

**Multi-dimensionality of Local Public Health Capacity:
The Case of Local Public Health Management in Northeastern Thailand**

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ABSTRACT

Thailand has been experimenting with decentralized governance since the late 1990s. However, the decentralization reform process has been ploddingly slow. Thai local authorities show different levels of management capacity, especially in the public health. Drawing on extensive research on community development and decentralization, this paper distinguishes among three dimensions of local public health capacity: local organizational capacity, local fiscal capacity, and community capacity. Although the public health functions are not fully devolved to local jurisdictions, several local governments in northeast Thailand have been actively involved in health-related matters. Statistical analysis, in-depth interviews, and focus group are used to compare these “good practice” localities with their neighboring communities. The research findings help identify capacity-building measures that must be in place to empower local governments in the developing countries.

Keywords: Decentralization, Public Health, Local Government Capacity, Community Capacity