Revitalizing Rural Economy through Social Solidarity Economy
: Ban Chan Community Enterprise under Alternative Agriculture Network (AAN) in Northeast, Thailand
AAN’s activities

1. Develop type of knowledge: farm management, certification, processing, and marketing => sustainable agriculture systems
2. Farmers’ rights: saved seeds
3. Follow-up and advocate related agriculture policies
4. Enhance young farmers group/network
5. Strengthening community: community enterprise
6. Public dissemination
General views of community enterprise in Thailand

- Community enterprise was promoted in 2005 by the Department of Agricultural Extension
- To promote local knowledge/wisdom; improve income; collective action

Number of registered groups as community enterprise

1. Productions
   - Crop (i.e., rice) = 28,971 groups
   - Livestock (i.e., meat cattle) = 21,316 groups
   - Processing (i.e., soy sauce) = 12,036 groups

2. Services
   - Community fund = 4,157 groups
   - Community shop = 1,965 groups
   - Eco-tourism = 1,276 groups

AAN: There is around 100 groups that registered as a community enterprise
Ban Chan Community Enterprise

• Attended sustainable agriculture training
• Group established in 2001
• 11 to 37 group members
• Adopt organic farming
  – concerning on health condition
  – decreasing farm production costs
• Reasons to form group as a community enterprise
  – Being a formal group
  – Having the rights to get supports from the committee of community enterprise promotion (as a detail under Community Enterprise Promotion Act)
  – Collective action
Group activities

1. Organic farming
   - Integrated farming: Mainly rice, some seasonal vegetables and fruit trees, poultry and livestock
2. Seed production

=> Started in 2014 after attending seed saving workshop from the University

=> Seed varieties:

- Rice: 3 glutinous (Khao Naew Deang, Khao Kham Luem Phua, and Khao Naew Khao Wong varieties); and 2 non-glutinous (Khao Riceberry and Khao Hom Mali 105 varieties)
- More than 10 varieties of vegetables such as chili, lettuce, long bean, Chinese cabbage, sweet basil, Thai eggplant, etc.

=> Benefits: 1) reduce farm production costs (i.e., seeds); 2) earn alternative income; 3) seed protection

(cont.) Group activities
(cont.) **Group activities**

3. Certification
   - Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)
   - USDA organic standard
   - EU organic standard (on-going process)

4. Marketing
   - Buying farm production with guarantee price
   - Access several marketing channels: export, among AAN’s members, online market, green markets etc.
Group benefits

• Improve health condition
• Decreasing farm production costs
• Improve income
• Provide job opportunity
• Price negotiation
• Working/supporting together

Group challenges

• Climate change
  – Water issues (flooded and drought)
  – Quality of seeds
  – Loss farm production
The supporting organizations

• Alternative Agriculture Network: local NGOs, academic, and farmer institute in 4 regions
• Sustainable Agriculture Foundation
• University: Maejo University, Mahasarakham University
• Research institute: Thailand Science Research and Innovation (TSRI)
• Public agency (i.e., Large Scale Scheme, sustainable agriculture project, etc.)

=> knowledge, grant project, research study, policy movement
The way forward

• Register seeds under seed law
• Support young farmers: sustainable agriculture system, marketing opportunities, community development, and seed production.
• Building seed network: improve seed production, appropriate technologies, advocating related agriculture policies (i.e., alternative agriculture act, the Thai Plant Varieties Protection (PVP) Act.
Thank you