



Potential Building for Community Development of Elders in the Northeastern Region of Thailand

Nittaya Taweecheep ^{a,*} and Sawittri Kadsanuk ^b

^a Faculty of Education, Khon Kaen University, Thailand

^b Faculty of Management Science, Suan Dusit University, Thailand

Received 28 January 2019; Received in revised form 4 July 2019

Accepted 22 July 2019; Available online 16 December 2019

Abstract

The objectives of this research were to 1) examine the current state of potential building, 2) explore a guideline for potential building, and 3) evaluate the effectiveness of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand. The study uses participatory action research and quantitative research methods, and draws on a sample of 60 male and female elders aged 60 years old or over residing in the northeastern region, 3 community leaders, and 3 government officers, totaling 66 persons. The instruments used for data collection were in-depth interviews, a focus group discussion, training workshops, a field trip, and participant and non-participant observation. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The statistics used for quantitative data analysis were mean, standard deviation and t-test. It was found that the elders wished to build their potential for community development in terms of knowledge, skills, adjustment and living in the society. The guideline for potential building for community development consists of four steps, which are planning, action, observation and reflection. Moreover, the elders enjoyed

Keywords

Potential Building, Community Development, Elders

Introduction

Improvement of human resources or human quality is important for stable and sustainable country development. Elders are regarded as valuable human resources and are not less important than other population groups as they have more experience and can greatly contribute to the society and the country (Aroonkiatpong, 2007). We can see that from the 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007–2011), more emphasis has been put on promoting elder value and development of potential in their occupations, health promotion, and lifelong learning. Moreover, the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012–2016) placed great importance on developing elders to have economic and social stability, quality and value, and potential to adjust themselves to changes; be a driving force for social development; use their knowledge and experience for community development (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2012). We can see that Thailand has attempted to produce a quality population (especially elders), who can serve as a driving force for the country's development. As Thailand is becoming an ageing society where the number of elders has increased and the number of children and labor force has declined, more people will need to depend on others regarding economic, social, and healthcare issues. A survey of the Thai population in 2015 found 9.6 million or 14.9% were elders, of which 5.3 million or 8.2% were young-old (60–69 years), 2.9 million or 4.5% were medium-old (70–79 years), and 1.3 million or 2.0% were very old (80 years or over) (The Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2015). According to the National Statistical Office (2014), the northeastern region (Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani) has the largest number of elders (31.9% of the population), followed by the central region (Samut Prakan, Nonthaburi, and Suphan Buri), where elders account for 25.6% of the population. Next comes the northern region (Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Nakhon Sawan), which consists of 21.1% elders and the southern region (Nakhon Si Thammarat, Songkhla, and Surat Thani), where elders account for 12.0% of the population. In the next 27 years the number of those 80 years or over will double. Once Thailand becomes an “aging society,” the lifestyles and behaviors of people in the society will change rapidly. Thus, it is very necessary that the public sector, private sector, communities, and families pay attention to this issue in order to prepare for elderly care and set up measures to promote elder quality throughout their lives, arrange appropriate activities for them to live happily in their families, communities and societies, as well as enable elders to depend on themselves.

Quite a number of elders still have good potential. That is, they have good health, can depend on themselves and help others, are capable in terms of knowledge and life experience, can teach their descendants, can pass on knowledge to people in their communities and societies, and live their lives appropriately. Therefore, it is the duty of elders

with potential to pass on useful wisdom, especially those who take part in community development and are considered as valuable human resources. At present, there are a large number of elders who can generate income for their families and communities. Chanthip et.al (2005) found that, for community development, most elders play a consultant role and pass on knowledge, abilities, or local wisdom for creating and developing jobs. They also pass on useful experience to the young and people in the communities in terms of preservation of handicrafts and arts. However, elder potential has not been utilized to fully benefit the country. According to a study done by Boonsu et. al. (2009) , it was found that elders' problems are not limited to health problems, but also the fact that elders suffer from their children's and grandchildren's materialistic value, and that the society does not allow elders opportunities to express their full potential. This is in line with the study done by Yashakoo (2013), who investigated a guideline for potential building for elders in Tum Tai Sub-district, Kumphawapi District, Udon Thani Province in terms of community economic development. It was found that the local government didn't place importance or support on this issue as there were no specific policies; supportive policies were not clear enough; and understanding was not promoted among occupation groups nor government officers. If elders are encouraged to participate in community development, it can serve as one form of development used for making changes or developing humans, communities, and societies. In addition, it allows elders to use their free time productively, prevents elders' feeling of uselessness, loneliness, or isolation. Elders will have good physical and mental health, have opportunities to share their social knowledge and skills, and can pass on their know-how to the society to benefit other elders, families, communities, and localities (Suwandara, 2011).

From the above reason, the researchers considered that northeastern provinces, especially Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani, have a rapid and continued change in the elderly number, and consist of elders who are unemployed, have low income, lack abilities to develop their own potential in terms of knowledge, skills, or information in order to depend on themselves at old age. As a result, encouraging elders to develop their own potential by taking part in social contribution or volunteering to develop the community can promote positive attitudes towards elders, and recognition of elderly value as those contributing to the society. This is consistent with the 2nd National Plan on the Elderly (2002-2021), 1st amendment, B.E. 2552 (2009), which states that elders are not a burden to the society, but human resources of high value who should be encouraged to take part in society (National Committee for the Elderly, 2010). Therefore, the findings of this study can be used as a guideline for promoting elders' potential building for community development to address the actual problems and needs of the society. Moreover, the findings can raise people's awareness of the value of elders as a group who can contribute to the society and

realize the importance of preparation for becoming quality elders who can live their lives with dignity and can sustainably depend on themselves.

Aim of the Study

1. To examine the current state of potential building.
2. To explore a guideline for potential building.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand.

Conceptual Framework

This study applies Biological Theory, Psychological Theory, Sociological Theory and Conflict Theory as a conceptual framework as follows:

Biological Theory

When people reach an old age, their bodies become weaker. Various factors influence the degree of these physical changes. Wear and Tear Theory, for example, states that body systems will deteriorate as time passes and become worn from external sources. Those external sources can be direct (deadly chemicals) and indirect (lack of food, drug addiction, and stress). Finally, those factors will destroy different systems of the body (Bowles, 1981, as cited in Taweecheep, 2014).

Psychological Theory

Based on Disengagement Theory, elders tend to disengage themselves from society. Nowadays, it is common for elders to disengage themselves from social roles as they are discouraged by competitions in the society. Social disengagement can occur in various ways, for instance, being forced to resign by an employer or elders' voluntary disengagement from society due to age-related factors, such as retirement, bad health, death of the spouse or close friend, and poverty. When people retire, they usually disengage themselves from their coworkers and various activities, while some people pay attention to new activities, such as joining clubs or being volunteers (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2001). This is consistent with Bradshaw (1981) (as cited in Christopher, 2013), who argued that if elders have feelings and behaviors which promote high recognition of their own value, they will clearly show their confidence, confront conflicts, express trust, have creativity, provide cooperation, and have courage to create new and different things.

Sociological Theory

Social Exchange Theory focuses on why some elders disengage themselves from social interaction. That is, elders have fewer resources for exchange, lower income, worse

health and lower education. Moreover, declining resources have become an obstacle for long-term relationships with others (Quadagno, 1999). This corresponds to Activity Theory, which states that the very old have the same needs as those of the young-old and medium-old. However, different incidents in life, such as retirement or divorce, may lead to a decrease in social interaction. Such decrease is caused by external factors. According to this theory, the very old want to maintain their social interaction level by replacing their social roles with new ones. If such replacement is successful, they will be satisfied with their lives, be happy, as well as have good mental health and wellbeing. This can also increase social opportunities for elders who wish to replace their old roles (Erber, 2005).

Conflict Theory

Community development is the process of controlling and accessing different resources (land, labor, capital and knowledge). Therefore, community development is considered as potential and power building, and the true understanding of power is very important. However, Schellenberg (1996) (as cited in Phillips & Pittman, 2009) studied a combination of conflicts and value creation from community development. He explained that conflicts can drive development if, in the end, such conflicts lead to cooperation of people to gain mutual benefits. Inequality or other social problems may not be solved if conflicts create disorder. However, if conflicts are resolved through community development, they will benefit the community, such as reconciliation and compromise.

Materials and Methods

Area Selection

The researchers chose to conduct this study and develop potential of elders in three northeastern Thai provinces (Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani). These provinces have seen a rapid and continued change in the elderly number, and consist of elders who are unemployed or have a low income. They generally lack the ability to develop their own potential in terms of knowledge, skills, or information in order to depend on themselves, resulting in unsuccessful and delayed community development, as well as loss of opportunities to receive an income. Due to these problems, the researchers selected the above three provinces to conduct a case study on elders' potential building for community development. The study was divided into three phases as follows:

Phase 1: Studying the current state of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand over the period of 3 months

In this phase, the researchers studied the community context, elders' community development activities, factors contributing to and obstructing community development, as well as elders' needs for self-development. The instruments used were in-depth interviews,

structured interviews, and a focus group discussion among community leaders, government officers, and researchers in order to brainstorm ideas to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis).

Phase 2: Developing a guideline for potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand over the period of 6 months

This phase used participatory action research (PAR). In addition, the PAOR process was used to reflect on the operation outcomes. It consists of four stages based on the concept of Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), which are planning, action, observation, and reflection.

1. Planning: The plan encouraged participation of elders in community development through in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion. The researchers, community leaders, government officers, and speakers jointly planned a guideline for such development by taking into account the community context, as well as elders' needs and problems. Then, they devised a plan to promote training workshops to develop potential, knowledge, and skills, and a field trip in each area.

2. Action: The researchers and the speakers used the guideline in practice, as well as promoted and organized training workshops to develop knowledge and understanding about community development both theoretically and practically. In addition, elders were taken on a field trip to visit organizations which were successful in community development. The results of in-depth interviews with the elders about their needs for community development were used for prioritizing the elders' needs in order to organize a one-day field trip to observe community development activities.

3. Observation: The researchers and the local speakers jointly collected data from the workshops, field trip, observation, interviews, focus group discussion, and recorded performance.

4. Reflection: The researchers monitored elders after they participated in training workshops, occasionally asked elders to answer what they failed to understand, assisted them in practicing, and asked for help from the speakers and related organizations.

Phase 3: Evaluation of the effectiveness of potential building for community development of elders over the period of 3 months.

Target Sample

This study uses participatory action research and quantitative research (i. e. , purposive sampling) for the selection of areas in northeastern Thailand. The selected provinces included Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani, which are provinces with rapid and consistent change in the number of elder population. These provinces also consist of unemployed elders with low income, so they don't have

knowledge and abilities to develop their capacity in terms of knowledge and skills, and cannot search for information to rely on themselves. Therefore, community development has not been successful and has fallen behind. The criteria for selection of the key informants and sample were 60 male and female elders aged 60 years or over, residing in 3 provinces of northeastern Thailand (Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani), 3 community leaders, and 3 government officers, totaling 66 persons.

Key Informants and Sample

The key informants and sample of the study on potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand consisted of three groups with the total number of 66 persons as follows:

1. Male and female elders aged 60 years or over who could take part throughout the research and resided in three provinces in the northeastern region of Thailand, namely Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani. Purposive sampling was used for selection of the following target groups:

1.1 For Nakhon Ratchasima Province, there were 10 elders from Hua Thale Sub-district, Mueang Nakhon Ratchasima Province, and 10 elders from Chakkarat Sub-district, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, totaling 20 elders.

1.2 For Khon Kaen Province, there were 10 elders from Ban Thum Sub-district, Mueang District, and 10 elders from Ban Lao Sub-district, Ban Fang District, totaling 20 elders.

1.3 For Ubon Ratchathani Province, there were 10 elders from Nai Mueang Sub-district, Mueang Ubon Ratchathani District, and 10 elders from Warin Chamrap Sub-district, Warin Chamrap District, totaling 20 elders.

2. Community leaders included a community chairman, a Village Health Volunteer Chairman, and an occupational group chairman, sub-district headman, or village headman, both male and female, who lived in the study area, could communicate well, and could take part throughout the study.

3. Government officials included a mayor, a chief executive of a sub-district administrative organization, a community developer or a technical officer of a sub-district administrative organization/municipality both male and female, who lived in the study area, could communicate well, and could take part throughout the study.

Research Instruments

This study uses participatory action research (PAR) and quantitative research. The researchers went to the target area to work in the community, study the area and what

actually happened, and consistently carry out activities with the target group. The instruments adopted for this study were:

1. Interview: It was not structured, but the points of study were determined, and additional points were added while collecting data. It was divided based on the target groups under this study, which were elders, community leaders, and government officers.
2. Focus group discussion: This aimed to brainstorm ideas for performing SWOT Analysis, and planning to strengthen the communities by producing shampoo and conditioner from Kaffir lime and others.
3. Learning outcome evaluation form (knowledge): It consisted of the content on production of shampoo and conditioner from kaffir lime, dishwashing liquid, and souvenirs from local cloth. It was the evaluation before and after potential building for community development.
4. Elders' work performance skills evaluation form: It aimed to examine elders' work performance skills
5. A questionnaire on satisfaction in participation in the workshops to build potential for community development of elders, and a questionnaire on satisfaction in participation in the field trip.
6. An expert questionnaire to evaluate the workshops to build elders' potential for community development in the northeastern region of Thailand. It can be divided into two parts, namely (1) evaluation form for measuring consistency of the manual of workshops to build elders' potential for community development, using 3-point rating scale, including consistent, not certain, and inconsistent, and (2) evaluation form for measuring appropriateness of the manual of workshops to build potential for community development, using 5-point rating scale, including least appropriate, slightly appropriate, moderately appropriate, very appropriate, and most appropriate.

Data Collection

Data were collected using interviews to study the current state of potential building for community development of elders. There were 66 interviewees altogether, consisting of elders, community leaders, and government officers. A focus group discussion was employed with representatives of elders, community leaders, government officers and researchers to brainstorm the ideas for SWOT Analysis, summarize problems for development, and determine a guideline for elders' potential building for community development. The representatives were selected using purposive sampling twice. Prior to the workshops, the researchers asked 60 elders to complete the learning outcome evaluation form (knowledge). During the workshops, the speakers and researchers jointly observed the elders' learning behavior and completed the elder work performance form to collect data on

changes in the elders' level of understanding. At the end of the workshops, the researchers asked the elders to complete the learning outcome evaluation form (knowledge) again, and surveyed satisfaction in workshop participation. After that, a field trip was organized for the elders to exchange their knowledge with external organizations. The data were recorded in writing, and the activities were videotaped by cameras. In addition, the researchers also surveyed the satisfaction in field trip participation three times by phone with representatives of community leaders and elders to monitor the elders' behavior, problems and obstacles after the workshops, application of knowledge gained from the workshops, and changes in potential for community development. At the end, the researchers made conclusions and wrote a report.

Data Analysis

The statistics used for quantitative data analysis were Mean, Standard Deviation, and Paired-Samples t-test. Meanwhile, the qualitative data analysis employed content analysis of the data from reviews of documents, observation, interviews, a focus group discussion, workshops and field trip.

Research results

1. Current state of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand

From the analysis of the current state of potential building for community development of 60 elders in three provinces in the northeastern region of Thailand, which are Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani from in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion, the findings are as follows:

1.1 Most elders lived separately and worked as farmers and government officers. As agricultural product prices always fluctuated, the income was not enough to cover household expenses. Thus, sub-district administrative organizations or municipalities, as well as government agencies had to support the budget to promote knowledge and additional skills to the elderly so that their potential for community development could be built, and they could earn supplementary income apart from doing agriculture. Thus, an elderly club was established. Some elders paid attention and took part in community development and served as speakers for communities, schools, and universities. They also served as committee members of the Basic Education Commission, experts, community philosophers, temple liaisons, heads of village health volunteer (VHV), presidents of the elderly club, presidents of basketwork occupational development group, community committee members, advisory board and secretaries to mayors, committee members of the Basic Education Commission in

schools and universities, ladies' club, elderly club, and other representatives, as well as leaders of community exercise and recreation, etc.

1.2 The elders still needed potential building for community development. In terms of knowledge, the elders needed to learn about the psychology for teamwork, followed by leadership, adjustment to society, human resource management, and conflict management. Regarding skills, the elders needed training on producing herbal shampoo and conditioner from Kaffir lime, followed by producing dishwashing liquid, souvenirs, sandalwood flowers, ribbons, keyrings, bags, dessert, and basketry. For attitudes, the elders needed training on living based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, how to adjust themselves to the society and live happily, building human relations, conflict management, building morale and encouragement, and conversation and communication principles, etc.

1.3 As for the workshops on potential building for community development required by the elders, it was found that both lectures and practice were needed together with a field trip; the instructional materials used for the workshop should come in various forms, such as practically used materials, videos, pictures, handouts, etc.; the workshop should take 3-5 days and about 6-7 hours/day; the days available for the workshops were Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; the venue for the workshops should be at a hotel or a resort which is convenient for traveling; most elders thought the evaluation should be carried out both before and after each workshop; and skill evaluation and workshop participation satisfaction evaluation should be conducted. The elders also needed the cooperation from municipalities, sub-district administrative organizations, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Community Development Department, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, and military officers to establish a network by sending speakers to provide technical knowledge, and rules and regulations for living happily in the society, as well as motivating elders to adjust themselves to the age of information technology. In addition, temples should serve as the center for coordinating activities and distributing information to elders thoroughly and consistently.

1.4 Regarding problems and obstacles to elders' potential building for community development, they involved public and private sectors, community leaders, elders, and other aspects. The problems included lack of public relations to promote news and information, lack of the center to allow elders to take part in community development, lack of activities to enhance knowledge, skills, and good attitudes towards community development in order to build potential of elders, and ineffective community management.

2. A guideline for potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand

The results of the focus group discussion among the researchers, community leaders, target government officers, and speakers to come up with a guideline for potential

building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand are as follows:

2.1 Planning: The participants in the focus group discussion adopted the results from the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Analysis) in terms of potential in community development of elders, community context, problems and needs of elders for planning potential building for community development based on 5 training unit topics, which are Unit 1: Psychology for Teamwork, Unit 2: Production of Shampoo and Conditioner from Kaffir Lime, Unit 3: Production of Dishwashing Liquid, Unit 4: Production of Souvenirs from Local Cloth, and Unit 5: Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy. The researchers scheduled the workshops to cover three days from Monday, 20 February – Wednesday, 22 February 2017 at Kaennakorn Hotel, Nai Mueang Sub-district, Mueang Khon Kaen District, Khon Kaen Province. The target group consisted of 60 elders from three provinces, including Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani. The researchers, community leaders, and government officers brought speakers to give knowledge both theoretically and practically in the workshops and during the field trip; wrote the project, project evaluation forms, manual of the workshops to build elders' potential for community development; jointly planned project promotion and field trip activities to enhance the potential for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand.

2.2 Action: After reaching an agreement, the participants of the focus group discussion assigned roles for running activities. The researchers and speakers applied the guideline in practice and promoted it with the cooperation from community leaders and government officers in spreading news to elders through the broadcast tower and by word through verbal communication in person or via phone; organized the project to build potential for community development of elders; took elders on a field trip to visit organizations successful in community development in order for elders to gain more knowledge which can be applied in their daily lives or work.

2.3 Observation: The researchers and speakers jointly collected data from project management, field trip, observation, interviews, focus group discussion, and record of implementation from organizing the workshops three times during 20-22 February 2017. The findings are as follows:

2.3.1 First workshop on Psychology for Teamwork: Data were collected from observing participation of the elders. It was found that the elders paid great attention and cooperated throughout the activity. Moreover, elder representatives of each community consistently took part in expressing their opinions and discussion on each point in order to find ways for the community to create good teamwork. As for the summary of interviewing elders, it was found that the target elders had more knowledge and understanding in the concepts and principles of psychology for teamwork and teamwork techniques.

Also, the researchers observed that the workshop participants had good knowledge and understanding in applying psychology in adjusting themselves to living in the society and teamwork after joining this activity.

2.3.2 Second Workshop on Production of Shampoo and Conditioner from Kaffir Lime, Dishwashing Liquid, and Souvenirs from Local Cloth: It was found that:

1) Regarding the workshop on production of shampoo and conditioner from Kaffir lime, from observation of the elders' participation, the elders paid great attention and provided good cooperation throughout the workshop, as well as asked questions about what they didn't understand. From interviewing the elders, it was found that most of them had more knowledge and understanding about the quality of Kaffir lime used for producing shampoo and conditioner, used more natural raw materials, knew how to reduce household expenditure, and applied the knowledge learned in creating part-time jobs using Thai herbs for themselves, families and society.

2) Regarding the workshop on production of dishwashing liquid, from observation of the elders' participation, the elders paid great attention and provided good cooperation throughout the workshop, as well as asked questions about what they didn't understand, such as dishwashing liquid formula, stirring methods, producing dishwashing liquid from local natural materials, etc. In addition, from interviewing the elders, it was found that most of them had more knowledge and understanding about how to make dishwashing liquid, how to reduce household and social expenditure in the long run, as well as benefits of producing dishwashing liquid as it can truly help generate income for themselves, their families, and communities.

3) Regarding the workshop on production of souvenirs from local cloth, from observation of the elders' participation, the elders paid great attention and provided good cooperation throughout the workshop, as well as asked questions about what they didn't understand, for example, Thai cloth modification, how to sew cloth neatly, purchasing materials, and pricing, etc. In addition, from interviewing the elders, it was found that most of them had more knowledge and understanding about how to produce souvenirs from local cloth, how to reduce household and community expenditure in the long run, as well as benefits of producing souvenirs from local cloth as it can truly help generate income for themselves, their families, and communities.

2. 3. 3 Third Workshop on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy: From observation of the elders' participation in the field trip, they paid great attention and cooperated throughout the field trip and asked questions about what they didn't understand, such as how to make insect repellents, how to effectively grow vegetables, production cost, application of agricultural technology, etc. In addition, from interviewing the elders, it was found that most of them had more knowledge and understanding about the Philosophy of

Sufficiency Economy and its application to themselves, farmers, communities and society appropriately.

2. 4 Reflection: The researchers monitored the evaluation after the elders participated in the workshops. After monitoring three times, it was found that the elders recognized the importance of potential building for community development, and the activities met the elders' objectives and needs for learning and building potential for community development. After the workshops, the researchers monitored the elders and called them by phone. It was found that some groups of elders intended to apply the knowledge and skills learned from the workshops for producing shampoo and conditioner from local natural materials and dishwashing liquid to be used in the household or for sales in the community. Moreover, some groups of elders passed on their knowledge to people in the community to generate more income. However, some groups cooperated with government officers to extend the knowledge learned from the workshops and request budgets from government agencies to conduct training for people in the community to have jobs. The elders consistently paid great attention to the potential building activities to lessen their loneliness and stress from unemployment. This enabled the elders to use their potential for developing more activities in the society. Some groups of elders were interested in joining this kind of activities again as they gained knowledge and skills, as well as had a chance to exchange ideas with the speakers, other elders, and various organizations. Most importantly, what was learned from the workshops could practically be applied in living in the Thai society.

3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand

The evaluation of effectiveness of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand is the continuing process from Step 2, which consists of a questionnaire on satisfaction in workshop participation, learning outcome evaluation form (knowledge), work performance skills evaluation form, and a questionnaire on satisfaction in field trip participation. It can be summarized as follows:

3. 1 Regarding the elders' satisfaction in participating in the workshops to build potential for community development (Unit 1: Psychology for Teamwork), it was found that most elders were satisfied with the participation at a very high level ($\bar{x} = 4.58$, s.d. = 0.32).

3.2 Regarding evaluation of learning outcome (knowledge), it was found as follows: after undergoing training on Unit 2: Production of Shampoo and Conditioner from Kaffir Lime, the average scores of knowledge before and after the workshops were $\bar{x} = 10.83$ and $\bar{x} = 34.13$, respectively. This means the average score of knowledge after the workshops was higher than the average score of knowledge before the workshops at a statistical level of .001; after undergoing training on Unit 3: Production of Dishwashing Liquid, the average

scores of knowledge before and after the workshops were $\bar{x} = 4.70$ and $\bar{x} = 30.27$, respectively. This means the average score of knowledge after the workshops was higher than the average score of knowledge before the workshops at a statistical level of .001; after undergoing training on Unit 4: Production of Souvenirs from Local Cloth, the average scores of knowledge before and after the workshops were $\bar{x} = 2.78$ and $\bar{x} = 22.62$, respectively. This means the average score of knowledge after the workshops was higher than the average score of knowledge before the workshops at a statistical level of .001

3. 3 Regarding evaluation of work performance skills of the elders from the workshops, it was found that their overall work performance skill in Unit 2: Production of Shampoo and Conditioner from Kaffir Lime was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 2.89$, s.d. = 0.14), Unit 3: Production of Dishwashing Liquid was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 2.68$, s.d. = 0.33), and Unit 4: Production of Souvenirs from Local Cloth was at a moderate level ($\bar{x} = 2.36$, s.d. = 0.33).

3.4 Regarding satisfaction in field trip participation (Unit 5: Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy), it was found that most elders' overall satisfaction was at a high level ($\bar{x} = 4.33$, s.d. = 0.43).

3.5 Regarding the analysis of consistency of the workshop manual to build potential for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand, it was found that most experts found the consistency in all issues.

3.6 Regarding the analysis of appropriateness of the workshop manual to build potential for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand, it was found that the overall appropriateness was at a very high level.

Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. Current state of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand

It was found that most of the 60 elders from this study lived separately and worked as farmers. They were ready for community development, but with the need for potential building for community development in terms of knowledge about the psychology for teamwork, skills in producing herbal shampoo and conditioner from Kaffir lime, followed by production of dishwashing liquid and souvenirs. Regarding attitudes, the elders needed training on living based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, how to adjust themselves to the society and live happily, human relations building, conflict management, morale and encouragement building, principles of good conversation and communication, etc. This corresponds to Suwandara's (2011) study, which found that elders had potential for community development in terms of religion and ethics; served as good role models, and had potential in traditional medicine, which is local wisdom. However, the elders in their study still

lacked potential in terms of education, politics, and occupation. They also didn't have skills in learning new things for career development. Therefore, the elders' potential in community development was not so successful. Despite such findings, at present, elders are recognized by the society more, and elders themselves better recognize their value. As for the workshops on potential building for community development required by elders, it was found that both lectures and practice were needed together with a field trip; the instructional materials used for the workshops should come in various forms; the workshops should take 3-5 days and about 6-7 hours/ day; the days available for the workshop were Friday, Saturday, and Sunday; the venue for the workshops should be at a hotel or a resort which is convenient for traveling; most people thought the evaluation should be carried out both before and after the workshops; and skill evaluation and workshop participation evaluation should be conducted. This is in line with the study done by Palangrit (2004), who examined development of elders' quality of life by the elders themselves, families and communities in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. It was found that the organized activities met the elders' demands. In order for these activities to be sustainable, the organizers need to make sure that they correspond to the way of life and culture of people in the community, and the elders' availability to attend, such as time, venue, traveling, elders' physical condition, persons who send and pick up the elders, and expenses. The elders also needed the cooperation from municipalities, sub-district administrative organizations, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Community Development Department, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, and military officers to establish a network by sending speakers to provide knowledge in technical content, rules and regulations for living in the society happily, as well as motivating elders to adjust themselves to the age of information technology. In addition, temples should serve as the center for coordinating activities and distributing information to elders thoroughly and consistently. The problems and obstacles to elders' potential building for community development are as follows:

1. Regarding the public and private sectors, the public sector policy was not clear and not flexible for the preparation for potential building for community development of the elders in each area. Yashakoo (2013) found that local government agencies did not provide enough support as the policy on support was still unclear. Moreover, the public and private sectors rarely participated in potential building of elders in the community; the public sector budgets in each year were limited; community development public personnel were not sufficient for the number of elders in each sub-district. Thus, the work of officers on organizing activities for elders was not consistent. This is supported by In-krod's (2010) study, which found that there were many problems and obstacles of the work related to elders, such as personnel, budget, and little attention from administrators on elder activities,

as well as project overlap caused by a lack of coordination with other organizations in terms of planning and budgets. Suwandara (2011) further added that for elder potential building, it's very necessary to plan and prepare for personnel, budgets, places, equipment, as well as knowledge and understanding about how to build elders' potential to give them a good quality of life. Polsri (2004) said that community development can be successful through cooperation between the government and people, and support from the private sector and external communities.

2. Regarding community leaders, community leaders didn't have knowledge or understanding about community management, resulting in a lack of trust and acceptance from people in the community. According to Thinhuasuea's (2005) study, community leaders lacked knowledge and skills for writing a project, ineffective transfer of knowledge and information to people, and inefficient community organization management. Pakdeekul et al. (2006) asserted that to successfully strengthen communities, the country leader and politicians must have sincerity in providing support for the operation. Chun (2006) found that to strengthen community leaders, the government should organize training to increase management skills for community leaders, and arrange field trips to model sub-districts in order to enhance their understanding about roles, and community leaders should organize public meetings to jointly find solutions with leaders from all the organizations from provincial level to village level.

3. Regarding elders, the following was found.

3.1 The age of elders affected the needs for potential building for community development differently; elders had knowledge but didn't know how to utilize their existing potential in extending knowledge to benefit other aspects; some elders were not available during the time the community organized activities; as elders got older, they didn't pay much attention to community development, but staying at home; health problems and physical weaknesses did not allow elders to attend community activities, such as having medical problems, elders' dependence on relatives for traveling, activities that required a lot of movement, etc. According to the Bureau of Health Promotion (2013), health has the largest impact on participation in the family, workplace, community, and how free time is spent, especially at old age, and from interviewing elders, it was found that the problem in potential building for community development of elders came from different available times and bad health. This is supported by the study of Phunnai (2008), who studied a guideline for enhancing the quality of life of elders in Bang Krathum Sub-district Municipality, Phitsanulok Province. It was found that most elders had health problems; they were lonely, depressed, and rarely had time to relax; they lacked opportunities to interact with people in the community; there was little participation as a member of groups or organizations in the community; there was a lack of help and assistance among elders in terms of

environment and access to government public health services due to elders' difficulty in traveling. This is in line with the study of In-krod (2010), who explored a guideline for promoting elder activities in Ban Ta Khun Sub-district Municipality, Ban Ta Khun District, Surat Thani Province. It was found that the elders deteriorated both physically and mentally, leading to physical, mental, social, and economic problems. Bowles (1981) (as cited in Taweecheep, 2014) also asserted that as we age, our bodies will become weary and vulnerable to various factors, and the body organisms will gradually deteriorate. Then, efficiency of the immunity system will become weaker, resulting in aging (Jin, 2010). As a result, elders voluntarily disengage from society. This corresponds to disengagement theory, which talks about disengagement as elders' behavior of disengaging from society caused by ageing-related factors, such as retirement, bad health, death of their spouses or close friends, and poverty. However, some of them are against the society and don't accept treatment from others (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2001). This situation is inevitable as it's the rule of life to confront negative development. The key is that changes in old age may influence longevity of life, so it is important that elders should be able to take care of and depend on themselves, and live long with self-esteem.

3.2 Elders still lacked knowledge and understanding about community development, lacked self-esteem and pride in themselves, as well as lacked motivation from the public sector and facilities for elders. This is in line with Franken (2007), who said that low self-esteem will result in underestimating themselves and expressing lack of self-esteem, so they cannot make a decision. From interviewing elders, it was found that elders' potential building didn't meet all the needs as most elders had their former knowledge and various abilities. Suwandara (2011) said that local administrators, local councils and communities, and community organizations need to recognize the importance of elders towards the society and local communities, and that although elders get older, it doesn't mean that their work capacity will decline, but they can still create value for themselves, society, and country.

4. Regarding other aspects,

4. 1 There was a lack of public relations related to community development activities as there was no center for continuous information distribution; the network for goods production and distribution to the markets was incomprehensive. This is consistent with Bathkuntod's (2011) study, which found that for occupation groups, there was a lack of channels for communication between members and relevant organizations, so product promotion and market findings to support more products should be conducted. Yashakoo (2013) also found that for elders' potential building in terms of community economic development, government organizations should take part in public relations so that occupation groups will widely be recognized, as well as support other aspects, such as providing knowledge about product and packaging development.

4.2 There was no center for elders to attend activities involving community development roles. According to Chongkham-ang (2002), elders didn't have activities to support their occupations and the gathering place was far away. Phunnai (2008) found that most of the elders lacked help and assistance, for instance, in terms of provision of good environment and safe venues for elders to attend recreational activities and to have more interactions with other people in the community.

4.3 There was a shortage of activities to promote development of knowledge, skills and good attitudes towards community development, particularly in order to build potential for elders. This is due to the fact that some projects organized activities with all groups of people--elders, the disabled, women, and youths. Most of them were the same volunteers who participated in the activities. Suwandara (2011) also found that elders lacked potential in education, politics and government, and occupation as they didn't receive continuous education, so they could not read and write, nor take part in politics and government. For occupation, elders mainly worked as farmers, such as rice farming and growing herbs, but they didn't have skills in learning new things for career development.

4.4 Community management was still ineffective. For example, elders in various areas were encouraged to produce sandalwood flowers; however, elders still lacked knowledge and understanding about marketing strategy planning, as opposed to general shops and coffin shops with comprehensive marketing, for instance, by selling coffins and giving sandalwood flowers for free, like buying one coffin for 3,000 and getting free sandalwood flowers. Yashakoo (2013) also found that elders, occupational group management was still not so strong, and local government organizations did not place great importance on this issue.

2. A guideline for potential building for local development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand

The result of the focus group discussion using the PAOR process to reflect the outcomes of the guideline for potential building of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand consists of:

2.1 Planning: The participants in the focus group discussion adopted the summary from SWOT analysis of community development of elders and the summary from the analysis of the current state, community context, problems and needs of elders for planning, with date, time, place, and speaker qualifications set. This is in line with the work of Pornsiripong, Burasit, Pisisitpanporn, and Duriya-angkoon, (2014), which stated that researchers need to study communities carefully to identify strengths, weaknesses, and cooperation from people concerned for familiarization and to create instruments which are appropriate for the community. Puangngam (2006) (as cited in Suwandara, 2011) added that

the basic concept for planning to determine policies to promote elders' potential building must be based on studies and analysis of elder data, systematically stored and updated basic data of elders, availability of the data on number and structure of elders in the local communities, and realization of the capacity of elders in the community, including those who can and cannot depend on themselves.

2.2 Action: Everyone and every section applies the development guideline in practice, and promotes it to the elders through the broadcast tower, in person by word, and by telephone, with the cooperation from the community leader representatives, elder representatives, and government officers. The training workshops must be carried out, and the elders must be taken on a field trip to build a network for exchanging knowledge with organizations successful in community development and for enabling elders to increase their knowledge, skills and value for their daily life and for working with others in the society. Community development allows people in the community to jointly think, cooperate, and be responsible in every stage, including brainstorming, planning, implementing, evaluating, and receiving benefits (Polsri, 2004). This corresponds to Seesod (2009), who found that elder development encourages two levels of participation, namely (1) participation of researchers through encouraging potential and value building to jointly develop elders in the community, and (2) participation of the community with the focus on cooperation and restoration of elderly clubs to serve as the center for coordination among elders, agencies, and local organizations promoting the activities.

2.3 Observation: The researchers and the speakers jointly collected data from project organization, field trip, observation, questions, focus group discussion, and record of performance. It was found that the elders paid a lot of attention, asked questions, expressed their opinions, and continuously discussed each point of the training workshop activities and field trip. This is in line with Cobb's (1979) theory, which states that when a person is encouraged to accept and recognize value, that person will truly want to learn and pay attention. Chanthip et al. (2005) found that most elders did activities for themselves and for the community at a high level, and activities for the community were appropriate for the elders as they could socialize, consult and exchange ideas with one another.

2.4 Reflection: The elders recognized the importance of potential building for community development, and their objectives and needs for learning and potential building for community development were met. Some groups of elders passed on the knowledge and skills learned from the workshops to people in the community, and some groups cooperated with government officers to extend the knowledge learned from the workshops and requested budgets from government organizations in order to allow the elders to use their potential for developing more activities in the society. This concept is supported by McGehee & Thayer's (1967) theory, which states that elders may have one or more goals for their learning based

on what they need and in line with their former experience, the circumstance of the target, and what they gain in return. Then, the elders will gain appropriate learning, which contributes to the elders' learning and performance. Othaganont (2011) added that if the elders have positive or creative motivations, they are likely to have good behaviors and successful activities. However, although the elders have less work capacity, they can still create value for themselves or have value in the eyes of others as they have lived long, have a lot of experience, and can pass on their knowledge to their descendants. The existing experience will benefit and be valuable for the next generations.

3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand

The summary of the evaluation of effectiveness of potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand is the continuing process from Step 2, which consists of learning outcome evaluation form (knowledge), work performance evaluation form, and a questionnaire on satisfaction in workshop participation. It was found as follows:

3.1 Regarding the satisfaction in workshop participation for elders' potential building for community development (Unit 1: Psychology for Teamwork), it was found that most of the elders were satisfied with their participation in the workshops to build potential for community development (Unit 1: Psychology for Teamwork) at a very high level. This corresponds to Paibulsiri's (2011) study, which investigated the development of training programs to increase elders' quality of life, and found that the participants in the training were satisfied with the training at a high to very high level. Also, Kim (2003) conducted a study on community context and livelihood of old Korean American immigrants, and found that elders were satisfied with the activities in the organization. From interviewing elders, it was found that these days some elders are using their knowledge for social services, such as to serve as speakers in schools and universities, community philosophers, MCs to give knowledge to children, families, communities, and societies in various aspects. Most elders wanted to contribute to the community and society, and their families encouraged them to do these activities so that they would not be lonely, stressed, or isolated. When they did activities in the community, they could use their free time to benefit others, and serve as a good role model for youths, families and communities. The activities met the needs of elders who wished to learn the principles of teamwork psychology in order to apply it in their own life, in their families, and in working with others in the society where psychology is needed to promote better learning behaviors.

3.2 Regarding the evaluation of learning outcomes (knowledge) before and after every workshop, it was found that the elders had better knowledge after the workshop at a statistical significance level of .001. Similarly, Othaganont, Subgranon, Kangchai, &

Somanusorn's (2014) study, which examined the development of the training program on skills in management of knowledge in health promotion for elders, found that the trainees had more knowledge at a statistical significance level of .001. Fai-upbala (2010) studied the addition of a community committee to develop community in Dansumrong Municipality Amphoe Mueang Samut Prakarn Changwut Samut Prakarn Province and found that the trainees had more knowledge. As the learning outcome evaluation form (knowledge) was created from the information based on the needs or experience of the elders, the effectiveness was primarily evaluated by experts before being used in practice, and the speakers were knowledgeable and skilled, the elders participating in the workshops were motivated and paid great attention to learning, were ready to initiate motivation for learning without stress or worries. In addition, the elders received new opportunities and experience in socializing and building networks for knowledge extension from others, resulting in better knowledge achievement.

3. 3 Regarding the evaluation of work performance skills of elders in the workshops, it was found as follows:

3.3.1 For Training Unit 2: Production of Shampoo and Conditioner from Kaffir Lime, it was found that the overall work performance was at a high level as most of the elders already had skills in other areas. Thus, they could use them to catch up with learning. In addition, with a combination of former knowledge and experience, and the use of local raw materials, the elders were highly motivated to do the activities. When each item was individually considered, the one with the highest score was completion of work in time. As the activities were systematic with clear steps, the elders were not worried or nervous, resulting in fast learning. This is in line with Bowonnantakul (2014), who said that potential building will enable persons to learn their work faster, save time, and reduce loss as those who have been developed will not make mistakes easily, can use resources for their work effectively, and implement the development to meet the set objectives. Meanwhile, the item with the least score was screening as the screening method requires high-level skills and expertise for learning to prevent errors and to complete activities in time. Most elders didn't have basic skills in this activity, so it affected the performance in terms of screening, which was at a low level.

3.3.2 For Training Unit 3: Production of Dishwashing Liquid, it was found that the overall work performance was at a high level. As it is an activity involving our daily life, the elders were capable and picked up the new skills faster. When each item was individually considered, it was found that the item with the highest score was selection of tools and equipment for production. Paul Robert (1980) studied the project entitled Elderly Community Service Assistant: The Use of Paid Part-time Work Experience according to the preventive plan for elders in hospitals. It was found that the elders saw the possibility of the new roles

and developed the work skills. Also, Bowonnantakul (2014) said that potential enhancement will make a person up-to-date both in terms of knowledge for work performance and use of different instruments. The item with the lowest score was the work method. As the elders needed to know accurate methods of production in order to achieve a good mixture, and they needed to use a lot of movement, they could be tired and have pain in their arms, and become worried if they had to work for a long time and couldn't finish the work in time. Therefore, the work method may not match the physical condition of the elders, resulting in the lowest score.

3.3.3 For Training Unit 4: Production of Souvenirs from Local Cloth, it was found that the overall performance was at a moderate level. As this activity required high-level skills and expertise in tailoring, sewing and decorating, both male and female elders had to put a lot of effort to create a good piece of work. When each item was considered individually, it was found that the item with the highest score was selection of tools and equipment for production. As tools and equipment used for production were those found and used in daily life, the elders were familiar with their usage, so there were no obstacles to learning. Fai-upbala (2010) studied the addition of community committee to develop community of Dansumrong Municipality Amphoe Mueang Samut Prakarn Changwut Samut Prakarn Province, and found that encouraging people to depend on themselves, starting from small and simple things, or allowing them to learn from such work, and doing works based on their own decision will enable them to develop themselves and participate in the society. However, the item with the lowest score was delicacy. As the activities required skills with high delicacy, the elders needed to use more physical movement and patience than for other activities, from tailoring to decoration in order to achieve quality and practical work, resulting in tiredness and muscle pain. According to the Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (2015), elderly people confronted deterioration in performing different activities and chronic illnesses, such as Knee Osteoarthritis and Alzheimer. At older ages, these diseases cause work performance regression, making it difficult for doing daily life activities.

3.4 Regarding satisfaction in field trip participation (Training Unit 5: Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy), it was found that most of the elders were satisfied with the field trip at a high level. As the activities consisted of the content the elders were interested in and wanted to learn in order to be applied in their daily life and in the community, they paid attention and took part in asking questions and expressing opinions, as well as providing cooperation when the speakers asked for volunteers. According to Suwandara (2011), encouraging elders to receive new knowledge for career development, such as through the organization of vocational training for elders, will enable the elders to have skills for doing jobs and develop the communities in other aspects. When each item was considered

individually, the item with the highest score was the correspondence of the field trip topic and content with the needs of the training participants. This could be because the activities could be applied in the elders' daily life, so they were highly motivated. From interviewing community developers, it was found that the elders in the community had knowledge and skills in various areas, still wanted to learn and pass on their knowledge to the youths in the community, and wanted to find activities to compensate their lost roles. According to the sociological theory of elders, social interaction can increase social opportunities and life adjustment for elders wishing to replace their lost roles (Erber, 2005). Waitayachot (2004) also added that community and social activities will help develop occupational skills and expertise, leading to the learning of new things and the ability to solve problems by one's own, which will help improve quality of life for elders.

3.5 Regarding the evaluation of the correspondence of the workshop manual for potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand, it was found that most of the experts found correspondence for all items. Suwannaboot (2013) studied the guideline for leadership potential building of administrators of municipalities in Surat Thani Province, and found that the experts found its correspondence at the highest level. This could be because the workshop manual for potential building for community development of elders developed by the researchers were based on studies of documents, theories, and relevant research studies, as well as basic information and the needs for potential development of elders, where every step of training aims to encourage all the parties concerned to participate through interviews to elicit opinions or needs of elders, community leaders, and government officers. In addition, before the implementation of the training program, consideration was taken by experts and revision was made by the researchers. Finally, the training program objectives were feasible and appropriate for potential, experience and needs of the elders for comprehensive implementation.

3.6 Regarding the analysis of the appropriateness of the training manual for potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand, it was found that the overall appropriateness was at a high level. Suwannaboot (2013) studied the guideline for leadership potential development of administrators of municipalities in Surat Thani Province and found that the experts thought the guideline was appropriate at a high to a highest level. This could be that the developed workshop manual for potential building for community development truly corresponded to the state of problems and needs of the elders. In addition, most of the experts had positive attitudes towards recognition of the importance of the workshop manual for potential building for community development of elders in order to create value for the elders and to prepare the elders to

have potential for developing themselves, the community and society, and promote good quality of life, and happy life in the society.

The guideline for potential building for community development of elders in the northeastern region of Thailand is appropriate for the needs of the elders to be applied for organizing training, education, and field trips to cover all the target groups, understand life and development of each age range of the elders, and to promote participation in appropriately utilizing potential for community development. Moreover, it was found that the success of potential building for community development of elders depends on community leaders, Office of Welfare Promotion, Protection and Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Community Development Office, educational institutions, as well as public and private organizations concerned to build the network for surveying needs and following up the results of elders' potential building periodically so that the elders will recognize their own value and have more self-esteem. This will encourage more participation in community development and reduce social problems, such as unemployment, stress, loneliness, and depression (which may lead to suicide).

Comments and Suggestions

Suggestions are as follows:

1. Sub-district administrative organizations/municipalities and universities can apply the guideline for potential building for community development of elders in organizing training, education, and field trips to cover the needs of the targets.

2. Sub-district administrative organizations/municipalities should promote lifelong learning of elders to enable them to understand life and development in each age of elders, and to encourage participation in using potential for community development appropriately.

3. Sub-district administrative organizations/ municipalities should promote and develop different aspects of elder potential, including occupation, education, medicine, religion, politics and government, etc. by letting them practice new skills to have new roles they are interested to learn, so that they can depend on themselves and live happily.

4. Sub-district administrative organizations/ municipalities, community leaders, community development offices, as well as public and private organizations should jointly find a guideline or a measure to promote and develop elder potential, enable them to pass on their existing knowledge, invite speakers to give lectures and demonstrations, do things in practice to exchange knowledge, and support each year's budgets.

5. Sub-district administrative organizations/ municipalities should cooperate with community leaders to promote and protect elders, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, community development offices, educational institutions, as well as relevant public and private sectors to build a network for surveying needs and monitoring elders'

potential development outcomes periodically to make elders recognize their own value and importance. This will lead to motivation to take part in community development more and reduce social problems, such as unemployment, lack of income, stress, loneliness, and depression.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Studies on elder potential in other aspects should be further explored to encourage elders to express their potential appropriately.
2. Sub-district administrative organizations/ municipalities located in the same district should be compared to find out if they have different guidelines to support and promote potential for community development.
3. There should be a study to evaluate the outcome of potential building for community development continuously.

Acknowledgements

This study was completed with the support from various organizations, including the National Research Council of Thailand, President of Suan Dusit University, as well as key informants, which were elders, community leaders, and government officers in Nakhon Ratchasima, Khon Kaen, and Ubon Ratchathani, who shared their experience and took part in a focus group discussion. It is expected that this study will be beneficial for various educational institutions to apply the results for improving their instructions, and for relevant organizations to apply the results for improving the quality of life of elders and other population groups.

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