

Project name: Developing Community Enterprises into Professional Entrepreneurs

1) Prologue

Area of Village No. 13, Tha Khun Subdistrict, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. It is the home of a farming community. Most people plant vegetables in their kitchen gardens, various industrial crop and fruit garden. Villagers live simple, self-sufficient lives.

In this village, there is a leader who plays an important role in developing the living conditions of the villagers in many aspects, namely Ms. Kanya Sutthirak or Aunt Chiang, the village headman of Village No. 13, and she has also been trusted to hold many important positions in the village, including being the leader of the “Ban Khaek Farmers' Housewives Community Enterprise”.

In 2007, the government had a policy for villages to carry out activities in line with the sufficiency economy concept. Auntie Jiang gathered villagers to brainstorm and find ways to add value to agricultural products in the community. The Ban Khaek Farmers' Housewives Community Enterprise was thus born. It started by processing Kluai Nam Wa and Kluai Khai bananas into banana chips. The production of banana chips was a great success. The villagers had more income, which improved their quality of life. This success inspired the villagers to expand their business to making other popular desserts, such as Thai custard cake, cakes, cookies, fried beans, and Thai Honeycomb Cookies.

Due to the group members' abilities, they are all specialize in production, but they have no business knowledge. Therefore, even though sales have been increasing, they continue to face a number of issues. The obvious issue is product storage time, as desserts have a limited shelf life. If they cannot be sold, they will spoil, causing losses. There are also issues with selling and collecting money for the products, which led the business to discontinue in 2017.

Even though they had stopped producing the desserts, the village headman with the heart of a developer like Auntie Jiang did not give up on the idea of developing her village to have a better quality of life. Due to her keen observation and familiarity with every area in Village No. 13, Auntie Jiang saw an opportunity to create a business that could use raw materials from within the village, such as chili, lemongrass, galangal, and kaffir lime leaves. In addition, the members were already skilled at making curry paste for household consumption, so she suggested that the group turn to producing curry paste. The members of the group agreed with this idea.

Therefore, even though in 2017, the dessert business had to be discontinued, a new business, the curry paste business, was born to replace it. The group started producing curry paste for sale, consisting of 3 types of curry paste: sour curry paste, stir-fried curry paste, and coconut milk curry paste. With the superb taste of the curry paste that the group produces, which has the identity of a southern

curry paste and is made entirely of fresh ingredients selected from the hamlet. It has a spicy flavor blended with the flavor of numerous fresh herbs, and it tastes excellent enough to be considered an authentic southern curry paste. As a result, word of mouth has increased the group's consumer base. Until now, the group has been producing and selling curry paste.

2) Problems and requirements of the Ban Khaek Farmers' Housewives Community Enterprise

Although the Ban Khaek Farmers' Housewives Community Enterprise has been producing and selling desserts and curry pastes for a long time, as their main occupation is agriculture, they lack the correct knowledge in business management in various aspects that can be used to develop their business to be competitive in today's world, especially in marketing, such as upgrading products to be suitable for modern consumers, brands and trademarks creating, packaging that is suitable for customers' lifestyles, communicating business stories, price setting, distribution channels planning, etc., and in financial management, especially in terms of calculating costs and profits correctly, etc., the Community Enterprise therefore expressed its intention to have the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Business Management and Finance in the Digital Era (BUS&FIN Program) provide knowledge in these matters to the members.

3) Process and knowledge provided to fulfill the group's requirements.

Since the BUS&FIN Program is based on the philosophy of "Creating Businesspeople with Financial Skills," the program's lecturers are eager to organize the educational outreach activities to share knowledge relevant to the requirements of the Baan Khaek Farmer Housewives Community Enterprise for free. The work process is as follow:

3.1) Problem synthesis

The program's Lecturer, led by Assistant Professor Nalinee Thinnam, the project leader, Assistant Professor Dr. Pornpen Tipyana, Mr. Suchart Chansamran, and Dr. Nitthida Sudmai, began the working process by conducting in-depth interviews with Auntie Chiang and leaders of the Baan Khaek Farmer Housewives Community Enterprise, which led to the synthesis of problems that should be developed in the first phase, namely the problem of lack of business administration knowledge, especially in marketing and financial management.

Marketing knowledge that should be developed in the initial phase consists of an understanding of product appearance and packaging that helps solve today's consumer pain points, as

well as knowledge of brands, trademarks, various forms of marketing communication, pricing strategy, and appropriate marketing channels.

Financial knowledge that should be established immediately is the calculation of the correct cost of products.

In this regard, the leaders of the Ban Khaek Farmers' Housewives Community Enterprise Group agreed and expressed their intention to have the tailored lectures and workshop course beyond Walailak university's campus to provide knowledge in both marketing and cost calculation.

3.2) Problem resolution by integration into the subject of the BUS&FIN program

The lecturer of BUS&FIN program plans to implement the case of the Ban Khaek Farmer Housewives Community Enterprise by integrating it with two related courses in BUS&FIN curriculum: Innovation and Organizational Development course and Feasibility Study for Business Project course.

The objective of the innovation and organization development course is for students to create innovative local products that will become Nakhon Si Thammarat Province's identity products and souvenirs. This objective is consistent with the suggestions of the Nakhon Si Thammarat Chamber of Commerce. In this course, students will be assigned to study local products in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province and update them to products that help solve customer pain points and satisfy the needs of consumers in the present day.

Following that, in the Feasibility Study for Business Project course, the lecturer assigned students to continue from the previous course, which is to take the product developed in the course and develop it further under the method of Feasibility Study, in which students must study the feasibility of marketing, production, organization, and finance for that product.

For the curry paste products of the Ban Khaek Farmers' Housewives Community Enterprise, the study found that consumers' main pain points are inconvenient to use, inconvenient to carry or bring on airplanes or other vehicles as souvenirs, prone to spilling and staining when transported over long distances, and require low temperature storage.

To make it more convenient for customers to use, we therefore intend to improve the traditional curry paste, which is currently sold in plastic bags, into a curry paste sheet mixed with shrimp paste, packed in foil bags separately and then assembled once more in a paper box, which will make it convenient for consumers to use this curry paste sheet. Just boil clean water, put the curry paste sheet in, add meat and vegetables as desired, and you can eat it right away. In addition, it is easy to carry when traveling, is lightweight, does not take up space in luggage, and does not require caution about spilling and staining, and does not need to be stored at low temperatures.

And when studying the feasibility of doing business in curry paste sheets in terms of marketing, production, organization and finance, it was found that it is worthwhile to do so. Currently, the production of the curry paste sheet prototype is in progress and is expected to continue next year.

3.3 Activities planning to impart financial and marketing knowledge

Based on the synthesis of the problems of the Baan Khaek Farmer Housewives Community Enterprise that should be developed in the first phase, namely the problem of lack of knowledge in business administration, especially in marketing and financial management, we organized a workshop on marketing and calculating the cost of products for the Community Enterprise members.

In the topic of marketing, the speaker was Mr. Jakkapan KhawDam, an officer responsible for incubating entrepreneurs and having knowledge and experience in marketing at Walailak University Science Park. He gave a lecture, provided knowledge, gave advice, and answered questions about the products themselves, product upgrade guidelines, branding, trademarks, marketing communications, product slogans, packaging selection, sales pricing, and marketing channels. He used three types of curry pastes as a case study: sour curry paste, stir-fried curry paste, and coconut milk curry paste, along with examples of curry paste products from other manufacturers that had already developed their own designs, as well as other familiar products as comparative case studies.

For the topic of cost calculation, the main lecturer is Assistant Professor Nalinee Thinnam, who is assisted by third-year BUS&FIN students. We plan for the Community Enterprise members to learn the correct cost calculation while producing all 3 types of curry pastes: sour curry paste, stir-fried curry paste, and coconut milk curry paste. The BUS&FIN students will participate in the production process from the first step to the last step and record data on the quantity and price of raw materials used in producing each type of curry paste separately, as well as estimates of direct labor costs and overhead costs incurred, to ensure that Community Enterprise 's curry paste cost calculation is correct according to the principles that it should be.

In this activity, there were other people who were not members of the Baan Khaek Agricultural Housewives Community Enterprise who were interested in learning about both of the topics mentioned above. Therefore, they contacted us to join in upgrading their knowledge in marketing and finance. As a result, this project had 2 groups of participants: members of the Baan Khaek Agricultural Housewives Community Enterprise and others who were interested in joining this the activities.

4) Results

BUS&FIN students' presentations of curry paste products developed from the original curry paste currently sold, as well as demonstrations of various curry paste samples to the group, revealed

that the group members were very interested, motivating them to develop products with better properties and meet consumer needs.

In addition, from the workshop on marketing topics, the Community Enterprise members gained knowledge and understanding of the reasons for upgrading products to meet consumer needs, the concept of branding and trademarking, the necessity of marketing communications, packaging selection, pricing, and marketing channels.

As for the calculation of curry paste product costs, the Community Enterprise members currently calculates the cost of all three types of curry paste. They have never separated the costs by type of curry paste, calculated direct labor costs, and overhead costs, and have not given importance to the exact weight of raw materials. Therefore, after this training, Community Enterprise members learned how to calculate the correct costs and realized that the money that was allocated in each production round was actually not profit because the costs of their own labor and overhead costs had not been deducted. Therefore, it is expected that the group will use the cost calculation method learned this time to improve their operations correctly in the future.

Therefore, the programmed project show that members of the Community Enterprise have knowledge in marketing and cost calculation, which can be applied to improve and develop the group's operations further, which achieves the objective of providing academic services to society (WU-Social Engagement) in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No. 4: Quality Education, Sub-Topic 4.3.4: Education outreach activities beyond campus.

5) Further work plans

Since the development of traditional curry paste into sheet curry paste is not yet complete, we intend to encourage the successful development of sheet curry paste and provide the Community Enterprise members with additional marketing, financial, and accounting skills over the next year.
