

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Community Driven Development Approach on Sustainable Local Development: Lessons Learned and Success Factors from Sufficiency Economy Villages, Surin Province, Thailand

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Abstract

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), initiated by His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) of Thailand, can be applied as an important guideline for Community Driven Development (CDD). The SEP is seen as an approach for sustainable local development. The objectives of this research were: 1) to investigate the SEP principles, and the criteria and indicators used for evaluating Sufficiency Economy Villages (SEVs) models, and 2) to study the lessons learned and success factors of sustainable local development approach using the SEP: case studies of Hong Village and Tenmee Village, Mueang District, Surin Province, Thailand. The sampling groups included three governmental officials, three community leaders, and three model villagers. The research tool was an in-depth interview form, developed from the relevant SEP concepts. The results showed as the followings. (1) The SEP

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principles consist of three components: moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity, as well as two conditions: knowledge and morality. (2) There are four criteria and 23 indicators for the SEVs models' evaluation. (3) There were four success factors contributing to the SEVs models, comprising: leadership qualities of village leaders, villagers' cooperation, community development network, and academic learning resources. These concepts can be applied to drive the community to be a Community Driven Development Village model in other countries.

Keywords : Community Driven Development, Criteria and Indicator, Success Factor, Sufficiency Economy Village, Sustainable Local Development

Introduction

For developing Thailand to be modernized, Thai society has been being changed in every aspect, i.e. economy, politics, culture, community and environment. The development creates positive outcomes, e.g. raised economic growth rate, material modernization, information and communication technology (ICT), disseminated education, etc. However, the development has not been disseminated to the societal levels in all the country, especially local people in rural areas, who lack an opportunity to develop themselves in Thai society, need to rely on a middleman in marketing system, and lack an ability of entrepreneurship skills. These problems increasingly create the gap between the poor and the rich.

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) was initiated by His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) of Thailand in 1974 and was formed to the concept of SEP in 1994 (Office of the Royal Development Projects Board, 2009). The SEP encourages an adoption of the Middle Path of practice. There are three main components, i.e. moderation (or self-reliance, or avoiding extreme and overindulgence), reasonableness (or reasoning analysis, or causal connection between actions and consequences), and self-immunity (or prudence, or sufficient protection to cope with the like impact arising from internal and external changes) (Barua and Tejavivaddhana, 2019; Kansuntisukmongkol, 2017). Besides, there are two

conditions attached to these components, i.e. knowledge and morality. Then, morality coupled with knowledge cooperates to moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity (as illustrated in Figure 1) in order to maximize sustainable outcomes. Proper implementation of these principles, i.e. three components and two conditions, leads to the achievement of sustainable outcomes: self-reliance, resilience, immunity through balancing life in four dimensions: economic, social, cultural and environmental (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Thailand, 2020).

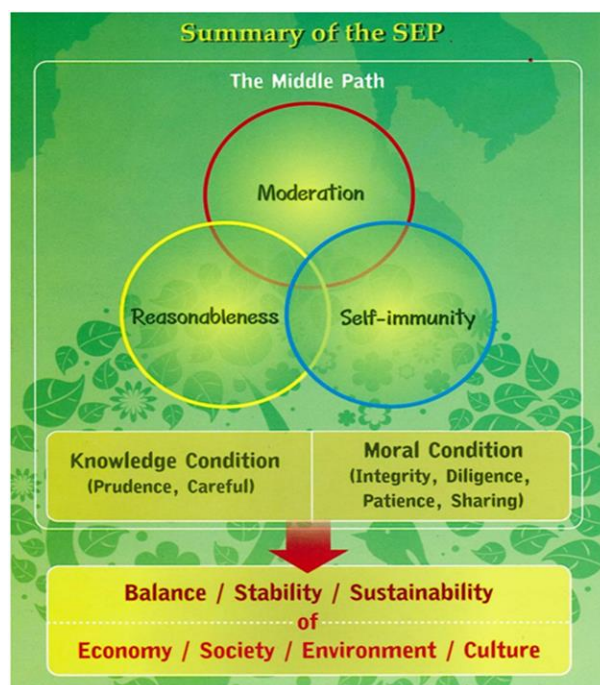


Figure 1 Concept of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy

Source: Royal Thai Embassy, Doha Qatar (2015)

The population of Thailand was 67.2 million people in 2019. Poor people are defined as “the poor” for the income lower than 30,000 Baht per year (986 US Dollars per year) and “the nearly poor” for the income ranging from 30,000-100,000 Baht per year (986-3,290 US Dollars per year). From the registration data of state welfare cards, 5.3 million people are the poor and 11.4 million people are the nearly poor. The Thai government has supported 300 and 200 Baht per month (10 and 6.7 US Dollars

per month) to the poor and the nearly poor, respectively, for their consumer goods since 1 October 2017. In order to attain the SEP, especially in communities or villages, which still have a poverty problem, it is needed to study communities' contexts for developing them in the right directions appropriately following their needs, using Community Driven Development (CDD) in order to empower them in poverty alleviation by making investments and taking responsibilities for decision making in their hands for sustainable local development approach. CDD is principally based on the community participation in local development, which works for building opportunities and strengthening people's voices to demand a greater accountability of related institutions that are relevant to their livelihoods and sustainable local development.

The Department of Local Administration (DLA) under the Ministry of Interior, established in 2002 as the main organization to work on CDD, which mainly promotes and supports the local administrative organizations (LAOs), has started to apply the SEP to Sufficiency Economy Villages (SEVs) since 2006. In Thailand, there are totally 76 provinces, 878 districts, 7,255 sub-districts, and 75,032 villages; however, 8,780 villages were selected to be the SEVs models as calculated for 11.7%. The DLA supports the budget to develop the project of the SEVs models in order to develop their economies and improve their qualities of life with public participation applying the SEP for sustainable local development.

Surin Province, located in Northeastern Thailand and having 1,556 villages, has participated in the project of the SEVs models since 2017, that there are totally 12 villages in Mueang District, being selected to be the SEVs models from 289 villages. Therefore, it is very crucial to investigate the SEP principles, and the criteria and indicators used for evaluating the SEVs models as classified into three levels, i.e. 1) Por Yu Por Kin (Subsistence Village: emphasizing on households' self-reliance for decreasing their households' expenses, increasing their households' incomes, and saving their households' money), 2) Yu Dee Kin Dee (Better Living Village: emphasizing on group development management, increasing their groups' incomes, and extending

their development opportunities for community people), and 3) Mung Mee Sri Sook (Wealthy Village: emphasizing on network development management, improving their qualities of live for community people, extending the occupational opportunities in communities, and providing welfare for community people). And, it is utmost important to study the lessons learned and success factors of sustainable local development approach using the SEP.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) principles, and the criteria and indicators used for evaluating Sufficiency Economy Villages (SEVs) models.
2. To study the lessons learned and success factors of sustainable local development approach using the SEP: case studies of Hong Village, Phearam Sub-district, Mueang District, Surin Province; and Tenmee Village, Tenmee Sub-district, Mueang District, Surin Province, Thailand.

Research Methods

This research was proceeded from January to May 2020. We firstly investigated the SEVs in Mueang District, Surin Province that there are 12 SEVs models in the same level of Por Yu Por Kin (Subsistence Village). Then, we chose Hong Village and Tenmee Village by random sampling, which were consecutively selected to be the SEVs models in 2015 and 2016. The villages' background is described as the followings.

For Hong Village, there are 126 households, 525 people (male 232 people, female 291 people), one primary school (named Ban Phearam School) and one secondary school (named Phayaramwitthaya School). Villagers' occupations are mainly farmers, including sericulture, cloth weaving, natural dying for silk, bamboo basketry, local food and dessert cooking etc., and there is the conservation of traditions, e.g. San Don Ta tradition (for Khmer ethnicity), candle procession, Songkran festival, etc.

For Tenmee Village, there are 132 households, 473 people (male 220 people, female 253 people), and one primary school (named Ban Tenmee School). Villagers' occupations are mainly farmers, including sericulture, cloth weaving, silk processing, bamboo basketry, local food and dessert cooking etc., and there is the conservation of traditions, e.g. San Don Ta tradition (for Khmer ethnicity), candle procession, Songkran festival, etc.

In this study, we designed to use the qualitative research to collect data and in-depth evidences as the followings.

1. Key informants

We firstly searched key informants by criterion based selection and purposive sampling. The key informants comprised three governmental officials, who mainly work for community development; three community leaders, who apply the SEP to the village; and three model villagers, who implement the SEP in each case study.

2. Research tools

We designed the questions for in-depth interviews for CDD approach based on the SEP principles by household surveys and key informants' talks; then, we used the relevant concepts of the SEP to define the questions' direction as an in-depth interview form. It was used for in-depth interviews as the research tool, checked using the triangulation method by considering times, places and personal groups, and we changed observers and interviewers for justifying the data. The data collection for the same replies or answers was observed together with questions.

3. Data collection

There were secondary data from the internet, journals, books, research articles and relevant literature concerning the SEP and CDD, and primary data from household surveys by creating good relationship communities and villagers including key informants, and then in-depth interviews from 9 key informants in each case study in order to get their ideas, attitudes and experiences how to approach the SEP and CDD, including their challenges and success factors how to improve their lives and contribute to the SEVs models.

4. Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the content analysis and frequency to explain in descriptive data mainly from the key informants for using the case studies' lessons learned to create a Community Driven Development Village (CDDV) model. These were challenges for other villages in every country.

Research Results and Discussion

1. Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) Principles, and Criteria and Indicators of Sufficiency Economy Villages (SEVs) Models

The SEP principles can be applied for CDD starting from creating knowledge of villagers with planning their lives with morality and consciousness based on sufficiency and promotion of villagers to have three components, i.e. moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity, and two conditions, i.e. knowledge and morality. These components and conditions can support families' warmth and their qualities of life, which are much related to human development process towards right living, and right interaction with other beings including mind and society, economy, learning, and natural resource and the environment. The SEP provides a practical tool to develop the necessary components and conditions and to develop human mind. With the Middle Path of practice and ethics, villagers use natural resources efficiently and ethically because the SEP places importance of the future needs and sustainability of all beings. Natural resource and environmental management emphasizes on ethics and efficiency in resource allocation and utilization. Both ethics and efficiency principles represent a public-minded attitude. It is contrast to business practice. The SEP emphasizes on fairness, good governance, honesty and moderation and non-harmful actions, and on a need for balance, people participatory approach, national security and independence of basic factors of production. All decisions must be knowledge-based or wisdom-based with fairness and participatory process. Then, the DLA under the Ministry of Interior sets the criteria and indicators used for evaluating the SEVs models as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Criteria and indicators for evaluating to be Sufficiency Economy Villages (SEVs) Models

Criteria	Indicators
1. Mind and society (7 indicators)	1. Unity and cooperation among villagers 2. Executing of village regulation 3. Implementing of village funds for villagers' well-being 4. Believing in democracy 5. Moralistic practice 6. Desistance of all vices 7. Regular practice of the SEP
2. Economy (5 indicators)	8. Practice of household bookkeeping 9. Practice of reducing expense and increasing income 10. Being member of occupational groups 11. Practice of savings as a group 12. Managing of community capital through community enterprises
3. Learning (7 indicators)	13. Surveying of community information 14. Utilizing of community information 15. Conserving of local wisdom 16. Having of learning centers 17. Utilizing of appropriate technologies 18. Networking with concerned agencies 19. Practice of self-reliance
4. Natural resource and the environment (4 indicators)	20. Practice of natural conservation 21. Having of actively natural conservation groups 22. Practice of alternative energy 23. Adding of values into natural resources and the environment

Remarks: Levels of the SEVs models: Por Yu Por Kin (Subsistence Village) level: passing 10-16 indicators; Yu Dee Kin Dee (Better Living Village) level: passing 17-22 indicators; Mung Mee Sri Sook (Wealthy Village) level: passing all 23 indicators

2. Lessons Learned

For the lessons learned to improve their lives and contribute to the SEVs models of Hong Village and Tenmee Village, the key informants of the three main groups in both Hong Village and Tenmee Village expressed their opinions, which all were consistent as the followings.

2.1 The village leaders have knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences for developing their villages. From the interviews of governmental officials (community development officials) of both villages, they were agreed that the leadership qualities of village leaders are very important to develop their villages and villagers. Each leader has different knowledge and skills and the leaders need to have experiences and be enthusiastic to learn and develop their villages. For examples, their important skills are agricultural practice, public speaking, team working, governmental organization cooperation, and so on.

2.2 The administrative boards and village committees of both Hong Village and Tenmee Village have good administrative systems. There are the systematically working divisions, and responsible persons and committees in each working division. In the village board, there are main positions, which are chairman, vice-chairmen, treasurer, secretary, public relations officer, and so on. They work as a team for planning their works and projects, and then communicate to every committee for consensus. After that, they work together with villagers for achieving their plans and unity of village's cooperation.

2.3 The village leaders have abilities to create good cooperation with villagers. From the interviews, the leaders are centered to co-operate villagers when there are activities, projects or public meetings. Villagers need to believe in and are willing to co-operate with the leaders when they ask for cooperation to work for the villages. The leaders need to have public mind, sacrifice and volunteer to work for community development.

2.4 The villagers have cooperated and volunteer mind for community development. From the interviews of the village leaders, the villagers of Hong Village

and Tenmee Village have cooperative and volunteer mind to participate in the villages' activities. Sometimes, they have to sacrifice their time from working but they always think about the villages' benefits first. For examples, there are every month meeting, public meeting for village planning, the SEV meeting, occupational meeting, and so on.

2.5 The villagers of Hong Village and Tenmee Village believe in the SEP for their daily life performance. From the interviews of the community development officials, when there are the projects in village level, especially the projects promoting sustainable local development and self-reliance, the villagers are ready to be trained with wholeheartedly and would like to develop themselves using the SEP. The governmental organizations, especially the DLA, have promoted the knowledge of the SEP, agriculture, occupation, household bookkeeping, and so on. When they are ready to be trained they are ready to perform following the governmental plans. Hence, the governmental occupations can work achieving the objectives or targets following the projects' criteria and indicators and the villagers are trained for learning system and process four sustainable local development.

2.6 The governmental organizations support community development activities and knowledge in the villages. From the interviews of the model villagers of Hong Village and Tenmee Village, the governmental organizations, especially the DLA, the LAOs, universities, etc., have arranged the seminars and training courses about the SEP. Firstly, they invited the villagers or households who are enthusiastic to implement the SEP and would like to be the households' models in the project of SEVs models. They were trained and described for the criteria and indicators to be justified for the SEVs models. After that, there were focus groups' discussions how did they achieve the households' models, which the villagers would participate and their households would be evaluated and justified to be the households' models. They had to present the processes and performances to achieve the SEVs models according to the criteria and indicators. For examples, the performances of practicing household bookkeeping, reducing expenses, increasing incomes, desistance of all

vices, creating occupations and so on were presented and discussed among the villagers, governmental officials, lecturers and interested people, etc. Then, the governmental organizations are very important to drive the community development according the SEP.

2.7 The governmental officials are the mentors for village leaders and villagers. From the interviews of the village leaders of Hong Village and Tenmee Village, the governmental officials of the DLA and other governmental organizations have cooperated with the villages and consulted with the village leaders about the SEPs and how to achieve the SEVs models according to the criteria and indicators. For instances, there are the activities of expense reducing, income increasing, vice reducing, occupational creating, and so on; besides, when there are other villages or communities come to learn and exchange knowledge the governmental officials always come to help, give willpower, and support ideas according to the SEP concepts and the community development procedures.

2.8 The learning centers are important to gather villages' data or information. From the interviews' results of the village leaders of Hong Village and Tenmee Village, there are 4 and 9 learning centers at Hong Village and Tenmee Village, respectively. Besides, local wisdom experts are important persons who have sustained their lives successfully. The learning centers and local wisdom experts can transfer knowledge to villagers following the SEP, which are silk weaving, sericulture, silk processing, local food and dessert, herbal products, basketry, natural dyeing for silk, and so on. And, there are other villages coming to Hong Village and Tenmee Village to learn from the learning centers and local wisdom experts. These are academic and human resources of the villages.

3. Success Factors

From the in-depth interviews of the key informants comprising three main groups, the interviews' results were analyzed into 4 success factors for achieving the SEVs models as the followings.

3.1 Leadership qualities of village leaders

The village leaders need to have knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences for developing their villages according to the SEP. The village leaders of Hong Village and Tenmee Village have knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences about the SEP, e.g. household bookkeeping, activities' creation for reducing expenses and increasing incomes, organic farming, EM production, detergent production, and so on. Saongoen (2017) suggested that the village leaders must have knowledge and competencies about the SEP and can be a public speaker to transfer knowledge to the villagers inside and outside the village. Besides, Treenetr (2014) propose that village leaders have the important roles of community development and must be the good models for other villagers in developing and sustaining their lives according to the SEP.

The administrative boards and village committees need to have good administrative systems. The administrative boards and village committees of Hong Village and Tenmee Village work as a team for planning their works and projects, and then communicate to every committee for consensus. Hence, they work together with villagers for achieving their plans and unity of village's cooperation. These are consistent with the research of Treenetr (2014), suggested that the good governance and systematic administration as village committees are very important matters to drive the villages into the accomplishment of SEVs models. Furthermore, Sunyawiwat (1998) said that the community development principle for strengthening the community to success is the cooperation of village leaders and villagers in the forms of group, committee or organization, which are the centers for community development in many aspects including creating and sharing knowledge and abilities, empowering, and increasing the community working efficiency and fruitfulness.

The village leaders need to have abilities to create good cooperation with villagers. The village leaders of Hong Village and Tenmee Village have public mind, sacrifice and volunteer to work for community development, and can work with the villagers very well and effectively. These are agreed with the research of Palakri

(2007); if the village leaders have ability to create the cooperation among other village leaders and villagers, the village will be the unity and the villagers can practice following the SEP. They are the main persons, who drive all projects and activities and lead the villagers for developing themselves and village to accomplish the sustainable community development.

3.2 Villagers' cooperation

The villagers need to have cooperation and volunteer mind for community development. The villagers of Hong Village and Tenmee Village have cooperative and volunteer mind to participate in the villages' activities. This is consistent with the research of Kerdsri (2010), the cooperation of villagers as a group is very important for them to work together, share all information and knowledge, and solve their problems of the village, which is one of the success factors to apply the SEP to the village.

The villagers need to believe in the SEP for their daily life performance. The villages of Hong Village and Tenmee Village have applied the SEP to daily lives and for developing themselves be the households' models of the SEP at least 30 households in each village. Maneechom (2015) found that the villagers at Kokpri community, Srakaew Province, Thailand apply the SEP to daily life, and participate in studying and searching the village's problems, analyzing and ordering the problems, planning and performing the plans, as well as monitoring and evaluating the developing results continuously. Besides, Sangsuwan (2012) proposed that if villagers believe and apply the SEP in daily life, they can be self-reliant based on their descended local wisdom and ways of life.

3.3 Community development network

The governmental organizations need to support community development activities and knowledge in the villages. The governmental organizations, e.g. the DLA, the LAOs, Department of Agricultural Promotion (DAP), Ministry of Public Health (MPH), universities, and so on, have driven and supported Hong Village and Tenmee Village for the community development projects, aiming to sustainable local

development by applying the SEP. In addition, the governmental officials need to be the mentors for village leaders and villagers. They are willing to train, suggest and give willpower to the village leaders and villagers for doing activities and works for community development. The village leaders and villagers have enforcement to drive activities to reach all targets and accomplish the community development according to the SEP. These are agreed with the research of Kingkum (2012); the supports of governmental organizations are very important for achievement of the success of Monhinkaew Village, Lampang Province, to be the SEVs model. They always arrange the meetings and trainings for the villagers concerning the SEP and how to apply the SEP in real life, and promote additional occupations to them for increasing their incomes and give the knowledge to be self-reliant.

3.4 Academic learning resources

The villages need to have the learning centers and local wisdom experts about the SEP. The learning centers and local wisdom experts of Hong Village and Tenmee Village are very important as academic and learning sources of the SEP for villagers inside and outside the villages. These are concordant to the researches of Sittichan (2011) and Treenetr (2014); they suggested that learning centers in villages are very important to educate and provide knowledge about the SEP in the villages and sub-districts. These are learning sources and practicing areas for villagers inside or outside the villages, and are the centers of local wisdom experts. The learning centers are also the places where villagers come to learn and exchange knowledge and ideas to develop themselves.

Originality and Body of Knowledge

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) mainly encourages villagers or communities to practice the Middle Path, which can be applied to be a guideline for people's living in every level including household, village and community. Additionally, the SEP can be used as an important guideline for Community Driven Development (CDD). Firstly, villagers have to realize from their mind following the

SEP principles, i.e. three components: moderation, reasonableness and self-immunity, as well as two conditions: knowledge and morality. After that, Sufficiency Economy Villages (SEVs) criteria and indicators are very important to apply in CDD because they cover the main 4 items of sustainable local development, comprising society, economy, education and environment. They are composed of 4 criteria and 23 indicators, used to evaluate the SEVs models as the following levels: Por Yu Por Kin (Subsistence Village) level (passing 10-16 indicators), Yu Dee Kin Dee (Better Living Village) level (passing 17-22 indicators), and Mung Mee Sri Sook (Wealthy Village) level (passing all 23 indicators).

Besides, the success factors contributing to the SEVs models are real situations, which we studied how to achieve the SEVs models. The success factors comprise as the followings: leadership qualities of village, villagers' cooperation, community development network and academic learning resources. These success factors are very important to drive the community to be the SEVs. Lastly, all of these (the SEP principles, the SEVs criteria and indicators, and the success factors of SEVs models) are covered to be applied for a Community Driven Development Village (CDDV) model in other countries as shown in Figure 2.

Research Suggestions

For further study, there should have more in-depth interviews for local wisdom experts, administrators of the LAOs, and villagers who are not model villagers. Besides, there should have more study about problems and obstacles in implementing the SEVs models.

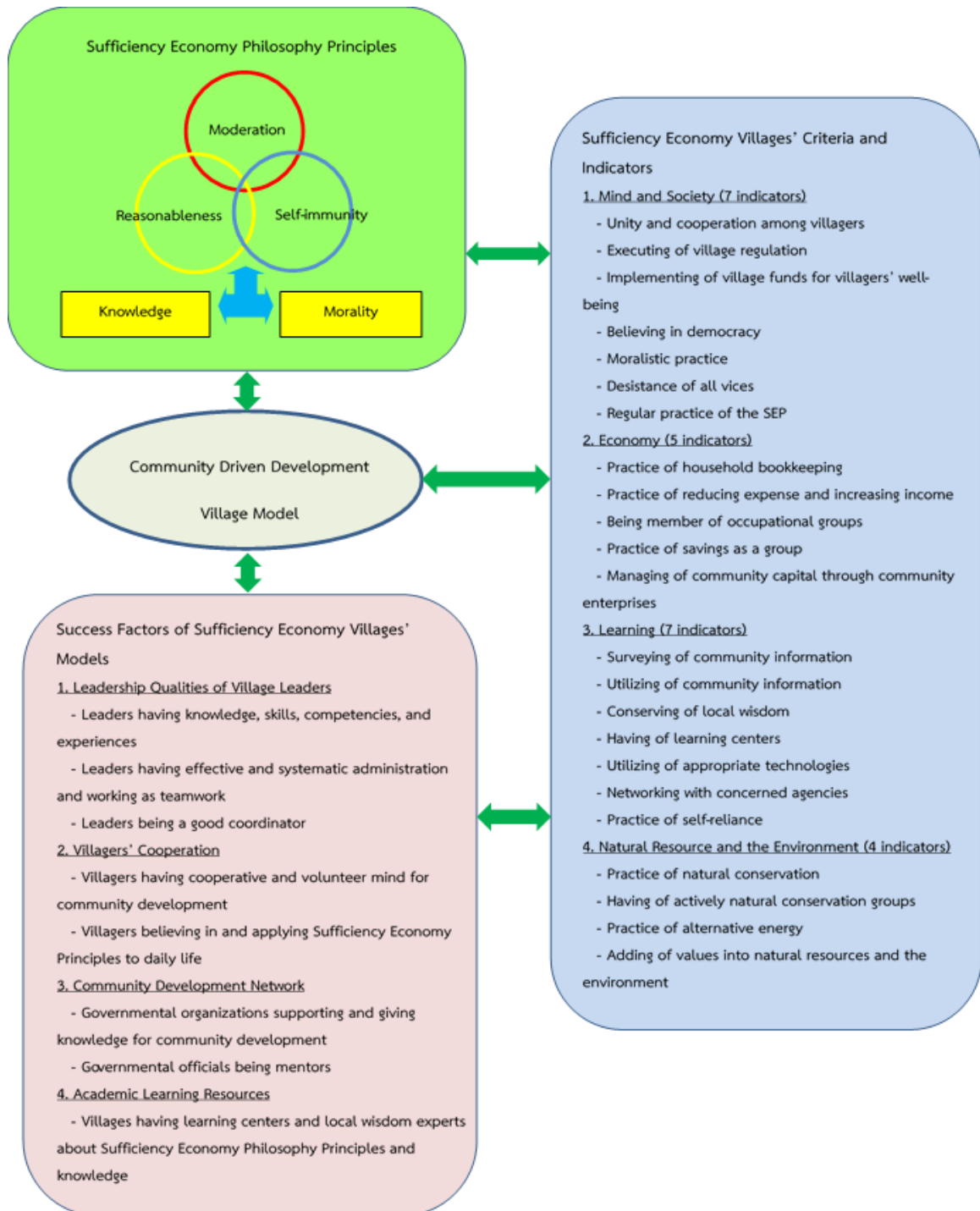


Figure 2 Principles, Criteria, Indicators and Success Factors for Achieving Community Driven Development Village Model

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