

Volunteer camp (ค่ายอาสา)

Volunteer camp is known as *kai-asa*, the event that is set up by college students in an attempt to create awareness for the rural struggle, helping out with construction, education, extracurricular activities for the inopportune locals. Whatever the purpose of the camp, it has highlighted the inadequacy and inefficiency in development in rural areas by the government. In this essay, we will explore the background, purposes, issues, and the solution to solve chronic issues of rural development.

As the person who has participated and arranged such volunteer camps. Different volunteer camps entails dissimilar purposes by the individuals who are responsible for the camp. Some were set up to promote “better well-being of the people”. Presumably, all camps were aimed to achieve the same objective, However, the processes and activities, instead of promoting the wanted objective, encourage bonds among these unknowing, fun-loving, traveling oriented participants. Of course, it cannot be generalised that all partakers wanted to be part of the volunteer camp only either focused on making relationships, or traveling to the suburb. But, the purpose of going to these camps— to truly help lifting up the betterment of the locals— seemed to be the secondary reason for joining one, for a handful of people anyway. These camps have been established and concurrently for roughly fifty years, from various universities and non-profit groups; Five decades of attempt to help others has not resulted in concrete evidence, showing a real improvement as a result of these camps. Perhaps, we were solving the exterior issues and did not possess the capability of enacting real changes.

From participating in these volunteer camps, I can safely say that many people were pleasantly being part of the volunteer merely to satisfy what I called “happiness ejaculation.” The thought of helping seemed to be the facade behind other unharmed intentions. Despite that, I totally understood that these people cannot be blamed, but rather individuals who held responsible for enhancing the well-being of the people should.

The living condition of the locals was drastically different, to an extent of desperation and perplexion. To illustrate, a family of five with two young children was living in a hatch with unreliable electricity and mountain water— water that naturally flowed from the top of a mountain. The three oldest children grew up being fed with wild-catches as food and potentially-contaminated water from the mountain. These juveniles learnt their lessons from a teacher who teaches all the subjects. Many of the children were finishing primary school, only those lucky ones who could finance their high school diploma. The school lunches were served with instant noodles with barely any signs of vegetables or meat. The mother has to walk roughly up-and-over six mountains to her constantly mobile plantation; where she cultivates her rice field on a foothill. She told a somewhat grim story of the time she had to walk herself to a closest public clinic a walking hour away from her hatch to give birth. She and her husband are particularly excellent at their green finger skills, due to experience and the lack of education and occupation opportunities. The father has a visible tumor on his left pelvic that sticking out like a sore thumb was left untreated for god knows how long. The unimaginable level of helplessness grew on me every single day during my short stay. But its impact lasts ostensibly forever. Although, these locals could still manage to live happily, in spite of the hardships, I could not anticipate seeing anyone from the city willing to live in their life for a lengthy period— let alone living there.

This is definitely the problem of having politicians who seemingly lack the crucial abilities to develop the country. The wellbeing of the people should be sparsely distributed across the country, in spite of the geographical, economical opportunity; Financial opportunity often gives incentive to a politician to deliver his promises for personal gain, whether it be social or capital gains. Together with an ineffective bureaucratic system, and government instability, the faith of the locals seemed improbable. According to Persons (2016), social capital (face-eyes) plays a major role in shaping Thai leaders in our society. With a small and scattered population, the locals aren't merely enticing enough for the politicians to extensively pave roads, construct

hospitals, or transform a transportation system, create job centres, and improve the education system. These workers are overwhelmed to put in the effort in solving issues especially for only four years terms of service; most importantly, face-gains from these hard works seemed to be underappreciated in comparison with those in the city.

Certain politicians visited the countryside periodically only for the short term personal interest, chance for reelection. Some contributions from these politicians such as solar-system electricity was planted, to improve the livelihood of the locals, but in all honesty it was only a window dressing with a humongous amount of the problems underneath.

More drastic instances such as the monarch involvements somehow, In my humble opinion worsen the situation. Many royal projects attempted to improve the cultivation of the locals, but it most oftenly facading the elephant in the room— the livelihood of the people. These royals projects are unable to sustainably shift the wellbeing of the people, due to the inability to put effort into it lack of fund (very unlikely), perseverance for long term projects, or perhaps not their duties, priorities; Only a mere propaganda programs were on their agenda to brainwash the educated bunch— maintaining their rightful throne.

Summarising, it can be seen that many projects set up by the local politicians and royal projects attempted to solve only short term problematic situations, with no willingness to uplift these local residences.

Despite the alarming notions for help needed, the counter agreement for preservation of the local's livelihood and culture cannot be made rationally. To disagree on allowing a person to their rights seemed exuberantly evil; or raising the cultural disruption from enhancing the livelihood reasoning doesn't make a more valid argument.

In my opinion, cultures and ways of life are only a human's collectivism construction. These concepts are ever changing as humans constantly change. It should be morally wrong for us fellow humans to deny their rights to have better welfare . Government entities should be the responsible party for enhancing the betterment of the citizens.

Decentralisation of government agencies to distribute the source of financial resources should be implemented. Currently, the majority of capital resources went either into primary cities, or the politicians' pocket. By condensing the agencies and promoting a check and balance system, political transparency could be enhanced tremendously; As a result, government revenue can then be distributed reasonably well. Furthermore, as a product of decentralising, governing power can then be given to the responsible parties who resided in the actual area, not by the unaware and greedy politicians in the capital.

Moreover, systematic alteration especially the form of government should highly be adapted. I have to address the elephant in the room— constitutional monarchy. The monarchy entities have participated in governmental issues for a lengthy period of time. They gained an excess amount of people's tax merely to maintain the stability of the system.

As an individual who strongly advocates equality of all men and women, It is mind blowingly absurd for all citizens to give away their blood, sweat and tear hard earned money to high majesty and peers. Approximately twenty-six percent of government's revenue was reserved for the monarchy. Such funds could drastically make an impact on societal effects on so many level.

In conclusion, volunteer camp existence has raised undisputable concerns that originally stemmed from the well-being, or lack thereof, of the local dwellers that raised many flags regarding the involvement of both government bureaucracies, and the monarchy. Despite its inability to mitigate the local villager's troubles, on a significant level, volunteer camp has surely paved the road of empathy and willingness to question. Although, the purpose of volunteer camp is decent to an extent, It takes a collective eagerness to alter the concurring chronic disease, that is government instability and a disgusting constitutional monarchy. Systematic change must be profound and change must be made from within in order to eliminate the root cause of the problem.