



Co-operative movement development and Fairtrade Project

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Executive Summary

The conduct of research series on the Co-operative Movement and Fairtrade Development aims to supplement and extend the knowledge of the “valued network connection” by conducting three main projects, divided into eleven sub-projects, of participatory action research. These are **the area-based research projects** - with three sub-projects; a Valued Network Research Project of Phitsanulok Province, a Valued Network Project of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, and Land and Settlement Valued Network Project - **the research projects dedicated to establish alliance connection under the supply chain** - with seven sub-projects; Moral Rice Valued Network Project, Thai Co-operatives Jasmine Rice Valued Network, a Conservative Community Tourism Network Project, a Distribution Valued Network Project, a Cassava Valued Network Project, a Fruit Valued Network Project, and a Rubber Valued Network Project – and **the research project dedicated to support co-operative development** – Co-operative Information Network Project.

The process of the research series consists of two parts. One is the work of central coordinators in conducting knowledge sharing forum and coordinating all related sectors in order to support the researchers of the sub-research projects. Another is the work of the research team of the eleven sub-projects in one-year period from April 2008 to March 2009. The research results are as follows.

The results from an analysis of input factors in terms of the preparation of the research team and procedures in conducting the research, as a whole, are in good basis. Nine networks established from the research results are Moral Rice Valued Network, Thai Co-operatives Jasmine Rice Valued Network, the Conservative Community Tourism Network of Phangnga, the Valued Network of Phitsanulok, Land and Settlement Co-operative Valued Network, the Fruit Valued Network, the cassava valued network, the distribution valued network, and the Co-operative Information Network, in which 303 co-operatives and groups/organizations are associate networks.

Formation of these networks is the type of horizontal integration which can reduce the limitations of the vertical integration of the current co-operative networks. This is the new dimension of co-operative business which brings in the advantages of cost reduction and negotiating power of the networks by setting the administrative system in order to achieve the common targets and taking the networks’ conditions into account. Moreover, the encouragement of learning process from the central coordinators and the execution of the co-operative information project results in the development of

human resources networks, which are a Researchers Network, a Think Tank Network, a Clergy Network for co-operative development, a Co-operative Leaders Network, a Co-operative Auditors Network, an Agricultural Co-operative Managers Network, and 'The Co-operators' magazine network, which will then lead to the development of a learning society to support the co-operative development to be the valued co-operative system.

The impact of the research projects to the government sector is that the National Cooperative Development Committee (NCDC) has set a practical plan for strategic movement. The research projects have participated in the movement, accounting for 11.5 per cent of the projects under the practical plan.

The impact of the research projects to the co-operative movement sector is the initiation of 51 co-operative models, which create valued administration. The 9 Co-operative network models are incubated with the valued network pattern. Besides, the research projects results in the establishment of the learning centers, which are the effects from the operation initiated by the co-operatives. These centers are Moral Rice learning center and cassava learning center.

For the impact to academic sector, the operation of the co-operative information center which focuses on the website development and 'The Co-operators' magazine has created the participation among qualified panels, researchers, and academic persons which can then create the informative society and encourage the co-operative leaders and managers to apply such information beneficially. The training course for valued co-operative leaders is developed as well. It is a four-dimension integrated learning course; to raise awareness of cooperation under the co-operative values, to paradigm shift in terms of the co-operative contexts and sustainable development, to clarify on the co-operative principles, and to drive the practical approaches which can form the skillful co-operators and are benefit for members and community.

The research findings reveal that, under the current co-operative circumstances, the co-operative leaders and people involved are accustomed to the government support, thus their co-operative ideas are in the contrary to the co-operative identity – self help organization. This can be seen from the requirement for an amendment of co-operative laws related to associate members, etc. However, the strategic framework of the second co-operative development plan (2007 – 2011) has directed the development to the valued co-operative system. This is considered as the 'new order' which all relevant sectors have to work cooperatively to drive all 5 strategies in order to achieve the common goal. (Figure1) Next stage of the research projects should emphasize the pursuit and creation of the co-operative models in order to provide an empirical data for the co-operative context to

improve living circumstances of members and community. This will be 'best practice' and can build confidence to those related to the co-operative development. The followings are the important research issues.

First, **area-based research projects** which will be employed to develop the co-operative leaders' model consist of the valued co-operative model, the area-based network model, and the Young Co-ops. Second, **the research projects dedicated to connect the supply chain** are comprised of goods and service business network model and the co-operative business groups. Last but not least, **the research projects dedicated to develop the supporting system and essential infrastructure** consist of, for instance, the approach to develop the co-operative monetary system through self-help and cooperation, the approach to develop the co-operative informative society, the approach to campaign the co-operative values to the nation, self-help principles co-operative learning center, and the approach to create the co-operative learning society through in the academic institutions.

References :

Juthatip Patrawart and Team. The Co-operative movement development and Fairtrade Project, 2009.