

# CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENTS TO GEAR THE COMMUNAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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## Abstract

In the studies of Civil Society Engagements to Gear the Communal Development Plan in Rai Khing Municipality, Samphran District, Nakhon Pathom Province, the author intended to present civil society engagement to find and the approach to drive the Rai Khing Municipal Development Plans, concept of development, engagement/ participation, civil society and how to gear the municipal development plans. The author found 3 major strategies and plans, their 14 sub-strategies and plans with their analyses. The author recommended that the municipality should apply strong collaboration with win-win sharing strategy, strong and literate bilingual schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities. The communal elites should raise intimate connection with Most Venerable from 9 renowned temples in the Rai Khing municipality and other renowned temples in Nakhon Pathom province to eliminate ignorance of the local political elites. In stimulating investments to restructure target industries towards the Rai Khing Municipality not only 4.0 but 5.0-6.0, should be resumed but revise in each phase of development and it needs to explore and update the 3rd Strategy and Plans.

**Keyword:** Civil Society; Engagements Society; Communal Development Plan

## Introduction

Rai Khing, Nakhon Pathom Province was not known exactly how long this area has been in existence. The Chinese settled here to plant ginger; its name thus called "Rai Khing" (ginger farm) ever since. Its royal patronage temple was constructed in 1851 in the reign of His Majesty King Mongkut (Rama IV) thus called Wat Rai Khing located on the bank of Tha Chin River (Nakhon Chai Si River) located 2 km (15.5mi) from downtown Nakhon Pathom. Rai Khing is considered to be the central part of the district with Tha Chin River (locally known as Nakhon Chai Si River) flows through the area. It is about 8 km (5.0 mi) west of downtown Samphran and about 25 km (15.5 mi) from downtown Nakhon Pathom. Its rich land homes with vast plains of fertile land, and have good irrigation conditions with Tha Chin River which has been branched into 20 tributaries. It administrated 14 villages, i.e. V1). Ban Rai Khing, V2). Ban Rai, V3). Ban Khlong Mai, V4). Ban Khlong Ma Naow, V5). Ban Khlong Bang Phraow, V6). Ban Khlong Ta Jun, V7). Ban Pracha Ruam Jai, V8). Ban Khlong Phi Suea, V9). Ban Khlong Wat Tha Phut, V10). Ban Khlong Bang Sue, V11). Ban Tha Kwian, V12). Ban Khlong Chang, V13). Ban Khlong Bang Yang, and V14). Ban Khlong Rang Toei. Its local traditions were 1). Worshiping Luang Phor Wat Rai Khing during the Chinese New Year Festival every year; 2) Gilding Luang Phor Wat Rai Khing is held annually at Wat Rai Khing during April shortly before the Songkran Festival; 3) Tak Bat Devo and listening to sermons, including gilding Luang Phor Wat Rai Khing during the Buddhist Lent Festival around October; and 4) Loi Krathong Festival at Wat Tha Phut (Office of the Rai Khing Municipality, 24 August 2023).

Most its problematic issues were least met its slogan above but aligned and adhered with the 13<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plans 2023-2027: NESDP (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council: ONESDC, October 1, 2022). Its thirteen Development Milestones (DM) were: DM.1). Thailand is a leading country in high-value agricultural produced and processed agricultural products. DM.2). Thailand is a sustainable quality-oriented tourist destination. DM.3). Thailand is the world's important electric vehicle manufacturing base. DM.4). Thailand is a high-value medical and wellness hub (the Rai Khing Municipality accommodated Samphran Hospital

(Wat Rai Khing; Meta Pracharak Hospital (Wat Rai Khing); Sub-district Council of Wat Tha Phut Hospital; and the Field Communal Hospital). DM.5). Thailand is the regional key strategic trade, investment and logistics gateway. DM.6). Thailand is ASEAN's hub for digital and smart electronics industry. DM.7). Thailand has strong, high-potential and competitive SMEs. DM.8). Thailand has smart cities as well as safe and livable regions with sustainable growth. DM.9). Thailand has less intergenerational poverty and adequate, appropriate social protection. DM.10). Thailand is a circular economy and low-carbon society. DM.11). Thailand can mitigate risks and impacts of natural disaster and climate change. DM.12). Thailand has a high-capability workforce committed to lifelong learning and responsive to future developments, and DM.13). Thailand has a modern, efficient, and responsive public sector. However, there were only 7 DMs corresponded with the six goals of the Rai Khing Municipality, i.e. State Bureau Center (M.13), Invaluable Buddhist Sites (M.2), Shining Education (M.12), Renowned Agricultures (and Orchards) (M.1, M.7), Industrial Estates (M.3), Led municipal development. Still, the civil society engagements to gear the communal development plans in Rai Khing Municipality had met snail collaboration in its critically municipal problem-solving, e.g. assistance, enhancement of residential quality of life and alleviation of public inequality among the vulnerable groups, the poor people, the cripple people, and the socially disadvantaged members.

On January 18, 2024, the Rai Khing Municipality Board held a meeting of civil society engagement to draw MOU of cooperation for integrated development of residential quality of life with Wat Rai Khing Royal Temple, Wat Tha Phut, Shera Public Company Limited, Nakhon Pathom Vocational College, Rai Khing Municipality Community Organization Council, Chairman of the Community Department of Rai Khing Municipality and Civil Defense Volunteers (OPPO), Rai Khing Municipality. This is to mitigate social, economic, household problems and the municipal members affected by shelters. This has been seen that municipality focused on the municipal vulnerable group members, its poor members, its cripple members, and the socially disadvantaged members with regards to residential quality of life and the alleviation of the municipal inequality members. With the deviated focuses on the less-quality life and the misery alleviation, which was unmatched to the 13<sup>th</sup> NESDP 2023-2027; it drove the attraction of the researcher to find the approach to drive the Rai Khing Municipal Development Plans, concept of development,

engagement/participation, civil society and how to gear the municipal development plans. The author presented 3 major strategies and plans with their 14 sub-strategies and plans with their analyses.

## **Concepts of Development, Participation or Engagement, Civil Society, and Their Related Researches**

**Concepts of Development with Related Researches:** Development was a change done or planned in advance. This change might be in a better direction if not, it was not called development. At the same time, development did not mean the quantity increase of goods or income of the people only but also inclusively meant increasing the satisfaction and happiness of the people (Wirat Wiratnibhawan, 2023). They were the important points which caused the transition from one condition to another for the better, and was a linkage system from the status quo to changes. To achieve a transformational organization in the development system and bettered it than its status quo in a systematic and qualitative way towards more complete development. Strengthening the participation of various parties in the educational administration such as teachers, parents, religious institutions and communities might coordinate to cultivate morality and ethics in students and university students at various levels. At the same time, it needed to design plans to organize instruction through harmoniously integrating knowledge and skills of morality and ethics into the teaching curriculum (Phra Dhammatipaka, P.A. Payutto). There were 4 parts in social development, i.e, physical and mental happiness, developing people, having qualified people and virtuous people charterized in five attributes, which were peaceful-oriented, learning-oriented, management-oriented, spirituality-oriented, and environmental balance-oriented (Sanya Sanyawiwat, 2003) targeted on economic, social and political developments.

Conclusion, the concepts and theories about development if explained in principle, it would be seen that it was a change that had a good direction and approach. So, it could be changed in something useful and quality in line with the development concept. It emphasized happiness, human development, having quality and morality through the process and develop according to the goals. Mental development, patterns, behaviors included interrelationships of people in society to solve various problems in society. Development according to this

group's opinion therefore depended on the objectives and how the objective makers would identify and require from them (Mescon, 1988; Keeves, 1988; Kendall and Kendall, 2005) The researches related to the development; the models explored were focused on social development, such as the development of local knowledge, the development in plantations, the development to promote learning, the product and handicraft development with emphasis on increasing knowledge and promoting management through development processes, organizing activities to recover and convey diverse and efficient activities Naris Sinsiri and Wattana Sinsiri, 2014).

## **Concepts of Participation or Engagement with Related Researches**

Participation was an opportunity for all members of the community and members of the wider societies to participate and influenced the process of development activities as well as contributed equally to the development outcomes (United Nations, 1981) which was a process in which citizens or stakeholders had the opportunity to express their views and participated in various activities that affected people's livelihoods and to use such opinions for consideration in formulating government policies and decisions, i.e. it was a two-way communication, both formal and informal, which consisted of sharing information among stakeholders and strengthening social cohesion. This was because public participation increased the quality of decision-making, reducing costs and wasting time. This was to build consensus, which ensured credibility and legitimacy with the public. (Phramaha Prakasit Thitipasitdhikorn, 2019). The concept of participation was the process of creating a movement to connect collaboration to work. Increasing the quality of decision-making, reducing costs and wasting time, building consensus and being good governance; it eased implementation. Participation then rose from the important part, which was public learns; human development; Social outcomes; and the participatory process (Lersan Pissawong, 2023). It is fair and easy to implement, with participation coming from an important part: learning, human development, good consequence for transition and promotion of networking. The principle of participation was consistent with the theory of Cohen and Uphoff: participation in decision-making, operational participation, benefits earned participation and participation in evaluation. Researches related to participation were the main

thing, they would explain the collective picture of building a network to achieve participation in development. Management and creating patterns were to be a model and useful in building unity and solidarity. Focusing on quality was to give importance to cooperation and to jointly find solutions, improvement, resolution and development with sustainability and a purposeful decision, operation and evaluation (Worrayuth Nak-aai and Decha Wannaphahul, 2020); Ieu-issara Honghiran, 2001; Chanachida Khongthip, 2022).

Concepts of Civil Society with Related Researches: "Civil Society" was an explanation of Antonio Gramsci's approach but at that time, the Thai society still unlikely see much importance to this concept. The term has been lately discussed in academic discussions recently. Recently, attempts had been made to define the meaning of this term in the Thai context. There were various interpretations to present to Thai society (Subhawal Plaainoi, 2003). By all societal segments as a whole, the public and also people sectors considered all to be a civil-societies that differs from the Western meaning, which was separate from the public sector. However, it meant all partied came to be partners; therefore, society was considered an achievement of the modern world. Civil society created a regime of necessity that people could rely on rather falling under a state of conflicting nature (Chai-anant Samuttawanich, 1996). Civil society was then a gathering of people from some sectors of society with a certain number of collective ideas, common consciousness, and common ideal in some matters. There was communication with each other to forming groups of organizations and institutions to carry out joint activities to solve certain problems or actions related to the group's way of life in order to develop the potential of individuals, communities and societies to be self-reliant and leading to sustainable development under the management to link networks (Theerayuth Boonmee, 1996). Characterizing civil society demanded the following 7 means as follows: having a common vision, broad participation, having the knowledge and ability to seek knowledge, having learning through joint activities, having continuous communication and cooperation networks: having a good and efficient management system, and having public responsibility as a citizen (Suwit Wibolpholprasert, 1997). Having strong civil societal participation of all sectors and for the next meeting, we would jointly consider legal information, regulations, establishment of foundations, associations, and the assembly of civil society for studying other models inclusion of civil society information related to education support (Vinai Dalan, 2024) and driving civil society demands

having communities in the form of a strong civil society with 5 elements, i.e. civic consciousness; Public infrastructure and communication channels; communal learning and decision-making processes; leadership and community leaders' distinctive characteristics of communal civil societies; and interrelationship between people and institutions (Theerathas Rojkijjakul, 2016).

Conclusion, the driving concept of civil society was a diverse assemblage emphasizing all societies having a common mindset, similar ideals in doing activities or solving problems with a vision consisted learning, communication, good management system, collaborative activities and responsibility as citizens with objective beneficial to societies. Being successful required new ideas, good operation, governmental supports, and indispensably was that people or people in society vigorously contribute participation. Civil society or community-related researches focused on building strong communities, with monks playing the most role. This included building the community to realize knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and exchange of learning from teaching by transferring to generations in the community for efficient development in the future (Phuttipatra Pektepin, 2022; Vasithphol Kulprom, 2017; Wuddhichai Sabboonjuang, 2018; Phrapalad Samart Sangngern, 2013).

Conclusion, the concepts and theories about development if explained in principle, it would be seen that it was a change that had a good direction and approach. So, it could be changed in something useful and quality in line with the development concept. It emphasized happiness, human development, having quality and morality through the process and develop according to the goals. Mental development, patterns, behaviors included interrelationships of people in society to solve various problems in society. Development according to this group's opinion therefore depended on the objectives and how the objective makers would identify and require from them. The concept of participation was the process of creating a movement to connect collaboration to work. Increasing the quality of decision-making, reducing costs and wasting time, building consensus and being good governance; it eased implementation. Participation then rose from the important part, which was public learns; human development; Social outcomes; and the participatory process (Lersan Pissawong, 2023). It is fair and easy to implement, with participation coming from an important part: learning, human development, good consequence for transition and promotion

of networking. The principle of participation was consistent with the theory of Cohen and Uphoff: participation in decision-making, operational participation, benefits earned participation and participation in evaluation. Driving the concept of civil society was a diverse assemblage emphasizing all societies having a common mindset, similar ideals in doing activities or solving problems with a vision consisted learning, communication, good management system, collaborative activities and responsibility as citizens with objective beneficial to societies. Being successful required new ideas, good operation, governmental supports, and indispensably was that people or people in society vigorously contribute participation.

## **Driving Civil Society Engagement to Gear Municipal Development Plans through 3 Strategies and Plans**

On January 18, 2024, the Rai Khing Municipality Board held a meeting of civil society engagement to draw MOU of cooperation for integrated development of residential quality of life with Wat Rai Khing Royal Temple, Wat Tha Phut, Shera Public Company Limited, Nakhon Pathom Vocational College, Rai Khing Municipality Community Organization Council, Chairman of the Community Department of Rai Khing Municipality and Civil Defense Volunteers (OPPO), Rai Khing Municipality (2024). This is to mitigate social, economic, household problems and the municipal members affected by shelters. Development Strategies and Plans have been designed through modifying the 13<sup>th</sup> NESDP, 2022, into 3 major strategies and plans with 14 sub-strategies and sub-plans (ONESDC Office, 2022), they were:

Strategy and Plan 1: Building the Rai Khing Municipality's position in the new provincial context:

Sub-strategy 1.1 - Maintaining and advancing balanced relationships between 14 municipal villages with other surrounding sub-districts through policies that clearly meet the municipal needs while extending collaboration with subdistricts with which the Rai Khing has intimate amicable relations to ensure equitable cooperation.

Sub-strategy 1.2 - Establishing the Rai Khing's role as the Greater Tha Chin River key local economic partner by means of intimate collaboration and reciprocal support rather than rivalry. Forging balanced and collective regional development through a regional committee to integrate approaches in nurture regional relations at all levels.

Sub-strategy 1.3 - Developing trade and investment relationships by pushing for the exploiting trade agreements. Negotiating various agreements supporting trade and investment, such as transport and management at subdistrict and provincial borders crossing areas. Creating and strengthening cooperation in any special development zones between the Rai Khing Municipalities, other provincial municipalities and the surrounding provinces to generate larger economic and social benefits from all possible aspects.

Sub-strategy 1.4 - Improving mechanisms to support the setting up of local economic bases in the new normal context. Creating a mechanism or national committee for integrated methods to reviewing investment promotion as well as investing in new economic fields to accommodate an ongoing shift of production bases and supply chain realignment across regional area.

Sub-strategy 1.5 – Enacting laws and guidelines to elevate the Rai Khing Municipality to the national and international standards. Promptly leveraging standards in social and environmental aspects and in health, well-being, quality of life, inequality mitigation, labor mobility, transparency and good governance in the business sector to meet national and international standards in order to overcome any prosperous barriers and the middle-income trap.

Strategy and Plan 2: - Developing infrastructure and supporting factors to enable The Rai Khing to become a key local trade, investment gateway and economic base to the western and Southern of Thailand:

Sub-strategy 2.1- Investing in infrastructure and developing supporting factors to promote special development zones and areas with promising future and hidden latency, including transport infrastructure, logistics services and networks along every routes and links with neighboring municipalities, cross-municipal border investment and trade facilities, ports and land bridges in the

Regional Trade Corridor to turn the Rai Kding Municipality into a strategic gateway not only to foster tourism and services.

Sub-strategy 2.2 - Developing a seamless multimodal transportation and logistics system at the regional, sub-regional and cross-border levels. Integrating infrastructure development plans for land, rail and river transport to exploit the geographical and infrastructural linkages from regional, sub-regional and cross-border links, and links with GMS (Google Mobile Services) in particular focusing on convenient, modern and safe transport along key waterways for economic purposes to boost the effectiveness of domestic and international transports.

Sub-strategy 2.3 Boosting the efficiency of logistics management to facilitate and mitigate obstacles in trade and investment as well as correspond to future trade patterns. Improving basic infrastructure management systems by, for example, adopting modern technologies, enhancing service systems, developing software, and relaxing relevant rules and regulations.

Sub-strategy 2.4 Encouraging investment in building logistics service centers, which includes container yards or inland container depots, dry ports, and loading-unloading docks, with an emphasis on integrating investment plans into key strategic transport routes to enable connections with GMS countries, China and ASEAN. Setting compelling service rates to motivate a shift in transport modes to rail system.

Sub-strategy 2.5 Encouraging more private sector investment in infrastructure with transparency, accountability and clear evaluation of efficiency and success. Allowing operators in the trade, investment and service sectors to have more roles in service provision.

Strategy and Plan 3: Stimulating investments to restructure target industries towards the Rai Kding Municipality not 4.0 but 50.0-6.0:

Sub-strategy 3.1 Expediting the adoption of modern technologies in production in the industrial, service, and logistics sectors, particularly in terms of a shift to automate production and prompt exploitation of technological advancement.

Sub-strategy 3.2 - Restructuring the industrial, service and logistics sectors to adopt BCG (Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model) framework, as well as supporting clean energy usage, reusing and recycling of factors of production, and CO<sup>2</sup> emission reductions.

Sub-strategy 3.3 - Establishing digital systems conducive to trade and investment. Developing a national trade platform to support B2B trade. Digitalizing the Rai Khing municipality financial services to facilitate investments. Reviewing, revising and developing laws and regulations to facilitate fair trade and investment. Developing effective laws on electronic transactions and personal data protection.

Sub-strategy 3.4 - Equipping human resources with international-level capacity and standards to support trade and investment. Revising HR development systems and curricula to meet the needs of the labor market and businesses by allowing the private sector to participate in curriculum development and share expenses incurred. Digitalizing pedagogical methodologies to facilitate self-learning and knowledge usage in income generation and business building. Raising labor skills and teaching levels at Thai educational institutions to international standards or the same level as those of leading global institutions (bilingual education) to ensure the usefulness of skills in professional life.

Conclusion, necessary Strategies and Plans.1: building the Rai Khing Municipality's position in the new provincial context with 5 sub-strategies and plans; Strategies and Plans 2: - developing infrastructure and supporting factors to enable the Rai Khing to become a key local trade, investment gateway and economic base to the western and Southern of Thailand with 3 sub-strategies and plans, and Strategies and Plans 3: stimulating investments to restructure target industries towards the Rai Khing Municipality not 4.0 but 50.0-6.0 with 4 sub-strategies and plans.

## New Knowledges

The engagement of civil society is vital for the successful implementation of the communal development plan in Rai Khing Municipality. By adopting the recommended strategies and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, the municipality can pave the way for sustainable development that meets the needs of its residents while promoting economic growth and social cohesion.



**Figure 1:** Diagram Show the engagement of civil society is vital for the successful implementation of the communal development plan.

## Conclusions

The deviated focuses on the less-quality life and the misery alleviation, which was unmatched to the 13<sup>th</sup> NESDP 2023-2027; they attract the researcher to find the approach to drive the Rai Khing Municipal Development Plans, concept of development, engagement/participation, civil society and how to gear the municipal development plans. The concepts of development, by principle, it would be seen that it was a change that had a good direction and approach in line with the development concept, which emphasizes physical and mental happiness, human development, having quality and morality through the process

and develop according to the goals. *The concept of participation* was the process of creating a movement to connect collaboration, increasing the quality of decision-making, reducing costs and wasting time, building consensus and being good governance; it eased implementation. Participation then rose from the important part, which was public learns; human development; Social outcomes; and the participatory process like learning, human development, good consequence for transition and promotion of networking under Cohen and Uphoff: participation in decision-making, operational participation, benefits earned participation and participation in evaluation. Driving the concept of civil society was a diverse assemblage emphasizing all societies having a common mindset, similar ideals in doing activities or solving problems with a vision consisted learning, communication, good management system, collaborative activities and responsibility as citizens with objective beneficial to societies. Being successful required new ideas, good operation, governmental supports, and indispensably was that people or people in society vigorously contribute participation.

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