Analysis of the Development of a Learning Community within the Thai Context

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This article analyzes the process of developing a learning community using an example of an artisan community in northeastern Thailand. The process occurs over three development periods: (a) the initial period (before 1927), the beginning of development; (b) the second period (1927-87), the transition to a learning community through learning processes, exchange and sharing of ideas, and transfer of knowledge as a result of changes taking place in the community; and (c) the final period (1987-present), the transition to the extension of knowledge and commercialization of products. In this third period, the analysis of transition and development relied mainly on qualitative research based on individual informants, such as elders, leaders, development officers, teachers, the general public, artisans, and their families. The community, Dan Kwian, is known for its highly developed pottery traditions. Data collection included in-depth interviews and participant observations; the researcher stayed and worked in the community for 10 months. The results showed that:

1. In the initial period, creation of community knowledge began when community members started to learn and gain knowledge of making pottery from artisans of the Kha tribe, a group that had immigrated from some distance to make a living. These skilled artisans trained and transferred their knowledge and skills within their families to continue and maintain their expertise in the community.

2. In the second period, old and new knowledge, as well as new technology, were brought into the learning process for product development. During this period, community people were more open to outside knowledge and technology that could be used to extend and strengthen the existing knowledge and wisdom for producing new products. As a result, advancements in knowledge extended further and on a wider scale, leading to the formation of a group of experienced teachers who had been living in the community for a long time and were considered living learning resources within the community.
3. In the final period, as external knowledge flowed into the community, the ways that people learned and developed their skills changed. This could be seen from the new designs and styles of products, reflecting a combination of old and new wisdom with new looks and added values generating more income for local people.

Keyword: Learning community

Introduction

Globalization has created interconnected networks of information and communication among countries with few boundaries (Prong, 2005; Chirawat, 2005), changing the nature of local economies. In particular, any economy that wants to compete globally must become a knowledge-based economy that is in part driven by knowledge. In the early 21st century, several countries modified and adjusted their investment bases to develop a knowledge-based economy and industries, placing more importance on the creation of knowledge bases and organizational talents to have a competitive edge over other countries. This has been an important part of developing the world community into a learning community. Affected by these changes, Thailand has begun paying more attention to developing a knowledge-based economy, including developing its human resources into a wisdom and learning society (Bordin, 2004). This can be seen from the 9th and 10th National Economic and Social Development Plans, including Government Policy Framework for Information Technology (2001-10). The Secretariat of the Committee on National Information Technology (2002), appointed by the government, has determined approaches to developing the country into a wisdom and learning society, emphasizing the development of human resources, communities, and environment in a balanced fashion by using information technology as a tool to accelerate the development according to the 9th and 10th National Economic and Social Development Plans. The policy framework for information technology clearly adopted the definition of a wisdom and learning community that accepts a culture of learning, utilizes knowledge as the basis for development, and acknowledges that knowledge is a social asset. To promote production of goods and services, or community enterprises, a transfer of knowledge to the community on a wider scale for community benefits must occur. The various levels of labor in the community must also be stimulated. The community should also be fully aware of the importance of blending existing knowledge with new external knowledge to strengthen the economy, community, and national competitiveness (9th
National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2002-06; 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2007-11; Secretariat of the Committee on National Information Technology, 2002). From such currents of globalization, economic and social development has forced Thailand to develop itself into a wisdom and learning society. This led to the current research question: what would be the approach to developing a society into a learning one, which involves complicated and different processes, depending on the societal context?

However, when the analysis was conducted, it was found that society comprises not only people, but also the community and environment. As laid down by the National Economic and Social Development Plans, community development is considered a basic component, important for developing society into a wisdom and learning society within the framework devised in the two National and Economic Development Plans. In these plans, a “learning community” is defined as a community that encourages and supports the creation, transfer, and utilization of knowledge, including the ability to manage local wisdom (including natural resources and traditional knowledge) through mechanisms of networks of community cooperation. These networks aim to strengthen community and achieve self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and reciprocal hospitality in the community.

The major components of a learning society include human beings, a community environment that includes a body of knowledge, natural resources, community learning sources, and the process of knowledge transfer (9th National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2002-06; 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan, 2007-11; Secretariat of the Committee on National Information Technology, 2002).

Approaches to developing a community into a learning one are varied, covering the creation of a new community, such as academic, research, and learning communities. These communities may use information technology as a tool to communicate or transfer a body of knowledge among themselves (Secretariat of The Committee on National Information Technology, 2002). However, development of a community from the social development viewpoint is not the development or creation of a new community, but instead the development of an original society—a unique area with land, people, occupations, culture, economy, local knowledge, and a long history of a learning culture (Parichart Walaisathien et al., 2003), including the application of local wisdom and knowledge for economic purposes. In the meantime, they are able to transfer the body of knowledge from one generation to another in the community, and likewise are able to create a learning society. Thus, in studying approaches to developing a community into a learning society, it is necessary to study it from the original
existing community that developed itself into a self-reliant community, brought local wisdom to bear for daily-life benefits and the welfare of the people in the community, and at the same time, preserved and protected its body of knowledge and local wisdom for the generations to come in an apparently clear manner.

In order to study approaches to developing a community into a learning one, a conceptual framework has been developed to understand the lessons learned from existing communities that have evolved and developed by themselves over a long period of time; been accepted at a certain level as a community that is able to transfer a body of local wisdom and knowledge for the benefit of people living in that community; and at the same time, is able to maintain and extend that local intellectual heritage. This study chose the Dan Kwian Community in Dan Kwian Sub-district, Chock Chai District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand, with the purpose of analyzing and seeking the characteristics of the development and evolution of a learning community in the Thai context.

Research Framework

To study the development of a learning community within the Thai context, the researcher has developed a research framework by applying the concept of knowledge management proposed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Although originally intended for use with formal organizations, many studies have applied this concept to informal organizations to explain how knowledge management can create and exchange ideas and knowledge among individuals. This concept divided knowledge into two types: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) proposed their SECI Model for the creation of knowledge in a unit or an organization that has accumulated, accrued, and blended various forms of knowledge with tacit knowledge making it more advanced through four components: socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization. The cycle of knowledge creation in an organization will widen and deepen the base of knowledge with unlimited growth and lifelong learning. Applying this concept to the development of a learning community in the Thai context, Montra Pongnil (2005) conducted the study “People Who Drink from the Same River,” which helped to advance the use of local wisdom for the resource management of the Kwan Phayao Reservoir. Networks of several communities have been set up to manage the natural resources and environment in Phayao Province, which includes the Phayao Reservoir and Ing River Basin. This includes the conservation of natural resources and environment using local wisdom and culture under the supervision and guidance of development leaders, who have stressed the importance of the
community’s knowledge base in relation to other communities in terms of relationships and mutual impacts. In addition, cultural concepts and community local wisdom useful for natural conservation were incorporated in creating the networks, such as raising community awareness for common protection of rivers, including network extensions outside the province that share the same river and tributaries of the major rivers. This created a network of community people interested in the same problem, formally called, ‘Communities of Practices (CoPs),’ to analyze problems, make observations, and propose solutions.

In addition, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) further explained, “Areas for learning and sharing called ‘Ba’ or ‘CoPs’ would create, utilize, and exchange knowledge for further unlimited development.” This concept has been applied to develop a learning community. For instance, Wicharn Panij (2006) conducted a study of a community of diabetes patients at Payuhakiri Hospital, in Nakhon Sawan Province, who shared and learned among themselves about how to behave, eat, and take medications, which helped them develop more proper behaviors beyond just listening to the doctors or nurses’ advice. Another community of practices is a group of AIDS patients at Barmaratnaradoon Institute who have had regular meetings for more than 10 years to share and learn about their daily activities and behaviors.

To study the process of knowledge transfer, the researcher applied the conceptual framework for knowledge management proposed by Sveiby (1997), which focused on intellectual capital management that can add value to an organization. Knowledge management principles applicable to financial capital are of three types: employee’s knowledge and expertise, procedural knowledge and expertise of the organization, and external knowledge. Sveiby (1997) proposed 10 steps for knowledge management: (a) knowledge transfers/conversions between individuals, (b) knowledge transfers/conversions from individuals to external structures, (c) knowledge transfers/conversions from external structures to individuals, (d) knowledge transfers/conversions from individual competence to internal structures, (e) knowledge transfers/conversions from internal structures to individual competence, (f) knowledge transfers/conversions within external structures, (g) knowledge transfers/conversions from external structures to internal structures, (h) knowledge transfers/conversions from internal to external structures, (i) knowledge transfers/conversions within internal structures, and (j) maximize value-creation by seeing the whole (see Sveiby 1997). Of these 10 steps, the researcher found three to be the most important: (a) knowledge transfers/conversions between individuals, (b) knowledge transfers/conversions from external structures to individuals, and (c) maxi-
mize the value-creation by seeing the whole. For example, the Dan Kwian community has used the three processes for its pottery making business, generating income for the community.

This conceptual framework has also been applied to community development that leads to a learning community with the focus on knowledge and learning process of people in the community as a driving force. As a clear example of this, Phramaha Sutit Apakaro (Obun) (2005) conducted a study on the mechanism of community knowledge management and found that the “Inpaeng Network,” a villager network, had applied the framework proposed by Sveiby (1997). This could also been seen from the various attempts made to achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance using the intellectual capital of people in the community, which had resulted from the learning, experiments, practices, and search for new knowledge and skills based on local wisdom and knowledge. The purpose here is to gain self-knowledge, community knowledge, and proper adjustment for survival in a fast changing world, such as reforestation on farmland through mixed plantation, or community SME enterprise promotion through value-added product processing to substitute for purchasing products from outside and thus creating a community industry.

The establishment of a financial institution and welfare center in the community could be possible by mobilizing community savings in order to help each other; the mass-learning institute is also a focus for community organizing. In addition, the Inpaeng Network aimed to further expand itself on a wider scale, with the Inpaeng Assembly as a provider of knowledge, learning/sharing, and a self-reliant management system.

**Methodology**

This study, Analysis of the Development of a Learning Community within the Thai Context, follows a qualitative research process.

1. Selection of a community for research by analyzing and synthesizing theoretical documents, textbooks, and research studies related to the key issues: learning communities, people, environment, and processes of knowledge transfer. From the careful investigation of secondary data and community context, it was found that the Dan Kwian Community in Dan Kwian Sub-district, Chok Chai District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province has been a native community with a long history of continuous development, previous learning activity, the use and transfer of traditional knowledge and wisdom, the development of making unique pottery products from local clays which contain special properties, and thus in the process generating additional income for the community.
2. Selection of a site and informants for research, i.e., Dan Kwian Community of Dan Kwian Sub-district, Chok Chai District, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. In collecting data, the researcher used observations and interviews with two selected groups of people within the community: community leaders and individual households. Leaders consisted of long-time senior residents of the community: religious leaders, administrative leaders, including the Dan Kwian Sub-district Mayor and Dan Kwian Sub-district Administration Organization Chairman, and community leaders, including village chiefs and village headmen. These informants, with their original knowledge of pottery production, provided essential information on the Dan Kwian community. At the household level, informants included traditional wisdom teachers; households engaging in making pottery for household consumption, as an occupation, as a business, as part of official activities, in transferring local wisdom and knowledge, and as OTOP model producers; and general households with a long history of living in the Dan Kwian community and practical knowledge of pottery production.

3. Collection of data: Secondary data was gathered from various sources, such as books, articles, research studies, theses and dissertations, pamphlets and brochures, and other documents available at the Community Development Center for Technical Assistance, Region 11 Nakhon Ratchasima, Chok Chai District Office, Nakhon Ratchasima Province; Dan Kwian Sub-district Administration Organization, Chok Chai District Office, Nakhon Ratchasima Province; Arts and Culture Institute of Rajabhat Nakhon Ratchasima University; Provincial Administration of Nakhon Ratchasima; and other institutes, colleges, and universities. Primary data was collected on site about the community context, characteristics of a learning community, development processes leading to a learning community, and factors affecting development into a learning community through: (a) group interviews and in-depth interviews, (b) non-participant observation and participant observation. The researcher also personally observed the learning process and knowledge transfer process between traditional wisdom teachers and potters, as well as observing community activities, reconciliations, leadership processes, cultural behaviors, forms of communication, and examples of social and organizational structures, which are essential for the development of a learning community.

4. Data processing and analysis: The researcher classified, grouped, analyzed, and compared the collected data before performing a final overall analysis in accordance with the concepts, theories, and objectives of the research.

5. For validation, the researcher held a focus group meeting for
20 stakeholders consisting of development officers, traditional teachers, 
community leaders, schoolteachers, and representatives of pottery-making 
households. The researcher then presented the analysis of data on the 
development of a learning community in Dan Kwian Sub-district. The 
collected data was classified by topic, analyzed, and compared to arrive 
at the conclusion. Next, the data was analyzed in the overall picture 
according to the theoretical framework. Finally, the research results were 
reported by descriptive essay.

Results

Dan Kwian is an ancient community, 17 km south of the city of 
Nakhon Ratchasima, occupying an area of 24 sq km. It started well 
before 1922 as a small community near the banks of the Mool River. 
Over time, the meanders of the river created protrusive soil. The alluvial 
complex soil and buried soil became natural resources rich in minerals 
and other valuable elements. This type of soil offers unique features for 
pottery making; it shines brightly by its own nature and, as a finished 
product, holds water well (Institute of Arts and Culture, Rajabhat University 
Nakhon Ratchasima, 2001).

From the study and analysis of the community, participant obser-
vation, and in-depth analysis of community leaders, traditional wisdom 
teachers, and senior people in Dan Kwian community, it was found that 
the community has undergone continuous development and change 
through both internal and external factors. This summary of the study 
divides Dan Kwian’s development into three periods.

The first period (before 1927) saw the settlement of native people 
without clear evidence of knowledge of pottery or related skills since their 
opposition was mainly agricultural. The creation of a pottery-based learn-
ing community started with the migration of the Kha into the community, 
having come to work as masons and construction workers in building 
Buddhist temples. These people used clays in the area to make pottery 
items for their daily use and exchanged them with other necessities. When 
local people realized the benefits of pottery, they took interest and learned 
the craftsmanship from the Kha. Later, they made their own products 
and transferred their knowledge to younger generations. This knowledge 
consisted of knowledge of clays, making pottery, carving and glazing, 
and firing or burning. In this period, people made pottery products in 
a subsistence manner and were not focused on mercantile development. 
This period was the starting point of the development of the pottery-based 
learning community in Dan Kwian.
However, community learning was not so active initially, as members still worked in the paddy fields or on their farms; pottery making was just a supplementary activity. The transfer of knowledge was a family affair, although some outsiders came to work as assistants. Tools and equipment were mainly made from locally available natural resources, such as a spinning stand or a pug mill called pamon, made of strong wood requiring two men to do the job, one was the “potter,” the other the assistant. Those who did not have their own pug mill and kilns would ask to work as assistants and help with anything needed by the master potter, for example, clay kneading or pounding. This was the period of initial knowledge creation based on traditional local wisdom and natural resources, and the objective was to produce pottery products for family consumption only.

The second period (1927-87) showed signs of developing into a learning community through a learning process, exchange of knowledge, knowledge sharing, and knowledge transfer. During this period, a group of Chinese traders came to open groceries in the community, affecting the way of life of the locals and how they produced their pottery. Originally, they made pottery for family use but now shifted to making it to sell for income. Chinese traders and shop owners bought their products to sell both in and outside their community. As a result, community members learned more techniques and gained more knowledge and skills to produce better products; they even reduced the scale of their farming and husbandry to devote more time and energy to their new business. They also shared and transferred knowledge and skills to their family members, relatives, and close friends to create better understanding of pottery making for business.

To increase the quantity of pottery products, Chinese traders built their own large kilns and let local potters use their kilns in exchange for some basic necessities, such as rice. Moreover, one rich family, locally known as Baan Khun Phra, owned kilns that they made available to the community. Baan Khun Phra started making jars named Ong Pae and Ong Mon (after his wives’ names) for keeping water for daily use, which encouraged more people to take interest in the pottery making business.

In this period, more important developments took shape with academics and experts coming into the community, including: Wirot Srisuriyo, Watanyoo na Thalang, Tawee Rachneekorn, and Pis Pomsinsap from Northeastern Technical College (now, Isarn Rajamongkala University). These academics and experts were outsiders who sparked more imagination in the local residents and motivated them to produce more creative products for sale. Their products were well accepted and bulk orders flooded in, leading them to be more creative with the designs and
product models. Consequently, community members worked and learned together to extend their local wisdom and knowledge.

Moreover, more academics, experts, and specialists came to settle in the Dan Kwian community to conduct pottery business. Later, this group of people became “traditional wisdom teachers.” This change led to forming more groups of people who learned together, shared knowledge, and transferred knowledge to younger people. They produced more products, both old and new styles, for marketing purposes inside and outside the community, and for family consumption, as well.

The third period (1987-present) was characterized by development into a learning community with extension of local wisdom and knowledge for commercial purposes. This period was a transition from the earlier periods, bringing in new models and designs, including new knowledge and skills to meet the demands of customers by orders. Much more income was generated in this period, with exports of pottery products abroad.

The production of pottery in Dan Kwian has changed from a traditional, family-oriented, and close-to-nature style of operation to one of business transactions on a larger scale for increasingly more income, based on consumerism and capitalism. This has forced community members to continually evolve the business to keep up with changes and meet the demands of modern customers who look for new models and new styles of products. This process of adjustment has led to various mixtures and combinations of the existing local wisdom and knowledge with new sources of knowledge and technology, creating such objects as lotus bowls, flowing water bowls, and water spring bowls, to be placed at different places in accordance with Chinese Feng Shui (the popular Science of Locations for Good Luck). This also included decorative uses of pottery products at other places and for other decorative purposes. In addition, pottery products have been developed by being glazed and painted reflecting Thai ways of life, for example, pottery depicting a boy with topknot riding a buffalo or a banana horse, and walking on coconut shells. Pottery has also been made into decorative tiles and walls to reflect Thai history and culture.

In addition to developing products in the community, more shopping venues have been created to answer the demands of customers, including the systematic expansion of pottery factories while maintaining the community members’ family businesses for major income to support the family. Dan Kwian pottery was also exported abroad during this period. In response to the changes, families started sending their children to study for higher degrees in Arts, Design, and Business Administration in Thailand and abroad, including Italy and France. They became more knowledgeable about foreign markets and how to deal with them appro-
appropriately, resulting in more exports and fewer problems.

In this period, more groups of people—including traditional wisdom teachers, community leaders, traders, and businesspersons—influenced the development of a learning community. In addition, old knowledge was blended with the new from sources outside the community via mass media such as TV, radio, magazines, Internet, community loudspeaker relays, study tours, customers’ advice, and their own creativity leading to better quality and more elegant designs and product models. At present, potters apply simple technology and natural materials such as strings, fiber crops, and rattans to produce pottery resulting in new quality products like umbrellas and golf club holders. Importantly, pottery in this period has been produced primarily for national and international markets.

As the community developed and become larger, it was elevated to the status of a municipality, with the Mayor as head of the Dan Kwian municipality. The Mayor holds meetings, seminars, workshops, and study tours for local residents and outside experts to meet and exchange ideas for the development of the pottery business and production. Dan Kwian community was chosen as a model OTOP village as well as a model tourism village. Home stay services are offered in the community and a course in traditional wisdom and knowledge for pottery production and business are available in the community schools.

Moreover, as more jobs have been created, people from outside have come to work in the community, leading to the exchange and transfer of knowledge, including new knowledge and skills.

As a result, more income has been generated in the community with some families now able to afford to send their children to study for higher degrees in Thailand and abroad. For example, Uncle Pis (77 years old), a traditional wisdom teacher, experimented with new kilns in place of molehill kilns. After retirement, he became a business owner and sent his children to study Business Administration and Design in Italy. Other families followed his example. This brought new knowledge from outside to improve Dan Kwian pottery, with the community opening up to various media (TV, radio, newspapers, and Internet), to gain new ideas for updating their products.

**Discussion**

The results of this research concluded that the development process of a learning community was fulfilled through the application of knowledge management as stated in the research framework. Based on the analysis, it was found that knowledge was the major motivator that encouraged people
to come and learn together. Knowledge management for developing a learning community could be explained in two ways.

1. Creation of new knowledge. This concept was explained based on Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), who proposed the SECI Model for human knowledge creation. They stated that the creation of knowledge in an organization began with socialization, such as informal meetings and dialogues. This is followed by externalization for organizations, when conclusions and agreements cannot be reached on their own. Next is combination, in which organizations seek further conclusions and apply the lessons learned to build a process to solve the problem or find another alternative. As for pottery production, community members learned from their family members and relatives, or if they wanted to know more, they would learn from the work site or kilns (Rong Hai), or learn from the master potters through apprenticeship under the concepts of externalization, reproduction, and specialization.

The creation of knowledge in Dan Kwian community succeeded partly because of its favorable environment consisting of family work places (Rong Hai) that led to learning, transfer of knowledge, applications of knowledge, and reproductions. More importantly, people in the community could earn their living through their knowledge by setting up their own factories, being employees in the factory, and by helping to design the products, which exhibited the characteristics of knowledge creation via new models and new designs.

2. The application of knowledge management process for developing a learning community is considered a creation of new knowledge based on the existing knowledge, which could be explained by the SECI Model as well, but the process was natural and took a much longer time to materialize. The activities were mainly related to the daily lives of people in the community rather than to specific objectives, but what was conducive to the application of knowledge management was the community environment, referred to as “ba” by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). The “ba” in the Dan Kwian community was Rong Ruan or Rong Hai (a work site for pottery making). The researcher used the knowledge management process proposed by Sveiby (1997) to explain the process of the development of a learning community in the Dan Kwian community. The community implemented the use and creation of knowledge to produce pottery for family use, in exchange for other basic necessities, and then for trading with new designs and models, and finally for commerce with new innovations generating income for the community and leading to a shift from a farming to a trading community with factories, shops, and learning resources. Dan Kwian is also a community that creates and uses knowledge
According to the principle of knowledge management (Sveiby, 1997), the application of knowledge in an organization covers employees’ expertise, an organization’s procedural knowledge of the work process, and external knowledge. Sveiby further articulated 10 steps for knowledge management out of which the researcher found that three of the ten were the most important: (a) knowledge transfers/conversions between individuals, (b) knowledge transfers/conversions from external structure to individuals, and (c) maximize value-creation by seeing the whole.

The development process that leads to a learning community at Dan Kwian can be accurately understood using the knowledge management rubric proposed by Sveiby (1997) because it is a process of community knowledge management for commercial benefits. The creation of knowledge in Dan Kwian community started with the settled residents learning how to make pottery from the migrant Kha community who first produced pottery items for use in the family; Kha people used natural clays available in the area which could be turned into strong, durable, beautiful jars that held water very well. Their purpose was not to make money but to sustain their life. Later on, they trained and practiced until they became skilled potters and transferred their knowledge and skills to their family members, relatives, and assistants.

The development of a learning community through learning processes in this period could be felt from the community exposure to external knowledge. The incorporated new knowledge extended the existing wisdom and knowledge base, leading to new designs and models of their products, satisfied customers, and higher prices. From this juncture, more people took interest in pottery as a business. They even extended their knowledge to make new products—smaller, more useful, and beautiful—backed up by their knowledge of marketing strategies.

With the increase in customers and skilled producers, new models, product designs, and production tools were developed. Those who were highly skilled and knowledgeable became traditional wisdom teachers from whom others could learn. The learning and exchange of ideas and knowledge in the community expanded and maintained local wisdom and knowledge. More importantly, knowledge transfer was taking place on a continual basis in the community, making it always alive with wisdom and knowledge.

Therefore, it can be seen that the development of a learning community in Dan Kwian Sub-district changed with the rhythms of the community members learning through a process that was open to new ideas and knowledge from outside, which in turn extended existing ideas, leading to
new ways of doing things with value added. With a community structure in which most people were relatives and family members, members knew and trusted each other, depended on each other, and worked together more productively. They continuously transferred and shared their skills and knowledge, leading to new discoveries.

The development of a learning community by using wisdom and knowledge for commercial purposes during this period could also be seen from its opening to new knowledge and ideas from outside to improve or innovate their pottery products. The learning process started, in fact, in the family with members and relatives in an atmosphere of pottery making; they all realized the value of what they were doing along with the income that could be generated, so they were more willing to maintain their knowledge and skills. Later, meetings and the exchange of ideas and knowledge became more intense and active, especially with the help and motivation of traditional wisdom teachers, community leaders, external specialists, and experts. Skills and knowledge were passed on to younger generations and courses in traditional wisdom concerning pottery production were offered in the community to cultivate local wisdom and knowledge in the minds of young people so that they could apply and improve the pottery products for more commercial gain.

Moreover, learning processes between community members and outsiders took place through a variety of channels, including meetings, study tours, national and international exports, foreign degrees earned by younger family members, and expanding pottery businesses. All of these contributed to the creation of new knowledge, knowledge transfer, sharing of ideas, improvement of Dan Kwian products, more income, and better standards of living for the community, which reflected the true and lasting values of Dan Kwian’s pottery.

**Recommendations**

1. Transfer of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. The results of this study clearly point to the fact that traditional wisdom and knowledge are valuable resources for people to have jobs and income. They are the cultural heritage that demonstrated the identity and individuality of the Dan Kwian community. The study also showed that the community has undergone considerable change, particularly in the knowledge applied to producing pottery. They have combined the old and new—in knowledge, technology, marketing, and management—to keep up with market needs and trends. Traditional wisdom teachers are regarded as valuable resource persons who maintain, improve, and transfer their skills, know-
knowledge, and wisdom. Unfortunately, these teachers are now quite old and facing health issues, though they remain eager to teach and train younger people. Moreover, although the younger generation has brought and applied new knowledge and technology to pottery production, they still lack the refinement of the necessary traditional skills. Concerned authorities, such as the Municipality, should find ways and means to transfer the tacit knowledge from these traditional teachers into explicit knowledge for the young people to learn from and apply in their work, including:

1. Set up a knowledge management committee to analyze and classify types of essential knowledge of pottery production, and find out who are the experts in each area of knowledge.

2. Transfer knowledge and expertise from traditional teachers through simple techniques, such as storytelling and recording of knowledge.

3. Gather and classify areas of knowledge and create poster presentations with pictures of the whole pottery production process and types of products. Areas and types of knowledge can be stored in printed media and databases.

In addition, direct learning and sharing between traditional teachers and community members interested in the craftsmanship of pottery making needs to occur. This should be a long lasting method of knowledge transfer and knowledge preservation, from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge in the form of a living tradition. The Municipality should systematically collect and store the traditional wisdom and knowledge for younger generations to study and extend for their future occupation and income. The storage of wisdom and knowledge could also be used to prove copyrights and intellectual property ownership when problems arise.

2. Common interest is the key factor for the development of a learning community. Thus, it is necessary to analyze the context of knowledge propagation and search for existing strengths within the community that other people may benefit from. This common interest, however, should have a concrete impact on individuals as well as the community. The case in point for Dan Kwian is clearly pottery.

3. Building leadership is necessary as it is the major factor that guides and controls community development. Good leaders should have a strong sense of love for the community, be aware of the significance of folk wisdom, and be keen on extending or redefining such wisdom as their permanent community heritage.

Two kinds of leadership are apparent in the Dan Kwian community: formal, such as the Mayor and his staff; and informal or natural, such as
people interested in making and developing pottery products not only for themselves but also for their own community. These natural informal leaders should be open-minded to develop their products, transfer their skills and knowledge to younger people, and be flexible about copyrights or patents of their products, allowing everyone to share knowledge as a common heritage and to earn a living. Likewise, formal leaders should be open-minded, be both knowledge leader and knowledge worker in the community; they should realize the significance of local wisdom and knowledge, which are the potential and strength of the community, and use them to determine future directions for development of the community.

4. In developing a learning community, mechanisms need to exist that help create a favorable, loving, and friendly atmosphere for team learning by stressing love of and faith in community knowledge and wisdom. Leaders should push for better understanding of people in the community, more community learning by taking people on study tours, inviting resource persons or experts to give talks and share expertise with local people; and should promote love, unity, reconciliatory attitudes, and knowledge transfer among people in the community. Based on this research, community structure has impacts on the development of a learning community. For example, people with a shared family name can be assumed to exhibit more unity and hospitality toward each other, as opposed to a flat organization. This research also found that community learning is usually informal learning, the result of real practices with guidance and help from a master. Through repeated practice and reproduction, community members can gain mastery.

Therefore, the creation of mechanisms for common community learning may have to be processed through practical activities rather than formal classroom learning in the form of group learning, which also generates benefits, for instance, the Textile Weaving Group and Pottery Making Group. Mechanisms can likewise be formed through networking, such as a Network of Experts who will discuss, exchange ideas, and plan together for the common learning of people in the community.

References


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