

# THE MODEL IN PREVENTING AND SOLVING DRUGS IN THE THAI-LAO BORDER VILLAGES

Wattana Puttichart, Saner Piromjitpong and Metta Mettkarunjit

Graduate School of Ubonratchathani Rajabhat University, 34000, Thailand

Received 2014-02-05; Revised 2014-04-16; Accepted 2014-02-18

## ABSTRACT

A drug issue is a problem at both national and international levels. The root causes of the problems lie inside and outside the humans. To solve the problems in a sustainable way, it is essential to get cooperation from many parties. The research aimed to study the situations and prevention and solution of drugs in the border villages, to construct the model to prevent and solve the drug issues and to evaluate the model for preventing and solving the drugs prevalent in the border villages. The work was a qualitative research. It analyzed documentary data and those from the field study gained by surveying, observing, interviewing, focus group and workshop. Twenty border villages in Khemarat district were used as the samples which derived by a specific random sampling. The research found that (1) as regards the drug situations, the drugs were prevalent in Khemarat. There were two guidelines to deal with the situation: Internal factor or participation from all; external factors or the cooperation between the state and the community residents. (2) Considering the guidelines for constructing the model for preventing drugs, there were four types of measures: (1) Integration from all sectors, (2) objectives in constructing the model which consisted of two items: 2.1 promotion and support for the state officials' performance, 2.2 observation and protection of the community members from drugs. (3) The process of constructing the model was composed of the following: Finding a leader, communication to effect changes, multilateral communication in society, community participation in solving the problems, linking ideas from a variety of people, public forum to exchange the ideas, feedback on problems, turning burdens into energy, progress in people's participation. (4) evaluation of the state officials' and the community's participation. (3) Given the suitability and practicality of the model, the model in question was found to be suitable and also found to be feasible in preventing and solving the drug issue were 89.6 percentage and 83.9 percentage. A further research should be conducted on the cooperation between the state and private sectors in planning to prevent and solve the drug issues along Thai-Lao border villages. As for the application of the model in the study, the model can be formalized as a main policy for the Interior Ministry. It is also possible to be made as a handbook to be distributed to the state agencies, the private organizations, the communities and the border villages.

**Keywords:** Model, Preventing, Solving, Drug Problem, Thai-Laos Border

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ubon Ratchathani is the province where the drug trafficking and smuggling are prevalent. The drugs are mostly smuggled from its neighboring country. The government gives priority to prevention and war on drugs and takes the issue as the national agenda. As a consequence, CATPLWDP (2012) had reported that the

drug problem has established the centers at different levels to deal with the illegal drugs. In response to the government-backed demands, Khemarat district had the center of operation to suppress and tackle drugs on February 1, 2003. The purposes of the center in question were to effectively deal with the drugs according to the government's policy. Khemarat-based center had undertaken strategic actions to deal

**Corresponding Author:** Wattana Puttichart, Graduate School of Ubonratchathani Rajabhat University, 34000, Thailand

with the problems. However, a practical solution in a crackdown on illegal drugs did not achieve the set targets as desired. Besides, the drug issues became more serious and more widespread.

Drug prevention and suppression which was carried out by both the private and public agencies were not so successful as there were no full cooperation and coordinations from the different parties concerned. The government, thus, had come up with new alternatives. That is, it had laid down the guidelines to overcome this perennial problem by launching an awareness campaign to make the public aware of the hazards and dangers of the devastating threat from drugs.

It is important to bear in mind that the drug issues require a cooperation and coordination from all parties concerned. It is important that the government give attention to the guidelines, 'the community-taking-care of the community.

The aims for this are to strengthen the community so that the community can play a vital role in solving the drug issues more efficiently. For the set goal to materialize, it is essential for the public members to take part in preventing and solving the drug issues. The action from the community level is apparently is a promising start as the community forms the first important step. With the community well aware of the problems posed by the drugs, it is practically feasible to work out a solution based on a communal participation. The community, being empowered, will change, develop and control the mentality of its members in practicing and choosing an appropriate way of living.

The researcher as the staff member who worked in a state agency and was concerned with the policy implementation under the power strategy has become interested in developing a model of prevention and solution of illegal drug problems in the Thai-Lao border villages. A study was conducted on the situations, problems and preventative measures to be used to deal with the drug issues in Khemarat. Data acquired were used to construct a model for prevention and solution of the illegal drugs.

## **2. METHOD AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

The work was a qualitative and quantitative research consisting of three stages as follows:

### **2.1. Stage One**

It studies the problems of drugs along the border and the preventative measures with the followings;

#### **2.1.1. How to run a focus group;**

- Documents concerning the wide spread of drugs in Khemarat district were studied and analyzed
- Concepts regarding the community, the civil society, the social strength, social control and cooperation network were studied and synthesized
- The concepts on the prevention and suppression of the drugs as successfully taken by the government were studied
- The study results were used as the issues for the discussion
- The researcher had organized a meeting to inform the groups and samples of the objectives, the methods and the plans in a given area, the data collecting procedures, the discussion records

### **2.2. Stage Two**

It constructs the preventative measures for the illegal drugs along the Thai-Lao border villages.

Methods were made in line with the suggestion made by the experts with the followings step;

#### **2.2.1. Model Synthesis**

It was concerned with a study, research, synthesis of data and related documents and researches.

#### **2.2.2. Research Instruments**

It was the evaluation format on the model of preventing and solving the drugs.

#### **2.2.3. Creating the Model**

The stages in creating the model were as follows:

- The evaluation format and the question were made
- The supervisors and co-advisors evaluated the quality of the model
- Seven experts had examined the congruence and validity of the content in the model

### **2.3. Stage Three**

It estimates the preventative measure for the illegal drugs along the Thai-Lao border villages

#### **2.3.1. Methods**

The developed model was evaluated to examine a suitability and possibility by the officials responsible for the drug operation.

### 2.3.2. Population and Samples

Fourteen officials tasked for preventing and solving the drugs in Khemarat were derived by a specific random sampling.

Research instrument was the evaluation model for suitability and possibility.

### 2.3.3. Data Collection

The model in the study was evaluated by the officials concerned to find out the suitability and possibility.

### 2.3.4. Data Analysis

Statistics used were mean and standard deviation. The results were analyzed by a five rating scale. Suitability and possibility were 89.6 percentage and 83.9 percentage.

Statistics used in data analysis:

- Statistics in data analysis were percentage and mean
- Statistics used in evaluating the instrument's quality were: IOC and Cronbach's Co-efficient

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1. The Research Found That

#### 3.1.1. Drug-Related Situations and Problems, Prevention and Solution

It was found that drug trafficking across a border remains a serious issue. The trafficking comes in a variety of forms. For example, drugs are packed in condoms or inserted in private parts or in annul part. As for the preventative measures used to cope with the drug issues, it was found that the methods in use were dependent on two factors: Internal and external. The former is the members in a community choose a leader who is active and strong in taking different actions to deal with the drugs. The latter is a cooperation between the state and the community.

#### 3.1.2. Guidelines in Constructing a Model for Preventing an Solving the Drug Issues Prevalent Along the Thai-Lao Border Villages

There were four components: (1) Integration of all sections of a community and society and strength of a community and society. (2) Objectives in constructing a model in preventing and solving the illegal drugs in Thai-Lao border villages. The objectives in this regard were composed of 2.1 promotion and support of the state officials' work, 2.2 observation and protection of the

residents and the community from the drug issues by having a sustainable preventative plan.

Procedures of building a preventative model and solution had the following stages: (1) Recruiting a person to lead a community and build a communal trust; (2) communicative stages to effect changes; (3) multi-coordination in society; (4) creation of participation in dealing with communal problems; (5) linking a variety of ideas; (6) a community forum for the exchange of different people in coping with drugs; (7) reflection upon the issue; (8) changing burdens into power; (9) progress of the public's participation. These ideas was in line with the Sustainable and comprehensive alternative economic development programs (Yong-An, 2012) which are provided by United States and China, it concerned about the essential for long term success in the war on Asian drug trafficking. Myanmar and Afghanistan are two of the poorest countries in the world and as such they cannot resist the "impact of powerful transnational trafficking flows on their own," (UNODC, 2010) advance their own economic development, nor even hope to maintain a stable government. These countries would not survive without either the influx of money from poppy cultivation or without external financial aid and political support.

#### 3.1.3. Evaluation of a Participation of the Community and the State Officials Evaluation of Suitability and Feasibility of the Preventative Model

It was found that the drug prevention model in question was found suitable. The model was found to be possible to be made use in solving the drug-related problems.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Part one Problems and Preventions of Drugs in the Thai-Lao Border Villages

As the border villages under study were located near the drug production sites and were the transit points, drugs, consequently, were smuggled in a huge quantity and prevalent in the communities and villages. Some communities might be strong to fight the drugs while others were not that strong. However, in some communities and villages where their residents were still strong in their traditions and their leaders were strong in leading to fight the drug threats, there was some positive sign. Yet, in some places, the inhabitants were not willing or determined to cooperate to fight the drug abuse. There were a number of factors to account for

this. The locals were unwilling to take action in fighting the drug thanks to conflict with one another, personal issues and different villages settings. This also was in line with the idea of Simon (2011) with the idea in the Trans-border Crime and its socio-economic impact on developing economies that the phenomenal rise in money laundering and drug-trafficking and other trans-border crimes within the West African sub region has generated much concerns to scholars and policy makers. These significantly affect the economies of developing societies and possess the capacity of undermining and fueling insecurity across the globe. Organized criminal activities affect our joint security and core democratic values.

From a focus group discussion, it was found that the samples in the study were determined to prevent and tackle the drug issues. They were apparently proud of their traditions, way of life and reciprocal assistance. Furthermore they still retained a sense of unity. With the drug problems facing them, they were on full alert to do something to deal with the threat. They were more than willing to attend the public forum on drugs held by different villages.

As for the implementation plan to address the drugs conceived by the government, the locals and the residents were unanimous in viewing the plan as 'good'. To get a better understanding and clear picture of the drugs, there was to be a forum for the public. A regular meeting was to be held for all members to work out the solution.

As regards the guidelines in preventing and tackling drugs in the Thai-Lao border villages, the subjects in the research held a common opinion that all parties were interconnected and had duties to discharge as far as the drug prevention and solution were concerned. In their opinion, all members were to be engaged in preventing and solving the drug abuse and trafficking. From this idea in the guidelines in preventing and tackling drugs in the Thai-Lao border villages was in line with the idea of Pushipita (2012) whom studied the Drug trafficking in India : A case for border security, it was found that the problem of drug trafficking and to protect the country's borders against such infringements, India has employed a mix of measures. On the other hand, it has enacted stringent anti drug laws, co-opted various voluntary organizations and sought to strengthen the physical security of its borders by various means, on the other hand it has been seeking the cooperation of its neighbours and other countries through several bilateral and multilateral agreements.

These efforts have only been partially successful in dealing with the problem. For achieving greater success

in preventing drug trafficking, a few suggestions are put forth such as prevention of drug trafficking has to be accorded greater priority. At present it forms part of the larger mandate of the border guarding forces to 'prevent smuggling and any other illegal activity'. Special measures need to be formulated to check trafficking of drugs through the border. Coordination among various agencies needs to be improved and information/intelligence gathering regarding drug trafficking, its analysis and dissemination capabilities need to be strengthened.

#### **4.2. Part two: Guidelines in Constructing a Model for Preventing and Solving the Drug Problems Social Conditions of the Villages and Communities**

Guidelines in constructing a model for preventing and solving the drug problems Social conditions of the villages and communities were vulnerable to the threats posed by drugs and social controls imposed by the state officials were not stringent and efficient.

Furthermore, the locals changed their way of living. The subsequent outcomes were the communities became more urbanized. The residents aimed more in making more money. They gave more attention to the ends at the cost of the process. In other words, they would try any means they could just to achieve the goals they had in mind. The short cut they usually took was through drug dealing. As a result, the drug-related problems had become more prevalent. In addition, there were many locals who neither willing nor ready to cooperate with the state officials in tackling the drug trafficking.

The researcher had one aim in mind: What kind of action were to be taken to gain more cooperation between the state and the public. In determining the principles of cooperation in the drug prevention and solution were set.

In a process of developing a model, the researcher had synthesized the relevant ideas in order to determine the stages to outline a model of preventing and solving the drugs in Thai-Lao border villages. The stages in developing a model were divided into three: (1) A model based on study of elements of knowledge and basic data, (2) examination of the model and (3) revision and improvement of the model.

This also in line with Jittatam (2009) that studied about Development of a participative management model of the Royal Thai Police in basic education provision for drug and crime protection for disadvantaged children. It said that the partnership and the commitment model of a participative management model of the Royal Thai Police

in basic education provision for drug and crime protection for disadvantaged children comprised; (1) the objective was to prevent disadvantaged children from drug and crime, (2) the concept was to encourage ideas of being partnership and commitment between police stations, schools, parents and communities, (3) the character of participation was to cooperate with each other by formal and informal character, (4) the process of participation was to make decision and work together, and (5) the role of participation was to be the academic and budget.

In the process developments, there were nine stages of guidelines: (1) Building faith and searching for a leader, (2) communication for changes, (3) multilateral coordination, (4) ladders of participation, (5) linking ideas (6) community forum, (7) reflection on the problems, (8) turning burdens into energy and (9) community strength.

From the process above were also in line with the idea of Po-Klin *et al.* (2010) that the model of community network for crime prevention in northeastern region, it included the model in which the member and organization in community agreed to connect with each other like as community network for crime prevention by organizing the major aspects including: (1) The major component of network, (2) the development of good characteristic of network, (3) the planing of work to be implemented, (4) the determination of network practice process, (5) the development of good characteristic for leader, (6) the development of community strength, (7) the exchanged interaction, (8) the emphasis on member participation, (9) the follow up and evaluation of supportive performance practice, (10) the development of network member to be extended and (11) the problem analysis. For the next implementation, both of government sector and private sector should provide support in thinking system, labor and source of funding.

These processes emphasize the operation in conformity with community strength and social power as the main actors in preventing drug prevalence and spread in a sustainable fashion. The principle is a bottom-up approach. Putting it in another way, the state sector has a vital role to play in supporting community activities as a preventative measure. The community was to have a participation from its members to get strong and to enhance an anti-drug movement.

The process in question was in line with the ideas as proposed by Pholpanga (2011) that studied about the unidentified corpses: Development of management model in charity organization of Chinese-Thai people. It was found that the aspect of the guidelines for developing charity organizations in the future, awareness and placing importance on communities was very

important for their activities. Participation of communities would create positive image of organizations. Personnel development, especially efficient rescue units, could rapidly help wounded or dead people and all units should have good quality equipments. Human resources were important as well, they should have public mind. Furthermore, state agencies should have their participation because some activities or operations might have legal problems. Agencies that played their roles on people living should recognize and accept operations of charity organizations. These would ensure general people for using services.

A model of community strength by mobilizing the village and community against drugs was a key mechanism to effect changes to curb or contain the spread of drugs into communities. Besides, the model can help the drug addicts get back to their normal life. The process involving participation from various parties to strengthen social forces and potentials can prevent the spread and prevalence of drugs. A cooperation between the state officials and the communities by using the model constructed by the researcher can be crucial in the preventative activities. In this model, the district chief had to support the positive activities in the villages and communities along the border.

All state officials concerned are to be made aware of their duty and social responsibility. Importantly, they must not meddle with the drugs themselves. All members have to be cooperative in the preventative method. These all cooperative were in line with the ideas as proposed by Po-Klin *et al.* (2010) that the model of community network of crime prevention, establishment of network occurred from determination by the work unit or organization as well as from the network connection, initiated by the leader and collaborated in doing activities, learning by practicing together in different forms. Furthermore, the continuous development of network member, the network would have more strength.

#### 4.3. Part Three: Evaluation of the Drug Prevention and Solution Model

The evaluation of the model in terms of suitability and possibility is important as it is important to get the model efficient, valid and consistent with the ideas on the model set out by the idea of Bruce (2013) that studied about the evolution of drug trafficking and organized crime in Latin America, it can be concluded that some measures are essential for their own future political stability, democratic consolidation and national security and cannot wait for global decriminalization or legalization to take place at some nebulous point in the future. Neither the legalization

of marijuana nor the decriminalization of harder drugs, when and if they ever take place, will constitute panaceas for the resolution of the problems created by proliferating crime, corruption and violence through the region, for they will not do away with many other types of organized crime that operate with virtual impunity in Latin America and the Caribbean today.

This also was in line with the idea of Pholpanga (2011) with the idea in the appropriated model depended on direction of social changing. Sometime social was a channel to specify roles of knowledge, especially some principle such as; a concept of non-profit organization that enhanced social benefits. This was for life quality development in better social by using more new marketing principles because there were more non-profit organizations and problems about fund raising or volunteers became a duty of donation for supporting social causes.

And this also in line with Wisupee *et al.* (2011) that studied Ethics Camp: The Appropriate Management Model for Northeastern Region Youth, Ecclesiastical Region 9, it was found that the appropriate management model, camp directors should have wide and long vision, intelligence, perseverance, honesty and human relation while lecturing monks must be professional the charges for any expenses should be depended on situations; in aspect of financial management should be in form systematic study with committees and asked for supporting from related agencies. The materials should have safety, cleanliness and peace that was good environment for training while training equipments should be modern, attractive and met requirements of trainees and should analyze the appropriateness of trainees' age, maturity and requirement, courses, training operation. For marketing, should provide services with friendliness and publicized camps in websites.

It was also in line with Phad *et al.* (2010) that the appropriate management model in developing the temple and community regarding to economic, social and cultural aspects would be a model for being applied in others temples with similar nature as well as a guideline in developing Wat Sotonwanaram.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is to be observed that the district chief as representing the state can play a significant role in preventing and solving the drug trafficking and prevalence. The so-called 'bottom-up' process takes time for the public to become familiar with the model. The state officials must allow more time for this. They must

not forcibly guide the public. Instead they have to provide an advice and knowledge on the process, which can lead to success and community strength.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

### 6.1. The Problems on Lack of Budget for the Continuous Operation to Solve the Drugs Problems

#### 6.1.1. General Recommendations

The village committee should set up some part of budget for the purpose. A special committee should be appointed to manage the budget.

#### 6.1.2. On the Policy

The state funds are to be managed. The anti-drug funds are to be set up at the village level. The government systematically has to evaluate and control the spending:

### 6.2. The guidelines for Constructing the Model for preventing Drugs

#### 6.2.1. General Recommendations

The most important mechanism in driving is the village as it forms the center of the implementation of the state policies. For the villages to succeed in different developments, there must be a working committee. There must be responsibility, coordination and evaluation in the processes.

#### 6.2.2. On the Policy

In making a policy or a plan to prevent and solve the drug issues, it is very important for the state to understand the key context of the villages along the border as the border areas are unique in many aspects. To solve the drug-related problems relies on a community cooperation and the community is to be used as the base for the action and participation. Through these, the model can be practical and efficient.

### 6.3. A Further Research

A further research should be conducted on the cooperation between the state and private sectors in planning to prevent and solve the drug issues along Thai-Lao border villages.

As for the application of the model in the study, the model can be formalized as a main policy for the Interior Ministry. It is also possible to be made as a handbook to be distributed to the state agencies, the private organizations, the communities and the border villages.

In addition, a study should be done on the impact or achievement of the model as part of a community learning or part of the training course for the state officials or other private agencies concerned.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Asst. Prof. Dr. Saner Piromjitpong and Lect. Dr. Metta Mettkarunjit with the great mind and helpfully to fulfill my study. And thanks for all company in the Graduate School of Ubonratchathani Rajabhat University, my colleagues in study and the other that couldn't be named at all. At last, thank my parents and my family whom give me the great inspiration to fulfill my whole life.

## 8. REFERENCES

- Bruce, B., 2013. The evolution of drug trafficking and organized crime in Latin America. *Sociol. Problemas E Prat., J.*, 71: 117. DOI: 10.7458/SPP2013712333
- CATPLWDP, 2012. The instruction number 1/2012; The Land of the Winning in drug Problem. The Center of the Administration towards on the power of the land of the Winning in drug problem. Bangkok.
- Jittatam, J., 2009. Development of a participative management model of the royal thai police in basic education provision for drug and crime protection for disadvantaged children. PhD. Thesis, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.
- Pholpanga, O., 2011. Unidentified corpses: Development of management model in charity organizations of Chinese-Thai people. *J. Soc. Sci.*, 7: 605-610. DOI: 10.3844/jssp.2011.605.610
- Phad, P., W. Siltragool and T. Panthachai, 2010. Suitable management model for economic, social and cultural development derived from beliefs and rites on prabuddha southern in chachoengsao province. *J. Soc. Sci.*, 6: 4-7. DOI: 10.3844/jssp.2010.4.7
- Po-Klin, C., S. Chantachon and S. Wanlu, 2010. The development of community crime preventing network model in northeastern thailand. *J. Soc. Sci.*, 6: 361-364. DOI: 10.3844/jssp.2010.361.364
- Pushipita, D., 2012. Drug trafficking in India: A case for border security. Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.
- Simon, O.E., 2011. Trans-border crime and its socio-economic impact on developing economies. *Sociol. Soc. Anth, J.*, 2: 78-80.
- UNODC, 2010. World drug report. UNODC.
- Wisuppee, W., S. Laoakka and K. Paengsoi 2011. Ethics Camp: The Appropriate Management Model for Northeastern Region Youth, Ecclesiastical Region 9. *J. Soc. Sci.*, 7: 132-140. DOI: 10.3844/jssp.2011.132.140
- Yong-An, Z., 2012. The Brooking Institution center for Northeast Asian policy studies. *Asia, International Drug Trafficking and U.S. China Counternarcotics*. 1st Edn., Washington, New York.