

## Health Behaviors for Well-being of Karen Group: Traditional Rituals and Mental Health across Four Cultures

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### Abstract

In recent years, mental health issues among Thai youth have been increasing. This review article explores the relationship between mental health and indigenous rituals from various regions, examining how these rituals contribute to mental well-being. This study aims to suggest solutions for maintaining and enhancing well-being by utilizing the local knowledge of ethnic minority groups. It applies the “Eight Dimensions of Well-being model”, which offers comprehensive perspectives on well-being, to the traditional rituals of the Sámi, the Navajo, the Ainu, and the Karen groups. Data were gathered from various academic sources, ethnographic studies and historical record. The findings indicate that these rituals strengthen the emotional and mental dimensions of well-being for both participants and other involved. Based on these insights, the study suggests establishing “safety nets” to enhance well-being and activating the supportive functions embedded within existing cultural practices. One expected outcome of building these safety nets is the reduction of social security costs through a grassroots initiative that does not rely on large-scale fiscal spending.

**Keywords:** Thai youth, Mental Health Issue, Well-being, 8 Dimensions

### Background

In Thailand, rapid population aging and a declining birthrate are accelerating leading to a rise in social security costs. However, financial measures to fully address these costs are not yet fully in place (NESDC, 2024; The Nation, 2023) At the same time, the younger generation (typically aged 15 to 34) who are expected to bear the growing demands of healthcare and pensions for the elderly are increasingly facing mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety. These issues stem from stress related to education, employment, and unemployment caused by lifestyle changes

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brought about by economic growth, urbanization, and the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2023; The Nation, 2024). This situation could result in lower labor productivity, increased healthcare costs, and higher unemployment benefit expenditures, raising concerns about the sustainability of the social security system.

To help mitigate social security costs, it is crucial to develop and implement strategies that maintain and enhance the well-being of Thai youth. Since 2006, our experience has worked as a grassroots NGO staff member, installing water supply systems, building flush toilets, and introducing native beekeeping practices in mountain villages across Thailand. During that time young villagers frequently mentioned, "The traditional rituals enhance our uniqueness, resilience, and social cohesion, which surely contributes to our health. If there is some truth to these narratives, then incorporating local knowledge from various cultures may hold potential when addressing the mental health challenges faced by Thai youth.

With this context in mind, this study aims to propose long-term solutions to the pressing modern issue of maintaining and enhancing the well-being of the younger generation to help curb Thailand's social security costs. This will be explored from the perspective of utilizing the local knowledge embedded in global rituals.

## **Review Literature**

### **The Eight Dimensions of Well-being**

The eight dimensions of well-being constitute a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of well-being. Each dimension represents a crucial aspect of an individual's health and contributes to overall life satisfaction and balance. Addressing all dimensions fosters a holistic approach to health and well-being. The eight dimensions include physical, emotional/mental, environmental, financial, occupational, social, intellectual, and spiritual well-being. These dimensions are interconnected, and achieving optimal health requires a balanced approach to each.

Physical well-being is centered on maintaining a healthy body through regular exercise, proper nutrition, adequate sleep, and timely medical care. Attentiveness to physical health enables individuals to prevent illness and sustain overall well-being.

Emotional/mental well-being pertains to the ability to understand and manage emotions effectively, as well as to cope with stress. It emphasizes the importance of self-care, relaxation, stress reduction, and the development of inner resilience, enabling individuals to learn and grow from their experiences.

Environmental well-being encourages individuals to adopt a lifestyle that respects and sustains their surroundings. This dimension promotes harmony with the environment by advocating for responsible actions that protect natural resources. Engaging with nature and maintaining an awareness of one's surroundings contribute to environmental well-being.

Financial well-being involves the ability to manage financial resources effectively. Financial stability plays a critical role in overall well-being, as financial stress is a common source of anxiety and concern, particularly among college students. Developing sound financial management skills is essential for maintaining both mental and physical health.

Occupational well-being relates to deriving satisfaction and fulfillment from one's professional endeavors. This dimension highlights the importance of meaningful work and personal contributions, promoting a sense of accomplishment and purpose.

Social well-being involves the ability to establish and maintain positive relationships, perform social roles effectively, and develop a supportive network. It encompasses both platonic and romantic relationships, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional support.

Intellectual well-being entails maintaining an open mind, engaging in lifelong learning, and seeking opportunities for intellectual growth. This dimension encourages participation in academic, cultural, and community activities that stimulate cognitive development and personal enrichment.

Spiritual well-being pertains to the development of personal values, beliefs, and a sense of purpose. This dimension can be expressed through religious practices, meditation, or personal reflection. A strong spiritual foundation provides individuals with coping mechanisms for navigating life's challenges.

When discussing well-being, the definition stated in the WHO Constitution is well known; "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (WHO, 1946). On the other hand, when examining global traditional rituals in the context of the mental health issues, this study employs the "Eight Dimensions of Well-being" model, which was proposed by the University of Michigan in the 2010s and traces its roots to the "Six Dimensions of Wellness" developed by the National Wellness Institute in the U.S. in 1976 (NWI, 2024; UM, 2024). What is noteworthy about the model is that it attempts to understand comprehensively the subject from the perspective of eight dimensions: physical, emotional/mental, environmental, financial, occupational, social, intellectual, and spiritual. Each dimension is explained in Table 1. Furthermore, well-being is generally thought to be related to the quality of life and satisfaction felt by an individual.

**Table 1:** Basic Characteristics of "The Eight Dimensions of Well-being"

8 dimensions		explanation of the characteristics
1	physical	The role that you take in maintaining your body for strength vitality and energy.
2	emotional/ mental	Being aware and managing your feelings being at peace with who you are and having the tools you need to weather life's ups and downs.
3	environmental	Reflects the impact your environment (home, school, city, planet) has on you and the impact you have on the environment.
4	financial	Your relationship with money and skills for managing resources as well as your ability to make good consumer choices and seek out appropriate financial opportunities.

5	occupational	The work you choose to do and how it contributes to your community and fulfills you.
6	social	How you choose to define and connect with your community and the people around you.
7	intellectual	Feeling stimulated and engaged with learning and staying open to new ideas and perspectives.
8	spiritual	Your understanding of your place and purpose, how you make meaning of what happens to you, and what your mind goes to for comfort or relief. [Author's note: This does not necessarily refer to religion or faith.]

Source: Excerpt from UM (2012).

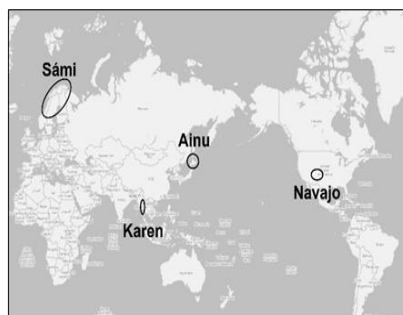
## Methodology

This study draws from various academic sources, ethnographic studies and historical record of four ethnic groups, these are Sámi, the Navajo, the Ainu, and the Karen groups to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how traditional rituals contribute to mental health.

## Findings

### Traditional Rituals

The subjects for applying the 8-dimensions model were selected from four ethnic groups each with its own unique language, culture, and representative traditional rituals: the Sámi Yoik, the Navajo Blessing Way, the Ainu Iomante, and the Karen Ohe. Their approximate geographical locations are shown in Figure 1. The focus on minority group rituals stems from the fact that unlike the urban environments where most of Thai youth reside, these communities exist in environments rich in nature with strong social ties and traditional ways of life. These conditions are believed to preserve local knowledge that has had little interaction with modern medicine and psychotherapy. Furthermore, by examining multiple rituals it is possible to compare their basic characteristics and identify common elements that may contribute to maintaining and enhancing mental health. The key characteristics of these four rituals will be explained below.



**Figure 1:** Residential Areas of Four Ethnic Groups

Source: Created by the author with the use of Map Navi and Google Maps

### Yoik of the Sámi

The Sámi whose population is estimated to be between 70,000 and 100,000 reside in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia (Figure 2). Traditionally, they have engaged in reindeer herding and fishing for herring and cod. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Sámi language and culture were subjected

to assimilation policies in various countries. However, in Finland they were constitutionally recognized as indigenous people in 1995, leading to more protective measures. The overview of the Sámi representative ritual, Yoik (Figure3) are summarized in Table 2 (Pentikäinen, 1997; Ramnarine, 2009). Yoik is not merely a musical form it is a ritual that strengthens cultural identity and community cohesion through spiritual connections with individuals' nature and animals.



Figure 2: Singing in the Yoik Ritual

Source: Finntastic (2024)



HOTO: Johan Mathis Gaup/ Igor Antse Allu Gaup yoiking surrounded by nature at a lake in Sápmi.

Figure 3: Residential Area of the Sámi

Source: Bjärstig et al. (2020)

Table 2: Yoik of the Sámi

purpose	to express memories, emotions, respect, and draw upon spiritual power, by connecting with spiritual entities such as individuals, nature, and animals.
characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A traditional form of singing performed improvisationally.</li> <li>- The rhythm is free, and the melody is repetitive. Sounds and humming are also used.</li> <li>- The lyrics abstractly and symbolically represent individuals, nature, and animals.</li> <li>- It is sung at Sámi weddings, funerals, and festivals.</li> </ul>
significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It represents Sámi's cultural identity.</li> <li>- It serves to promote community unity.</li> <li>- Those who listen to the Yoik can feel a spiritual connection to the subject of the song.</li> <li>- It expresses the traditional Sámi faith and their deep connection with nature.</li> <li>- It functions as spiritual healing within traditional Sámi life.</li> </ul>

### Blessing Way of the Navajo

The Navajo, with a population of 253,124 is the largest Native American group residing in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and other parts of the United States (Figure 4). Traditionally, they have been engaged in the cultivation of crops such as corn, beans, and squash as well as sheep herding. In 1864 they were forcibly relocated. During World War II, the Navajo language was used as a code. Today, the Navajo has an autonomous government known as the Navajo Nation. The overview of the Navajo representative ritual, the Blessing Way (Figure5) are summarized in Table 3 (Navajo Nation, 2024; Reichard, 1990; Szpak and Ochwat, 2021; Wyman, 1970). The Blessing Way is a ritual that brings blessings of happiness, harmony, and protection to individuals and communities while also expressing the ethnic identity of the Navajo.



**Figure 4:** Residential Area of the Navajo

Source: Navajo Nation (2013)



**Figure 5:** The Blessing Way During Pregnancy

Source: Kelly (2024)

**Table 3:** Blessing Way of Navajo

purpose	to celebrate significant life events, this ritual promotes the health, happiness, prosperity, and spiritual harmony of individuals and the community.
characteristics	- Prayers are offered to ward off disaster and invite positive forces.
	- Songs, prayers, sand paintings, and corn are used.
	- It is performed during life milestones such as weddings, pregnancy, childbirth, coming of age, and the building of a new home.
	- The circle drawn during the ritual represents their worldview and their perception of nature.
significance	- Singing plays an important role.
	- It represents the identity of Navajo culture.
	- It allows individuals and the community to avoid negativity and maintain harmony and safety.
	- Those who receive the Blessing Way are granted spiritual protection.

### Iomante of the Ainu

The Ainu, with a population of around 24,000 reside in Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands (Figure 6). Traditionally, they have been involved in hunting deer and boar fishing for salmon, trout, and herring and gathering nuts such as walnuts and acorns, as well as wild plants like udo (wild plant). Subjected to assimilation policies under a law passed in 1899, the Ainu were recognized as an indigenous people by the Japanese government in 2008 and in 2020 the National Ainu Museum was opened. The overview of the Ainu representative ritual, Iomante (Figure 7) are summarized in Table 4 (Batchelor, 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1971). Iomante or the bear-sending ceremony is a ritual aimed at maintaining spiritual harmony with nature and symbolizes the philosophy and spirituality of the Ainu.

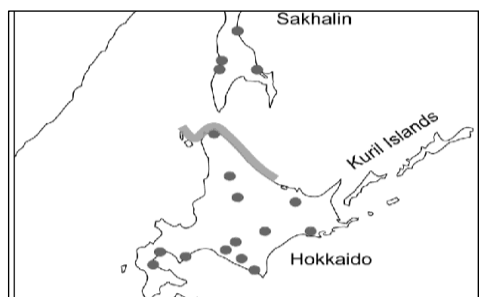


Figure 6: Residential Areas of the Ainu



Figure 7: Iomante Ceremony

Table 4: Iomante of the Ainu

purpose	to maintain the gods' blessings and harmony with nature, by sending the soul of the bear, considered a messenger of the gods, back to the world of the gods.
characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The captured bear is treated with great care by the entire village, with special attention given to its food and environment.</li> <li>- During the ritual, the raised bear is offered as a sacrifice to the gods.</li> <li>- The bear's meat and fur are distributed among the villagers.</li> <li>- Traditional songs and dances are performed as the bear's soul is returned to the gods.</li> </ul>
significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It symbolizes the Ainu values and beliefs, such as coexistence with and reverence for nature.</li> <li>- Sending the bear's soul back to the gods ensures harmony with the natural world.</li> <li>- There is a cyclical understanding where humans send the bear's soul to the gods, and the gods bestow the bear's meat and fur upon humans.</li> <li>- The ritual strengthens the unity of the community that performs it.</li> </ul>

### Ohe of the Karen

The Karen are estimated to number between 3,000,000 and 7,000,000, living primarily in the Karen, Kayah, and Mon states of Myanmar (Burma), and approximately 400,000 live mainly in the mountainous regions of northern Thailand (Figure 8). Traditionally, they have practiced rotational shifting agriculture, cultivating upland rice and vegetables, and hunting deer and wild boar. Since 1948, the Karen have been engaged in a conflict seeking independence from the central government, and around 90,000 refugees, including the Karen, currently reside in nine refugee camps along the

Thai border (UNHCR, 2022). The overview of Karen's representative ritual, *Ohe* (Figure 9) are summarized in Table 5 (Stern, 1968; Keyes, 1997). *Ohe* symbolizes family harmony and renewal, and it also serves as an opportunity to strengthen cultural identity and community bonds.



Figure 8: Residential Areas of the Karen



Figure 9: the Ohe Ceremony

Table 5: Ohe of the Karen

purpose	to maintain harmony within the household, by praying for the spiritual purification, safety, and renewal of the family.
characteristics	- Family members gather, and an elder leads the prayers.
	- Offerings such as food, alcohol, and clothing are made.
	- The elder ties cotton threads around each family member's wrist for spiritual protection.
significance	- Though usually held within the household, relatives and the community provide support and cooperation
	- The performance of the Ohe ritual helps maintain the family's harmony and health.
	- Spiritual protection strengthens family bonds.
	- It serves as an opportunity to pass down family traditions and values.
	- The ritual expresses reverence for nature.
	- It plays a role in passing on Karen cultural identity to the next generation.
	- It provides an opportunity to deepen the bonds between family and community.

### The Relationship between Four Traditional Rituals and Well-being

By applying the 8-dimensions model to Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5, the relevant items were described for each of the eight dimensions of the four rituals in Table 6. Each item is assigned a reference number such as A1, B2, C3 and D4. For example, D8 refers to the item related to the spiritual dimension of the Karen Ohe.

Table 6: Relevant Items on the Eight Dimensions of Four Traditional Rituals

8 dimensions	A: Yoik, the Sámi	B: Blessing Way, the Navajo	C: Iomante, the Ainu	D: Ohe, the Karen
1 physical	A1: The primary purpose is not to maintain physical vitality. However, the act of singing involves breathing techniques and vocal exercises, which can lead to	B1: It helps maintain physical health by providing spiritual protection and healing for pregnant women and the sick.	C1: This ritual does not directly aim to maintain physical health. However, the distribution of the bear's meat and fur temporarily contributes to the physical	D1: The prayers for the prosperity and spiritual purification of the family during the ritual also contains wishes for physical health.



	physical relaxation.		health.	
2	A2: The ritual singing promotes emotional expression and spiritual connection, contributing significantly to emotional stability.	B2: The songs and prayers in the ritual provide emotional stability, comfort, and healing.	C2: It carries strong emotional significance. Villagers can deeply feel harmony with nature and the gods through the bear-sending ritual.	D2: As a ritual that strengthens family bonds, it strongly promotes emotional support and stability.
3	A3: Through <i>Yoik</i> , a deep connection with nature is symbolically expressed.	B3: Respect for nature and sacred lands is expressed, emphasizing harmony with the natural environment.	C3: It symbolizes coexistence with nature, emphasizing reverence for the natural environment.	D3: The ritual emphasizes family harmony while also expressing reverence for nature.
4	A4: Economic stability is not a direct aim. However, in modern society, <i>Yoik</i> may contribute to the community through tourism promotion as part of cultural heritage.	B4: It does not directly relate to economic stability. However, as a ritual that prays for prosperity and happiness, it may inspire hope for economic success.	C4: Economic stability is not a direct goal. However, the sustainable use of resources during the ritual could link to the economic stability in the long run.	D4: While the ritual prays for the safety and happiness of the family, it may indirectly contribute to economic stability.
5	A5: It is not directly linked to employment or career. However, those engaged in this practice may provide a sense of fulfillment similar to that gained from professional work.	B5: The ritual is not directly related to work or career. However, praying for prosperity and success could support daily satisfaction related to professional work.	C5: There is no direct impact. However, the responsibilities involved in bear's raising may strengthen participants' sense of responsibility, which could positively affect their occupation.	D5: There is no direct impact. However, the division of roles during the ritual could lead to an enhanced sense of professional responsibility.
6	A6: <i>Yoik</i> strengthens social connections within the community and promotes the sharing of cultural identity.	B6: The ritual deepens the bonds of family and community by providing an opportunity to share prayers and blessings, encouraging mutual support.	C6: As a ritual involving the entire village, it provides an important opportunity to strengthen social connections and communal unity among the villagers.	D6: It is a ritual symbolizing family harmony, playing a role in deepening family bonds. In larger-scale rituals, it also serves as an opportunity to strengthen the solidarity of the entire community.
7	A7 The improvisational nature of the singing requires creative thinking, expression, and comprehension, linking to intellectual activity.	B7: As a ritual that reflects the Navajo worldview and understanding of nature, it likely offers participants intellectual satisfaction.	C7: Through the ritual, which is based on Ainu beliefs and views of nature, participants can learn traditional wisdom and deepen their intellectual understanding.	D7: By participating in the ritual, participants connect to traditional wisdom and beliefs.
8	A8: Through <i>Yoik</i> , personal values and beliefs are expressed, fostering spiritual growth and stability.	B8: The ritual is deeply rooted in the Navajo worldview. Individuals and the community are encouraged to achieve harmony and growth through spiritual protection.	C8: The ritual helps maintain spiritual harmony with nature and the gods.	D8: The ritual is aimed for the spiritual purification and renewal of the entire family.

Next the contents of the relevant items in Table 6 were compared and grouped by each dimension. For instance, A1, B1, C1, D1 of physical dimension was clustered. In this way, eight groups were created from physical dimension to spiritual dimension. Then common elements (phrases with similar or related meanings) were extracted in each dimension. And then each relevant item (labeled

such as A1, B2, C3, etc.) was individually evaluated according to the degree of relevance to each dimension using a three-tier scale: “high (◎),” “moderate (○),” and “low (△).” Furthermore, based on summaries of the common elements for each dimension overall evaluations were also conducted using the same three-tier scale. These relevant items not only preserved cultural heritage but also play a vital role in fostering unity and enhancing mental well-being. The results are presented in Table 7. In the overall evaluation, the dimensions that received high ratings were emotional/mental, environmental, social, and spiritual.

**Table 7:** Individual and Overall Evaluation of the Relationship Between the Four Rituals and Each Dimension

eight dimensions	individual evaluations of the relationship between the four rituals and each dimension (three tiers: ◎: high, ○: moderate, △: low) [Note] The following A1, B2, C3, D4, etc. refer to the reference numbers listed in Table 6.		overall evaluations of the relationship between the four rituals and each dimension (three tiers: ◎: high, ○: moderate, △: low)	
	common elements (phrases with similar or related meanings) extracted in each dimension:	individual evaluation	summaries of common elements	overall evaluation
1 physi-cal	A1: “can lead to physical relaxation” B1: “helps maintain physical health” C1: “temporarily contributes to physical health” D1: “contains wishes for physical health”	A1: ○ B1: ○ C1: ○ D1: △	Some physical benefits are obtained.	○ moderate
2 emotio-nal/ mental	A2: “contributing significantly to emotional stability” B2: “provide emotional stability, comfort, and healing” C2: “carries strong emotional significance” D2: “strongly promotes emotional support and stability”	A2: ◎ B2: ◎ C2: ◎ D1: ◎	emotional stability and healing are achieved.	◎ high
3 environmen-tal	A3: “a deep connection with nature is symbolically expressed” B3: “emphasizing harmony with the natural environment” C3: “symbolizes coexistence with nature” D3: “expressing reverence for nature”	A3: ◎ B3: ◎ C3: ◎ D3: ◎	A deep connection with nature, as well as harmony, coexistence, and reverence for nature, are expressed.	◎ high
4 finan-cial	A4: “may contribute to the community through tourism promotion” B4: “may inspire hope for economic success” C4: “could link to economic stability” D4: “may indirectly contribute to economic stability”	A4: ○ B4: △ C4: △ D4: △	While not the primary objective, economic benefits can also result.	△ low
5 occupa-tional	A5: “may provide a sense of fulfillment similar to that gained from work” B5: “could support daily satisfaction related to work” C5: “could positively affect their occupation” D5: “could lead to a sense of professional responsibility”	A5: △ B5: △ C5: △ D5: △	There is no direct impact, but positive effects related to occupational fulfillment are gained.	△ low
6 social	A6: “strengthens social connections within the community” B6: “deepens the bonds of family and community” C6: “strengthen social connection of communal unity” D6: “strengthen the solidarity of the family and the entire community”	A6: ◎ B6: ◎ C6: ◎ D6: ◎	Strong social connections, unity, and solidarity are fostered.	◎ high

7 intellectual	A7: “linking to intellectual activity” B7: “likely offers intellectual satisfaction” C7: “learn traditional wisdom and deepen intellectual understanding” D7: “connect with traditional wisdom and beliefs”	A7: ○ B7: ○ C7: ⊙ D7: ○	Intellectual benefits are somewhat present.	○ moderate
8 Spiritual	A8: “fostering spiritual growth and stability” B8: “achieve harmony and growth through spiritual protection” C8: “maintain spiritual harmony” D8: “aimed for spiritual purification and renewal”	A8: ⊙ B8: ⊙ C8: ⊙ D8: ⊙	Spiritual stability, protection, harmony, as well as spiritual purification and renewal, are achieved.	⊙ high

Various factors contribute to mental health challenges including work-related stress, economic pressure, and relationship problems. Indigenous culture plays a crucial role in strengthening social bonds and promoting collective well-being. Many Indigenous communities including the Karen people emphasize ritual traditions that enhance social cohesion and mental resilience. These cultural elements contribute to a strong sense of identity, emotional satiability, and psychological well-being.

### Discussion: Well-being Support Functions

The section 3 reveals that the four rituals make contributions to the emotional/mental, environmental, social, and spiritual dimensions of well-being. This finding appears to validate the narratives made by the young villagers at the beginning of this study, who emphasized that traditional rituals likely contribute to their health.

Among the four rituals examined, the Karen’s Ohe ritual is particularly notable for its strong emphasis on community participation and intergenerational support. Unlike the more spiritually centered rituals of the Sámi and Navajo, or the ceremonial aspects of the Ainu’s lomante, the Ohe ritual integrates practical well-being strategies directly into communal life. It involves family members gathering together, with an elder leading prayer for spiritual purification, safety, and renewal. Offerings such as food, alcohol, and clothing are made, and cotton threads are tied around each family member’s wrist for spiritual protection. This feature makes it especially applicable for constructing safety nets. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

If this assumption holds true, it is worth considering how the well-being support functions of the Karen’s Ohe ritual can be effectively utilized to address the mental health challenges faced by younger generations in Thailand. The proposal put forth by this study is to create a safety net equipped with well-being support functions, drawing inspiration from the Karen model. Specifically, it involves establishing four safety nets that contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of the four key dimensions of well-being (Table 8).

Furthermore, by incorporating insights from the Karen’s Ohe ritual, the study suggests that safety nets can be strengthened by emphasizing localized, community-driven approaches rather than solely institutional interventions. The Ohe ritual not only preserves family traditions and values but also reinforces social cohesion and intergenerational connections within the community. This

adaptation may lead to long-term social and economic benefits, including a reduction in mental health treatment costs and improved community resilience.

**Table 8:** Four Safety Nets with Well-Being Support Functions

reference number	names of the safety net (SN)	descriptions	target specific dimension(s)
SN-1	SN for awareness	The individual (youth) is reasonably aware of and facing the specific existence of SN-2, SN-3 and SN-4.	emotional/mental
SN-2	SN on small communities	The individual (youth) is managing reasonably well or has established desirable relationships within small communities, such as family, relatives, or close friends.	social, environmental
SN-3	SN on large communities	The individual (youth) is managing reasonably well or has established desirable relationships within large communities, such as school, workplace, or local society, with which they regularly interact.	social, environmental
SN-4	SN for values and beliefs	The individual (youth) has a reliable or firm foundation in values and beliefs, such as a connection to nature, the spiritual world, or personal convictions [Note: It is not necessarily limited to religion or faith.]	spiritual, environmental

Each of the four safety nets has target-specific dimension(s). SN-1: emotional/mental; SN-2 and SN-3: social and environmental; and SN-4: spiritual and environmental. The creation of these safety nets involves key stakeholders: family, relatives, close friends, local community, government, schools, workplaces, NGOs, and temples. In Table 9, potential on-site and online events that could serve as opportunities for building safety nets are outlined along with the expected outcomes.

**Table 9:** Events for the Creation of Safety Nets and Their Expected Outcomes

stake-holders	on-site and online events		related safety nets (indicated by reference numbers in Table 8) and expected outcomes for participants
	types	some examples	
family, relatives, close friends	traditional events	year-end, new year, and other seasonal events	SN-2: strengthening connections with family, relatives, and close friends, leads to a sense of mental security.
local community, government	traditional and modern events	summer festivals, Halloween, firework shows, and cherry blossom viewing.	SN-3: enhancing mental stability and self-efficacy through shared experiences within the local community.
schools, workplaces	Workshops,	workshops on traditional herbal and massage therapies.	SN-1: learning to manage stress, build resilience and feel safe.
	cultural events, and educational program	community clean-up initiatives and sports tournaments.	SN-3: strengthening harmony and connections within the community to improve mental stability.
		Lectures on world philosophy and morality.	SN-4: cultivating the own values and beliefs.
NGOs	experiential and educational programs	On-site programs in natural environments.	SN-1: experiencing harmony with nature to improve and strengthen mental health.
		programs in mountainous areas on how to use the internet appropriately.	SN-1: developing the ability to appropriately use digital devices while embracing a simple life.
		volunteer programs in traditional minority communities.	SN-3: experiencing firsthand the connections among villagers.

temples	spiritual and intergenerational programs	meditation programs on weekends during early mornings or evenings.	SN-1: paying regular attention to mental stability and habitually alleviating stress and anxiety.
		temple tours based on mythology and folklore for youth and elders	SN-4: learning about one's roots and culture to enhance self-esteem.

Many of the events listed in Table 9 are not new. However, by highlighting the latent well-being support functions inherent in these events, they can be revitalized. A straightforward example of this activation is that event organizers establish a safety net for young people as one of the event's goals and communicate this message to young people subtly but persistently. Furthermore, one anticipated outcome of building safety nets around young people is the reduction of social welfare costs. Specifically, this could lead to: (1) reduced treatment costs for mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders, (2) a decrease in unemployment benefits and welfare demands due to lower unemployment rates and improved productivity, and (3) long-term reductions in healthcare and social welfare expenditures.

## Conclusion

This study suggested a response to mental health issues among Thai youth by leveraging the local knowledge of four minority groups' rituals: the Sámi Yoik, the Navajo Blessing Way, the Ainu Iomante, and the Karen Ohe. The analysis applied the Eight Dimensions model to assess well-being across multiple perspectives, revealing that these rituals support four key dimensions: emotional/mental, environmental, social, and spiritual.

Among them, the Karen Ohe ritual provides a particularly valuable model for constructing sustainable well-being support systems. Its emphasis on family harmony, spiritual protection, and cultural identity aligns closely with the proposed safety nets. Therefore, this study suggests incorporating these elements into community-based mental health initiatives for Thai youth.

Additionally, this study recommends integrating the concept of building safety nets into existing event goals. By recognizing the well-being support functions of these events, their impact can be amplified. The grassroots approach proposed in this study offers a feasible and cost-effective way to address the pressing mental health challenges facing urban Thai youth.

The authors intend to continue investigating how local knowledge from minority groups, particularly the Karen, can be utilized to address contemporary urban issues, and how these rituals strengthen the emotional and mental dimensions of well-being for both participants

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