

## Developing the Community Participation-Based Student Care System for a Small School

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### Abstract

This research was aimed to: 1) study current contexts, problems, and needs for student care system for a small school; 2) develop a community participation-based student care system for a small school; and 3) study the benefits students can gain from a community participation-based student care system for a small school. A total of 52 participants in the study included a research team of Ban Khum Kham school and a research team of Ban Phraw Nue school. The research team of Ban Khum Kham school consisted of a school director, 5 teachers, 2 representatives for an educational institution, 8 representatives for parents, 6 representatives for students, and 2 representatives for villagers, totally 24 participants and the research team of Ban Phraw Nue school comprised a school director, 9 teachers, 4 representatives for an educational institution, 8 representatives for parents, 6 representatives for students, and 2 representatives for villagers, totally 28 participants. The study was conducted through a participatory action research procedure. It was found that 1) most parents were farmers and they brought up their children based on the conduct of moral reasoning. When staying home, most students did the reading and homework as well as the chores as their routines and responsibilities. Most parents had positive opinion and attitude towards schools. The problems about running the school project on developing the student care system were a lack of continual co-ordinations between schools and communities, parents hardly participating in school activities which were organized by teachers only, and students having no chance to give any ideas. The needs for developing the student care system concerned the community's needs in volunteering being a committee and cooperating in solving student's problems in every aspect; 2) developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school consisted of 7 stages: (1) home-visiting and data surveying with community coordination, (2) analyzing data with community coordination, (3) separating students into individuals with community coordination, (4) organizing projects, supporting activities, and problem-solving with community coordination, (5) running projects with community coordination, (6) summarizing the project assessment results with community coordination, and (7) student's home-revisiting with community coordination; 3) according to the benefits students gained from the community participation-based student care system for a small school, it was found that student's learning achievement got increased in terms of learning and abilities. As for physical and mental health and behaviors, students got improved and for student's family, economic status, and protection, students received more warmth and care from their parents.

**Keywords:** Community Participation, Student Care System, Small School Development System Development.

### 1. Introduction

The Office of Basic Education Commission Ministry of Education as a major organization for educational management commits itself into preparing basic education for all and making it qualified according to the standards of basic educational curriculum and educational standards. It also plays an important role and carries its commissions in managing education for all students, target groups which include normal students, exceptional students, and students with less opportunity. Currently, there have been 31,424 schools under the Office of Basic Education Commission. Among them were 14,397 schools which have fewer than 120 students and 5,631 schools were found to be the smallest, with a fewer than 60 students. In managing education for all without any payment, specific strategies and suitable techniques have been needed and expansions of the schools have been made in order to serve and cover most areas which are categorized into city areas, distant areas, and special areas. However, with such expansions there are still obstacles with particular reference to quality of education and effectiveness in managing those schools when

compared to other schools according to various limitations including factors and processes which result in quality of production (Office of Basic Education Commission, 2008: 28)

Community participation in managing education becomes a major issue for education reform in Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550 which indicates the state support for people's participation, particularly the National Education Act B.E. 2542 as amended (No. 2) B.E. 2545 which adapted policies as an intent and a guideline for encouraging all parties to participate in managing education and the essence of participation was summarized as 1) participation brings about brainstorming and discussion among the persons concerned which results in a variety of thoughts and leads to feasible action rather than a thought given by one person, 2) participation gives psychological outcomes which cause less resistance in the one hand. In the other hand, participation enhances acceptance. Besides, administrators can employ this to test out whether or not what they know relates to what their staff know, 3) participation enhances good communication, knowledge and working experience exchange, and good relationship, 4) participation provides the staff or the persons concerned with the opportunity to use their abilities and skills in co-working which fosters team spirit and self-involvement in their workplace, 5) participation results in favorable performance, quality of decision, and feasibility of work improvement as well as co-worker's satisfaction with more performance (Atkamanon & Chokeworawatanakorn, 2002: 21 )

In terms of student development, emphasis is on physical, mental and intellectual qualities. In addition, being able, moral, and healthy is also expected by the society through a process of education. Such characteristics can be fostered through both student's promotion and student's problem protection which are crucial for development since social contexts have been tremendously changed due to media and technology which have affected people both positively and negatively. These cause different problems such as economic problems, drug problems, competition problems, and family problems, causing sadness, anxiety, depression, improper self-adjustment, and others which negatively affect physical and mental health of the concerned persons. Therefore, success in student development as aimed must rely on co-operations of all people concerned particularly a community and teachers in schools. In doing so, advisers should take care of students with love and concern and they also take pride in what they are doing for developing student's quality of life which results in being qualified persons in the society. Consequently, preferable outcomes are able to happen with all people including teachers, students, parents, community or society both directly and indirectly. The student care system then becomes the system which can be operated to serve the quality assurance with reference to factors, products and processes (Department of Mental Health, 2003). With such reasons, the researcher was interested in developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school in order to obtain the appropriate student care system for further use.

## **2. Purposes**

This research was aimed:

1. to study current contexts, problems, and needs for the community participation-based student care system for a small school,
2. to develop the community participation-based student care system for a small school, and
3. to study the benefits students gain from the community participation-based student care system for a small school

## **3. Methodology**

This research was conducted through the participatory action research procedure to develop the community participation-based student care system for a small school as follows:

1. Analyzing basic conditions and problems about students care system for a small school by studying general school contexts, documents about running the student care system. The school director, 5 teachers, and 12 students who are studying in Grades 1-6, two students of which were chosen, were interviewed about problems with running the student care system for Ban Khum Kham school Sri Chiangmai district Nong Khai province. On the same issue, the school director, 9 teachers, and 12 students who are studying in Grades 1-6, two of which were chosen, were interviewed about problems with running the students care system for Ban Phraw Nue Muang district Nong Khai province. The information gained at this stage was used as a basis for developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school.

2. Developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school consisted of the following stages:

Stage 1 Preparing a community. The small schools under the Office of Nong Khai Educational Service Area 1 were purposively chosen based on poverty problems and problems about the students who do not live with their parents in the community. Ban Khum Kham school and Ban Phraw Nue school reached the requirements and were willing to participate in the study, and the meeting for student's parents was held.

Stage 2 Training researchers and the community. Training and seminars in developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school were

organized at Ban Khum Kham school and Ban Phraw Nue school in order to provide the participants with knowledge about student care system, roles and duties of the research team, developing student care system, leadership, sponsors and human relationship. The sample consisted of 147 villagers of Ban Khum Kham and 158 villagers of Ban Phraw Nue. Statistics for analyzing data in this stage included percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Stage 3 Developing the community participation based-student care system for a small school. Focus group discussion was organized with a research team consisting of school administrators, teachers, and representatives for an educational institution, representatives for parents, and representatives for students and villagers, which were equally divided into 2 groups. Focus group discussion was formed in a panel discussion pattern of 52 participants. Focus group format report was used and data gained was analyzed according to the issues obtained and reconfirmed by referring to documents and participants to gain both preciseness and reliability.

Stage 4 Collecting data. The researcher and the research team collected data regarding general current contexts and needs of Ban Khum Kham and Ban Phraw Nue schools, academic profiles and special abilities of the students, the information about student's physical and mental health and behaviors, the information about family backgrounds, economic status, and student's protection. Home-visit was made and student's home-visit forms were used.

Stage 5 Analyzing data. The researcher and the research team were divided into 6 groups for a group work which consisted of equal numbers of participants including chairman, secretary, and group members as committees. Each group performed the given tasks categorized into 6 grade levels which were Grades 1-6 and the major part was placed upon the classroom advisers. Student's data was calculated and processed according to the survey forms comprising 3 parts: academic records and special abilities, student's physical and mental health and behaviors, student's family backgrounds, economic status and protection. Each group summarized the data and gave a 10 minutes' report about the results. All members of the research team helped make observations and criticize the data which was collected, processed, and analyzed by each group. The research team recorded and summarized what they had found and gave suggestions. Student data processing forms were used as the research tool.

Stage 6 Discussing the findings with the community. The meeting was held for the researcher, student's parents, and villagers for a presentation of analyzed data obtained from each group. This was for correction and verification of the data gained from students in Grades 1-6 within 10 minutes. Everyone in the meeting was encouraged to express opinions towards each raised issue relating to developing school and students in 3 aspects in order to participate in sharing ideas, planning, acting, making decision, processing and analyzing the data. Questionnaires were distributed to the participants in order to evaluate the meeting and all data and suggestions were taken as crucial information for establishing the plan for developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school. The research tool in this stage was a questionnaire.

Stage 7 Community planning. The researcher and the research team held a meeting for establishing a project to solve the problems found in an analysis of the data and from the meeting with parents and villagers. The proposed projects were: 1) the project on solving learning problems and promoting special abilities of the students including sub-projects, namely, 1.1) the project on Thai language skills improvement which comprised Thai language remedial activities, Thai language skills enhancing activities, and fluent reading and writing in Thai, 1.2) the project on English language skills improvement, 1.3) the project on computer skills improvement, 1.4) the project on learning improvement, 1.5) the project on "LOVE READING", and 1.6) the project on learning improvement camping; 2) the project on solving problems on and promoting student's physical and mental health and behaviors including 2.1) the project on promoting sports and health, 2.2) the project on student's activities improvement, 2.3) the project on

exercising before class and meeting, and 2.4) the project on activities for physical education; 3) the project on solving problems on and promoting student's family, economic status, and protection consisting of 3.1) the project on student's home-visit, 3.2) the project on taking care of the students not living with parents and special home-visit, 3.3) the project on fund-raising for student's education, and 3.4) the project on money-sharing "TOD PHRA PA" for student's education. All proposed projects were taken into considerations of representatives for parents, community leaders, representatives for an educational institution for correction and approval. Groups were divided and held the meeting for responsibilities and assignments. Projects were processed to the school director for approval and then to classroom advisers for operations.

**Stage 8 Plan performing.** The research team and the community co-worked with one another and performed the plans and the projects which were aimed to solve the student's problems with 3 aspects according to the proposed projects in Stage 7. The meeting was held for the research team for summarizing the outcomes which were gained from each project and activity. The group responsible for each grade level was assigned to report plan performance and all outcomes of the projects were recorded for further satisfaction evaluation.

**Stage 9 Following-up, monitoring, and evaluating.** A total of 5 participants including the researcher, the school director, the representative for an educational institution, the representative for parents, and the representative for the community took part in following up, monitoring, and evaluating the proposed system which was implemented, following Stage 1 to Stage 8 in Ban Khum Kham school and Ban Phraw Nue school. In evaluating the project, the researcher team's satisfaction with developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school was assessed using the satisfaction questionnaire. After that, the meeting of 60 participants consisting of the research team and people of Ban Khum Kham and Ban Phraw Nue was held for sharing opinions about the benefits students could gain from the community participation-based student care system for a small school.

#### **4. Results**

Based on the results of this research in developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school, it was found that:

1. In an aspect of current contexts, most student's parents lived in their own two-storey houses and students' houses were located in good environment. Most student's parents were farmers and the workplaces of student's parents were in the same district. Most students had good relationship with their family members and did not have underlying disease. The parents were satisfied with the students and brought up them with reasons. When staying at home, most students did the readings and homework, and were responsible for what they were assigned to do. Most students lived with their parents who lived with each other. Each family earned more than 3,000 baht a month, but sometimes it was not sufficient. Most students were at the same age and walked to school. The parents had good attitude towards the school. In a family, most students were close to a mother more than a father and they often consulted their mother when having problems. The problems with running the project about developing the student care system involved a lack of continual coordination between school and community. Parents had less participation in the activities organized by the teachers only. Students did not take part in sharing their ideas and the budget allocated for operating the project about student care system was not sufficient. The persons engaging in developing the student care system wanted to participate in the activity, volunteer themselves as a committee, and solve the student's problems in every aspect.

2. The results of developing the community participation-based student care system for a small a school showed that the system consisted of 7 stages, namely, (1) home-visiting and data surveying with community coordination, (2) analyzing data with community coordination, (3) separating students into individuals with community coordination, (4) organizing projects, supporting activities, and problem-solving with community coordination, (5) running projects with community coordination, (6) summarizing the project assessment results with community coordination, and (7) student's home-revisiting with community coordination.

3. The results of the benefits students gained from developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school were as follows:

##### **3.1 Student's learning and abilities**

In a case of Ban Khum Kham school, there were 7 students with high learning achievement (15.22%), 33 students with moderate learning achievement (71.47%), and 6 students with low learning achievement (13.04%) before developing the community participation-based student care system, and after the community

participation-based student care system had been developed, the students could improve their learning achievement. A number of the students with high learning achievement were changed to be 22 students which contributed to 47.83%, while the improvement of the learning achievement reduced a number of the students with moderate learning achievement, which were left to be 24 students (52.17%). Evidently, all students with low learning achievement could improve their learning achievement successfully, which constituted 0% for the students with low learning achievement after the system had been developed.

The same pattern was found with Ban Phraw Nue school after the community participation-based student care system had been developed. The number of different groups of students was changed and gave satisfactory outcomes. A number of the students with high learning achievement changed from 8 students (9.88%) to 32 students (39.51%) and a number of the students with moderate learning achievement decreased from 64 students (79.01%) to 47 students (58.02%). As for the students with low learning achievement, all of them (9 students or 11.11%) could improve their learning achievement and left 0% for this category after the system had been developed.

### 3.2 Student's problems on physical and mental health and behaviors

According to the results of developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school, in a case of Ban Khum Kham school, there were 6 students (13.06%) had such problems and after the system had been developed most of them were improved in terms of physical and mental health and behaviors. Only one Grade 2 student still had the problems, which gave 2.17%. In the same case, 10 students with such problems of Ban Phraw Nue school (12.35%) could be improved and had no problems with physical and mental health and behaviors after the system had been developed.

### 3.3 Student's family, economic status, and protection

Developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school helped improve student's problems about family, economic status, and protection in both Ban Khum Kham school and Ban Phraw Nue school. Before the community participation-based student care system was developed, there were 6 students (13.03%) of Ban Khum Kham school and 8 students (9.88%) of Ban Phraw Nue school who had got such problems. The problems of the students in both schools could be completely solved after the system had been developed.

## 5. Conclusion

This research was aimed to: 1) study current contexts, problems, and needs for students care system for a small school; 2) develop a community participation-based student care system for a small school; and 3) study the benefits students can gain from a community participation-based student care system for a small school. The research was conducted by the participatory action research procedure. It revealed current contexts, problems, and needs for the student care system. The major outcome was developing the community participation-based student care system for a small school which consisted of 7 stages and the benefits students could gain from the community participation-based student care system for a small school. Students had higher learning achievements and their physical and mental health and behaviors were improved. For student's family, economic status, and protection, they got more warmth and care from their parents

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