ABSTRACT

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Thesis Title: DEVELOPING MORAL CHARACTER TRAITS THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING: CASE STUDIES AT ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY OF THAILAND

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The purpose of education is not only teaching and facilitating students to gain academic knowledge, but also cultivating and developing moral character traits. As Aristotle mentioned that human is a social animal, the interdependent relationship between each individual can help to develop moral character traits of the individuals. The interrelationship between persons could be created through a community. A community is a process of socialization which consists of three characteristics: citizenship, shared values, and mutuality of the community. To develop moral character traits based on this concept, service-learning program is recommended as a tool.

Service-learning is a program encourages students and other stakeholders to learn and develop their moral character traits through the process of working with the community. It applies the concept of reciprocity which balance the outcome of community development and learning outcomes of stakeholders.

In a service-learning program, the stakeholders are required to work closely with the community members. During the working process, all parties could learn and gain an opportunity to share and exchange their experiences with each other. This creates a bond between the stakeholders and make them become a part of the community. After reflecting on the new
experiences from service-learning, the stakeholders could develop and cultivate their moral characters.

In this research, service-learning program at Assumption University of Thailand is discussed involving four service-learning projects conducting by undergraduate students. A discussion on the obstacles for this program is provided with suggestions for improving this program in the future.