



## Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy of Business Organization by Using School as the Medium to Community

Pensri Jaroenwanit and Supot Deeboonmee

**Abstract**— This research is aimed at investigating the needs and the problems of the community in order to develop CSR strategies that are relevant to the needs of the community by using the school in the community as the medium and by following up the CSR with evaluations. The studied area was Ban Hong Sai School and Ban Hong Sai Village in the Kampaeng Sub-district of the Kasetwisai District of Roi-et Province. This is the school in Thung Kula Rong Hai in a drought-stricken area that floods in the rainy season. Moreover, the soil fertility is low and it is salty making the land unsuitable for agricultural activities. As a result of these factors, the poverty rate is high. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied in the current study.

The results revealed that the main problems of the community were monthly food expenditures and insufficient food production. In addition, the farming costs have been high due to the fact that the drought had caused low production and a loss of economic benefits. Moreover, family problems have arisen because there are a number of elderly people, children, and juveniles living in the area. The adults are working out of town, and this has resulted in a community that lacks warmth and has family problems. Ban Hong Sai community is located far from the center of Roi-et Province and there are no community library services for people in the area. Hence, a brain storming activity was organized to solve these problems. The CSR strategies, that could meet the needs of the community, were developed. The following five activities were held in Ban Hong Sai School: 1) Agriculture Development activities to support learning of food production in the community, 2) Productivity and Cost reduction in rice farming by utilizing the rice intensification technique of the Princess Pa Foundation, 3) Sport & Health activities, 4) A Living Library, and 5) Information Technology Development. The results showed that these activities were able to solve the problems of the community with with a high level of satisfaction.

**Keywords**— Corporate social responsibility, strategy, community.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's global world, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has increased the public's demand for transparency and regarding disclosure of information, firms must meet the stakeholders' expectations. Firms, which are engaged in business with a large public-interest component, must commit themselves to promoting business activities that bring about economic, social, and environmental benefits to the society [1]. Corporations often portray themselves as socially responsible members of society. These actions extend to, but are not limited to, the community where the firms operate; the environment; and to the firm's treatment of employees, suppliers, and customers. The last few decades have seen a surge in corporate social responsibility (CSR) [2], [3]. When corporations make

an effort to be socially responsible beyond what is required by the law, this effort is often described as being strategic and as being made mainly for the benefit of the shareholders or managers. A large body of literature corroborates this belief. However, could the incentives for corporate social responsibility (CSR) come from an altruistic inclination fostered by the social capital of the region in which the firm is headquartered [4]. Over past a few decades, the topic of CSR has received increasing attention from both researchers and practitioners, and CSR practices have become mainstream business activities [5].

Over the past decade, the development of CSR in Thailand has changed from a CSR-after-process, which consisted of giving donations and participating in community volunteerism, to a CSR-in-process because the former activities were not related to their businesses. At present, the social responsibility of business enterprises consists of trying to link CSR with their businesses by protecting, sustaining, and solving the negative effects for stakeholders in Environmental, Social and Governance: ESG. These are essential factors for Sustainable Enterprise [6]. CSR activities in the business sector from the past year have expanded from one organization to inviting business partners and suppliers to participate in activities. This is the beginning of a concrete CSR in the Supply Chain in Thailand [7]. The Corporate Social Responsibility – CSR in Thailand is another example of a demand for social responsibility

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directed towards other stakeholders rather than shareholders and employees. An increasing number of businesses that have conducted social activities during the past 4-5 years have indicated that the trend of business in the future will be involved in social responsibility and development [8].

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development have changed the direction of businesses in Thailand. Business enterprises tend to focus more on balance between the growth of the economy, society, and the environment [9]. International Organization for Standardization or ISO has specified social responsibility, which is ISO 26000 Social Responsibility, in order to increase awareness and understanding about social responsibility in business enterprises. In Thailand, standardization related to social responsibility was officially agreed upon on 1st November 2010.

In the past, social responsibility was not strictly prescribed. However, businesses that focus on social responsibility will have an advantage over other businesses [10]. In addition, new CSR strategies should be planned to garner sustainable benefit for the community. The Business Strategy Development Center of Khon Kaen University has cooperated with public organizations to develop a CSR strategy using schools as the medium. The objectives of this study were to investigate problems and needs of the community and to develop a CSR strategy that can be used in the community. The community has opportunities to participate in every process. The studied area is Ban Hong Sai School and Ban Hong Sai Village in the Kampaeng Sub-district of Kasetwisai District in Roi-et Province. The school and community are located in Thung Kula Rong Hai area, which is drought-stricken and unsuitable for agricultural activities. Furthermore, it has a high rate of poverty. The community should be able to solve their problems by themselves which will lead to sustainable development.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

#### *2.1.1 Definition of Corporate Social Responsibility*

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a business strategy or approach that enables organizations to act in a socially responsible manner based on their premises [11], and is perceived as an instrument for driving sustainable development [12], [13] and for maximizing long-term benefits for organizations [14]. In addition, CSR is the volitional contribution by organizations to improve the environment, society, and the economy, and is based upon either altruism or the enhancement of competitive advantages. CSR has a long history and has developed alongside the business concept, but only in the 1990's did it become critical to business strategies [15]. However, companies have begun focusing more on the environment and social effects recently [16], [17].

#### *2.1.2 Development of Corporate Social Responsibility*

In recent decades, increasing attention has been paid to the social and environmental impacts of business,

particularly in regards to multi-national companies. Stakeholders are ever more concerned and responsible about environmental and social issues [18], [19]. Corporate goodwill through mega-event sponsorship has become increasingly challenging, and sponsors have often linked their sponsorship to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities [20]. Movements towards sustainable development have resulted in increased pressure from different stakeholder groups to report on ESG (environmental, social governance indicators). Consequently, over the past decade, companies have been asked to improve transparency in reporting on their CSR performance [21], [22], [23]. Over the years, growing attention has been paid to the ethical, environmental, and social dimensions of business, most often under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) heading. Much of the early literature aimed to specify the concept and the various components of CSR, as it emerged in the second half of the 20th century [24], [25], [26], [27].

### **2.2 Strategy**

#### *2.2.1 Definition of Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy.*

Carrying out Corporate Social Responsibility policies and activities in ways that are sensitive to the social and political forces, surrounding a company, is a key aim in the CSR strategy-making process [28]. The perceived importance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed in recent years in line with a growing recognition that it offers companies the potential to develop a competitive advantage [29], [30], [31]. CSR is important in today's socially conscious market environment [32], [33].

#### *2.2.2 Development of Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy in Thailand.*

In 2005, the Thaipat Institute conducted action research regarding the development of CSR in the business management process. The objectives of the research were to study the characteristics and compositions of CSR, that were related to the context of Thai society, and to develop them by grounding CSR in eastern wisdom. The research was funded by the Thai Research Fund (TRF.) From the results of that research, the word "CSR-in-process" was coined for the first time. Business process was used to classify CSR in "Social Enterprise" [34]. Many Thai business enterprises have developed CSR strategies in response to their needs and to create a sense of engagement with the stakeholders. The company CSR activities create value for their businesses [35]. This impulse has led to an increase in CSR activities in many other organizations in Thailand, including government organizations, public organizations, and stakeholders. These organizations clearly see the benefit of CSR and are aware of its drawbacks if social problems still remain. In terms of consumers' behavior, they tend to understand and focus on the social responsibility of the business enterprises [36].

## **2.3 Community.**

### **2.3.1 Definition of Community**

The term "community" is used extensively in almost all areas of our lives. It is used in both our common, everyday language and also by professionals, politicians, and by corporations. We frequently hear about "community care", "community revitalization", and "community service", as well as many other references to community. Even though everyone seems to have a fairly common understanding of what is meant by "community", a clear and comprehensive definition often eludes us [37].

### **2.3.2 Community in Thailand**

Considering the social and economic evolution of the country, as well its location, Thai society is an agrarian society. It can be seen that the majority of the communities in Thailand are either rural communities or urban communities, especially in the main city of each region and the capital of Thailand [38]. Rural society refers to the communities that are situated outside of the city. Most of populations in rural society are agrarian and their living conditions are similar with an extended family in which members work together to produce food. The traditions of the people, who work seasonally in rural areas, are tied to religion. They strictly follow the traditions and the religion, and as a result, the temple is the center of the community. Worship, education, and other activities are held in the temple. There are increasing problems in rural communities, such as poverty and economic problems [39].

### **2.3.3 Information of Ban Hong Sai and Ban Hong Sai School**

#### **1) Ban Hong Sai**

Ban Hong Sai is located at Moo 4 of the Kampaeng Sub-district in the Kasetwisai District of Roi-et Province. It was established in 1932, in the area of Thung Kula Rong Hai. The soil in this area has a high level of salinity with large amounts of Sodium salts which affect the growth of plants. The salty soil results in a reduction of water absorption. Dehydration occurs and decreases the growth of plants. Currently, there are 245 households (or a population of 975) living in Ban Hong Sai. The farming area in Ban Hong Sai is approximately 1,000 Rai.

#### **2) Ban Hong Sai School**

Ban Hong Sai School is located at Moo 4 of the Kampaeng Sub-district in the Kasetwisai District of Roi-et Province. This school is under the administration of the Roi-et Primary Education Service Area Office 2, and students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 attend. In accordance with the Primary Education Act of B.E. 2478, it was established on 4th July 1943 by Khun Norakhan Borirak, Chief of the Kasetwisai District Office. This primary school covers an area of over 26 Rai, 2 Ngan, and 86 Square Wah, and is covered in the service area of only one Village which is Ban Hong Sai, Moo 4. In the beginning, the building of Ban Hong Sai School was a temporary building with a grass roof, and

the pavilion at a temple was used as a class room. Later, it was developed, and the school buildings were constructed. There are two buildings with one library that are now used by 77 students and 13 educational personnel [40].

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

Participatory Action Research was applied in this study. The school was assigned as a medium for the education and the collection of data. The sample groups consisted of working teams of project activities. Data was gathered by brainstorming and by conducting group interviews, as well as in-depth interviews. The details of interview guidelines for data collection and observations were as follows:

Brainstorming activities were organized for fifty participants including experts from Khon Kaen University, teachers from Ban Hong Si School, and representatives from the Ban Hong Sai community.

For group interviews, the data was gathered from 20 participants from each of the activity groups which were composed of teachers from the Ban Hong Si School and representatives from the Ban Hong Sai community.

The samples, who participated in the in-depth interviews, were Mr. Som Boon Songga, a man of local wisdom from the Ban Hong Sai community, and Mr. Sanae Saowapan, The Director of Ban Hong Sai School.

Observations were carried out while the activities were being conducted. Data was also gathered from each of the activities. The sample group consisted of fifty teachers from Ban Hong Si School and representatives from Ban Hong Sai community.

For the quantitative research, questionnaires were used to gather the data. The key question involved the community's satisfaction regarding the activities. Purposive sampling was used to select 50 participants. The sample selected was: 1) educational personnel, and 2) members of the local community of Ban Hong Sai of the Kampaeng Sub-district of the Kasetwisai District in Roi-et Province. The sample was cooperating and participates in all activities with voluntary.

The data obtained from the questionnaires was analyzed by using the fundamental descriptive method. The interpretation of the mean value found in Tables 1 & 2 has been defined in the following manner:

- 1.00-1.80 refers to lowest
- 1.81-2.60 refers to low
- 2.61-3.40 refers to moderate
- 3.41-4.20 refers to high
- 4.21-5.00 refers to highest

## **4. FINDINGS**

Since social problems are related to schools, it should be considered that when students have problems, schools should also be responsible. Therefore, the school was selected as the medium for this study. The research findings are presented as follows:

### **A. Problems and Needs of the School and Community**

Using the questions formulated by the research team, the

problems and needs of the community were investigated by conducting group interviews. The sample group included the community leader, the heads of community enterprise, the villagers in Bang Hong Sai Village, and the school director of Bang Hong Sai School. The total number was 20 people. On December 15, 2014, the data collection was conducted. The results were as follows:

1) The cost of daily living was high while the income rate was low. The monthly food expenditure of the villagers was somewhat high, and they have to buy food from the market, such as vegetables, fresh foods, etc. As a result, they had debts and were affected by the chemical residues that were found on most of the food that they bought from the market. In addition, the costs for agriculture (e.g., growing vegetables) were high while the production was low due to the conditions of the soil in the area and the drought which has caused a loss of benefits.

2) Rice farming in Ban Hong Sai area is not supported by irrigation; farmers rely heavily on rain or on dry-sowing methods. In case of drought, they needed to plow and re-sow the seeds, which used an unnecessary amount of seeds. Moreover, there was a lack of labor and considerable amount of chemicals being used to increase the production. This has caused an increase in the numbers of pests, which as a result, has led to increases in production costs. Meanwhile, there was little trust regarding the use of chemicals or organic agricultural practices. As a result, people were not confident about the produce, nor were they ready for the consequences of low production.

3) Family problems arose in Ban Hong Sai community because there were a large number of elderly people, children, and juveniles living in the area. The adults are out of town working, and this has resulted in a lack of warmth within the community and a host of family problems, such as misbehaving, not paying attention in school, participating in hooliganism, getting into fights, gambling, and doing drugs.

4) Because the village is a good distance from the city and has no library or Internet, that could enable the villagers to gain access to necessary information or knowledge, the children, juveniles, and the people of the community have not placed any importance on reading or learning.

The problems mentioned speak to the needs of the community. Therefore, by using the school as the medium, community activities could be implemented with objectives that were aimed at improving the quality of life, paying off debts, becoming more healthy, and gaining occupational knowledge in order to make a living.

#### *B. The approaches for developing CSR strategies to be relevant to the needs of the community.*

One of the approaches for the development of CSR strategies, being relevant to the needs of the community, was accomplished by brainstorming opinions from the villagers. This took place on 10 January 2015 and was executed by the research team from Khon Kaen University in collaboration with 3K Products Co., Ltd.;

the representatives of Ban Hong Sai village; and the director and teachers of the Ban Hong Sai School. The following activities were implemented in order to solve problems: 1) Agricultural Development activities supported the learning of food production in the community and were used to solve the first problem. 2) By utilizing the rice intensification technique of the Princess Pa Foundation, the second problem was managed by using Productivity and Cost reduction in rice farming. 3) The last two problems were solved by applying Sport & Health activities, A Living Library, and Information Technology Development. There were 4 sections that were responsible for the aforementioned activities.

#### *C. The implementation of CSR strategies in Ban Hong Sai community by using school as the medium was conducted during February – August 2015. Five activities were conducted by using the following steps:*

1) Organizing seminars in order to disseminate information provided by experts from Khon Kaen University.

2) Holding trainings regarding the PA's Precise Rice Cultivation and Roi-Kaen-Sarn-Sin Rice Network.

3) Conducting activities led by representatives from the community and from the school.

4) Scheduling follow-ups and providing counseling from researchers, experts, and specialist from Khon Kaen University.

#### *D. Follow-ups and evaluations of the activities are detailed as follows:*

1) Agricultural Development activities to Support Learning of Food Production in the Community: The activities included developing the growing methods of vegetables and edible plants, such as pumpkins, eggplants, oyster mushrooms, peppers, bananas, etc. Other activities included developing water management systems and learning how to plant and to care for each plant species. As a result, the participants learned how to manage their vegetable and edible plant gardens, as well as how to grow their own vegetables for consumption and how to earn some money from selling them.

2) Productivity and Cost Reduction in Rice Farming by Utilizing the Rice Intensification Technique of the Princess Pa Foundation: A training session was held regarding the PA's Precise Rice Cultivation, which consisted of how to sag rice seedlings, how to nurture rice seedlings, how to make fermented water, and how to take care of rice. As a result, the methods were applied in the demonstration rice field in the school area and in the rice fields of the farmers who had participated in the project. In addition, they learned how to make fermented water to use in their rice fields and how to use in growing vegetables.

3) Sport & Health Activities: There were landscape improvement activities and exercising activities regularly held every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 3pm-5pm for the teachers, students, and villagers. The sport field included a volleyball court, table tennis tables, and a badminton court. In addition, an improved soccer

field was built with support from the community. As a result, the juveniles and the villagers came to play sports at the school field and to participate in exercising activities in their free time. By participating in this way, there is a reduced risk of villagers resorting to drugs and other vices and there is reinforcement and strengthening of the family bonds.

4) A Living Library: The following services were set up: 1) landscape improvement, 2) interior and exterior decorations and 3) a system for borrowing and returning books. Moreover, old and worn-out books were replaced with new ones. Furthermore, books, that are suitable for juveniles and farmers, were provided. In addition, each day there were volunteer librarians, who were responsible for the services at the library. As a result, there is now an effective provision of library services for the teachers, students, personnel, and for the villagers.

5) Information Technology Development and Information Search in the Community: The computers at the school were repaired and the Internet system was improved. In addition, certain personnel were made responsible for facilitating people who use the computer service.

As a result, the school has become a major source for learning and for information technology. Furthermore, the personnel in charge in the computer room now have basic computer knowledge..

*E. The Participant’s Levels of Satisfaction regarding the Projects*

After completing the project, there was an evaluation to determine the participants’ levels of satisfaction. There were 50 participants involved in this evaluation. The results of the levels of satisfaction regarding the project are shown in Table 1, and the levels of satisfaction regarding the activities are shown in Table 2.

**Table 1: Level of satisfaction regarding each activity in the project**

ISSUES	The Participant’s Levels of Satisfaction regarding each Activity in the Project	
	Average	Level
1. Agricultural Development activities to support learning of food production in the community	4.50	highest
2. Productivity and Cost reduction in rice farming by utilizing the rice intensification technique of the Princess Pa Foundation	4.75	highest
3. Sport & Health activities	4.63	highest
4. A Living Library	4.63	highest
5. Information Technology Development and Information Searches in the community	4.63	highest
Average Level of Satisfaction	4.60	highest

Table 1 shows that the overall level of satisfaction regarding the project is 4.60%. Activities with the highest satisfaction rate were Productivity and Cost reduction in rice farming by utilizing the rice intensification technique from the Princess Pa Foundation at 4.75%. This was followed by Sport & Health activities, a Living Library, and Information Technology Development and Information Retrieval in the Community which were all

equal at 4.63 %. Another activity that had a high level of satisfaction was Agricultural Development Activities to support the learning of food production within the community at 4.5%.

**Table 2: Level of satisfaction regarding the overall project execution**

ITEMS	Level of Satisfaction regarding the overall project execution	
	Average	level
1. Information is beneficial and meets the needs of the community. Information is also accurate and up to date.	4.54	highest
2. Consultants or experts have skills knowledge, and ability.	4.83	highest
3. There is an opportunity for the audience to ask questions.	4.54	highest
4. The seminar topic is interesting and can be applied in businesses.	4.58	highest
5. Staff has good manners and willingness, and pay attention when carrying out the project.	4.67	highest
6. Staff is willing to help cordially.	4.88	highest
7. Staff is working systematically.	4.46	highest
8. The field work was convenient and flowed fluently.	4.46	highest
9. Consultants, experts, and staff members have an effective process and methods for doing the project.	4.50	highest
10. The project was done on the time line.	4.29	highest
11. Tools and equipment used in the project were prepared well.	4.54	highest
The overall level of satisfaction regarding the project’s execution.	4.58	highest

According to Table 2, the overall satisfaction towards activities was approximately 4.58%. Activities with the highest satisfaction rate were as follows: 1) the willingness and sincerity of the working team; 2) the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the consultants or experts; and 3) the manners, determination, and attention of the team towards the project at 4.88%, 4.83%, and 4.67%, respectively.

*F. Discussions*

The results are interesting and have led to a discussion of the issues as follows.

Regarding Agricultural Development Activities to support Food Production in the community, the results were consistent with the research of Premchaya, Kamrai, and Kanokwan (2010) [41], and these are the practices of reducing the costs of farming and the use of fertilizers in the orchards, as well as producing home-grown vegetables and farm products. Within the community, this is related to agricultural development activities that can support learning about food production and creating activities that increase production and reduce the farming costs by using PA’s Precise Rice Cultivation technique. This activity is also related to stopping the use of chemical fertilizers, so that the cost of farming and expenditures for food can be reduced.

A Living library activity is consistent with the research of Wattanachai (2011) [42]. “A living library in the form of learning resort” or the model of learning resort and services can encourage organizations to build or improve a modern library or learning resources, so as to creatively promote reading and life-long learning. This can respond to the diverse needs and behaviors of the customers. The learning space can be divided according to the needs and interests of the target groups.

Regarding the development of information technology and information search within the community, this is

consistent with the research of Suthasinee (2010) [42]. Information technology is an important factor for communities. The local community can access information resources, which, in terms of forming a learning network within the community, is an essential mechanism.

With respect to CSR Development Strategy and as outlined in the research of Aekalak (2011), it was suggested that social responsibility activities could be appropriately developed to become consistent with the needs of the communities. In terms of the economy, society, and the environment, this will balance businesses towards development that is sustainable.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

By using the school as the medium, the application of CSR strategies of the business organization resulted in a satisfactory outcome with the highest satisfaction rate at an average of 4.60 in each of the aspects. The satisfaction evaluation towards the speakers, personnel, duration, processes, and availability of the equipment had an average of 4.58. It can be concluded that the following are important CSR strategies: 1) implementing the target for the community to participate in the research study from the beginning to the end, 2) designating a school or a temple as the community gathering center and as the driving force to success by encouraging villagers to participate and collaborate, 3) collaborating with local organizations on committees, such as the local educational institutions and the Sub-district Administration organizations, etc., and 4) establishing close working relationships in order to solve the problems at hand.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to develop CSR strategies by using schools within the community as the interface for the community, personnel in Education and those from the local community should constantly participate in the activities. In terms of selecting communities and the schools, the following aspects should be considered: 1) the relationships, 2) the previous activities, 3) the School Director's level of readiness, 4) the community leaders, and 5) the participants. Finally, the strength of community should also be taken into account.

The activities which are suitable for collaboration between business organization and agencies in community of CSR strategies the following aspects should be considered: 1) activities should be usefulness and solving the problem to the community sustainably; 2) business organization and agencies in community should have readiness and adequate resources regarding to knowledge, human resources, and budget, including the concept of performing CSR strategies together; 3) business organization and agencies in community should conduct the beneficial activities to collective society and operate continuously; and 4) business organization and agencies in community should be design and implement CSR strategies which accordance to the community in each area.

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