

## **A Guideline for Community Based Voluntourism Development in Chiang Saen Historical Site, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand**

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### **Abstract**

The research is aimed to present a guideline for community based voluntourism development in Chiang Saen historical site, Chiang Rai province. A small group discussion was used as instrument to collect data from the target groups that include community leaders, tourism integrators, local tourism entrepreneurs and public sectors, totaling 20 people as well as presentation and transmission of tourism routes and activities of the community. A research method used in this study is coding analysis to define a guideline for community based voluntourism development in Chiang Saen historical site. Furthermore, the researchers had presented a guideline for community based voluntourism development in Chiang Saen historical site with a new model theory of CL-TEAM that consists of 6 key components (CL-TEAM): 1) community, 2) learning, 3) time, 4) expense, 5) attractions, and 6) management. It was found that the two communities in Chiang Saen historical site have potential to become community based voluntourism by organizing and managing voluntourism activities and attractions based on local natural, historical and cultural attractions, and local way of life with CL-TEAM model.

**Keyword:** Community Based Tourism, Voluntourism Development, Historical Site, CLTEAM Model

## 1. Introduction

Tourism development in Thailand focused on sustainable quality tourism which aims to distribute incomes to local communities for a better quality of life and strengthening the community. That is, all concerned parties must be aware of equilibrium and sustainability and the development of products and services must be consistent with needs of the community and market. Importantly, there is an increase in the efficiency of tourism managerial administration which focuses on integration and connection at the national and regional level (Thai Tourism Strategic Plan 2015-2017, Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2015).

According to the policy on Tourism development of the country, the tendency and tourism situations as well as change factors effecting tourism and specific tourism types creates voluntourism which is the combination of volunteer activities and tourism types such as community-based tourism. This is a new dimension of tourism which is different from traditional tourism in terms of learning and sharing dimension (giver and receiver). At present, voluntourism interests new tourist generations of both Thais and foreigners, particularly on Gen Y group of 17-35 years old. They truly make voluntary tourism rapidly spread through various social media since they prefer to travel for seeking new things and would like to help the society such as school development, teaching activities, and check dam building. Besides, they will have an opportunity to be close to people in the tourism community and knowledge/learning exchange such as way of life, opinions, and culture will occur (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2016).

Nowadays, the trend of voluntourism begins to be popular. According to a survey on tourism preference throughout the work in 2013, it was found that tourists want to travel and do volunteer activities. Also, the latest survey supported by msnbc.com and Conde' Nast Traveler showed that more than one-half (55%) of the respondents are interested in volunteer activities during holidays (Rob Lovitt, 2008). According to a report on ranking of a number of people seeking for data through Google Search by Go Overseas, it was found that tourists retrieve the term "Volunteer Trip in Thailand" which ranks third in the world (Go Overseas, 2012). Besides, Thailand ranks top ten which tourist prefers to visit in the form of voluntourism (Lasso Communication, 2009). Part of it dues to Thailand has tourism advantage for it has diverse basic resources in tourism throughout the country and unique identity. This included tourism activity development, beautiful and attractive tourist sports, and supporting activities. The advantage in tourism resources of Thailand is a strong point making tourist places in Thailand be well-known. This makes Thailand receives awards in tourism at the international level so it reflects positive image of the country as well as potential in Thai tourism (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2012).

Upper northern Thailand is a region having potential in the development of voluntourism product since there are a lot of student tourists visiting Thailand each year. More than 10 tour companies and more than 60 private development organizations revealed that there are diverse forms of outreach activities which tourists do during traveling such as teaching English, child care, check dam construction water work system construction, wildlife conservation, elephant care-taking, reforestation, sustainable farming, etc. In addition, Thailand has tourist attractions where tourists can visit after finishing their outreach activities (Sommit, 2013). Regarding the situations on voluntourism in upper northern Thailand (Chiagn Mai, Chiang Rai, Mae Hong Son, Lampang, Lamphun, Nan, Phrae, and Phayao provinces) it is found that Chiang Mai province has most numbers of tourists doing volunteer activities and follows by Chaing Rai province whereas the other provinces have few numbers of tourists doing volunteer activities. This makes the team of researchers interested in a study on a guideline for community-based voluntourism development in Chiang Rai province where there is the development of new tourism forms to be responsive to needs of tourist. Besides, Chiang Rai province has diverse tourist resource such as beautiful natural resource, historical resources, arrest and culture, unique traditions, and ways of life of ethnic groups. Importantly, Chiang Rai province is an area having rapid expansion of economy.

Chiang Saen is one of the districts located in Chiang Rai province and it is normally called “Chiang Saen historical town” In fact, Chiang Saen is an important tourist spot in Chiang Rai province but it has a problem in sustainable tourism management participated by local community and stakeholders of both public and private sectors. This is one reason making most tourists there prefer a one day trip (back and forth). Most Thai and foreign tourist prefer to visit the Golden Triangle and Mae Sai border after a one day visit to Chiang Saen. It is observed that the situations of current voluntourism management mostly be a tourism program of tour companies which focus on utilization of accumulated resources and environment which results in deterioration. Besides, voluntourism can cause urbanization in various tourist spots and it can change local culture to be consistent with foreign tourists’ way of life.

In order to respond to the trend of participation in sustainable tourism development, there is the possibility that voluntourism will begin with needs of the community and assistance of public and private agencies. Based on situations of historical tourism voluntourism as afore mentioned, the team of researchers has proposed a guideline for the development of community-based voluntourism in Chaing Saen historical town.

## **2. Objectives of Research**

Specifically, this study aimed to propose a guideline for voluntourism development in Chiang Saen historical town, Chiang Rai Province

### **3. Scope of the Research**

This study employed mixed method research. The sample group of the quantitative research were household heads or household representatives in Wiang Chiang Saen municipality (2 villages: Baan Wiang Nue and Baan Wiang Tai), Chiang Rai province. The sample group size determination was based on a formula of Yamane (95% reliability) and 400 households were obtained. For the qualitative research, key informants were community leaders in Chiang Saen historical town, representatives of local people local tourism entrepreneurs, and scholars on tourism management from public and private sectors with a total of 10 persons. Data collection and analyses were conducted during January 2017-February 2018

## **4. Review of Related Literature**

### **1. Voluntourism**

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and George Washington University's International Institute of Tourism Studies (IITS) worked together on the preparation of website on Voluntourism and Voluntourism Forum begun in 2000 and they defined voluntourism as it is the combination of service provision in the form of volunteer and traveling in various forms such as arts and culture, geography, history, and recreation in tourist spots.

Voluntourism is a kind of tourism industry integrating outreach activities to travelling activities and it cannot be separated (VolunTourism International, 1999). In other words, it can be concluded that voluntourism can be understood as a form of tourism having the combination of volunteer activities (teaching, environmental conservation, wildlife care-taking, etc.) and tourism activities based on interest (soft-adventure, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, agro-tourism, etc.) It is a tourism form aiming to create benefits for tourist spots and provide an opportunity to tourists to learn and understand about history, geography, culture tradition of local people. The International Ecotourism Society has explained 5 components of Voluntourism as follows:

- 1) Minimum "Local Investment" Level      A volunteer organization invests volunteer project which must have least impacts on the local community.

Meanwhile, the volunteer organization also assist and support the local community in the form of capital, resources, training.

- 2) Long Term Commitment to the Project. Time span of volunteer project must be at least 3 years. The volunteer organization must have direct relationships with the area owner or the community. This aims to access needs of the area or community and develop the volunteer project to achieve the goals.
- 3) Clear and Honest Project Description and Thorough Volunteer Preparation This begins with the readiness preparation of volunteer; appropriateness in area selection for volunteer activities; and volunteer project training.
- 4) In-Country Support and Project Management Volunteer has been supported continually and there is always communication during the project implementation.
- 5) All volunteer Expenses Covered by the Placement Organization, Not the Local Community Expenses on the participation in volunteer activities with the local community is the responsibility of tourists. Incomes are used for community-based tourism management.

## **2. Community Based Tourism – CBT**

Community-based Tourism Institute defines community-based as a type of tourism which puts the importance on the sustainability of environment, society, and culture which direction and management are determined by the community. The community plays roles as the owner and has the rights to manage and take care for the occurrence of learning to visitors. According to a brain storming venue related to community-based tourism on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, 1999 among 60 local leaders from 30 communities which there is participatory managerial administration for the process of learning exchange and conservation of natural resources, tradition, culture, and local way of life (Community-based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) and The Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Research for Locality Section, 2012).

Components of community-based tourism making it be successful comprise 4 aspects (Community-based Tourism Institute and The Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Research for Locality Section, 2012) as follows:

1. Natural resources and culture – The community has abundant natural resources and production style relies on sustainable natural resource utilization. Besides, the community has unique local tradition and culture.
2. Community organization – The community has the social system which has local scholars who are knowledgeable and skillful in various matters.

Also, the community has a sense of belonging and participates in development process.

3. Management – The community has rules/regulations for the management of environment, culture, and tourism. Also, there is an organization or mechanism in operation to manage tourism and be able to connect tourism with community development. This includes fair distribution of benefits and the community found contributing to social and economic development of the community.
4. Learning/experience – Forms of tourist activities can create perception and understanding about different ways of life and cultures. There is the management system to create a learning process between local people and visitors. It also includes the creation of an awareness of cultural and natural resource conservation of both local people and visitors.

Each component connects and relates to each other which will make community-based tourism be sustainable and attractive. In other words, abundant natural resources help local people be able to produce goods and have enough food/incomes which there is no need to rely on tourism (Community-based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) and The Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Research for Locality Section, 2012).

Community-based tourism using tourism as a tool for community development (Community-based Tourism Network Coordination Center, Community-based Tourism Institute, 2012) has the following principles:

1. Community as the owner
2. Local people participate in the determination of direction and decision-making
3. Enhancement of self-pride
4. Elevating quality of life
5. Environmental sustainability
6. Maintain unique local culture
7. Creating learning between cross-cultures
8. Respectfulness of different culture and dignity of human being
9. Occurrence of fair returns of local people
10. Income distribution to public benefit of the community

Community-based tourism is a tool employed for the creation of pride for local people to present good things to people outside the community. That is, the community has managerial administration and mutual determination of what way of life and culture which the community is ready to present and create learning to visitors. Also, there is a guideline for self-practice of tourists who are interested in way of life

and culture of local people. In fact, it can create tourist participation in cultural activities of local people which impresses them.

### **3. Historical tourism**

Historical sites are conservative tourist sites which arise from alternative tourism and it is called in various ways such as sustainable tourism, green tourism, bio-tourism, community tourism, and eco-tourism. It has the philosophy on income generating from tourism and environmental care-taking. Historical tourism is a form of tourism in cultural based tourism sources. It is the travelling in archeological and historical tourism in local communities on the basis of responsibility and consciousness towards the conservation of cultural heritage as well as quality of the participation in tourism management (sustainable tourism). According to this concept, it can be concluded that historical tourism is a form of tourism focusing on tourism in sanctuary and cultural sources together with the conservation of tourist spots.

Historical tourism focuses of travelling in historical and archeological sources to admire and enjoy visiting historical sites. Besides, tourists have a chance to gain knowledge and understanding about local history and archeology and the basis of responsibility and consciousness about the conservation of cultural heritage and value of environmental condition (Chittangwattana, 2015) Indeed, Thailand has various historical sites having uniqueness and identity which can attract tourists (Suwatthikul, 1999).

Historical tourism can be described as visiting touring attractions having valued historical background which tourists will gain knowledge and understanding about the historical site and be aware of value and importance of history and culture. Also, local people participate in the management of historical tourism (Information Study Section, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Burapha University, 2012).

### **4. Management**

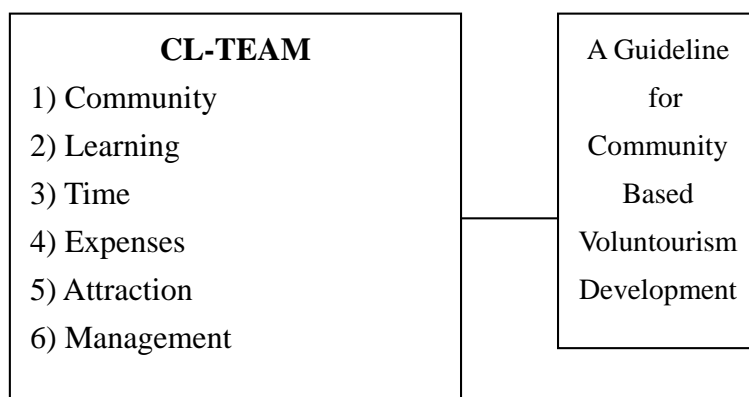
The term “Management” can be defined as the management or administration. According to Organization and Management book of Sereerat et.al. (2012, pp:18-19) as cited in Eduzone (Online media), the definitions of “managerial administration” and “management” are as follows:

Administration refers to a group of activities comprising planning, organizing, leading/directing, and controlling which will have a direct relationship with resources of an organization (6M's). These resources are used for the aims of benefits and achievement of success with efficiency and effectiveness (Eduzone, Online media).

Administration refers to the operation or any work practice of a public agency or public personnel which covers various matters such as 1) Man, 2) Money, 3) Material, 4)

Management, 5) Market, 6) Morality, 7) Message, 8) Minute, and 9) Measurement. This is the adoption of “Factors playing important roles for administration” called 9M which is one is used as a guideline for giving definition (Wiratnipawan, Online media). According to the investigation on theories and concepts about the said managerial administration, the team of researchers concluded that managerial administration can be understand as a process of planning and management, stimulation and control having the determination of direction in various effective resource using in order to mutually achieve the goal of the community. This man concern with any operation of practice of the community which relates to man, object, and an agency covering various matters. Factors playing important roles towards administration called 7 m include: 1) Man, 2) Money, 3) Material, 4) Management, 5) Market, 6) Method, and 7) Measurement.

## 5. Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework of this study employs components of community-based tourism regarding 4 aspects of the success in community-based tourism (Community-based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) and The Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Research for Locality Section, 2012): 1) Natural and Cultural Resources; 2) Community Organizations, 3) Management, and 4) Leasing Besides, components of voluntarism as defined by The International Ecotourism Society in terms of 5 aspects as follows:

1. Minimum “Local Investment” Level – Volunteer organization invests the project with least impacts on the community. It also assists and supports the community in the form of capital, resources and training.
2. Long Term Community to the Project – Volunteer organization must truly have a direct relationship with the area owner or the community in order to access needs of the community and develop the volunteer project to achieve the goals.
3. Clean and Honest Project Description and Thorough Volunteer Preparation - It begins with readiness preparation of volunteer and appropriateness of area selection for the volunteer project and training.

4. In – Country Support and Project Management – The volunteer project is continually supported and there is always communication during the project implementation.
5. One Hundred Percent Volunteer Expenses Covered by the Placement Organization, Not the Local Community.

Thus, there is the occurrence of conceptual framework in this study with the combination of 5 aspects of the main component and components of voluntarism comprising 6 main components (CL – TEAM):

1. Community – The management of tourism and volunteer activities by the community.
2. Learning – A form of tourism focusing on knowledge and experience exchange between the community and visitors.
3. Time – A form of tourism having a condition of time span for activities such as staying overnight in the community.
4. Expenses – Tourists are responsible for the expenses for the project participation.
5. Attractions – This includes natural resources, history and culture which all of these are tourism capital.
6. Management – This includes management and participation of concerned entrepreneurs, accountability of the project, and having a policy to support the project.

## **5. Methodology**

This study employs applied qualitative research. For qualitative research, key informants in this study were community leaders in Chiang Saen tourism management from public and private sectors (20 persons). Structured interview was used for data collection (small group discussion) and analyzed by using coding analysis, data organizing and data display, then making conclusions.

## **6. Conclusions**

Results of the study on CL-TEAM model can be basic data for developing a guideline for voluntourism development by Chiang Saen historical town based on the following:

### **1. Community organization**

Community organization is one of the four components of successful Community-based tourism management. That is, the community organization must have a social system having understanding and local scholars having diverse knowledge and skills. Importantly, the community must have sense of belonging and participates in a development process. Thus, the development of voluntourism by Chiang Saen historical town needs the community be an operation on volunteer activities. Also, the community must determine direction of local tourism by using volunteer activities as a driving force.

Results of the study reveal that Baan Wiang Nue and Baan Wiang Tai communities have an understanding social system and local scholars who have various knowledge and skills such as local food cooking, wickerwork, local music instrument, knife making. Flower cone, etc. People there have a sense of belonging but little participation in development projects. There are rules and regulations about tourism and environmental management since the two communities share the same location with sanctuaries under care-taking of Fine arts Department. There are fare benefit distribution and external tourism counselors (Office of the Higher Education Commission) conducting research with the communities. However, the two communities do not create networks with any non-profit organizations and tourism coordinators. The tourism service sector there is ready in all aspects because the two communities are located in an urban area. For accommodation, there are homestay service, guesthouses, hostels, hotel, etc. It is a safe community but needs volunteers. That is, the two communities can provide volunteer activities on the basis of needs of the communities. However, it should have public relations to networks of voluntourism

entrepreneurs on the potential to accommodate voluntourism. Each community should be aware of the adoption of community tourism principles. For examples, community is the owner and carries out managerial administration; local people participate in decision-making and planning; mutual preparation of practice issues on voluntourism management; mutual determination of development and planning; and participation problem solving. Importantly, the organization development must put the elevation of quality of life, pride, conservation of local culture and tradition, creation of learning exchange between local people and visitors, respectfulness to cross culture, and fair benefit sharing on income distribution.

## **2. Learning**

Results of the study show that Baan Wiang Nue and Baan Wiang Tai communities have tourism activities which enhance experience of tourists and it can create perception and understanding about different way of life and culture. This includes the following: 1) cleaning sanctuaries, schools, and various important places of the communities; 2) sanctuary restoration; 3) teaching students at schools in the community; 4) translation volunteers for foreign students; 5) community development such as repairing school buildings; 6) making community products based on local wisdoms such as basket; 7) environmental conservation such as refutation and garbage disposal; 8) community cultural/traditional conservation; 9) community way of life learning such as farming; 10) cruising up Mekong river 11) making merits, etc. It is found that the two communities create an awareness of cultural and natural resource conservation to both local people and visitors. Besides, there are rules, regulations, and recommendations in the management of culture and environment. Importantly, there are suggestions for tourists to behave and dress properly when visiting the community or temples. One thing which the two communities do not have is the management system to create a learning process between local people and tourists. The two communities have knowledge about various volunteer activities but they lack of skills in the presentation or meaning conveyance to tourists.

## **3. Time Span of Activity Participation**

The component on time span of activity participation is an important one in terms of community-based voluntourism. This is because tourism has a condition on time span for doing activities such as staying overnight in the community for at least two nights aiming to do volunteer activities. According to a survey on community opinions, it found that the two communities there can accommodate tourists for at least 2-3 days (11-20 persons, each time) while time span of daily activities is about 9 hours.

#### 4. Expenses

Tourists are responsible for all expenses for volunteer activities in the local community and incomes earned from the activities are used for tourism management. According to a survey on opinions of the community and small group discussion for the determination of tourist expenses in volunteer activities, the following are found: 1) accommodation- homestay (300 baht/ person/ night), guesthouse (300 baht/ person/ night), hostel(300 baht/person/night),hotel(400-600 baht/person/night); 2) food- (100 baht/ person/ meal/, transportation (tram (300 baht/ person, bicycle (40 baht/ person/ activity).

The researchers, community, and stakeholders mutually prepare two community-based voluntourism programs based on time span for volunteer activities as follows:

##### 1. Three days / 2 nights voluntourism program (5 tourists)

Activities      Day 1 : Cleaning defunct temples and Prathat Chedi Luang temple  
                    Day 2 : Tree planting and visiting buffalo camp  
                    Day 3 : Learning local way of life, livelihood and cooking class

Attractions     Day 1 : Taking city tram, city cycling around city walls and temples  
                    Day 2 : Visiting buffalo camp and Mekong river cruising  
                    Day 3 : Cruising on Chiang Saen lake and respect to Pha-ngao Stupa

##### Expenses

Accommodation: Community home stay- 300 baht / person/ night, including breakfast

Food: lunch and evening meals (100 baht/ person/meal)

Transportation: Skylap car (5-6 persons) – 200 baht/car/day

Saleng car (4-5 persons) – 300 baht / car / day

Tram – 300 baht / tram / day

Bicycle – 20 baht / hour

Service charge for the interpreter – 300 baht / activity

Service charge for the coordinator – 300 baht / group

Total = 3,000 baht / person

##### 2. One day voluntourism program (10-15 tourists)

Activities                      Cleaning defunct temples and Phrathat Chedi Luang temple, learning community way of life (Sueng making-

northern style banjo with a pair of coupled strings), and local food cooking

Tourist attractions      Cycling around the city wall and temples, Lao ethnic group village, national museum, and Khong river

Food                      Lunch meal, coffee, snack at Mong Du Nam restaurant

Transportation          bicycle

Total = 300 baht / person

## **5. Natural Resources, History, and Culture**

Community-based tourism management employs tourism capital such as natural resources, history and culture for volunteer activities. Results of the study show that the two communities put the importance on natural resources, history, local culture, local way of life and local wisdoms at a high level. Resources having importance to the two communities most include Khong river scenery, Phrathat Chedi Luang temple, Ching Saen national museum, Pasak temple, Songkran festival, boat racing, Loy Khathong festival, Buddhist Lent festival, Nakhon Ngern Yang Chiang Saen festival, Choonkathin festival, Khamsalee festival, Kuay salak festival, salak yisibha tradition, Pengput food offering to monks tradition, Songkhro Wanpapi tradition, waisa Chaomae Nangserng tradition, Chao Por Pratoosak oblation tradition, Tan Khao Mai Tradition, Sipeng festival, Sibsong peng festival, Phrathat Chedi luang ritual bathing tradition, grandparent ghost offering tradition, Khaokam Loogkhammoon tradition, Kaopeng tradition, Chiang Saen walking Street. Besides, volunteer activities can be done in each tourist site.

## **6. Fair and Accountable Managerial Administration**

This includes management, participation of concerned entrepreneurs, project implementation, and project supporting policy. According to small group discussion and a survey on community opinions, it is found that most local people in Chiang Saen historical town do not have any community position. There are only two persons who are committee members of tourism development at the provincial level. However, some people are members of groups related to tourism such as housewife group, OTOP group, tourist guide group, home stay group, etc. few local people have a community position related to public activities or volunteer. This conforms to obtained data that there is no position related to occupations concerning with tourism. In addition, results of the study show that there is a low level of local people participation in community-based tourism development. However, it is found that local their needs for the participation in the management of community – based voluntourism, accommodation, food shop, local products/ souvenirs, and voluntourism activities, respectively. Importantly, the two communities need for group forming among local people for the management of

community – based voluntourism to be the community – based voluntourism coordination center.

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