

## The Model of Technical Cooperation Between Thailand and Lao PDR

<sup>1</sup>Chanajai Muenthaisong, <sup>2</sup>Sukanya Aim-im-tham,

<sup>3</sup>Prapat Thepchatree and <sup>2</sup>Sekson Yongvanit

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Law and Politics, Roi-Et Rajabhat University, Roi-Et, Thailand

<sup>2</sup>Department of Public Administration,

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand

<sup>3</sup>Department of International Relations, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand

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**Abstract:** This research aims to describe the model of technical cooperation scholarships, currently in place, between Thailand and Lao PDR. The study was conducted with a qualitative approach and the study area was mainly of the technical cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR. The units of analysis were at both individual and organization level. Data were collected by in-depth interview with 11 key informants who had knowledge of international relations and technical cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR. A content analytical method was employed for the data analysis. The study found that the model of technical cooperation scholarships between Thailand and Lao PDR consists of 6 components: technical cooperation scholarships based on international relations, the sharing of knowledge and experience in development, the need of the recipient country for international cooperation, the implementation of a development strategy between Thailand and Lao PDR. Flexibility, efficiency and diversity and relatives, traditions, culture and language that are similar. These various elements are interrelated in ways that support each other. Moreover, this also reflects the aims, processes and concepts of the technical cooperation scholarships as the two countries have participated in pushing towards becoming part of an ASEAN Community.

**Key words:** Technical cooperation, aid, international relations between Thailand and Lao PDR, scholarship, international development

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### INTRODUCTION

The international cooperation currently exists in various forms (Gore, 2013). Especially use as a tool for international relations or to compensate for the mistake in the past and for the trade cooperation. Mostly, it has occurred within the framework of regional integration which integrates economic matters, society and politics such as within the European Union. Integration of ASEAN is developing to create the ASEAN Community (AC) in 2015, so it can be said that the occurrences of international cooperation are the mechanisms and tools to achieve international agreement.

International cooperation, in particular cooperation between countries is often used as a tool of foreign policy (Kawai and Takagi, 2004). And found that this method is use for strength the relationship between Thailand and neighbor countries after the Cold War. The main purpose is to promote international relations in order to pursue cooperation in various fields, especially in economic matters. Noppadol Chartprasert studied Thailand's

economic and technical assistance to Lao PDR and Pichet Sunthornpipit studied the international cooperation as a tool to strengthen alliances that support Thailand in the international arena. There were also US technical cooperation scholarships being used as a "soft power" with the Soviet Union. In addition, several studies presented the same conclusion that the support of education to be accessible to the poor, contributes to economic growth and improves the quality of life, being a support to democracy (Williams, 2014). The above review shows that technical cooperation has been used as a tool to build and develop relationships in a variety of contexts.

However, technical cooperation scholarships between Thailand and Lao PDR were used as a tool to build a relationship between the two countries and the changes consisted of the economic context, society and cultural results. A study by Muenthaisong, points out the dynamic changes in the technical cooperation between the two countries. There are two periods, firstly during 1992-2000, when technical cooperation scholarships

between Thailand-Lao PDR were to compensate for the divisive issues that occurred during the Cold War. The technical cooperation scholarships in this period were focused on the basis of developing areas such as agriculture, education, health, etc. During the second period, 2001-2011, technical cooperation scholarships became increasingly diverse and a cause of positive attitude between Thailand and Lao PDR which had a range that influenced upon the integration of the region and sub-region. The technical cooperation scholarships were used to create a relationship between Thailand and Lao PDR over several decades, especially after the Cold War in the early 1990s and up until the focus moved to the development of the region and sub-region.

The changes occurred within the context of each country and also the region, so it is very important to know the model of the technical cooperation scholarships. It will be beneficial in order to plan, promote and develop cooperation between the two countries which will be strengthened and will lead to a decrease in the development gap in the region, in the future.

Researchers believe that with globalization and cooperation under the banner of the ASEAN Community, the dynamic of social conditions, economic conditions and external conditions has changed and therefore, the model of technical cooperation scholarship seems to have changed also. So, the important question is under the current situation regarding Thailand and Lao PDR; what is the model for technical cooperation scholarships?

**Objectives:** To describe the model of technical cooperation scholarships between Thailand and Lao PDR, under the current circumstances.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study is a qualitative research by analysis to understand the model of technical cooperation scholarships between Thailand and Lao PDR, under the current circumstances.

This study covers both the Thai and Lao PDR agencies involved in the technical cooperation. In Thailand: the International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) and the Thai universities that accommodate the many Lao students, in Lao PDR: private residence, the Embassy of Thailand in Vientiane, the department of Asia Pacific and Africa, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR.

The purposive selection of the key informants is of those with positions related to technical cooperation, both in Thailand and Lao PDR. The data consists of four major groups: the first group is Thai and Lao PDR

policymakers including diplomats from the Thai International Cooperation Agency (TICA) executives from the Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA), Khon Kaen University, the oldest in the Northeast of Thailand and from Lao PDR, senior diplomats from the department of Asia Pacific and Africa, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR and a former Ambassador of Lao PDR to Thailand. The second group is of Thai practitioners including officials in International Affairs, at the oldest university in Northeast Thailand. The third group is of the experts in international relations between Thailand and Lao PDR and the fourth group includes Lao students and graduates from Thailand, a total of 11 people.

The researchers used in-depth interview with data analysis: this study used content analysis while collecting data to check the triangulation of information obtained from the interviews. However, the researchers grouped the data by analyzing the concepts used in the form of technical cooperation scholarship, the researcher used a descriptive analytic that shows the patterns of academic scholarship between Thailand and Lao PDR in order to better conclude their weight and credibility.

## **RESULTS**

The study of technical cooperation scholarships between Thailand and the Lao PDR, under the present circumstances, found that the model of the scholarships consists of six components including; cooperation on international relations, sharing knowledge and experience in development, the needs of the recipient country, the implementation of the strategy for development between Thailand and Lao PDR, flexibility, efficiency, diversity and relative, traditions, cultures and language that are similar in composition to illustrate the methods and goals. As well as the concept of the two countries forming a technical cooperation, it was also found that various other elements related to and supported each other in the context of Thailand and Lao PDR. The composition and the relationship of the two countries' cooperation model had the following details.

**History and back ground of Thailand and Lao PDR in technical cooperation:** Thailand and Lao PDR are neighboring countries which have borders, language and similar culture, both the Thai and Lao people living along the Mekong River have a close relation. When Laos gained independence from France in 1954, Thailand was the first country to have diplomatic relations with them. After the political change in Laos in 1975, the conflict further increased tensions. Then, according to the trend

of regionalism in 1980s, Lao PDR opened up to support trade and investment from Western countries, donors and international organizations.

The policy of New Economics Mechanism (NEM) of Lao PDR was set up to delete regulations that were obstacles to trade and investment with developing countries (Rigg, 2009).

According to the policy 'New Economics Mechanism (NEM)', the relationship between Thailand and Lao PDR was improved. In particular, during 1988 General Chantchai Choonhavan as Thai Prime Minister, announced a policy "Transforming the battle fields of Indochina into a marketplace" where the government would make its primary focus to be Lao PDR. Because of the previous crisis in Indochina, the ways to approach Cambodia and Vietnam may present difficulties. However, access to Lao PDR would prove to be easier and if a relationship with Lao PDR could be formed, the relationship with Cambodia and Vietnam would, accordingly be easier. Lao PDR contributed to the efficiency of the policy of 'Transforming the battle fields of Indochina into a marketplace'. The reason that Thailand could approach Lao PDR was because of their attitude during conflict. In the case of Ban Romklao in 1988, although, there was a battle in the area, Lao PDR continued to sell electricity to Thailand. Furthermore, Lao PDR had been the first country to respond to the policy of transforming the battle fields of Indochina into a marketplace. Based on this, the result was that Thailand and Lao PDR worked together in terms of international cooperation, both trade and investment increased, they exchanged visits of senior leadership, a joint committee for Thailand and Lao PDR was created.

Among the neighboring countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), the Lao PDR is extremely important to Thailand in terms of political, economic, social and cultural issues, therefore Thailand gives Lao PDR the first priority. In 1992, the government of Mr. Anand Punyarachun announced international cooperation as a tool for foreign policy. The budget allocated to Lao PDR was more than for other countries in the CLMV group, especially the budget for scholarships and training.

After Lao PDR became a member of ASEAN in 1997, Asia was met by an Economics Crisis which caused the cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR to slow down. However as the crisis began to improve, Thailand and Lao PDR continued to cooperate as normal in regard to the budget and the number of scholarships. Lao PDR becoming a member of ASEAN in 1997 was very useful in terms of the fields of trade and investment. Due to the

economic crisis in Asia, Lao PDR was affected as were many other countries and China began to play an important role in Lao PDR.

International relations between Thailand and neighboring countries including Lao PDR, feature both relations and international cooperation that are bilateral and multilateral. For example, in the area of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) through, The Mekong River Commission and the Greater Mekong Sub-Region Dialogue and this was clearly evident again when Thailand, under the leadership of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, proposed the establishment of the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) with the leaders of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar in 2003. Vietnam became a member in 2004 and the establishment ACMECS closed the economic gap for the CLMV group and it also benefited ASEAN. Although, the government of Thaksin Shinawatra came to an end, the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) continued.

#### **A historic perspective of Thailand-Lao PDR in human**

**resource terms:** Prior to Laos changing its political regime in 1975, Thailand and Lao PDR had engaged in technical cooperation under the framework of the Colombo Plan from the 1950s. Technical cooperation was extended in 1973 when priority was given to development in Lao PDR. The largest areas of cooperation include; agriculture, education and health. In 1973, there were 114 Laos students who undertook studies in Thailand.

Prior to 1992, Mr. Anand Panyarachun's government had used a policy of international assistance as a foreign policy tool to build mutual trust (An expert in international relations February 14, 2013). After the end of the Cold War, the development cooperation between the two countries became more influential as Thailand wished to strengthen its relationship with Lao PDR because they had followed conflicting political ideologies during the Cold War.

The Government of Thailand allocated funds to the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation to handle technical cooperation and even though Thailand suffered an economic crisis in 1997, the cooperation continued, according to the agreement, during that year "even we had economic crisis in that year, we still provided scholarship, TICA will provide scholarships for postgraduate, PhD training under the Technical Cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR" (Interview with senior officials of International Development Cooperation Agency. Ministry of Foreign affair, Kingdom of Thailand February 15, 2013).

In the early to mid 1990s, it was found that the technical cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR, in terms of scholarship was at a high level. Fields of cooperation in the first period included agriculture, education and health. The emphasis was placed on these sectors because Lao PDR was intensifying its development and these three areas are fundamental to developing countries. So, of the Lao students that received scholarships, most were individuals from those agencies.

Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided scholarships for postgraduate and doctoral training grant work under the technical cooperation of Thailand Lao PDR from 2006-2011 during which it provided 247 scholarships, grants and training funds. In 2011, there were 1,270 scholarships, funding for 3 PhD's, Scholarship grants for 40 scholarships, 25 training courses with 160 scholarships and 186 scholarships for education (Interview with a diplomat from the Thai International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 15, 2012).

But at bachelor degree level, under the implementation of the Lao government in the mid-1990s, the University of Lao PDR had sufficient skilled teachers and was able to cooperate with the international community in order to develop its own human resources in education.

“When we have enough staff, Laos want to produce undergraduate students themselves and want to know whether the level of students from domestic production will be achieved as intended or not”. (Interview with Senior diplomat from the department of Asia Pacific and Africa. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, April 25, 2013). “However, some people think that sending Lao students to study as undergraduates is at too young an age and they are afraid that these children will be dominated by the political, social and economic model of capitalism” (An expert in international relations between Thailand and Lao PDR, February 14, 2013)

International cooperation in undergraduate scholarships, supported by the government was eliminated. However, it appears that the Lao people remain interested in sending their children to study as undergraduates at private universities in Thailand.

#### **Model of technical cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR**

**The cooperation is based on international relations:** Technical cooperation scholarships started due to the gap

that had grown between the two countries, during the Cold War. When the Cold War was over, Thailand created international cooperation to strengthen the relationship between Thailand and Lao PDR (Interview with an expert in international relations between Thailand and Lao PDR February 14, 2013). This was launched officially in early 1992 and the technical cooperation scholarships gave priority to the Lao PDR, until the year 2000 when the scholarships responded to the full integration of the region. It is based on sincerity (Interview with diplomats from Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) 15 February 2013) and does not rely on the word of the donor or receiving country (Interview with Lao students studying in Thailand on July 16, 2013). It is a collaboration without a hidden agenda as Lao PDR had accepted the partnership by sending Lao students to study in prestigious universities (Interview with an Official in foreign relations from a university of the Northeast of Thailand, March 15, 2013). This phenomena is matched in the interviews of senior executives of Thailand and Lao PDR who pointed out that scholarship is a tool for building international relations.

“...Scholarships can support the relations between countries. As for the people who went to study abroad, when they returned home to Laos, they still get in touch with friends and teachers and they can coordinate with work smoothly...” (Interview with a senior diplomat of the Asia Pacific and Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, April 25, 2013)

And the President of a university in the Northeast agreed that technical cooperation scholarships are important to Lao PDR and contribute to international relations also.

“...Lao students who study in Thailand will understand and have a good relationship with teachers. They also have a strong relationship with Thailand. When the President goes to Vientiane and the Lao students come to introduce themselves, they are proud that they are alumni students of Thailand” (Interview with the President of a university in the Northeast, March 26, 2013). “...It is a successful collaboration. You could see that by the number of graduate students from Thailand under TICA, when considering the increasing number of activities. There is a good relationship without conflict and both countries can discuss or consult more” (Interview with diplomats from Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) 15 February 2013)

Technical cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR is set on the basis of international relations benefiting human resource development mutually.

**Sharing knowledge and experience in development:**

Thailand changed from being a recipient country to become a donor country under South-South Cooperation. Thailand has a lot of experience in international development and cooperation and can transfer this experience to international cooperation recipient countries as well. As Thailand is a developing country at the same level as Lao PDR, there is no gap of technical knowledge and technology and the possibility to share knowledge and experiences can bring about faster development.

When Thailand was a recipient of international cooperation, it received cooperation from multiple sources such as from the US and Japan. In terms of rural development and human resource development, etc. Thailand received assistance from various countries and this broad expertise allowed Thailand to get varied knowledge from many expert sources. Technical cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR can allow Thailand to transfer their good experiences to another country and Thailand is aware of how it feels to be a country that receives international cooperation. The target group who are policy makers, leaders and policy implementers also talked about how to share their knowledge and experience, gained in the development of Thailand, in collaboration with the Lao PDR. According to the diplomats from TICA, they said that cooperation, in the early stages was only of scholarships, grants and training. Later, there was cooperation in development and also increased plans for cooperation in education.

“The Lao people accepted the technology and experience of Thailand and Thailand organized and delivered full knowledge to the Lao people. During the training, TICA was surprised to see that the Thai trainers gave a wide range of knowledge to the participants, sometimes more than the objectives required” (Interview with diplomats from the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA), 2013)

In the end, the Lao students who receive scholarships and study in Thailand can use their knowledge, technology and academic skills for developing their organizations and for personal development also (Interview with Lao students who graduated in Thailand 8 November 2013, an expert in international relations between Thailand and Lao PDR February 14, 2013).

**The needs of the recipient country (Demand Driven Approach) Thailand’s International Development Cooperation Agency:**

TICA is the lead agency in providing technical cooperation scholarships based on the needs of the recipient countries. Thailand and Lao PDR will have an annual meeting to consider technical cooperation between the countries and to consider the technical cooperation scholarships, based on the national socio-economic development plan of the Lao PDR and the national economic and social development plan of Thailand “(Interview with diplomats from the Thai International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) 15 February 2013, Senior official from Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency, NEDA February 13, 2013). According to the needs of human resource development in Lao PDR and the strategy of Thailand for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

In the future, the Lao PDR is aiming to exit being a “least developed country: in 2020, therefore it is necessary to develop its human resources in almost every field. Currently, Lao PDR continues to cooperate in various fields, including health sciences, science and technology and particularly in the areas of natural resources and the environment which must receive unconditional cooperation (Interview with a senior diplomat of The Asia Pacific and Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, 25 April, 2013).

The agencies in Thailand may consider annual technical cooperation with Lao PDR. The agencies or universities, in Thailand who want to have technical co-operation should give priority to collaboration directly with the agencies in Lao PDR. The scholarship allocation should be a priority decision of Lao students and the agency that sends students to study in that field. The scholarships for undergraduates from Lao PDR are still in demand, especially in vocational education. However, we found that currently, both countries have emphasized their cooperation on scholarships to postgraduate and doctoral programs.

Therefore, the universities and institutions of Thailand should continue technical cooperation within their capacity because most Lao students focus on the reputation of the institutions in Thailand and their academic potential. This is because now Lao students can choose to study at various universities in Bangkok and in other regions including Rajabhat University and Rajamangala which means that technical cooperation is based on the needs of the recipient country and is reflected in the text of the interviews of the policy makers and practitioners of both Thailand and Lao PDR as follows:

“...There is a need to develop the country especially in technology and human resource development, Laos wants to study in the fields that Thailand has experience in and this knowledge can be set in concrete” (Interview with a senior diplomat, Asia, Pacific and Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, April 25, 2013)

This was in addition to senior executives of the Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency, NEDA who said that NEDA’s cooperation or international assistance to Laos is considered within the national socio economic development plan of the Lao PDR and must be sure that the project is planned within the frame of the national economic and social development plan of Thailand. If it is within the framework of both plans, it will be a win, win situation for both countries (the executive of the Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency, NEDA 13 February 2015).

**Implementation of the strategy for development between Thailand and Lao PDR:** Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) prepared a strategy for development between Thailand and Lao PDR during 2008-2011 in order to guide the collaboration in moving both countries in the same direction. In terms of a technical cooperation strategy, it focused on the development of education and enhancing administration and management, promoting public cooperation and the private sector, development of public health, social development and quality of life, trade, Industry and agricultural support.

The strategy for development between Thailand and Lao PDR has received significant contributions that have led to projects and activities that have changed the strategy into actions which contribute to clear cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR and provide an ongoing compliance with the vision and the goals required. This is what a senior Thai diplomat said.

“...We must think multilaterally as Laos is a member of ASEAN and the GMS or ACMECS group so that can create opportunities for collaboration. Thailand must look at Laos as Laos has links with other countries, we can say that Laos is a foreign policy that does not have any problem with anyone. Use policies to promote peace by focusing on the strategy” ‘Look beyond Laos’...”(Interview with Ambassador of Thailand, former Director-General of the Department of ASEAN Affairs, August 28, 2012)

**Flexibility, efficiency and diversity:** As Thailand is a country in the South-South cooperation and is not a rich country it cannot allocate a large budget (Interview with former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand May 1, 2013). In order to implement technical cooperation scholarships successfully, the policy must evaluate the results to ensure the policy is a success under the framework of the continuous cooperation between the two countries. With a limited budget, then Thailand must focus on efficient capital allocation and diversity, including flexibility by focusing on the process of preparation of Lao students who receive a scholarship to study in Thailand, especially under the scholarship’s supervision by the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA). They should be well prepared to ensure that the scholarship recipients can graduate on time which reflects the effectiveness of the cooperation between the two countries.

In terms of flexibility, it was found that the relevant agencies in Thailand are encouraged to provide flexibility and diversity of scholarships. In addition, Thailand has progressed in the academic and technology fields so that it has gained the trust of donors who allocate budgets or scholarships to Thailand such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, etc. The evidence from Thailand and Lao PDR indicates the flexibility, efficiency and diversity of the cooperation as follows:

“...Study in Thailand will offer the experience of technologies and knowledge that can be applied in daily life because there are many similarities. To study in Thailand provides the opportunity to access modern technology and knowledge...” (Interview with the President of an old university famous in the northeast of Thailand March 26, 2013)

“...Students who are studying for a bachelor degree, especially in the science area, have encountered many problems because students in some undergraduate courses will have to review their course from high school. But for Lao students, this is unfavorable because some subjects, in some fields, have not been learned yet. We have to take care and help the students to solve these problems. For example, Lao students may drop a subject and study a lesson that is without credits, then in the next semester or next year, the students will pass the course. Moreover, to ensure that a student is qualified to study in Thailand, almost all the universities will use an entrance examination that means that the students are properly selected. In certain major subjects,

some lecturers may not be flexible which causes a problem and so the student may have to change fields in order to get a bachelor degree” (Interview with a diplomat from the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) February 15, 2013)

**Relatives, traditions, culture and language are similar:** Thailand and Lao PDR are neighboring countries that are similar in terms of tradition, culture and language, There is a relation in kinship, this is an important driving force in making the technical cooperation between Thailand and the Lao PDR. There has always been cooperation which has driven the success of technical cooperation scholarships. Of the Lao students who choose to study in Thailand, most of them choose to study there because it is not difficult for them to adapt, in terms of language, they can communicate without a translator which is very useful in the field of teaching or when doing research.

“...Cultural and language similarities make it different from many countries because we can communicate without an interpreter. It may seem simple, we easily understand the language. When lao students study for a while, they will learn to succeed. It is convenient for the students to learn” (interview with the minister of the Lao PDR. Former ambassador of the Lao PDR to thailand, August 27, 2012)

Technical cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR is a partnership that does not cause conflict, however, during the process, there may have been some

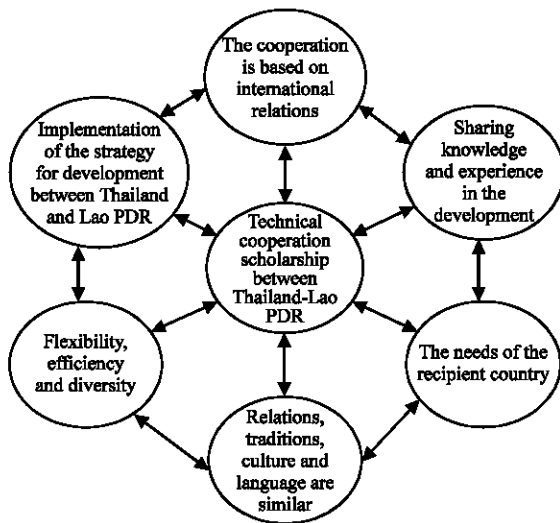


Fig. 1: The model of technical cooperation scholarship between Thailand-Lao PDR (prepared by the researcher)

obstacles that occurred but they are negotiable. The feeling of being relatives contributes to various forms of international cooperation. The researchers concluded the forms of cooperation study as in Fig. 1.

## DISCUSSION

The components of technical cooperation scholarships present the concepts, methods and goals for developing both nationally and regionally, a knowledge sharing experience between Thailand, based on the needs of the recipient country (Lao PDR) and by using the strategy of operational flexibility, effectiveness and diversity.

These elements demonstrate the concepts, methods and targets, both at national and regional level as can be seen from the end of the Cold War. The two countries have had many changes such as the Lao PDR adopting the policy of New Economic Mechanism (NEM), Thailand announcing the policy of turning Indochina from battlefield to a market place and Thailand moving from being a receiving country to become a donor country within the South-South Development Cooperation.

Also, Thailand has a policy of using technical cooperation as a tool for foreign policy, in building mutual trust with Lao PDR. There have also been changes in regional contexts such as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and Ayeyawady-Chaophraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS).

Technical cooperation scholarships between Thailand and Lao PDR are associated with diverse concepts, under the technical cooperation scholarship with 6 elements which combine with 3 concepts as follows: the concept of regionalism, the concept of inter-dependence and the concept of foreign aid. Although, the concept of regionalism is used, it describes a big part of the technical cooperation scholarship.

By making a visual model of technical cooperation in a formal manner, the model is an integral part in the process and the goals of integrating the region to contribute under the framework of ASEAN. But, the concept of regionalism is limited in characterizing the form of cooperation that has occurred while the concept of interdependence gives the appearance of being dependent on policy.

Including interdependence of human resources development, both countries have an equal opportunity to access academic progress and technology. Which is beneficial to analyze the technical cooperation scholarship, in addition, the concept of foreign aid also indicates a direction to help the developing countries who are demanding funds and assistance with the desired

technical cooperation scholarships contributing to the development of labor skills, technical cooperation and management training, etc.

### **CONCLUSION**

The result of this study shows the globalization and cooperation within the ASEAN Community as well as the social conditions and the economies in both countries. This relationship can use scholarship as a tool for bilateral strengthening, whose model can be explained through the technical cooperation scholarship in six elements:

- Technical cooperation based on international relations
- The sharing of knowledge and experience in development
- The needs of the recipient
- The implementation of the strategy for development between Thailand and Lao PDR
- Flexibility, efficiency and diversity
- Relatives, traditions, culture and language are similar

Each element reflects the process, goal, target and the concept that the two countries have shared. Furthermore, all elements are connected in a supportive manner which characterizes the promotion of mutual cooperation in the context of Thailand and Lao PDR. The understanding of the model of technical cooperation scholarships between Thailand Lao PDR has an interesting point in the discussion.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The study of technical cooperation, Thailand-Lao PDR scholarships, shows a relationship which is based on equality and international relations. Thus, the agencies who are involved in collaboration should give priority to relationship development between Thailand and Lao PDR and focus on the international context which aims to

develop the countries together. The key is human resources development in order to reduce the development gap and support economic growth to provide wellbeing and sustainability in the region.

The Thai government should support and facilitate all aspects of the various agencies, both in Thailand and abroad to participate in the effective allocation of scholarships to Lao students. The agencies, especially the universities of Thailand play a role in the agreement of academic cooperation between the countries (A Memorandum of Understanding, MOU) by allocating scholarships to Lao students. We consider that this agency is very important for the technical cooperation scholarships and universities should follow the strategic cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR to provide clear direction for the other related agencies, information sharing should be managed to avoid the technical cooperation between the two countries overlapping.

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