

Development of Business Management System Leveraging on Social Capital: A Case of Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise, Mae Wang Sub-District, Chiang Mai Province

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(Received: 3 February 2023, Revised: 16 June 2023, Accepted: 18 June 2023)

<https://doi.org/10.57260/rcmrj.2023.263464>

Abstract

This study examined the community business pattern based on the social capital of Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise, leading to the development of a suitable business management system for the community. Participatory Action Research (PAR) was conducted using the mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research. Preliminary findings indicated that the community enterprise did not have an organizational structure and that each member worked independently, using time-consuming and costly production processes resulting in low-quality products. Despite the homogeneity of the group, the community leaders and members failed to leverage on the social capital to work together effectively to achieve common goals for the organization. Working with the organization, the researchers recommended the development of a management system that is anchored on relationship building and trust. The system is divided into four parts – 1) management: organizational structure establishment, 2) production: job assignment based on knowledge and skills, 3) marketing: online and offline distribution channels, and 4) accounting and finance: income-expenditure account creation, and compensation allocation. The respondents showed higher level of satisfaction after they had utilized the developed management system particularly on the aspects of community unity, love, solidarity, and harmony, and community business transparency.

Keywords: Community enterprise, Community business management, Social capital, Business management system

Introduction

Located in the Chiang Mai province of Thailand, Mae Win Sub-district consists of 19 villages of diverse ethnic tribes including Karen, Hmong and Thai. Majority of the population works in agriculture, producing rice, corn, soybeans, lettuce, Chinese cabbage, Japanese onions, and flowers, which are sold to the Royal Project Foundation. Others are engaged in tourism business, with various interesting tourist attractions and attractive activities for both Thai and foreign tourists, such as rafting, elephant riding, hiking, beautiful flower gardens and waterfalls. Each community has its own unique way of life, traditions and cultures, which are still preserved and passed on to the succeeding generations like Songkran Festival, Yi Peng month, and the local language. Despite the social and cultural diversity, the people of Mae Win live together in harmony.

To alleviate poverty and improve the welfare of the people in the sub-district, a community enterprise called Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise was established in 2020. The intention was to make it a hub for locally-made products and expand the market. Products include woven fabrics, embroidered fabrics, and handicrafts that represent the beautiful identity of the local tribes. Additionally, the enterprise would serve as an information center for local people and tourists. It seeks to promote and foster a sense of hometown pride among residents leading to the appreciation of natural resources and awareness of the community's environment. It also aims to advance the local people's well-being, carry on traditions, culture, way of life and local identity.

In the beginning, the community business seemed to be growing, with more people joining as they recognized the economic potentials, and also with the support of relevant government agencies. However, the business has not made any progress after that because the members were lacking direction and basic knowledge in management. They had unclear organizational structure, weak coordination, and the operational setup had not been fully developed.

This research project focused on the development of a management system which would be suitable for the community enterprise, with proper organizational structure and an appropriate management system, such as personnel, resources, marketing, and finance. This would enable the community to run its business efficiently, enhance the well-being of the people in the community and serve as a model for developing management systems for other similar community enterprises.

The researchers aimed to leverage on the social capital of trust, unity, and shared cultures and traditions among the people of Mae Win as important resource in helping them develop the community business. Studies show that social capital can create a business management system that aligns with the needs and aspirations of the community enterprise, and could ultimately lead to sustainable growth and success. One example is the Klong Arang Community which is recognized and admired as a model of sufficiency economy, happy, and excellent village in the whole province of Sakeaw. Studies found that Klong Arang community members have volunteering-mind and are enthusiastic in developing their community, and participate in the community management. They trust each other, and believe in and cooperate with their leaders in the community management. Boontham. (2019)

Literature review:

Community capital

According to Community Organizations Development Institute. (2019), Community capital means anything that exists within the community both occurred naturally, and created by human. For example, natural resources, environment, people, culture, traditions, including money, which is valuable to people lives.

Community capital consist of

1. Monetary Capital – received from various fund, saving, and budget.

2. Non-monetary Capital

2.1 Human Capital – know-hows, skills, of people in the community

2.2 Social Capital – trust, faith, mutual acceptance, and culture, passing down for the next generation.

2.3 Physical Capital – facilities made for convenience, fundamental factors that support the livelihood of the people in the community, like electricity, water, communication, transportation.

2.4 Natural Capital – natural resources and environment such as natural water source, forest, mountain, sea, island, animals, mineral, and plants.

Following Intria. (2017), Social Capital is part of community capital, which means things in people's daily lives, for example, a relationship between people in a community, being part of a group, trust, having the same culture, being cooperated to achieve common goals, resulting in living happily together. The community strongly affects stability within the community.

Business Production Planning

A business undertakes these three tasks in order to produce goods and services. These activities are essential for both the survival of an organization and its ability to produce.

1. Marketing, which creates demand for a good or service, or at the very least, accepts orders for it (nothing occurs until a sale is made).

2. Production and operations involve creating, producing, and delivering the final product.

3. Accounting and finance, which keep tabs on the organization's performance, handle bill-paying and cash collection, Heizer et al. (2017)

Organizational Structure

Employees are grouped according to organizational structure so they concentrate their efforts for the best possible results. It has three essential components, level of hierarchy, departments, and coordination/communication system among departments. The hierarchy refers to a number of subordinates directly reporting to each supervisor. According to an organization's departments, people may be arranged in several logical groups, such as a function of work, a product line, a work project. The coordination and communication system are essential to support the hierarchy, Pinto (2015)

There are a few common structures used in most businesses.

1. Functional organizations – creating departments out of employees who are doing comparable tasks.

2. Project organizations – assembling individuals into project teams for short-term tasks.

3. Matrix organizations – establishing a dual hierarchy where projects and roles are equally important.

In accordance with Robbin (2016), in organizational design, there are 6 essential components. Begin with a work specialization, breaking down work activities into individual job responsibilities. Then, a departmentalization is a job organized into departments, like functional, product, customer, geographic, or process. The ability to complete tasks within an organization is impacted by authority, responsibility, and power. Authority is a right to issue commands and demand that compliance. When authority has been transferred, responsibility refers to the commitment to follow through. Power, which is distinct from authority, is the ability to have an impact on decisions. Span of Control is the amount of employees a manager can effectively and efficiently supervise. When it comes to decision-making, centralization and decentralization refer to whether the majority of choices are taken at higher organizational levels or delegated to subordinate managers. Formalization refers to how standardized an organization's tasks are and how heavily policies and procedures are used to direct employee conduct.

Marketing strategies for small business

Marketing is important for both large and small businesses. Marketing strategy is a part of a business plan, which will drive the business to succeed. Therefore, small business should pay attention to the marketing planning, which includes the following elements: marketing objective, sales forecasting, target market, and marketing mix, Ongsakul et al. (2007)

1. Marketing Objective – make the marketing plan clearer. The marketing objectives must be specific and measurable.

2. Sales Forecasting – a pre-sales forecast. It is used in a production planning, promotion making, so it is possible to estimate the profit of the business.

3. Target Market – a segmentation of the market as a whole, and identify the target market of the business. It will enable the business to develop marketing strategies to suit the target customers. There will be no unnecessary marketing waste to non-target customers.

4. Marketing Mix – the set of actions, or tactics, that a company uses to promote its brand or product in the market. It includes product, price, place, and promotion.

Objectives

1. To identify the current existing management practices in the community enterprise.
2. To determine how social capital can be enhanced and used to mobilize the members to work together in running an efficient and competitive business.
3. To develop a suitable business model for a strong and sustainable community enterprise.

The study is based on a theory of change that:

If enterprise members are knowledgeable of business management and have taken part in developing the business management system, and leverage on the social capital as a resource to mobilize members to work together, then they will be able to run an efficient and competitive business.

Methodology

1. Research Design and Instrument

The study employed mixed method, combining qualitative and quantitative research. Adapting the techniques of participatory action research (PAR), the study attempts to understand the situation or problem in the community enterprise and develop action-oriented interventions with the involvement of all stakeholders. As defined by the International Development Research Centre-Canada, action research is “research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action”.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was conducted using tools and procedures as follows:

Step 1. Diagnose the problem. Explore the local environment, understand the existing operational setup of the community enterprise and the gaps. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of members in running the business. Collect data using focus group discussions (FGD) with people who are involved in the community business, including the president, vice president, village headman and members, comprising a total of 41 informants. Questions asked in the context of the community were focused on the following issues:

- 1.1 Existing operational setup and management system
- 1.2 Challenges, problems and requirements encountered in the operation
- 1.3 Strengths and weaknesses of members in running the business

Step 2. Build knowledge. The researchers arranged a series of workshop training to provide knowledge on business management focusing on the following topics:

- a. Overview of community businesses,
- b. Operations Management: inventory management, production processes, and quality control
- c. Marketing Strategies: product positioning, pricing, promotion, and customer relationship management
- d. Financial Management.

Prior to the training, the researchers conducted a training needs assessment to evaluate the members’ existing knowledge about community business management and what is required to develop/build knowledge.

Step 3. Design and develop a business management system. After building knowledge through training and workshops, the researchers used the brainstorming method to help the members design and develop a suitable business management system. A series of meetings were organized to allow members to discuss, debate and agree.

Step 4. Test-run. Study the consequences of the actions/interventions through system trial. The designed system was put on a test-run by the group for three months. They ran the enterprise using the newly-established management system. In the beginning of the test-run, the researchers guided the members if they encountered any problems or concerns and continuously mentored them until they were ready to implement it by themselves.

Step 5. Evaluation. Learning from the actions and taking corrective actions. Following the three-month system trial, the researchers conducted a focus group discussion to evaluate the results of implementing the new business and any problems that may have been encountered. In addition, members were asked to answer a survey questionnaire to collect data on their perceptions and attitude toward using the new management system. The researchers continuously monitor the performance and feedback from the community to make necessary adjustments.

In the process, the researchers leveraged on the community social capital by identifying the key stakeholders within the community enterprise, understanding their roles, influence, and relationships. The researchers actively engaged the community members and stakeholders to build trust and establish relationships. They were involved in decision-making process to seek their input, ideas, and feedback on the design and development of the business management system. The opportunities for interaction and knowledge-sharing among the members and officers during the series of training, focus group discussions and brainstorming aimed to help develop their sense of belonging and forge harmony in the group. This participatory approach not only strengthened relationships but also ensured that the system aligns with the community's goals and values.

2. Population and Sample

The population used in the study are the three groups comprising the weaving community enterprise in the area of Mae Win Sub-district in Mae Wang District, Chiang Mai Province. The sample group was selected using purposive sampling, the criteria for choosing being the accessibility of the people in the group and the recommendations of the district leaders and related government agencies. The group also expressed willingness to improve the enterprise and cooperate with the study. Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise was selected as the sample group. There were 41 members from two villages, Moo 5 and Moo 6. Their products were from a mix of ethnicities, such as Hmong and Karen. The group had a strong desire to develop its community enterprise group, but insufficient knowledge in business management.

Results

1. Results from the preliminary study of the community business management practices

1.1 Management

The study showed that the community enterprise did not have a clear organizational structure. Although there was a president, no other roles were assigned causing the members to not know their responsibilities under the group operations. The president performed many duties alone resulting in a rather heavy workload. Hence, not all tasks were completed due to tremendous workload and lack of cooperation from the members within the group.

1.2 Production

The main products of the community enterprise were woven products such as shirts, dresses, scarves, and bags, among others. There was lack of coordination among the members on what products to produce. They generated goods on their own at every stage starting from raw material procurement to products creation. The researchers identified problems in product quality, production time, and cost of production. Although members were able to carry out their own production at every step, each member had different capabilities. For example, some people were good in product design, but not good in cloth dyeing. Therefore, working on unskilled parts was time consuming, and also affected quality. However, hiring workers to do the unskilled parts would result in higher production costs. Moreover, the cost of a whole process material preparation was high due to the diversity of materials and equipment used.

1.3 Marketing

Results showed that there was absence of marketing strategy to promote and sell the products. The group members were doing every production process solely by themselves causing poor product quality that did not meet customer requirements both in terms of form and quantity. As a result, the products could not be sold. Furthermore, product pricing was determined by each member according to his own wishes, not based on the actual cost or

following a pricing strategy. Another problem was the lack of distribution channels, with members selling their products at their homes with no other way to reach customers.

1.4 Accounting and Finance

The group did not record business transactions, such as income and expenses. Since the members worked separately, there was no compensation shared. Members who were unable to produce or sell products would have no income. The unequal distribution of jobs and income had a negative impact on group engagement and motivation, resulting in inefficient business operations.

2. Results from the development of the community business management system

2.1 Administration and Organization

Organizational structure

A flat organizational structure was determined to be suitable for a small, newly founded organization. This structure helps eliminate complications in the management and coordination processes. The organization chart is shown in Figure 1.

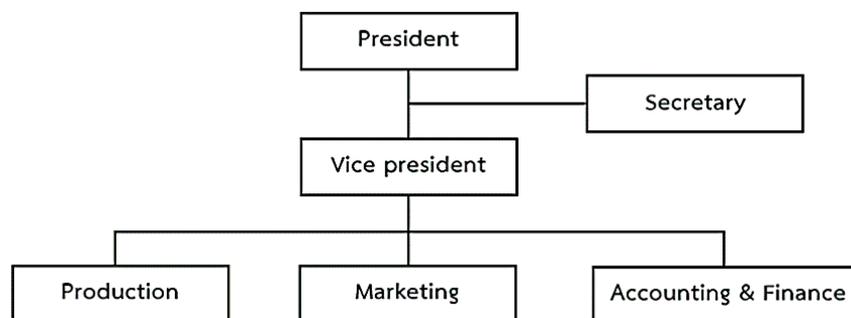


Figure 1 Organizational chart of Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise
(Source: Researcher, 2022)

Roles and Responsibilities

The assignment of duties and responsibilities were based on abilities, knowledge, skills and experience. Under the direction of the president and the vice president, members were allowed to offer their opinions and participate in the job selection. By embracing community-based decision-making, the system is expected to be more aligned with local needs and aspirations.

The duties were divided into main departments: Production, Marketing, Accounting and Finance. Job titles were created: President, Vice President and Secretary. Roles and responsibilities of each department were under the supervision of the Department Directors.

Member participation

A monthly meeting was scheduled for every last Wednesday of the month to discuss work performance and address any problems. The president would lead the meeting, and all members would participate by sharing their ideas for business improvement. This provides opportunities for diverse voices to be heard and actively involves individuals from various backgrounds, ages, and perspectives. The meetings would become opportunities to create harmony among members of the group. By valuing and leveraging on the harmonious relationship of members, the implementation of the new system becomes more robust and sustainable.

2.2 Production

Production management

A standard production model was developed to allow all members to work in the community enterprise. Roles and responsibilities were assigned based on the skills and experiences of members. There were 7 steps in the production process: (1) Material procurement (2) Product design (3) Cotton dyeing (4) Cotton weaving (5) Cloth tailoring (6) Embroidery (7) Quality inspection. Individuals were assigned responsibility for each step in the production process. This mechanism ensures equal representation and involvement of all community members. By valuing and including everyone's input, the system has become more comprehensive and inclusive.

Production planning

Coordination mechanisms were established between Marketing Department and Production Department in order to streamline the processes and avoid wastage.

The marketing department must verify the quantity of inventory. If any items were nearly out of stock or expected to be ordered by customers, the president would be informed to send a job request to the production department. The Production Department would receive the assignment from the president and then proceed to allocate the tasks to various steps along the production process. After the production were completed, the products would be quality-checked before sending to the marketing department.

Materials procurement

Effective collaboration among members made the planning for material procurement more efficient. This enabled bulk purchasing, leading to economies of scale. The process began by assessing the available materials in each department. Then, a material purchase requisition was created, which required approval from the president. This requisition was also coordinated with the accounting and finance departments to allocate the budget accordingly.

2.3 Marketing

The group designed an appropriate marketing strategy for the community enterprise, using the marketing mix (4Ps) concept as follows:

Product

The primary products consisted of woven fabrics that incorporated a blend of patterns reflecting the distinctive tribal identities of the Hmong, Karen, and Thai communities. These patterns were infused with the traditional wisdom passed down through generations. Value-added features were incorporated into the products, including the inclusion of logo tags on each item for branding and improved recognition. These tags featured a brief narrative about the product along with its pricing information.

Price

The pricing strategy was determined by adding a desired profit margin, typically ranging from 10% to 25%, to the production cost. Additionally, members took into account the price of local competitors and aimed to position their prices slightly lower. Members generally regarded this pricing approach as a competitive and reasonable markup compared to other businesses in the area.

Place

Distribution channels were categorized into two segments: offline and online.

In the offline channel, the group set up a store to sell their products at Mae Win Guesthouse Resort. The president was responsible for overseeing sales and coordinating with other departments. Furthermore, the group took part in numerous local and international

exhibitions as alternative distribution channels, aiming to enhance the product's visibility and reach a wider customer base.

For the online channel, a workshop session was organized for the marketing department to familiarize them with the utilization of various online platforms, including Facebook, Shopee, and Lazada, for the promotion and sale of the products.

Promotion

The group placed a strong emphasis on communication through online channels to raise customer awareness, utilizing platforms like Facebook fanpage and Facebook Live. They also organized additional activities, including farming events and community tours, to further promote awareness of the enterprise.

2.4 Accounting and Finance

The accounting and financial management system was divided into three parts:

Income and Expense Accounting: A detailed income and expenditure account was established, encompassing the calculation of the group's production costs. This aspect of financial management fell under the supervision of the group president.

Compensation Allocation: Compensation was disbursed based on the type and quantity of work performed by each member. Profit-sharing was distributed to members proportionally, reflecting their level of involvement, and was paid out semi-annually.

Group Performance Reporting: The group implemented a quarterly reporting system to evaluate overall performance. This allowed members to monitor progress, address challenges, and collaborate on solutions. Transparency, open communication, and information sharing were integral to fostering trust within the community.

3. Perceptions of members on the development of the community business management system

Table 1 Opinions on the group's community business management system, before - after development Comparison

No	Item	$\bar{x} \pm sd$		Interpretation
		Before	After	
1	You feel being a part of, and actively participate in the group.	2.63+0.49	4.36+0.49	Better
2	The efficiency of the group's management system.	2.73+0.45	4.56+0.50	Better
3	You are aware of the group's actual business performance.	2.46+0.50	4.41+0.50	Better
4	The community businesses can generate income and improve the well-being of community members.	2.73+0.55	4.46+0.50	Better
5	The community has unity, love, solidarity, and harmony.	2.65+0.48	4.51+0.51	Better
6	You are pleased with the income received.	2.56+0.50	4.43+0.50	Better
7	You are satisfied with the business transparency.	2.48+0.55	4.50+0.51	Better
8	Overall satisfaction with the community business management system.	2.68+0.57	4.39+0.49	Better

Table 1 provides a comparative analysis of the opinions of 41 members from the Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise Group regarding the new business management system. The

majority of respondents were women under the age of 50, with a high school education and a daily income of less than 300 baht.

The results reveal that respondents expressed a higher level of satisfaction across all aspects following the development and implementation of the new system. Their highest level of satisfaction was observed in terms of the efficiency of the new management system (item 2 = 4.56). This was closely followed by item 5, which pertains to unity, love, solidarity, and harmony (item 5 = 4.51), and item 7, which concerns community business transparency (item 7 = 4.50).

Discussions

1. Preliminary study involved exploring the local environment, gaining insights into the current operational structure of the community enterprise, identifying areas that needed improvement, and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of its members.

The Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise lacked a well-defined organizational structure, leading to member confusion about their roles and responsibilities. Previous research has indicated that the absence of a clear organizational structure can result in role ambiguity and redundant work (Mukda, 2014).

Many members had limited knowledge of proper business management systems, primarily due to their educational background, with most having completed only high school. Given their lack of business experience, they needed training to acquire a deeper understanding of business management principles and their practical application within the community enterprise setting.

The members predominantly operated as individuals, and a sense of collaboration and unity within the group was conspicuously lacking. Certain members carried disproportionately heavy workloads, while others were less actively involved, resulting in diminished trust and a lack of a sense of belonging among the group.

The absence of coordination within the group had an adverse impact on product quality, production timelines, and production costs. The products were solely sold within the community due to the absence of marketing channels and promotional activities. Additionally, there was no income-expense accounting system in place, which is crucial for effective financial management. Furthermore, there was no profit-sharing scheme, which contributed to low motivation and engagement among the members.

2. Intervention activities were implemented to enhance knowledge in business management and bolster the social capital within the community.

The researchers organized various intervention activities, including training sessions, workshops, and meetings, to impart knowledge on business management and foster a sense of harmony, trust, and unity among the members. By actively involving all members in brainstorming and discussions, the group collaboratively developed a comprehensive business management system that encompassed various aspects including management, production, marketing, accounting, and finance. As stated by Penmas et al. (2021), human resource management, marketing, production, and accounting & finance management are fundamental components of community business management. Moreover, active membership participation is crucial for the success of any community business, as emphasized by Wongkalasin et al. (2020).

Given that the community enterprise is small and newly established, a flat organizational structure was deemed the most appropriate choice. This structure simplifies management and coordination, promoting active member participation, Palasak (2019). Regarding production, the group established a production plan and assigned roles and

responsibilities based on members' skills and aptitudes. This aligns with Suaydee et al.'s (2021) assertion that proper job allocation and adherence to production standards are key factors for success in production.

The development of marketing strategies involved establishing the selling price and devising marketing channels. The selling price was determined by adding the cost and the desired profit. Both offline and online distribution channels were identified for marketing and distribution purposes. Online platforms like Facebook and Line were utilized for distributing goods, along with participation in sales exhibitions. Yanpiboon and Grisanaputi (2020) highlight the significance of establishing multiple distribution channels for products.

The group received training on financial management and the creation of income - expense account. The group was mandated to submit quarterly performance reports to assess progress and identify and resolve any issues. Moreover, financial management was divided into two components: compensation and dividends from profits. This aligns with Mukda's (2014) study, which highlighted the need for accurate accounting information among OTOP producers to effectively manage their budgets and remain competitive in the market.

Conclusion and suggestions

The initial assessment indicated that the community enterprise lacked an effective management system. It had an unclear organizational structure with undefined roles and responsibilities. As a result, the substantial workload became solely the responsibility of the chairman, leading to an excess of unfinished tasks. Additionally, there was no production management system in place, and a lack of coordination among members was evident. Products were individually produced, resulting in low quality and high costs. Additionally, there was no marketing plan, and members were selling their goods at home without any other distribution channels. The product price was set without considering the costs. There was no accounting and financial system in place. Members worked separately, which meant they did not share the profits. Additionally, some members who lacked the ability to create the product did not have a source of income. The group members lacked motivation and engagement, making it difficult to run an efficient community business.

With the development of the community business management system, a suitable organizational structure was established. Clear roles and responsibilities were appropriately assigned based on the member knowledge, abilities and responsibilities. Meetings were scheduled to facilitate discussions and the sharing of ideas about the business, fostering participation and building good relationships among the members. The production process was designed with clear steps, and work responsibilities were assigned based on the expertise and skills of the workers. In addition, the quantity to produce and the choice of materials to use were planned in advance to save time, reduce costs, and meet customer requirements. The marketing mix (4Ps) concept was used as a tool for developing the marketing strategy. The product quality was improved and appropriate prices were set. Product quality was improved, and pricing strategies were adjusted accordingly to better align with market demands. A combination of offline and online distribution channels was employed to reach a broader customer base. An income-expense account was established to ensure transparent monitoring and control of business finances. Wages were determined in accordance with the type of work and workload performed. Profits were distributed proportionally based on the level of engagement. Business performance was monitored regularly through quarterly reporting.

The development of business management system received positive feedback from the members. Quantitative data demonstrated a higher level of member satisfaction after

implementing the new system, particularly in areas such as the management system's efficiency, community harmony, and system transparency.

Recommendations

Drawing from these findings, the researchers offer the following recommendations.

1. Enhance members' understanding of product value addition and improve online marketing strategies on other social platforms to expand the customer base and boost sales.
2. Establish policies to ensure the ongoing implementation and adherence to the new business management system.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

The research generated a new suitable business management system for the community enterprise. It transformed the unsystematic community business to a well-organized one. With efficiency and transparency, members were more willing to engage in the business activities. As a result, the community business has developed sustainably, leading to harmony and well-being of society. Additionally, the system might serve as a template for other communities and community businesses.

Acknowledgments

This research would not have been possibly completed without the participation and assistance of so many people whose names may not all be enumerated. We sincerely appreciate and gratefully acknowledge their valuable contributions. However, the researchers would like to express their deep appreciation particularly to the following: Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI), for the financial support; Chiang Mai Rajabhat University for providing the opportunity to engage in this project; Mae Win Sub-district Administrative Organization for providing convenient coordination with the local area. And last but not the least, to Hub Mae Win Community Enterprise, for participating in the project and providing valuable information.

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