

ETHNOGRAPHY OF YOUTH LEARNING

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Abstract: The purpose of this qualitative study aimed to study learning of youth through the community volunteering spirit process in a socio-cultural context. The study was conducted in one municipality located in Sra-kaew province from December 2015 to October 2016. This study employed critical ethnography method as the research design and it was divided into 3 phases :1) exploring the community to understand socio-cultural context, 2) studying the situation or event contributing youth volunteering spirit, and characteristic of youth volunteer in a community and 3) analyzing the outcome or learning of youth from the development of volunteerism system in youths by community. The participants were divided into 2 groups, including 42 key informants and 19 general informants. The data were collected using participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and analyzed by content analysis. The results indicated as follows. 1) The incidents and event causing youth volunteerism; Problems and needs in the community, National and local policies, Cultural practice, Cultural activities. 2) Five characteristics of the volunteering work of the youth; Sociological, Economical, Environmental, Health-related and Political characteristics 3) Seven Outcome from volunteer worked

Keywords: youth, volunteering spirit, youth's learning

Introduction

In an era of globalization, according to competitive economic situations and an abrupt change of social dynamics, most Thai people tend not to take others for granted and merely pursue wealth, benefits, and power rather than morality. Subsequently, Thai society has been gradually lacking compassion, merit, and morality. Social problems have also occurred in this time namely, corruption, crime, illegal drugs, and robbery and family problems: true reflection of the selfishness of people in society. According to the morality lacking atmosphere, it affects to youths. The researcher who studied about youth in current time said that at the present, youth lacks individual responsibility and social solidarity and as a result, it causes social problems such as illegal drugs, brawls in public, unsafe sex, unwanted pregnancy, smoking and drinking. This comes from the lack of individual responsibility and social solidarity²².

Many organizations attempt to resolve such issues by creating the policy of educating children and youth, training parents and increasing in school curriculum on campaigns that seek to instill morality and ethics to children. According the attempt to try to solve the problems, it causes the gap which is the program or manages to overcome youth's problems that still cannot manage solutions to meet the needs of young people in the area and truly make a difference^{1, 3}. To improve or even to correct the current social situation, the term “volunteer spirit” has been raised and promoted by many organizations because the “volunteer spirit” concept means that individuals are supposed to be giving rather than taking. With the volunteer spirit, individuals are willing to offer others help with their responsible ideology; which can be considered similar to the concept of public mind and public consciousness^{2,3,4}. Volunteerism is an important, and increasingly popular, mechanism for young people to bring about positive with them and positive change in society and it is becoming more and more relevant as a mechanism used to engage young people to be good citizens in global peace and sustainable human

development^{10,20}. Developing volunteering spirit can be done by cultivating and supporting responsibilities in youth. Responsibilities namely: self-responsibility and social-responsibility are a caring attitude for oneself and others. The volunteering spirit supports self-regulation, so the participants can be responsible for themselves and their behavior^{9,17,18}. The volunteers are a group of youth that are willing to improve themselves. The volunteering spirit is a requirement that is helpful for every social community. With the supportive development from family, peer group, community and even all people around the world, the volunteering spirit can be relatively effective. Furthermore, the youths also bring direct benefits to their communities through volunteering. When presented with images of young people doing community services, the opinion of adults might be changed. They encourage positive citizenship among the youth and the adults in the community and encouraged the youth to be more engaged in their communities.

In 2010, the government declared a year of giving and volunteering and pushed it as the national agenda. The Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007–2011) and the guidelines for the development of children and youth to have a good mind related with Thai government also play a role in raising knowledge with morality among Thai children^{6,7,13} and adolescents by passing the National Education Act and Amendments B.E. 2542 (A.D. 1999) (2nd Edition). The act stated that it desired Thai citizens are human beings with inclusion of physical health, mental health, knowledge, merit, and morality^{8,14,15,16}.

Therefore, cultivating the youth with volunteer spirit is an important thing that requires the cooperation of family, school and community and support for building volunteering spirit in youth voluntary activities supported by person, group or organization in the community such as head of the village, teachers, temple and community organizations. Khanitta Nuntaboot (2013) mentioned the four major organizations in the community that should work together, including head of the village, community administration, and community health care service and community members. These four major organizations work as the network to develop the community to be the community healthy strengthening. On the other hand, the community also learns from the youth volunteer activities^{11,12}.

The purpose of this research was to study the model to build volunteer spirit in youth by using community capacity. To obtain knowledge about the development of the community on volunteering spirit in youth based on postmodernism and interpretative philosophy, multiple methods to understand process and mechanism are required. This study will present the knowledge or the guidelines for developing youth volunteering spirit in the community in order to develop youth to be good citizens and create strengthening community.

Research methodology

Design: The researchers decided to use critical ethnography for understanding the nature of developing community volunteering spirit in youth by using community capacity.

Setting and key informant: The study was conducted in one municipality located in Sra-kaew province from December 2015 and October 2016. The participants were divided into two groups, including forty-two key informants who involved in developing community volunteering spirit in youth including youth group, families, peer group, and community members or officers of the local administrative organizations, community leaders and head of the village and nineteen general informants consisting of community organizations, civil group, community members who got help from youth volunteer group.

Ethical considerations: Ethical approval was obtained from the KhonKaen University Ethics Committee in Human Research. An information sheet, invitation letter, and consent form were sent to all participants directly

with a clearly explanation about purpose, methods, procedures, potential risks and benefits of the study. Participation was voluntary and written informed consent was obtained. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Data collection: The data were collected using participant observation to understand lifestyle, beliefs and behaviors from scenario. In-depth interviews were used to understand the perception and the meanings of youth volunteerism, civil group, families and community organizations about youth volunteer spirit in the community and the process or the mechanism to develop community volunteering spirit in youth. Focus group discussions were employed for discussing and sharing opinions about youth volunteer spirit and the process or the mechanism to development community volunteering spirit in youth. Multiple data sources in the same study for validation purposes were used ^{1,2}. There are three types of data triangulation; time, space and person (Data Triangulation Technique)

Many data collection methods were employed in this study (Method Triangulation). Trustworthiness; to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, credibility, dependability, and conformability were established^{5,21}. These included participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document study⁵. All of the data obtained from these methods were then reconfirmed by the key informants and debriefing with the advisor having experiences in qualitative research.

Data analysis: Content analysis was applied to analyze the data. The analysis and synthesis process were immediately conducted at the completion of each individual interview and focus group discussion session. For The data gathered from in-depth interview, the tape recorder was heard and transcribed carefully. All of the transcriptions were then read several times and the key words or terms throughout the transcription were highlighted and noted. The coding then was made. The focus group data was also analyzed in the same format. The final emerging themes and categories were established.

Findings

1. Characteristics of the volunteering work of the youth

Five characteristics of the volunteering work of the youth;

1) Sociological characteristics. The activities undertake in order to promote life skills, morals and ethics, sense of responsibility for oneself and community. Examples of youth volunteer activities in sociological characteristics are: Teaching morals and ethics to children and youth, making home visits to the elderly and the disabled people.

2) Economical characteristics. These are voluntary activities in which the youth volunteers have participated in order to earn some money for the elderly and the elderly schools including Fundraising campaigns for the elderly school, making income for the elderly who are staying at home.

3) Environmental characteristics. These are voluntary activities in which the volunteers have participated in order to protect the environment in the school, temple, and community, to keep places clean, to manage waste, to save trees, as well as to inspect environmental factors causing diseases.

4) Health-related characteristics. These are voluntary activities related to both physical and mental health. These activities are taking care of the elderly, people with disabilities and poor people, teaching how to take care of oneself and avoiding risky behavior such as drugs abuse, sexual relationship, driving or using social media, making home visits to teen mothers and monitoring food safety in the community.

5) Political characteristics these are voluntary activities that promote political activities such as promoting election campaign, providing community forum for the villagers.

2. The incidents and event causing youth volunteerism

From the analysis of events causing the youth's voluntary activities, it can be

classified into 4 characteristics which are 1) Problems and needs in the community such as the elderly and disable people have been abandoned, teenage pregnancy, risk behavior, waste in school. 2) National and local policies to inculcate moral values, ethics, and a sense of social responsibility into the youths such as ministry of education's policy has guided schools to teach students about desirable characteristics, School's policy promote policy to inculcate moral values, ethics and volunteer activities, 3 Municipality's development plan in accordance with national development plan focuses on youths' development for inculcating moral values, ethics, a sense of social responsibility, and values of being good citizens. 3) Cultural practice. Being a good role model of our adults or parents has promoted voluntary activities and has created awareness of volunteer spirit in the youths. Community leaders 4) Cultural activities Voluntary work will be undertaken when there are festivals, ceremonies or activities in the community. The volunteer or community leaders will then persuade the youths to take part in the activities.

Key actors

The key actors who work for development system of youth volunteering spirit. included.

School included teachers and school directors who had important roles since the youth spent their time mostly at school. Apart of having friends, teachers were the ones who stayed closed to the youth. According to that, teachers had the important roles in instilling the volunteer spirit to the youth; providing knowledge about volunteerism and doing volunteer activities, supporting the activities in both school and community in order to foster children and the youth to have volunteer spirit, being an advisor as teachers had a role to give advice to the youth from the beginning, to make a plan, to organize the volunteer activities, to work, and to search for sponsors.

Parents were the ones who were close to the youth and they were also the ones who lived with the youth since the early age. They were the people who instilled the thoughts, morality and ethics to the youth. Being an ideal was the role of parents in order to foster the culture of volunteerism from the early age to the youth starting at home. Parents needed to realize of being a good role model to the youth in order to let them see and follow what the parents do. It was the process of instilling the youth to have volunteer spirit since they are young.

Social groups such as the group of volunteers, occupational groups or the elderly association were the people sector gathering to build up and develop the volunteerism to the youth. They invited the youth to join the volunteer activities in order to make them learn and do the volunteer work and to make them have confidence, skills, and positive attitude towards volunteer work. Social groups were the advisors of the youth in making working plan, assisting others, giving related information, and being a coordinator in coordinating with other organizations in order to support the volunteer work to the youth.

The leaders of the community consisting of a sub-district headman, the leader of the village, the members of sub-district administrative organization, the committee of the village, the religious leaders, and the local scholars were the leaders of principle in supporting the policy of volunteer development to the youths. They supported the activities, the work of youth volunteers in order to let them do the volunteer activities such as supporting places, budget, and convenience, supporting the news and information in organizing the volunteer

activities of the community and providing the information about the policy of volunteerism to the people in the community and providing knowledge or spreading the wisdom knowledge such as making a rice-offering and making a floating basket. It was the way to allow the youth to do volunteer work or have leader skill in managing volunteer work.

Local administrative organization was the organization in the local area having the important role in making policies about supporting the activities of the youth.

Youth Council was the organization inviting youth to do volunteer activities and it was the ideal of volunteer work of children and youth.

Outcome from volunteer worked

1) Knowing how to work : The development of volunteerism towards the youths in the process of working makes the youths to learn about critical thinking, working as a team, solving problems, planning, and working with others. This helps the youths who learnt through the development of volunteerism and working voluntarily be able to work well with others when they have to continue their study at other schools or work in other places.

2) Having morality and ethics : The development process of volunteerism instills the morality and ethics to the youths by doing activities corporately at the temple, learning about Buddhism at Buddhist center on Sunday, exchanging knowledge with teachers and volunteer workers. When they visit homes of elders or disable people, and do work, it makes them learn about life of people who need care. This make the youths know what mercy, sacrifice, think of others or people who need help is which is the development of morality and ethics to the youths in the areas.

3) Having knowledge and skills in working as a volunteer: Have knowledge and skills in looking after others such as disable people, elders, surveilling drugs, observing on the aegypti to prevent Dengue fever, having skill in being a lecturer, working with others, having skill in thinking analytically, collecting and using data, the youths can bring all skills to use with their work.

4) Being confident to express opinion: The process of building volunteering trains the youths to learn and to attend the meetings. Advisor supports them and also the work process which develop the youths to be confident in expressing their opinion at the meeting or public.

5) Being important and proud: The development of volunteerism to the youths when they work as a volunteer, what we can see from it is the youths feel proud of themselves; they feel that they are useful, particularly the stubborn ones, who are seen by others as bad people, when they have a chance to do a useful thing to the community, they feel proud of themselves and feel important. Meanwhile, parents including adults in the community, when they see their children and youths learn to work as a volunteer, who makes the youths have good behavior; they admire and feel proud of them.

6) Being a good ideal, be active, work as a volunteer: The process of working as a volunteer, there is a process of publication, communication to people in the community. Children and youths see working as a volunteer as a work that gets admiration, it makes the youths in the areas including the adults learn to be a good ideal in working with volunteer spirit. It activates the importance of the development of volunteerism to children and youths in the community.

7) Having good attitude towards volunteer work: When working as a volunteer and the development of volunteerism change the community and the youths, and the elders are well-cared, the leaders of the community including the youths themselves are admired.

Discussion

Systematic process and a variety of methods are required for the development or the creation of volunteerism in youth. Social capital and the potential of the area at every level are utilized to promote the development of volunteerism in youth based on the nature and the characteristics of youth in that area. In the development process, providing knowledge for understanding, the development of youth attitudes toward volunteerism, providing knowledge on planning, analytical thinking skill, problem solving and teamwork are needed^{4,23}. The opportunity to work with leaders should be provided to the youth. They should also be encouraged for the participation in community activities in order to allow them to see the role model and learn volunteerism skills. Providing the opportunity for young people to plan and operate the work themselves by having advice from adults and the support from the community leaders, social groups and those involved in the community is the cooperation to create the development of youth volunteering systematically.

The study also found that the successful strategy is the cooperation of the three sectors, including local administrative organization, school and volunteer group which are the sectors that are relevant and close to the youth. There is also the support from social enterprises which is the mechanism supporting and reinforcing the occurrence of systemic volunteer spirit development and there is a group of volunteers as a role model. These are the significant mechanisms leading to the volunteer spirit development in the community. The youth are the people who are in the age of learning from external environment, learning through the model or the role model. Therefore, having groups working as volunteers such as a group of civil defense volunteers, a group of public health volunteers, rescue volunteers, a group of safety and security volunteers as well as the leaders of the community, the village headman, and the sub-district headman who do a volunteer work for the community makes the youth learn and see the model of activity and work. The opportunity should be given to the youth to join the activities of these groups. Having Youth council which is the youth organization, is the center of youth in brainstorming, planning, and doing activities together by working systemically under the advice of adults leading to the volunteer spirit development of youth. According to the development of community volunteer system through the whole process, there are the main leaders in the development of volunteerism, including school referring to teachers, parents, social groups, the leaders of the community, local administrative organization and Youth Council. They are close to the youth and have different roles. The roles and the responsibilities of each section will help to develop the youth volunteer system in the community concretely in order to allow this research to be used as the guidelines for the development plan of the policy or the design of volunteer youth development which is consistent with the context of the area and can create systematic operation and make a difference to the youth who are the future of the country.

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