

The Role of Chaiyaphum Rajabhat University in Participation with Local Governments to Develop Chaiyaphum Province

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ABSTRACT

The study of the role of ChaiyaphumRajabhat University in participation with local governments to develop Chaiyaphum Province revealed that the university should develop courses which are consistent with the local needs through local participation and the implementation of research study for collecting and analyzing information on the local needs. The university should also establish memorandum of understanding (MOU) with local governments in order to provide short courses on local development. The university should play roles in evaluating, analyzing, and researching on good governance for local governments as a part of the university's mission on community academic services. Moreover, the university needs to encourage its personnel to conduct research to cover the missions of the local governments for practical research findings which provide guidelines for Chaiyaphum province to participate in creating development plans with local governments. Additionally, the university should be the center for collecting information on arts, cultures, and tourist attractions in Chaiyaphum, support the local tradition and culture, and publicize and campaign on the conservation, restoration, and development of the potential capacity in managing local natural resources and environment.

Introduction

The main mission of ChaiyaphumRajabhat University is to produce graduates according to the major strategy "To be the University for Local Development". Accordingly, the university needs to support the development of the local and community in Chaiyaphum through teaching and learning, research, academic service, and arts and culture promotion. At the present, the university continually participates in community academic services, and then

brings skills and experiences back to classroom instructions, supports research and development that lead to actual implementations, transfers knowledge bodies from research and academic services to the local. Moreover, the university emphasizes on participating with organizations responsible for the development of local community and society in order to react to the need and the cooperation for the sustainable development of local areas of Chaiyaphum province.

Studies showed that the participation of ChaiyaphumRajabhat University with local governments was on specific areas, covering only certain missions such as the academic cooperation project with local educational officers in the form of Local Administration Organization Development courses in order to improve the quality of personnel in the local administration organizations. However, there was no clear cooperation between the two sectors on other issues. Moreover, the level of sharing resources was found to be limited compared to their available potential and resources.

For the reasons mentioned above, the researcher was interested in investigating the role of ChaiyaphumRajabhat University in participation with local governments to develop Chaiyaphum province. Both organizations have roles and missions in responding to the development of communities, Chaiyaphum province. While ChaiyaphumRajabhat University is responsible for providing academic services and supporting academic resources and trainings for the local community, the local governments play roles in allocating budgets for managing and providing public services as transferred from the central government in response to needs of the people. In the past, the two organizations lacked of integrative cooperation for developing the province. The researcher expected that the findings of this research would serve as information that guide for the future cooperative development of Chaiyaphum province.

Methodology

This study was a mixed-method research consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The data analysis included descriptive analysis, document description, and interviews, through the process of planning, objective setting, data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. The samples of the study were purposively selected in order to obtain suitable data and reasonable critiques. Areas of investigations

included the followings: 1) the reviews of related academic literature and research studies and the social contexts of Chaiyaphum local governments; 2) the quantitative data collected through the questionnaire on the role of Chaiyaphum Rajabhat University in Participation with Local Governments to Develop Chaiyaphum Province; 3) the in-depth interviews with the group of chief executives, deputy chief executives, and the chief administrators in Chaiyaphum province selected by purposive sampling method from the areas closed to university with urgent needs for cultural and natural tourist promotional areas; and 4) the opinion panel on the role of Chaiyaphum Rajabhat University in Participation with Local Governments to Develop Chaiyaphum Province.

Results and Discussions

The role of Chaiyaphum Rajabhat University in participation with local governments to develop Chaiyaphum Province consisted of six areas. 1) Improving and adding values to agricultural products. 2) The development of education, religions, cultures, and local wisdom. 3) The strengthening and improvement of life quality. 4) Tourism development. 5) Natural resource and environmental development. 6) Good governance. According to the higher educational commissions, universities' status and roles are considered parts of the whole system, not only to provide education or to produce graduates, but also have the four missions according to the Ministry of Education. Chaiyaphum Rajabhat University has six missions – 1) education; 2) community academic service; 3) research; 4) arts and culture enrichment; 5) management; and 6) environment and natural resource conservation. Responses from the interviewees revealed four important suggestions. 1) The university should develop courses in response to local needs with local participation, as well as using research process to collect and analyze the needs. 2) The university should also establish memorandum of understanding (MOU) with local governments. 3) The university should provide short courses on local development and play role in evaluating, analyzing, and researching on good governance for local administration organization as a part of the university's mission on community academic services. 4) The university needs to encourage its personnel to conduct research to cover the six missions of the local governments for practical research findings which provide guidelines for developing Chaiyaphum province. 5)

The university should participate in creating development plans with local governments. 6) The university should be the center for collecting information on arts, cultures, and tourist attractions in Chaiyaphum as well as support the local tradition and culture. 7) The university should develop the database for tourist attractions in Chaiyaphum and explore community tourism places for further promotion to the province's tourism attraction. 8) The university should participate in publicizing and campaigning on the conservation, restoration, and development of the potential capacity in managing local natural resources and environment, in accordance with the 11th strategic plan for the development of ChaiyaphumRajabhat University (2012-2016).

Suggestions from the interviewees regarding problems and obstacles for ChaiyaphumRajabhat University to participate with local governments to develop Chaiyaphum province were as follows. 1) The university had no MOU with the local governments. 2) The university had no joint development of strategic plans with local governments. 3) The local governments were uninformed about channels for making contact with the university. 4) The university had no research findings on good governance which can be practically implemented. 5) The university had no database on religions, cultures, and local wisdoms of Chaiyaphum for searching and referencing.

The findings of the study identified five guidelines for the participation between ChaiyaphumRajabhat University and the local governments in Chaiyaphum province. 1) The university needs to establish MOU with Chaiyaphum local governments covering all development missions of the local governments in Chaiyaphum province. 2) The university has to improve its curriculum and courses in response to needs of the community, local governments, and labor markets. 3) The university should involve in the process of strategic planning of the local governments to set up the operational guidelines. 4) The university should organize tourism promotion activities in front of the university as one of the channels for promoting tourism and the university. 5) The university should encourage its personnel to do research, make the research studies outstanding by publishing practical findings to the community and the province.

Summary and Recommendations

The followings are recommendations at the policy level. 1) There should be Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ChaiyaphumRajabhat University and the local governments as the guidelines for developing Chaiyaphum province together. 2) The university's research policy should emphasize on the exploring ways of sustainable conservation of religions, arts, traditions, cultures, and local wisdom for practical development and the outstanding identity of Chaiyaphum province. 3) The university should set up the policy on developing curriculum and courses that serve the needs of local, including short courses such as career trainings and project-development seminar, as well as publicize the operation plans to all related organizations.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. There should be studies on the potential and capacity on management between ChaiyaphumRajabhat University and the local governments of Chaiyaphum province.
2. There should be some evaluation, analysis, and research and development on strengths and weaknesses of ChaiyaphumRajabhat University.

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