

Final Summary Report

June 30, 2009

Building Local Capacity on Community Based Tourism and Community Based Coastal Resources Management

Lion Village, Phra Thong Island, Phang Nga, Thailand



Implemented by: Mangrove Action Project

Background:

This short project was carried during a five week period ending June 30, 2009. It was as an opportunity provided by Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) to the Mangrove Action Project (MAP) to utilize some remaining funds under their larger Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Management Program (DPPM). MAP was an ECOT partner under the larger DPPM project and utilized experience gained from those project activities to develop this Community-based Tourism (CBT) capacity building project for Ban Lion community members. The total budget provided was 400,882 Baht.

Ban Lion is located on Koh Phra Thong, an island which is located in Phang Nga Province off the Andaman Coast and is accessed by a one hour boat journey from Kuraburi Pier on the mainland. Koh Phra Thong is one of Thailand's least developed islands. . The island was severely affected by the Asian Tsunami of 2004. "Pak Chok village" was completely destroyed during the tsunami in which approximately 75 people were killed. . Lion Village was built with the support Lion Club International for tsunami victims from several villages on Koh Phra Tong, including Pak Jok Village.

Lion village is a collection of a new group of people from different villages on the island including Moklen (sea gypsies), Thai, Chinese and more recently Burmese people have now also settled in the village. Most people are highly dependent on fishing with some income derived from construction and small-scale cashew plantations. The fishing condition also depends on the market price and high cost of petrol. The fishing livelihoods involve a middle man who provides gear, petrol and money to fishermen in advance and obliges the fishermen to sell their catches back to them at his set price. This system keeps the fishermen in debt for their whole lives.

The small Ban Lion Community is not united nor has it an elected village chief. People were brought together in the aftermath of the tsunami in a new community. As villagers come from different communities and have different cultural backgrounds they've remained fractured into several groups. The Lions Foundation had provided new houses but it's one of the few communities that didn't receive any community or livelihood development programs to support rebuilding a community.

MAP has been working to initiate an environmental education program on the island and assisting Naucrates, an Italian conservation organization, to carry out mangrove restoration and community surveys. Naucrates and MAP have been granted two tsunami houses in Lion Village by the Lion Foundation to be used as Coastal Conservation Resource Centres (CCRCs) and staff house base for conservation work.

Starting in Jan. 2009 MAP and Naucrates started a small two year project based at Ban Lion called: "*Community natural resource conservation and management project*" The project focus is on greening the community through tree planting and introducing good environmental practices like composting. The project also involves implementing Environmental Education in the schools and starting to look at alternative livelihoods including a home stay program for visitors.

During community meetings to share information to improve environmental and natural resource management, the community identified the issue on the need to improve the villager's livelihoods as the most important issue facing Ban Lion members. The community believe the development of a homestay program as one of the best options that could benefit a wide range of community members. For this reason the project focused on building community capacity to carry out CBT.

Objectives:

1. To strengthen the capability of the community in developing and implementing Community Based Tourism (CBT)
2. To undertake conservation activities to build awareness & improve the village environmental health and the coastal ecosystem on which community livelihoods depend
3. To develop learning process and widen networking among communities along the Andaman Sea coast (Ranong, Phang Nga) to promote collaborative activities for effective natural resource management

Activities:

There were four main activities carried out with ECOT support during the month of June.

1.) Training course on “Group Management and Facilitation Skills” for CBT leaders from CBT network groups from Phang Nga and Ranong (8-10 June 09) Co-funding with Andaman Discoveries (N-Act¹)

The following activities and outputs occurred:

- This 2.5 day workshop held in Kuraburi was conducted by Ms. Jaruwan Kaewmahanin and Ms. Weena Namcharoensom for 25 CBT participants from Phang Nga and Ranong.
- The participants learn the importance of team work and how to work together involving all members of the group which is important for CBT or other groups. Practical exercises helped participants through ‘learning by doing’.
- Effective participatory decision making was studied and also practiced which is critical for maintaining group harmony and making sure all voices are respected and considered.
- Goal setting and effective planning to meet the group’s goal was also discussed and tested through simulatons.
- Planning effective meetings was covered and discussed in relation to their own group CBT meetings
- Development of good facilitation skills was the other major area the workshop focused on which is important for community development, planning, assessment, and making decisions on all aspects of CBT.

So many groups break-up, because they are dominated by several members or are not effective and participatory which reduces the chance of achieving the group’s goals. This type basic training rarely occurs but is it so vital for team work and for groups to work effectively. Many groups don’t function without the members knowing why or how to correct the problem. This capacity building on group management and facilitation allowed the members to step back and think about the process & just not reaching the goal. It will be helpful for groups to solve internal problems and strive to listen to all members, especially the weaker ones. This training has been found to be useful for all groups not just the CBT groups. Ban Lion is extremely weak in group dynamics so this should be very useful for their members particularly.

Annex #1: Report on Group Management and Facilitation Skills Training.

¹ North Andaman Community Tourism Network
Strengthening local practice and sharing lessons learned (N-Act)

2.) CBT Capacity Training, Pilot Homestay and Eco-tourism Activity

MAP contracted Andaman Discoveries (AD) and North Andaman Community-based Tourism Network (N-Act) to carry out this activity at Ban Lion June 19-22.

The following activities and outputs occurred:

- The principals of CBT are understood by members
- The responsibilities of CBT group members are understood
- Seven (7) groups were established to deal with different aspects of CBT; boat group, vehicle (tractor & motorcycle), homestay group, guide group, coordinator, secretary and finance
- Homestay standards were set and understood
- The guide group learned how to set a program, make sure guests are prepared and dressed appropriately, think about safety issues, explain points of interest and how to treat guests
- All members learned the process of setting prices and creating a community fund from a percentage of the CBT profits
- A pilot homestay for two nights was run with AD staff and AD volunteers (3 foreigners) acting as tourists which gave practical hands-on training with feedback from people who understand CBT
- Two Ecotourism activities were run for guests as a practical training exercise for 5 guides. The first tour was to the seagrass, mudflats and mangroves followed by a visit to the old Pak Jok village site ending at the seaside. The second tour was to the Savannah

This basic training and practical hand-on training provided a good all round understanding of the requirements required to undertake a CBT homestay program. What is needed now, is further practice to development the needed skills.

Annex 2: The AD / N-Act CBT training report is attached

3.) Field Study Trip to Koh Yao Noi, Phang Nga to learn about CBT and its link to coastal & marine resource conservation

The following activities and outputs occurred:

- 12 members from Ban Lion & 4 staff / volunteers from MAP/Naucrates took part in a field study trip to Koh Yao Noi (KYN) June 25-27, 2009 to learn from this highly experienced CBT group, which is the first fishing community CBT group in Southern Thailand

- Visit conservation center, mangrove natural trail and Koh Yao Museum at Koh Yao Wittaya School which were presented by students which shows their involvement in conservation
- Visit KTN Women's OTOP Group (dessert, batik and coconut shell handicraft)
- Visit lobster farm and island tour to Koh Hong and Koh Nork (half day Eco-tour)
- Visit to the community's saving group and co-op
- Group discussion with KYN CBT members on topics such as coastal resource conservation, homestay management, tour arrangement, accounting, and group management. (2.5 hours)
- Final feedback session and planning for Ban Lion CBT (3 hours)

This field study trip to participate in a very developed CBT program on the Island of Koh Yao Noi run by fisherfolk families was an excellent opportunity for the members of Ban Lion to see a successful CBT model. Many practical lessons were learnt and useful information picked-up which can be applied to their own newly developing CBT homestay program. Seeing and experiencing first hand is the most effective way to acquire new information. Participants observed how they as guests were welcomed, looked after, and informed about what they seeing or places they were visiting which set a good model for their own CBT.

One of the most import lessons was the importance of conservation and environmental protection throughout the CBT study tour. The KYN CBT grew out on a conservation group which was actively attempting to protect the community's fishing groups from trawlers and destructive fishing gear. Mangrove conservation, use of non destructive fishing gear, waste management, low impact Eco-tourism activities are all part of the KYN CBT program.

Annex #3: The full KYN CBT study tour report is attached.

4.) Training course on seagrass conservation and community based monitoring using the international Seagrass Watch program method.

The following activities and outputs occurred:

- A seagrass awareness raising session was held on June 16 at Ban Lion with 12 community members attending and was lead by MAP staff, volunteer and a guest from IUCN Kuraburi. The participants were familiar with: what is seagrass, where it is located, what is its ecological role and what are the threats to seagrass. (2 hours)
- On June 26, a group of 9 villagers, led by Ms. Piyapat Nakornchai and Dr. Barry Bendell, met at the school for a short discussion and training on seagrass monitoring. The participants learned the Seagrass Watch community Based monitoring technique <http://www.seagrasswatch.org/home.html> and undertook data collection

along a transect. This required them to learn seagrass species identification and estimate seagrass coverage within a quadrat

- Four posters were designed and printed around the themes of: What is seagrass? ;What species are found around KPT, and how are they identified? What is the value of seagrass?; What are the threats to seagrass meadows? Those posters were originally written in English, and have been translated into Thai. So there are now 8 posters, 65 X 45 cm, which will be mounted and will become the central part of a permanent display in the CCRC at Ban Lion.
- Dried specimens of local seagrasses were mounted and laminated for display, and for demonstration of species differences in the workshop.

The main objective of this exercise was to raise awareness and interest in seagrass conservation using Seagrass Watch CB monitoring as a tool. Seagrass is one of the important coastal resources which is critical for fisheries production and coastal sediment stabilization, but is often over-looked compared to coral reefs and mangroves. The longer term objective is to have a community conservation group established in Ban Lion looking at the protection and conservation of all coastal resources in the area. This training already lead to some discussion on destructive fishing gear (sea cucumber trawls and boat propellers) which hopefully may lead to banning this gear or restricting its use. Ideally the development of a seagrass conservation zone(s) would help local fisheries production, help protect the feeding ground for the endangered Green Sea turtles and dugongs and provide a seagrass meadow site of high bio-diversity for environmental education purposes. We hope the seagrass monitoring continues and data will be displayed in the CCRC for local and visitor awareness raising as well as being part of an international network.

Annex #4: Report on related seagrass activities

Annex #5: Seagrass poster developed in Thai

Annex #6: Seagrass posters developed in English

MAP would like to extend our gratitude to ECOT for supporting these special activities which as greatly assisted in the development of CBT linked to coastal resources conservation at Ban Lion, Koh Phra Tong.