

His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand the Royal Policy on Thai Higher Education: Induction Into Practice for Sustainable Local Development

Chatupol Yongsorn, Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand

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Abstract

The research aims to study the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn's Royal Policy on Higher Education for Sustainable Local Development. The informants who were interviewed to study administrators, lecturers, students, representatives of government and private sectors, and representatives of local administrative organizations of higher education institutions that had successful results in implementing. In this research, 4 higher education institutions, 5 people each, totaling 20 people, were selected from the group of higher education institutions for developing local communities or other communities according to the classification of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, which came from 4 Rajabhat Universities: Chiang Mai Rajabhat University Loei Rajabhat University, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, and Surat Thani Rajabhat University, all four universities have the results of THE (Times Higher Education) impact rankings world-class university rankings in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN). The study results found that the university has had an important goal of being a higher education institution for local development for a long time, according to the Rajabhat University Act of 2004. This has resulted in collaboration with various communities, such as organizing teaching and learning alongside community development, transferring knowledge and innovations necessary for community development and problem solving, conducting area-based research, integrating with teaching, research, and community services, as well as creating collaborative networks both inside and outside the university.

Keywords: His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn, higher education, sustainable local development

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Introduction

By the grace and foresight of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn who has placed importance on education and intended for education to create Thai people with 4 characteristics: 1) Having the right attitude towards the country, which means having knowledge and understanding of the country, adhering to religion, being loyal to the monarchy, and being compassionate towards one's family and community. 2) Having a solid foundation in life with morality, which means knowing how to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, in order to do only what is right and good, and rejecting what is wrong and evil, in order to create good people for the country. 3) Having a job and a career, which means having children love work, work hard, and work until they succeed. Training them to learn how to work so that they can support themselves and their families. And 4) Being a good citizen, which means being a good citizen is everyone's duty. Educational institutions and businesses must promote everyone's opportunity to be a good citizen. Being a good citizen means being kind and compassionate, volunteering, and doing charity work. "If you see something that can be done for the country, you must do it." All of these will be important parts in creating stability for the country.

His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn has been presiding over the granting of degrees to graduates of Rajabhat Universities for over 30 years since he was Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn. He has also closely followed and observed the potential and deeply understood the essence of the university's graduate production, which was established to be a source of quality graduates, a source of academic knowledge, and a philosopher of local development, which is an important mechanism that can reach the root of the problems of his subjects in each area and can proceed to solve and develop them with a goal in order for the people to have a better quality of life in all aspects. Therefore, he assigned the mission to the Privy Councilor to advise the university to work towards the goal of raising the level of education and developing the local areas in their areas. In the past, higher education institutions across the country have followed the royal policy of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn, which is his intention to work for tangible local development, work towards the goal, raise the quality of education, and develop the local areas in their areas to participate in creating national security. Importantly, it must reach the people. And we must analyze and acknowledge the problems and needs of local people.

In 2021, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation has divided higher education institutions into 5 groups, one of which is "Group of higher education institutions for the development of local communities or other communities." Therefore, higher education institutions selected for this group must carry out their main missions and strategies aimed at developing local communities and communities with shared objectives or benefits, being a source of knowledge and technology transfer to strengthen communities, and providing people with lifelong learning opportunities that will lead to sustainable development, according to the following 5 considerations: 1) Focus on developing local communities and building the potential of educational institutions, community organizations, and people to be strong in developing education, economy, and society in the community; 2) Produce graduates and be a source of developing the potential of local personnel to have awareness and knowledge and skills as a principle for driving development and change at the local level; 3) Conduct research and create innovations to apply the knowledge gained to community development; 4) Continuing and preserving local arts, culture, and wisdom; Applying and developing local arts, culture, and wisdom to keep up with the times to increase value and worth; and 5) Promoting the inheritance and development of knowledge from those

with local arts, culture, and wisdom. (Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation).

In the past, the higher education institution that has closely worked with the community and locality is Rajabhat University, which is a higher education institution that is located in the locality and is close to the community. Since being a teacher training school, teacher college, and Rajabhat Institute that are spread out in many provinces in every region and have been elevated to Rajabhat University at present. The reason why Rajabhat University can clearly work with the community and locality is that the Rajabhat University Act of 2004 stipulates in Section 7 that “The university shall be an institution of higher education for local development that strengthens the power and wisdom of the country, restores the power of learning, honors local wisdom, creates arts and sciences for the stable and sustainable progress of the people, participates in the management of the maintenance of the use of natural resources and the environment in a balanced and sustainable manner. The objectives are to provide education to promote higher academic and professional studies, conduct teaching, research, provide academic services to society, improve, transfer, and develop technology, nurture arts and culture, produce teachers, and promote the qualifications of teachers.” This clearly shows that the establishment of Rajabhat University has the main goal or objective of local development. This can be considered as the intention of the drafting of the law that aims to make Rajabhat Universities different from the original universities that Thailand used to have. Working for the local area and staying close to the community is what makes each Rajabhat University gradually build a working approach that is more than teaching and more than activities within the university. When the scope of work has expanded to the community, local/community development has occurred from the drive of various sectors, with Rajabhat Universities participating as both hosts and network partners. When the Sustainable Development Goals were announced and the ranking of universities that achieved the sustainable development goals was made, the foundation of the work that Rajabhat Universities have been doing for a long time has been able to respond to many sustainable development goals (Rajabhat University Act B.E. 2547; 2004).

With great concern and consideration for the well-being of the people, His Majesty has a firm determination to make the country stable and the people have a better life. With the intention to continue, preserve and develop the royal projects and various royal initiatives of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great and Her Majesty Queen Sirikit the Queen Mother to relieve suffering and promote happiness for the people and develop the country to progress. His Majesty has graciously granted permission for the royal government agencies to collaborate with other government agencies and people of all groups who volunteer to volunteer as royal volunteers to perform public services in various areas to alleviate suffering and solve problems for the people. His Majesty has also graciously granted permission for the royal volunteer projects to be implemented in accordance with the royal initiatives, which is a model for holistic community development and integrated operations. It is a development model that is appropriate for the geographical, social and cultural conditions of Thailand, with an emphasis on development that begins with human development. It is considered a great genius and wisdom in the field of development and community development. It can be said that he is a complete and complete developer, both as an academic and a practitioner. Therefore, the research project on “His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Royal Policy on Thai Higher Education: Implementation for Sustainable Local Development” will be a set of important knowledge and data in determining the operational guidelines according to the strategies of higher education institutions in order to achieve the goals of sustainable local development. It will also be data to support higher education institutions, especially “groups

of higher education institutions for the development of local communities or other communities,” to operate according to the strategies to create rapid results for the community and the people and to encourage all parties to participate in driving the operations. This is an implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s Royal Policy on Thai Higher Education to implement for sustainable local development.

Research Objective

To study the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s royal policy on higher education for sustainable local development.

Population/Informant Scope

Interviewers to study the success of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s Higher Education Policy to sustainable local development, consisting of executives, lecturers, student club presidents, students, representatives of government and private sector agencies, and representatives of local administrative organizations of higher education institutions, with qualifications and numbers as specified by the researcher.

Interviewers to provide recommendations on guidelines for implementing His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s Higher Education Policy to sustainable local development, consisting of executives of higher education institutions and qualified persons, with qualifications and numbers as specified by the researcher.

Research Methodology

The study of the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s royal policy on higher education to sustainable local development has the following research methods:

Informants

The informants were interviewed to study the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s royal policy on higher education to sustainable local development. They consisted of administrators, lecturers, students, representatives of government and private sectors, and representatives of local administrative organizations of higher education institutions that have successfully implemented His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s royal policy on higher education to sustainable local development. In this research, 4 higher education institutions were selected, 5 people each, totaling 20 people, from the group of higher education institutions for developing local communities or other communities according to the grouping of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, which came from 4 Rajabhat Universities: Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Loei Rajabhat University, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University. and Suratthani Rajabhat University, all 4 universities have THE (Times Higher Education) Impact Rankings world university rankings in their efforts to achieve the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with data providers having the qualifications specified by the researchers.

Development of the Data Collection Instrument

1. The researcher conducted a study of documents and various related research studies to develop a research instrument to study the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn's higher education policy for sustainable local development.
2. The researcher used the data obtained from item 1 to create a semi-structured interview to study the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn's higher education policy for sustainable local development.

Data Collection

1. The researcher sent a letter to the president of Rajabhat University to request permission to collect data.
2. The researcher collected data from self-interviews.

Data Analysis

Content Analysis technique was used in conjunction with Grounded Theory data analysis. This method was used only to analyze data, without aiming to create a theory. The researcher then presented the data in a descriptive manner.

Summary of the Research Results

A study of the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn's royal policy on higher education to sustainable local development. The results of the study are as follows: Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Loei Rajabhat University, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, and Surat Thani Rajabhat University have all had important goals of being higher education institutions for local development for a long time. They have emphasized and given importance to the implementation of the Rajabhat University Act B.E. 2547, which is specified in Article 7. Throughout the past, there has been collaboration with various communities, starting from the mission of organizing teaching and learning alongside community development, transferring knowledge and innovations necessary for the development and problem solving of local communities, promoting and supporting personnel to conduct area-based research to respond to the needs of communities and local areas, emphasizing integration with teaching, research, and community services, including creating networks for collaboration both inside and outside the university.

The important context is being a higher education institution for local development for a long time. There are costs of working with society, communities and local areas until it is well trusted by the local people. The most obvious import factor is the Rajabhat University Act of 2004, which clearly states in Section 7 that "The university shall be an institution of higher education for local development that enhances the power and wisdom of the country, restores the power of learning, honors local wisdom, creates arts and sciences for the stable and sustainable progress of the people, participates in the management of the maintenance of the use of natural resources and the environment in a balanced and sustainable manner, with the objectives of providing education to promote higher academic and professional studies, conducting teaching, researching, providing academic services to society, improving,

transferring and developing technology, nurturing arts and culture, producing teachers and promoting teachers' qualifications." It also follows the royal policy of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn who intended for Rajabhat to work for local development in a tangible way. In addition, all 4 Rajabhat universities have personnel with expertise, precise knowledge, dedication, sacrifice and teamwork, focusing on presenting data on operations according to the research mission and academic service mission as the main principle to proceed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and integrating in joint operations. Various committees have been established and play an important role in driving Rajabhat Universities to achieve sustainable development goals. There are main agencies responsible for collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing various data to support operations. The administrators of Rajabhat Universities are all interested in and play an important role in being higher education institutions for true local development.

The process of Rajabhat Universities to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) leading to good practices found that all 4 Rajabhat Universities will assign people directly responsible, establish special working groups, and establish formal and informal working groups. Internal agencies that play an important role in integrating work together include International Relations, Public Relations, Information Technology, and various faculties. There will be main agencies that the universities have designated to collect, compile, analyze, and synthesize data. It was also found that all 4 Rajabhat Universities use participatory processes to create close collaboration between personnel both inside and outside the organization informally, resulting in a grouping together in a shared ideology for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), or what is known as collaborative volunteer work. It was also found that all 4 Rajabhat Universities have implemented operations to create a university environment that is conducive to achieving sustainable development goals, such as creating an educational environment, having a curriculum and courses related to sustainability. Including organizing the teaching and learning format that encourages students to learn about sustainability in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Physical environment arrangement: All 4 Rajabhat Universities promote physical environments that respond to various SDGs, such as tree planting, waste management, policies on electricity and renewable energy saving, water management, and the Green University Project. The environment is also organized to support personnel's work in order to support the achievement of sustainable development goals. All 4 Rajabhat Universities support all 4 missions, build morale and encouragement in work, and implement policies and announcements that respond to the indicators of sustainable development goals as specified by the universities. The results of operations and impacts can be divided into 4 areas as follows:

- 1) Personnel and related persons, such as administrators, lecturers, students, parents, and communities, are aware of, understand, and accept the direction of university development that will go hand in hand with the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the community.
- 2) Work aspect: Integrate the work of faculties, units, and universities to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), such as joint academic service projects, sending basic work data for work analysis, with the Research and Development Office acting as a medium to provide data to be used as a sustainability development task in the area.
- 3) University atmosphere: The university has developed knowledge in community and local development, resulting in knowledge for working on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) according to all 17 goals. Knowledge gained from working is applied in the area, problem-solving, and finding new ways. In addition,

working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has resulted in many new work assignments in the area, which will lead to the determination of research issues and academic service projects for faculties and lecturers.

- 4) Community and networking: Working to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the four Rajabhat Universities has resulted in work and coordination with the communities, the creation of internal and external networks, communication with the communities, and greater community acceptance. The communities want lecturers from the four Rajabhat Universities to help and play a role in providing academic advice, thinking together, working together, solving problems, and working together, creating opportunities to generate income for farmer groups and community enterprises. This has led to continuous and sustainable cooperation and trust, making parents more confident in sending their children to study at the four Rajabhat Universities. Success factors from the study of good practices in the operations of Rajabhat Universities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 4 Rajabhat Universities, it was found that the success factors:

- 4.1) Having executives with vision and leading the implementation, pushing through the administration to various parts within the university. “Clearly setting the goals for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” is set as an important agenda for the operations and various activities of the university.
- 4.2) Having clearly designated responsible persons, led by the highest executive of the university, which is the president, giving policies and assigning them to vice presidents, assistant presidents, and executives at all levels of the university.
- 4.3) Having continuously developed the work system and integrating the implementation of the sustainable development goals based on the missions that the 4 Rajabhat Universities are already implementing according to the operational plan.
- 4.4) Having teamwork and participation of personnel from all sectors, which is the collaboration of relevant people both inside and outside the university.
- 4.5) Having jointly evaluated the results of the operations to control, monitor, and evaluate the operations to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the university’s operations that need to be further developed.
- 4.6) The 4 Rajabhat Universities have been higher education institutions for local development for a long time. It has had a long history of working with society, communities and the local area and is highly trusted by local people.
- 4.7) It uses information technology systems to collect data in order to analyze and synthesize data, as well as to use the data in decision-making processes, resulting in fast, reliable data that can be used to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) quickly and accurately.

Conclusion

A study of the achievements of higher education institutions under the implementation of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn’s royal policy on higher education to sustainable local development, by studying Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Loei Rajabhat University, Nakhon Ratchasima Rajabhat University, and Surat Thani Rajabhat University. The study found that all 4 Rajabhat Universities have an important goal of being higher education

institutions for local development for a long time. They have the capital to work with society, communities, and the locality until they are well trusted by the local people. They have carried out their missions according to the Rajabhat University Act of 2004, which is clearly specified in Article 7. This may be because it was found that having personnel with expertise, precise knowledge, dedication, sacrifice, and teamwork, focusing on presenting data on operations according to the research mission and academic service mission as the main principle to proceed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is integration in joint operations. It was also found that all 4 Rajabhat Universities used the participatory process to create close collaboration between personnel both inside and outside the organization informally, resulting in a grouping in the same ideology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This may be because they have arranged the educational environment, the physical environment, and the environment that promotes the work of personnel. This has led to many subsequent results in the area, which is consistent with the Rajabhat University Act of 2004, Section 7, which states that “The university shall be an institution of higher education for local development that enhances the power and wisdom of the country, restores the power of learning, honors local wisdom, creates arts and sciences for the stable and sustainable progress of the people, and participates in the management of the maintenance of the use of natural resources and the environment in a balanced and sustainable manner” (Rajabhat University, 2018).

The objectives are to provide education to promote higher academic and professional studies, conduct teaching, research, provide academic services to society, improve, transfer, and develop technology, nurture arts and culture, produce teachers, and promote teachers’ qualifications. This is consistent with the research of Kongsathit and Suksamran (2018, p. 1-11) who conducted a study on Rajabhat Universities and Local Development: A Comparative Study of Rajabhat Universities in Rural and Urban Areas. The research results found that Rajabhat Universities are still universities for local development in accordance with the Rajabhat University Act of 2004, which intended for Rajabhat Universities to be educational institutions for local development in accordance with the original intention, even though the context of Rajabhat Universities has changed. And it is consistent with the research of Pudphad (2014, p. 1-11) who studied the participation of the people in the development of the area of Chiang Mai Rajabhat University, Mae Rim Center, Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province. The research results found that the university should create understanding among the people in the area about the objectives and roles of the university. The university must have activities with the community by opening opportunities for the people or community leaders to participate more and create cooperation with various agencies in the area to develop the area of the university and the community to coexist sustainably.

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Contact email: chatupol@g.swu.ac.th