	227	12	achieved
8	6	6	-	fare

Results and Conclusions:

Results and conclusions of this study can be summarized as followed.

1. Knowledge sharing, lesson learned visualizing, and transferring of experiences of working on social welfare promotion have been done systematically in community through participative manner, and creation of awareness.
2. Value and positive attitude toward human beings and voluntary mind of members of target groups in 25 sub-districts were increased.
3. Development of activities comprehensively and coordination of performing just social work together could be seen among target groups in Chiang Mai Province in term of projects proposals.
4. Development of potential volunteers in community working to both public and private sectors for social welfare operation in Chiang Mai Province and sharing information.
5. Creation of mechanism and tools of working together comprehensively in community and can be used jointly sustainably and efficiently.
6. Small NGOs in community can group together working jointly together.

Limitations and Future Study:

1. This study has limitations on traveling to mountainous areas especially in raining season to perform the 8 activities.
2. Members of disabled persons target group had difficulty of traveling to meeting sites.
3. For the future, sustainability is very important to keep this network goes on, since bringing groups of people comes to work together as a network will be difficult to manage successfully without coordination of central committee.
4. Time schedule is another limited factor in working together of those NGO organizations.
5. In other provinces, there are some different target groups of which networking of social welfare promotion organizations can be studied and application of this study can be applied to solve the same problems.

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