

Should the volunteer of rural development camp (ค่ายอาสาพัฒนาชนบท) still exist ?

First of all, I have been to two volunteer camp, the first one (Intercamp15) as camp member and the second (BE camp 2019) as a staff, I would say that I had experinced in a lot of perspectives that I have never expected to be like this before. However, those two camps that I have been to were based on activities of Thammasart university Thaprachan campus: Intercamp 15 is created by Thammasart students group from variuos faculty but mostly they are located in Thaprachan campus; BE camp is run by students of BE faculty and it is supported by the faculty as well. Furthermore, there are more than these two camps that are based in Thaprachun Campus: Asa Thaprachan, BBA camp; those camps are different and they are divided or are classified by whether it is a camp that select any candidates who come from any Thammasart faculties (commonly called and known as ‘Kai Ruam’, ค่ายรวม) or it is a camp that select only candidates who study in its faculty (commonly called and known as ‘Kai Kana’, ค่ายคณะ). As I have been to these two different types of voluteer camp: ‘Kai Ruam’ (ค่ายรวม) and ‘Kai Kana’ (ค่ายคณะ); I have experienced that though they are different type of camps, their patterns or structure are very similar, therefore; I would like to introduce you a term called ‘Kai Asa Thaprachan (ค่ายอาสาท่าพระจันทร์)’, volunteer camp of Thaprachan campus, to called those voluteer of rural development camps that I have mentioned above. The reason that I say that those camps, ‘Kai Asa Thaprachan’, are similar because they have the same perspective, same approach, and same purpose as their activities are to go to those rural areas where are very far from Bangkok and just help what they can do and also priortize on their camp members so that they are enjoying with their activities and try to make strong relationship in between themselves. As throughout those two camps that I have been, I expected that I would go to really help them to get rid of those problems that are existed by inequality but it turn out that it could never helps things to be better. Even

though they went to or tried to find some place or some location that they need help indeed but actually, in my opinion, I think that the action of trying to go up there by those whom I called 'Kai Asa Thaorachan' has never makes things better but makes it worse. Since they want to maintain the camp and want to maintain the norms or the pattern that what the volunteer camp of Thaprachan campus must have and must do. Furthermore, Kai Asa Thaprachan mainly focuses on their members not those poor families who lives in rural areas as the staffs of the camp have planned for more than three months for only the purpose of how they can prioritize their members and how they can makes the camp feel fun and makes those people enjoy the camp with strong network together. Not only that, but they still focuses more on what mood that the camp should have, moreover; they donot think about sustainability as they just go to any place only once or twice but the if it has the second time it is what they called 'Post-camp': after the volunteer camp they will go back to the place they have been again as reunion but mainly focuses on relationship of themselves and use the money of those they have got from charity donation. This seem to be out of volunteer camp's concept.

So there comes out with the next question: what is voluteer of rural development camp for ?

Most of people, when they heard this term, would say that the camp is to help those people who live in the rural area that faces with poverty that due to inequality that exist in the society obviously. And this inequality makes them lacks of opportunity to reach out those welfare and what they must get such as four factors of living, they could not get the good standard of living, good health care, and even good education. Therefore, the volunteer of developing rural camp is the hope to fixes those problem somehow.

Due to government failure and market failure that Thailand has, it is the urgency to give the help to those who are effected by this failures by

community. This come out with the volunteer of rural development camp that people think that this kind of community help would fix those problems that have been anchored in this society. However, the intention of volunteer camp, if we look deeply, is to create the camps that will abolish all of those camps in the future. This is because the camps would develop or makes society better somehow and then there is no need for makes more camp to go develop anymore. The intention of volunteer camp is to go to seek any problems that occurs in those society, it could be anywhere not only rural area, and help them to solves those problem as much as they could and seeking for the long-term goals or sustainability. This the opinion from the side or people who think that the camps should mainly focuses on the way or how to fix those problems and makes those community better and hence the society.

Nevertheless, there is other side of opinion, as these people think that there must be the volunteer camps over and over because when those basic needs problems are gone then there is another problem that must fix as well. Moreover, they think that fixing those problems is not important as giving their members a new perspective. They prioritize those activities that makes their members get the best things from camp than the method to makes those development effective. As this side thinks that those failures are hopeless to fix as the failure is due to those failures from system, government and market failure, the only things that they can do is prioritize their members to makes their members get those new perspective about the rural area and what failures effect to those people who live in the rural that is far from developed city. Givivng them new perspective would lead to better development in some day as they hope since we would never that anyone who have been to the camps will be any inflencer in the society and that will leads to effective public policy that can cure those stubborn problems in the society. However, in most of the time this leads to romanticism and focusing more on relationship of members than

getting some perspective that members must realize about the problem of inequality.

These two side of arguments, one believe in those activities that help the community and will leads to no more volunteer camp as the community get those basic needs but other thinks that there must be more camp over and over and the most important of the volunteer camp is to give those members some perspective and let them enjoy the camp, also leads to the next question: Is volunteer camp especially 'Kai Asa Thaprachan' good ?

As most of people from 'Kai Asa Thaprachan' are strongly believe that the volunteer camp that they have been have never reallu help about those poor families, who are left behind in the rural area that due to failures of system, and the only thing the camp could do is to help those vamp members to get better by showing them some new perspectiive about the rural area but it leads to romanticisize itself somehow: as people thinks that living in rural area is what their dream becomes real and their lifes must not be so perfect but living in this rural area is so perfect in the unperfect place. So if this question, is 'Kai Asa Thaprachan' good, I would answer that it is good and yes it is bad, however; it makes some members, who really want to help or have intention to help society, to be more charity people who seek to help thesociety as much as they can as they have class awarness about those capitalist or those government have done and have exploited to those poor people. I think that the viewpoint of giving people some pers[ective is good but not to prioritize on members' relationship and its mood and must focuses the activities that really help the rural area. If we can restructured of 'Kai Asa Thaprachan' to be better and change the goal of the camp to focuses more on fix those failures not giving people a wrong perspective then it is good for me to have more of volunteer of rural development camp, 'Kau Asa Thaprachan', than just only giving the money to those community and let they fix their problems by itself.

In conclusion, I think that if we can restructure the volunteer camp, 'Kai Asa THaprachan', to be more effective which has more of sustainability development goal and prioritize on those failures not the romanticism, not only to the members but to the staffs itself as well. This would leads to better camp that can fix or help people or community for long-term and give real perspective to people, themselves, to realize about in equality. Nevertheless, if they can not restructure and the staff and member of 'Kai Asa Thaprachan' still prioritize on their relationship and romanticize themselves like in nowadays then I think that giving or donating the money to those community that need help would be way more beneficial to the community than letting those volunteer camps to get there and exploit those poors like bourgeois exploiting proletarian as Karl Marx said.