

III. Conservation of Local Food Source by Eco-cultural Approaches

1. Introduction

Project No: THA/MFFSGF/12/03

Project Title: Conservation of Local Food Source by Eco-cultural Approaches

Grantee: Phang Nga Bay Coastal Fishing Community Food Security Project

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1.1 Implementing NGO/CBO: Phang Nga Bay Coastal Fishing Community Food Security Project: Established in 2000, with the objectives: 1) to promote CBOs participation in coastal natural resources, 2) to promote and launch campaign on gender equality, and 3) to encourage socio-economic self-reliance of communities. Targeted population of the organization covers 20 coastal communities in Phuket and Phang Nga Province. With the completion and lessons learnt of the project in Phase 1, followed by successive brainstorming of communities, a new dimension of food security through eco-cultural approaches was identified leading to the project activities.

1.2 Location of project: Coastal areas of 21 communities in Phang Nga and Phuket Province, which are situated in mangrove area in the vicinity of Ao Phang Nga National Park. The location, a water channel separating Phuket and Phang Nga, is a special habitat for marine species, especially, the Red Ant Mound. Some slight conflict between fishing communities and tourist entrepreneurs was looming in the location.

1.3 Target Population: 360 out of 850 households who earn living through para rubber plantation, small-scale fishery, aqua culture, and general services for tourism. The per capita income is THB 73,000.

1.4 Long-term objectives to support national coastal resources policy:

1. Designing ecologically and socio-economically sound coastal ecosystem rehabilitation (POW 2)
2. Supporting the 'Reef-To-Ridge' approach to land and resources management (POW 3)
3. Promoting civil society awareness and participation in coastal decision-making (POW 6)
4. Supporting environmentally sustainable livelihoods among coastal communities (POW 8)

1.5 Specific Objectives:

1. To protect and restore food sources in an integrated manner from mangrove, canals, sea grass, cram habitat and shallow-water reefs
2. To promote collaboration in protection of local food sources
3. To initiate knowledge compilation models on mangrove resources management, based on local practices and consistent with local context

1.6 Major stakeholders

- 1) Mangrove Development Station in Phang Nga and Phuket
- 2) Phuket Marine Biological Centre
- 3) Coastal and Marine Resources Conservation Centre in Phuket
- 4) Lor Yoong and Mai Khao Tambol Administrative Organization

2. Project Completion

2.1 Period of Participatory Evaluation: August 2013

2.2 Number of Beneficiaries/ Participating personnel: 625 households

Women:	1,738	persons
Men:	936	persons
Children:	1,043	persons

2.3 Income and Expense

Detail		Amount (THB)
Budget Allocation		299,500
Total expenditure		303,150
% expenditure against allocation		101%
Co-financing Sources		In-kind (THB)
Par Khlork Municipality, Thalarng, Phuket		80,000
Food Security Programme		-
Ao Phangnga Saving for Social Development Network		120,000
Ao Kung Community		200,000
Ao Phangnga Coastal Community Network		90,000
To-Be-Number-One Group of Tambol Par Khlork		40,000
Ao Phangnga Youth-for-Mangrove Group		30,000
Public Health Volunteer Groups of Tambol Khlornghian and Loryoong		30,000
Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization		50,000
Phuket Artist Group		40,000
Total		680,000

2.4 Activities and results/outcomes

Main Activities Implemented	Results/Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launching resources inventories, compiling implicit knowledge on "Red Ant Mound", relevant history and social/culture concerning biodiversity aspect 2. Building capacity through study tours on "Natural Resources Management by eco-cultural approach" followed by a seminar on the same subject 3. Launching rehabilitating activities for the red ant mound 4. Launching dissemination of the project 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 35 core leaders gaining insight required for successful implementation (with at least 14 female, 10 youth members and 11 men), and being capable of criticize and revise natural resources management process of the past 2. Acquired one explicit knowledge piece on "Red Coral Reefs" covering biological, social and traditional management dimension 3. Witnessed increase in catch from the mounds and emergence of one more fishing group 4. Initiated action plan for habitat management based on the knowledge piece followed by a declaration of "Red Coral Reef Area" in project location

2.6 Plans and Activities for Sustainability:

Approaches and experience of the project needed to be replicated and mainstreamed both horizontally and vertically by using the issues of marine and coastal resource base management.

2.7 Challenges and constraints

The international tourism industry was imposing threats to marine & coastal resources making community conservation become more difficult and complicate.

2.8 Lessons Learned

1) Since each location had its own characteristics, situation analysis was of utmost important for forging ahead projects on sustainable use and fair share of natural resources.

2) Capacity and persistent will of CBOs to carry out coastal resources management activities were the important foundation for steering, mobilizing and collaborating with other sectors.

3) Natural resources conservation by Eco-cultural Approach should be replicated and networked into horizontal and vertical range amongst relevant sectors. Such an approach would provide knowledge and offer a talking point which would eventually lead to a formulation of coastal management plan.

3. Story of change

3.1 Change in people or human knowledge, attitude, and practice (behavior)

The natural resources conservation by eco-cultural approach was elicited for real practice, first of its kind in project location. Based on community-based knowledge and existing network, the approach seemed to be welcomed among network members and communities beyond project location.

3.2 Change in socio-economic status or livelihood

Because of the successful prevention of mangrove encroachment in some area of Phang Nga bay, it was witnessed that quantity of aquatic animals was increasing resulting in better catch and income.

3.3 Change in participation and social interaction

The ownership and connected locations of community network was promoted thus encouraging them to lead and participate in wider natural resources management in the bay and beyond.

3.4 Change in coastal governance frameworks

1) The participatory process was newly rearranged bottom-to-top, i.e. from communities, networks, and small community movement up to provincial policy.

2) There was a co-management being acquired in two issues; 2.1) wider participation group from women, youth and transgender, 2.2) trans-administrative boundaries participation and management

3.5 Change in natural environment or ecosystems, and practices in ecosystem/coastal conservation

The capacity of CBO and women groups was the main driving forces of the project prompting more substantial cooperation and supports from Tambon Municipality and Provincial Administrative Organisation.

4. Monitoring visit by the National Coordinator, NSC and NCB members

4.1 Findings and observation

The visiting team interacted with 7 project leaders at the office of Baan Ao Kung Saving Group and learnt about major undertaken and planned activities. During the past years, the group had hosted events to share experience, launch campaigns and build capacity/entity of network in Phang Nga Bay. In addition, the team heard from the communication officer of the community mosque about applying religious belief and cultural practices to protect natural resources, especially mangroves in project location. One of the key messages from the officer focused on participatory and co-management process. It seemed that the process had produced satisfactory results, in term of conservation and community livelihood.

Sailing along the main canal leading out from the village into the bay, the team witnessed mangroves on both sides, one side of bigger area was demarcated as community forest, and the other a sacred forest or cultural forest called Oubo. Two shrimp traps were seen in the canal. This kind of fishery was said to be handed down culturally and specifically for certain families. The quality of water in the location was rated as one of the best in coastal area of eastern Phuket, guaranteeing migration of shrimp into the canal and mangroves.

The visiting team agreed that an Eco-cultural approach of the project has successfully kept land speculation and untoward public development in check. One such success was evinced by the inhibition of mangrove trimming project- the activity that would reduce biodiversity but increase timber, as discerned by communities. In April 2013, the group planned to host another event to launch campaigns on conservation and build stronger community network. The governor and chairperson of the provincial Islam organization would be invited.

4.2 Photos



This bird-eye-view picture produced by support of various actors including MFF SGF depicts location of Baan Ao Kung and their mangroves. In spite of limited land and resources, land speculation and regulated urbanization are imposing threats to community livelihood. Once such incident is currently under authority investigation.



Shrimp trap is a traditional fishery specifically handed over in a family line. There are 7 such families in Baan Ao Kung to keep on the fishery. Community conservation efforts had resulted in comparatively better water quality, hence abundant migrating shrimps from deep water into the canal. Mangrove of about 80 ha in the background serves as a community forest.



Women project members are famous for making shrimp paste. The paste was awarded the best price at national level, attracting customers, as far as Bangkok. However, the members prefer to practice self-sufficiency theory rather than commercially profit oriented.



Probably due to community conservation effort, this deserted shrimp pond along the canal still serves as a bleeding ground for edible mollusk. Less than one hour in the pond, this member has enough daily food for her family.



Both side of this sea-connecting river are full of mangrove. On the left is the 120-ha mangrove co-managed by community of Baan Ao Kung, on the right is a mix of mangrove and terrestrial forest accommodating community cemetery (Qubo). Community struggled to claim this portion back from forest concession.



After persistent dialogues with authority and other stakeholders, Baan Ao Kung community were bestowed conservation banner by H.M. the queen and also won a first prize on producing shrimp paste at national level.