



THAILAND

CHAPTER

8



THAILAND

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ON CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION

I.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Official Name of “Best Practice” Initiative	Community Empowerment On Conservation And Protection
Name of Contributor/ Organization	Koh Yao Noi Ecotourism Club
Address/Contact Details	Amphur Koh Yao, Phang-Nga Province 82160 Thailand Tel: +6676-597409 / 01-9680877 Fax: +6676-597535 Email: bangameel@hotmail.com Website: www.homestaykohyaonoi.net
Year The Initiative Was Started & Completed	1994
Location of Best Practice Project	Koh Yao Noi, Phang Nga Bay, Southern Thailand
Awards/Recognitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thailand Home Stay Standard 2005-2007, Certified by Office of Tourism Development, Ministry of Tourism and Sports. ● Thailand Tourism Awards For Tourism Development and Promotion Projects 2002 and 2004. ● Winner of the World Legacy Awards 2002 for Destination Stewardship by the Conservation International and National Geographic Traveler Magazine.

2.0 KEY SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Koh Yao Noi ecotourism project is a story about an empowering local community who, through their collective actions help to deliver a community-led ecotourism initiative. There is a story of a visionary community who choose not to use the same options and go the same way as their bigger neighbor to embrace mass tourism. Instead, they stood steadfast as a community to their traditions and culture to achieve a 'triple bottom line' goal in sustainable management.
- 2.2. Koh Yao Noi, a traditional fishing village is located in Phang Nga Bay, close to Phuket and Krabi, which are Thailand's biggest mass tourism destinations. The island is a tropical paradise with its natural resources, such as coral reef, sea-grass beds, gibbons, mangroves and beautiful beaches.
- 2.3. The island has been largely unaffected by the booming tourism development craze in its backyard. Unlike Phuket, with its large resorts, souvenir vendors and go-go bars, there are none in Koh Yao Noi. The community has managed to retain their tradition, culture, simple lifestyle and their idyllic fishing villages, which have remained largely unchanged for generations; and this is the way the people here like it. Fishing, not tourism, employs the vast majority of the island's 5,000 predominantly Muslim residents. The island is relatively affluent with satellite dishes dotting their rooftops and cell phones are ubiquitous. There are about 6,000 residents in Koh Yao Noi, 85% of the total population are fishermen.
- 2.4 But it nearly was not this way in the early 1990s. Commercial trawlers were illegally fishing and encroaching into their area, and they were encountering the impacts from uncontrolled development of increased rubbish, water pollution, etc and the use of natural resources to feed the hunger pangs of mass tourism in Phuket.
- 2.5 It seemed like Koh Yao Noi had no choice but to follow the same path as their neighbors and turn to mass-market tourism. But instead, they banded together, formed a cooperative and sought help from a local NGO, REST (Responsible Ecological Social Tours), fought back and won. Their gallant effort and victory won them admiration and recognition from the international community.





- 2.6 In 2002, they were selected from a list of over 40 countries to receive the World Legacy Award for best 'Destination Stewardship' from Conservation International and National Geographic; and in their home country, the Tourism Authority of Thailand awarded them with the Tourism Award 2002 and 2004 for Tourism Development and Promotion Projects. Recently, they received Thailand Home Stay Standard 2005-2007, which is certified by the Office of Tourism Development, Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

3.0 THE OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Instil a strong conservation ethic among the population as a way to lure visitors to the beauty of this island;
- 3.2 Fit and integrate local tourism activities with the local ways of life and livelihoods for greater enjoyment;
- 3.3 Promote conservation and the exchange of ideas amongst villagers using tourism as the platform;
- 3.4 Provide greater opportunities for local participation in tourism management;
- 3.5 Provide more jobs and income opportunities for local people;
- 3.6 Support proper sanitation, waste management and safety in tourism;
- 3.7 Enable visitors to have first hand experience in community based tourism activities.



4.0 THE MODEL

4.1 The community tourism products are integrated into the tour programs of tour operators like REST. It is an eco-friendly tourism model of home stay and tour programs based on local customs for outside tourists coming to their villages. It has these features:



- Small groups of tourists are allowed to live with local families to experience the local lifestyle in a small traditional fishing community. Tour parties are limited to a maximum of 100 people per group and up to 3 groups are allowed in a month;
- Accommodation is only provided by local families in traditional wooden houses without air-conditioning;
- Visitors can join their tours and participate in activities to learn about the local culture, customs, traditions and their fisherman's way of life. This is one unique feature which distinguishes itself from the other traditional homestay programs (which normally provide only simple bed and three meals per day).
- Other programs offered are:
 - a) Beach and island sightseeing;
 - b) Biking, trekking and truck tours;
 - c) Fishing, sailing, cave kayaking, sea canoeing;
 - d) Bird nest, butterfly watching, bird watching, and fish, lobster, prawn, squid and crab catching;
 - f) Rice plating, coconut picking and rubber tapping;
 - g) Seasoning fruit orchard, nature study and local cooking lessons;
 - h) Thai boxing (Muay Thai), cultural art and dancing.

4.2 10% of all income generated from tourism goes to a village development fund. The money also benefit those villagers in the community who are not involved in tourism. The rationale is every villager is part of the effort to conserve natural resources, thus making this island a prime tourist attraction in Phang-nga.

4.3 It operates on a rotation system for tourism activities, guides and homestay accommodation to ensure equal opportunity to participate in tourism, so as to spread economic benefits fairly.

- 4.4 There are strict local rules for visitors when they are in the community. Some of them are:
- No alcoholic drinks and drugs in the community;
 - Proper and modest dressing in the village community;
 - No littering;
 - Prohibition of collecting of any seashells or corals from the sea.



5.0 THE IMPACT

- 5.1 These environmental and ecosystem successes have been recorded:
- Fish catches have rebounded;
 - Illegal trawlers were booted out of the area;
 - Complete ban on fishing boats for the whole area of Phang Nga Bay National Park
 - Marine species increased in number;
 - Mangrove forests recovered and sea grass was replenished.
 - Fishing tools are limited in use.
- 5.2 Financial fortunes have improved. A typical catch 15 years ago was less than 2.2 pounds (a kilogram) a day. Today, local fishermen can catch up to 44 pounds (20 kilograms) a day of fish, shrimp, and crab, using traditional methods like traps, stationary gill nets, and hook and line.
- 5.3 A solid partnership now exists between the community and REST (Responsible Ecological Social Tours) to continually develop and promote sustainable fishing and conservation practices.
- 5.4 The Koh Yao Noi Ecotourism Club has also been set up to act as a pressure group for:
- Effective representation of the community interests;
 - A platform for collective action; and
 - A business cooperative to share the benefits of tourism with the entire community.
- 5.5 There is also a partnership with the Department of Fisheries in taking various proactive actions, such as:
- Restoring mangrove forests and other vital coastal resources;

- Monitoring trawlers' activities to ensure they do not encroach into their area and the coastal conservation zones.



6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

- 6.1 According to the Responsible Ecological Social Tours (REST), a key reason for the initiative's success is the adoption of a 'bottom-up' or 'inside out' participatory approach in developing an initiative that serves as a catalyst to generate communal awareness among the villagers on protecting their eco-system.
- 6.2 The early realization that putting efforts towards the preservation of local tradition is a good way to check uncontrolled high tourist traffic or mass tourism. It is also a way to impose code of conduct for tourists to respect the destination's local cultures. Despite opening its doors to the tourism industry with the setting up of the homestay and tour programs for over a decade, the village and the community of Koh Yao Noi, remain unchanged.
- 6.3 The management of sustainable tourism should always involve a strong community participatory process from the very start to ensure the initiative is based on things that local people really want to share with guests. Tourism operators who overlook or ignore such process often end up in failures.
- 6.4 Some important feedback from study tour visitors which provide useful lessons are:
 - 'It is important that tour facilitators make the community members feel proud and important about themselves for students to cross the world to study about them';
 - 'The community should not be passively studied as objects, but rather be empowered to contribute their own perspectives';
 - 'Where volunteer work is a part of the study tour, it should be based on the real needs of the community, and presented to students as sharing and exchanging rather than charity. Pity is corrosive, while admiration is empowering';
 - 'Have a clear mix of activities which empower both hosts and guests as givers and receivers, teachers and students';
 - 'It is also good to have completed academic studies translated into the local language and sent to the community so that they can add to their wealth of knowledge'.





- 6.5 The Koh Yao Noi's winning recipe consists of a number of factors:
- The host community organizations are well organized and managed, with broad-based participation from the very start;
 - They are led, driven and managed by a host community who play a leading role in all stages of the initiatives from planning, development and delivery. Some examples are:
 - a) Local villagers set forth a comprehensive plan for tourism development, including setting up local mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement;
 - b) Villagers have their own patrol boats to control encroachment and over-fishing;
 - c) Local people, not outsiders, act as tour guides; and
 - d) They control the number and frequency of visitors to their community areas.
 - Staying relevant and making it better all the time through regular reviews, evaluation and customer feedbacks.
- 6.6 Finally, it is also good to immortalize initiatives that are of 'best practice' standards in academic institutions for use as case studies and research reference.

THAILAND

GREEN LEAF ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION OF HOTEL OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

I.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Official Name of “Best Practice” Initiative	Green Leaf Environmental Certification Of Hotel Operational Standards
Name of Contributor/ Organization	The Green Leaf Foundation (GLF)
Address/Contact Details	Green Leaf Foundation Tourism Authority of Thailand Building, 1600 New Phetburi Road, Makkasan, Rajthevee, Bangkok 10400 Tel: +660 2250 5500 ext. 2064 / +660 2652 8321 Fax: +660 2652 8322 Email: contact@greenleafthai.org Website: www.greenleafthai.org
Year The Initiative Was Started & Completed	1997
Location of Best Practice Project	Bangkok, Thailand
Awards/Recognitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● United Nation Environment Program. ● Thai Hotels Association. ● Tourism Authority Of Thailand.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Green Leaf is a national tourism certification program which was introduced in 1997 to certify hotel establishments in Thailand. It is developed by the founding partners of the Green Leaf Foundation which is made up of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Thai Hotels Association (THA), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), Metropolitan Waterworks Authority (MWA) and Association for the Development of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).



- 2.2 Hotels are certified according to the level of their efficiency in 11 main areas of energy, environment and natural resources management where a 'Green Leaf' rating of between 1-5 leaves is given to the extent these criteria are met.
- 2.3 Some of the hotels awarded with 'Green Leaf' certification are Bangkok Marriott Resort and Spa, Banyan Tree Bangkok, Dusit Resort Pattaya, Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok, Imperial Queens Park, Laguna Beach Resort, Le Méridien Phuket, Phuket Arcadia, Siam Bayshore Resort, Siam Bayview Hotel and Sofitel Central Bangkok.
- 2.4 This home grown program is still growing and gaining a firmer foothold in the hotel industry. It has defied all odds and is surviving till today and has just completed its 3rd run with a bigger group of hotels. Its main challenge now is to create more publicity for itself, drive more hotels towards certification and more business to the certified hotels to create the market demand.

3.0 THE OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Encourage a culture of environmental awareness, protection and preservation among the management and staff of Thailand Tourism Industry;
- 3.2 Help hotels improve their efficiency in saving energy, water and other resources under the theme 'Save Money, Save Environment';
- 3.3 Establish a nationwide certification of environmental standards in hotels;
- 3.4 Encourage a continuous improvement in the efficiency of environmental development in hotels;
- 3.5 Create a positive image of Thailand for greater competitive advantage in the world market.



4.0 THE MODEL

4.1 It has these parameters:

4.1.1 The Stages

The Green Leaf certification has a 3-stage process to serve as a checklist for hotels to gain a good learning. They are as follows:

- **Screening Stage:**
Consists of 13 questions concerning certain rules, regulation, or legislation;
- **Qualifying Stage:**
Contains questions regarding the environmental activities in hotels;
- **Grading Stage**
 - a) A 'Letter of Participation' and a set of 244 questions are given to assess the hotel environmental performance. The questions cover all areas of the hotel operations; from guest rooms and restaurants, to back-of-house activities in the kitchen, laundry and landscape;
 - b) 30 days is given to complete the Grading Questionnaires, which has to be returned to the foundation's audit team to do the site audit.



4.1.2 The Criteria

Participating hotels and resorts are evaluated on initiatives and activities undertaken by individual properties in these areas:

- Policy and standards for environmental practice;
- Waste management and recycling;
- Efficient use of energy and water;
- Environmentally-friendly products purchase;
- Indoor air quality;
- Air pollution;
- Noise pollution;
- Water quality;
- Storage and management of fuel, gas, and toxic waste;
- Ecological impact;
- Cooperation with community and local organizations;
- Communication;
- Management support;
- Training.





4.1.3 The Award

The awarding of 1 to 5 leaves is based on a relative scale calibrated against a set of randomly selected 20 'reference hotels'. Based on this scale, the hotels that meet the most standards receive 5 leaves, while others are awarded 0 to 4 leaves based on their relative achievements.

The entire process takes about six months. Establishments that receive the awards are listed in the national 'Green Hotels Directory' which is distributed to travel agencies and international tourism interests.

4.1.4 Validity Period

The award certificate is valid for two years from the date of issue. Hotels need to renew the certificate and also have its operations audited again upon expiry.

4.2 The Green Leaf Environmental Standards undergo a continuous process of improvements.

- The first standard of the Green Leaf program was developed in 1998 which consisted of 170 questions in 11 areas. The focus was only on imparting knowledge and techniques for boosting the hotel efficiency of environmental management initiatives;
- The second and current standards were created in 2002. It provides for greater quantitative detail to evaluate the hotel's environmental performances;
- The future standard of Green Leaf will focus on the ability of the hotel in terms of participatory activities by employees, customers, and suppliers of the hotels, as well as the presentation of new technological ideas. The applicant hotel will have to focus on demonstrating its leadership ability in using new and appropriate technology to create greater resource efficiencies that are clearly measurable.

5.0 THE IMPACT

- 5.1 Many of the certified hotels are starting to take small incremental steps by implementing various projects such as using aerators at the faucets, energy and water conservation, recycling, reducing use of polystyrene products, and involving guests in environmental activities.
- 5.2 Green cards in rooms have been introduced in many hotels. They are Hilton Hua Hin, Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort, Club Andaman Beach Resort, Phuket, and others;
- 5.3 Certified hotels have been able to cut their energy use by 20% while water use, paper use and garbage output has also been lowered by 5%, 10% and 20%

respectively. The Dusit Resort at Pattaya for instance, used to consume 1,400 kilowatt/month, but since joining the 'Green Leaf Program' about 4 years ago, its consumption has gone down by about 10% to 1,200 kilowatt/month.



- 5.4 Hotel staff is gradually involved in implementing the program and this is a good platform for human resource development and staff training on various aspects of hotel operations and environment conservation. They are growing their own vegetables like in Dusit Resort Pattaya, Chumpon Cabana Resort, Andaman Beach Suite Phuket, etc.
- 5.5 The program has successfully completed its 3rd run with the 1st group of 34 hotels awarded with certification in 1998, the second group of 64 hotels in 2000 and the third group of 80 hotels in December 2003. The growing number of hotels that are joining the program shows that it is gaining increasing acceptance (albeit slowly) among hotel operators.

6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

- 6.1 Publicity with well-defined strategies is required to extend this industry's self voluntary initiatives to more hotels in order to highlight the commercial viability and attractiveness of this program in terms of cost savings and good competitive advantage.
- 6.2 Government support is important as they have the 'clout' to speed up the participation of more hotels. It is not only about voluntary efforts but also 'the power' to push hotels into adopting certification. This will also mean that this can be extended to cover more areas in tourism like:
- Serviced Apartments
 - Souvenir Shops
 - Travel Agencies
 - Restaurants
- 6.3 Use the 'power of the consumer' to drive hotels towards certification. Presently international hotel chain members are most active in participation as they need to meet the demands of their 'green' guests particularly those from North America and Europe who are more aware and better informed on tourism's environmental message. Thus, the Green Leaf 'brand' can be more widely publicized to involve a very important stakeholder; the traveler. Raising their awareness and educating them through consumer campaigns is effective to persuade them to stay at Green Leaf-certified hotels.
- 6.4 The Green Leaf Standard can also go regionally to ASEAN regional level. Intensive inter-governmental dialogues and the political will to succeed is a sure ingredient for success.



THAILAND

Initiative 3

KHIRIWONG VILLAGE ECOTOURISM CLUB

I.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Official Name of “Best Practice” Initiative	Khiriwong Village Eco-Tourism Club
Name of Contributor/ Organization / Company	Ban Khiriwong (Khiriwong Village)
Address/Contact Details	Khiriwong Village Coordination Centre, Tambon Kamlone, Amphoe Lansaka, Nakhon Si Thammarat 80000 THAILAND Tel : +66 75 533113 c/o TAT Southern Office : Region 2, Nakhon Si Thammarat Tel: +66 75 346515 / 346516 Fax: +66 75 346517 Email: tatnksri@tat.or.th
Year The Initiative Was Started & Completed	Started in 1988
Location of Best Practice Project	Ban Khiriwong (Khiriwong Village), Khao Luang National Park.
Awards/Recognitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thailand Tourism Awards in 1998 as Best Tourist Attraction, Town and Local.

2.0 KEY SUMMARY

- 2.1 Ban Khiriwong (Khiriwong village) is a small village in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, southern Thailand and is located at the foot of Khao Luang (Mt Luang). Mt Luang was declared to be Khao Luang National Park since 1974 and ranked to be the 9th National park in Thailand. The park covers an area of 570 square kilometers. The first community of Ban Khiriwong settled down during the reign of King Rama I – 2, more than 200 years ago. The name Ban Khun Nam means the village of river source. Locals learned how to live and get along with nature and earned their living through this means.

2.2 Nakhon Si Thammarat is a southern Thai coastal province edging the Thai gulf. The province covers some 9,942 square kilometers. The provincial capital is about 840 kilometres to the south of Bangkok. The province is historically important; dating back to 800 years ago, where trade was firmly established between Nakhon Si Thammarat and Southern India, including Sri Lanka. Inter-marriage between local women and foreign merchants resulted in the import of certain Indian beliefs and customs, (including Brahmanism and shadow plays) and influences that had profound effects on the Siamese courts of the Ayutthaya period (1350 – 1767). Nakhon Si Thammarat is rich historically, culturally and has a rich lush nature.



2.3 The Khiriwong community is surrounded by beautiful and abundant natural resources of mountains and waterfalls. The ecotourism attractions of the Khiriwong community can be categorized into 2 major types:

▪ **Cultural Tourist Attraction: Khiriwong Community**

The cultural tourism resources here are their local identity, lifestyle, ways of living, traditions, handicraft making activities and products from local intellectuals (herb group) all rolled into one.

▪ **Natural Tourist Attraction: Khao Luang National Park**

The natural tourism resources are forest, waterfalls and various kinds of plants, animals, orchids. Khiriwong is very popular among the tourists who love and admire the nature and trek along the way up to the top of Khao Luang (Mt Luang). The Khiriwong Village is like the entrance to the national park, as almost all tourists who love to trek must start from the village, where they learned the lifestyle of the Khiriwong people and study the past, current and future happenings in the village.

This is another means of earning for the Khiriwong people as they provide guided trekking tours up to the summit of Khao Luang (Mt Luang) using local villagers as tourist guides. During the journey commentary is provided by the guides on the local history and cultures.

The park also provides facilities and attractions such as homestay accommodation, local dishes, local products, natural color tie-dyed fabrics and guided tours to plantations and in and around the village.

2.4 All the tourism activities are created and coordinated by the villagers. They created a club called Ban Khiriwong Eco-Tourism Club to take charge of



controlling the use of natural resources. It was later managed by the Ban Khiriwong community under the control of Kamlon Sub-district Administration Organization. Today, it serves as the centre of most of the ecotourism programs and activities for domestic and international tourists.



- 2.5 In 1988, Ban Khiriwong faced a huge natural disaster. Half of the village was destroyed by flood and landslide carrying rocks and trees falling from Mt Luang causing loss of lives and damaging properties. Most of the farm land and orchards were under water and villagers were faced with hardship. It was the most severe catastrophe that happened to the village. But this was not the first time that it had occurred. It had happened before and it seemed to come once in every 13 years.



- 2.6 As a result of repeated disasters, Khiriwong Village has become a living example for Thailand where they have learned how to live in harmony with nature and have developed survival skills for future disasters. This disaster has changed the entire future of the community through the birth of a community-based ecotourism management partnership system.

3.0 THE OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Promote Khiriwong Community as a role model in ecotourism management in Nakhon Si Thammarat and the southern part of Thailand;
- 3.2 Raise the consciousness of tourists and encourage them to understand ecotourism, as well as to participate with the local community in the preservation of the local natural environment;
- 3.3 Create an opportunity for local people to have a supplementary occupation and income from local natural resources management to preserve their natural resources;
- 3.4 Forge unity amongst the villagers through various occupational groups in the setting up of a village reserve fund for the local community;
- 3.5 Strengthen and stabilize the local economy through well managed ecotourism programs against natural catastrophe.

4.0 THE MODEL

4.1 The Ban Khiriwong Ecotourism Club is made up of local villagers who are responsible for the promotion and management of Khiriwong ecotourism and they are supported by the Kamlon Sub-district Administration Organization.



4.2 This is a partnership program involving stakeholders where the majority is made up of the local people in the community because most of them are related to one another.

4.3 The Khiri Wong community is made up of an area of 8,173 rai with 4 villages in it. They are:

- MU 5 Ban Khiriwong
- MU 8 Ban Khiri Thong
- MU 9 Ban Khun Khiri
- MU 10 Ban Khiri Tham

4.4 Together they form the Ecotourism Management Committee with these characteristics:

- Ban Khiriwong (MU 5) is the location of the Kamlon Sub-district Administration Organization.
- Two leaders of each village or 8 in total, officially participate as members of the administrative committee in the organization.
- Within the 4 villages of the Khiriwong community, there are 8 sub-groups who act as the specialized local government. Each sub-group represents similar skill set, interest and suitability. Each has its own leader and administration. This 'local government' sub groups are:

Sub Group	Type
Handicraft Group	Handicrafts and local arts
Bakery Group	Cakes & cookies
Herbal Group	Local medicine
Stop Smoking Group	Anti-smoking
Saving Group	Financial savings
Ecotourism Group	Ecotourism programs and activities
Preserved Durian (sweet)	Durian fruits
Fabric Group	Nature color tie-dye fabrics and others

Refer To Appendix 3 For Details Of The Ban Khiri's Administration



4.5 Some of the ecotourism programs for tourists are:

- The Happiness Route to visit the self-dependent community of Ban Khiriwong and the agro-tourism sites to taste seasonal fruits;
- Farm tours to visit the anthurium, mushroom, honey bee, agro products and other mixed farming products;
- Herbal tours to visit the various herbal and medicinal products grown there;
- Cottage tours to visit local handicraft and arts products including soap made from mangosteen's peel.

5.0 THE IMPACT

5.1 There has been a marked improvement in the economic development of the community there. The set up of a group saving fund by the villager provides a means where the villagers can raise loans to improve their own major occupation. It is also a major capital provider in the village. The group administration is well managed with a set of regulations such as an application process, voiding process of membership, regulations on raising normal and emergency loans, warranty regulations, welfare or benefits. The group has set the 6th of every month as the date when the villagers will save money with the group as agreed upon. This makes the Khiriwong community to be the biggest savings group of Thailand, currently having a capital circulation of nearly 10 million baht as compared to 35,000 baht when it first started in 1970.

5.2 There has been a marked improvement in the production process of their cottage industries. Their improved socio-economic progress of the villagers has enabled them to bring in modern technology and machines over and above, the labor to harness their production for greater speed and productivity.

5.3 There is clear evidence in the intellectual development of the villages as well as in their empowerment to be leaders in their own rights. They have succeeded well in bringing about a natural partnership grouping, made up of each other's immediate and extended family to form the critical mass to drive the local ecotourism programs there. The Khiriwong people love their groups. They possess high awareness in community activities participation. They are able to gather to help solve each other's problems effectively. They are also capable of organizing meetings, and holding discussions to accomplish the goals and duties of their group.



- 5.4 A Foundation called 'Komol Keemthong Foundation' was set up to support project which encouraged villagers to increase their livelihood earnings in 1996. A tie-dyed fabric project was one of the projects developed and has become one of the most successful handicrafts of the village. (Tie-dyed is a technique which uses natural dye to produce beautiful designs on plain colored fabrics).
- 5.5 According to the success of the community, Khiriwong Village has been attracting many organizations to assist in the development of this area. The organizations that assisted between 1999 - 2003 are as follow:
- Bureau of Cottage Handicraft Industries Development, Department of Industrial Promotion;
 - Industrial Promotion Center Region 11, Department of Industrial Promotion;
 - Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Industrial Office;
 - Tourism Authority of Thailand, Southern Office : Region 2;
 - Local authorities and organizations in the community.

The operational activities of the above mentioned organizations do these:

- Encourage cooperation within the community;
- Provide training courses on product development, marketing skill development, quality management and production techniques;
- Organize seminars that prepare organizations in the community on the management of the community centre;
- Provide advice and suggestions on product pattern development.

6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

- 6.1 This is about commitment and determination with a 'if there is a will, there's a way' spirit among the Khiriwong villagers to become real fighters to overturn what could be disaster to a booming community.
- 6.2 Empowerment on people can be at all levels as shown in the Ban Khiriwong community. Not only are they self sustaining, they are also self managed to take over almost the entire administration and operation of the entire ecotourism enterprise.



6.3 What makes them unique or innovative are these:

- Solidarity among relatives who provide assistance and support towards one another;
- A well balanced and good mix of farm cultivation for an even-out production for sustainable living;
- Growth of local intellects which are well segmented in accordance to each other's skills and interests, which in total, contribute to the community's socio-economic development.

6.4 Like all initiatives, there will be challenges ahead. In this particular initiative which involves the local community in ecotourism, these challenges that need a longer term perspective include:

- Environmental control to address problems relating to garbage and its disposals;
- Internal friction and misunderstanding with people taking advantages from one another in the community;
- Social injustice in the community;
- Loss or dilution of culture and lifestyle of the people due to external influences.

6.5 Measures to mitigate or solve some of these issues can be proactively taken to achieve sustainable results. This can be done, for example through focused administration with specific groups taking charge of specific administrative and management matters like:

- Code of conduct in tourist attractions;
- Environmental management;
- Educational activities process;
- Community involvement.