Ecotourism Sustainability in Thailand

A formative evaluation of Andaman Discoveries

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Abstract

Andaman Discoveries (AD) is a social enterprise based in Southern Thailand that aims to “support community-led development by acting as a bridge to respectful visitors and volunteers through sponsorship of education, conservation, and cultural empowerment.” AD facilitates community-based ecotourism that aims to balance social, economic, and environmental needs, while not acting invasively. AD asked me to explore “how sustainable do local community members find AD’s programs?” and “how can AD ensure and improve program sustainability?” I conducted a formative evaluation to find what has been done well, and what needs improvement. Results show that locals believe AD’s programs improve social, environmental, and economic outcomes, with minimal detrimental impact. Some communities experienced tourism related conflict, but most find tourism’s community building effect far stronger. Primary recommendations include continuing community development and conservation projects consistently; ensuring AD staff attend community meetings regularly; and utilizing codes of conduct to ensure continued visitor respectfulness.

“When you see a lot of people impressed by the beauty of nature, suddenly you will be affected as well, and you will want to keep it, because you feel proud of it. You want to keep it to be able to show it to others.” – Quid
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“Through local tourism, livelihood in terms of culture – and also linguistic, because the Moken people have their own language – we had the chance, or were encouraged, to learn and keep our skills. The other cultural aspect – the occupations of the men – we’re still doing. We just have to know about it, even more, because we need to be able to give information to the guests, so we have to master it.” – Tia
Abbreviations
AD – Andaman Discoveries
BL – Ban Lion
BTN – Ban Talae Nok
CBT – Community-based tourism
GSTC – Global Sustainable Tourism Council
N-ACT – North Andaman Community Tourism Network
NATR – North Andaman Tsunami Relief
TD – Tung Dap
TIES – The International Ecotourism Society
TND – Tung Nang Dam
TPY – Ta Pae Yoi
UNEP – United Nations Environment Program
UNWTO – United Nations World Tourism Organization

Selected Thai Terms
Farang – Western foreigner
Jai Dee – literally good heart or mind, kind
Koh – island
Phu Yai Ban – village chief, leader

P and nong – Respectful titles used before names that are also indicative of relative age. For instance if Noi is older than yourself you call her P’Noi, but if she is younger you call her Nong Noi. P and nong also refer to older or younger siblings, and can be used to indicate a familial relationship.

Sabai – a comfortable, easy, relaxed, state of being
Sanuk – fun, enjoyable

Note: All interview subject names provided in this paper are pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.
Definitions

Certification – “A voluntary procedure that assesses, audits and gives written assurance that a facility, product, process or service meets specific standards. It awards a marketable logo to those that meet or exceed baseline standards.” (Honey & Rome, 2001)

Community Based Tourism – Tourism that aims to include and benefit local communities.

Criteria – Standards an organization must meet to receive a certification.

Ecotourism – "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." (TIES, 1990)

Homestay – A household that hosts tourists overnight in a private home. Most homestay providers with AD can accommodate 2-4 tourists per night.

Nature Tourism – Travel to natural places.

Sustainable Tourism – Tourism that is sustainable (but does not necessarily involve travel to natural places).

Voluntourism – Travel that involves volunteering for charitable causes.

Voluntourist – A tourist volunteering for charitable causes as part of their travels.

“Through tourism our community has been opened up. We wanted to see farang for a long time, but lacked the opportunity!” – Waan
Introduction

Ecotourism aims to improve local lives, conservation, and visitor education (Honey, 2008; TIES, 1990; UNEP & UNWTO, 2005, 2011; Weaver & Lawton, 2007). However, less meritorious forms of tourism can be falsely labeled ecotourism as there is little oversight of such claims (Honey, 2008; Hunt & Stronza, 2011; TIES, 1990). Socially and environmentally conscious tourists may be unable to ascertain which organizations are truly “eco”. Ecotourism certifications aim to verify claims so consumers can better discriminate between tour providers (Bien, 2007; Honey, 2008). Yet despite regionally specific certifications being lauded as the gold standard, they remain rare and usually prohibitively expensive for small and medium enterprises to obtain (Bien, 2007; Bowman, 2011; Honey, 2002). Nascent ecotourism certifications are promising, but do not yet meet the needs of smaller tourism operators.

Andaman Discoveries (AD) is a community-based ecotourism operator in Khuraburi, Thailand. They wish to ensure economic, social, and environmental sustainability of their operations. Ecotourism certification is an emerging field that promises to verify and ensure true ecotourism aims are met. Yet, certification remains impractical for logistical and financial reasons.

I researched the tourism AD facilitates to learn about local community beliefs and desires, so that I could create a sustainability plan for AD. The purpose of this study was to explore methods of increasing ecotourism sustainability in Khuraburi, Thailand for the local people and for AD using a formative evaluation, which “is used primarily to guide program improvement” (Ernst, Monroe, & Simmons, 2009). The result is a set of sustainable management tools that AD will use to plan for the future and highlight their commitment to sustainability to potential guests.

AD staff would like to learn how community tourism ventures impact partner communities, and how to move forward more sustainably. For this project, sustainability is viewed as a balance between social, economic, and environmental concerns (Elkington, 1998). The social side of sustainability is very important in this project, as this covers the local cultural values and the local interest in implementing any proposed program. The economic aspect mostly concerns AD’s transition from nonprofit to for-profit social
enterprise, and what place they will hold in the community in the future. The environmental aspect explores the impacts – both real and perceived – caused by tourism in the area, and seeks out locally acceptable and feasible ways to compensate or mitigate impacts. AD is a community-based organization that prides itself upon close relations with local people, so sustainability planning needs to be done in close consultation with local communities.

By answering: “how sustainable do local community members find AD’s programs?” and “how can AD ensure and improve sustainability of their programs?” my research will help one smaller ecotourism provider ensure and promote their commitment to ecotourism and sustainability.

**Background**

**Tourism Trends**

**Global Tourism**

International tourism is a huge market that is projected to grow. In 2012 global annual tourism arrivals reached 1 billion (UNWTO, 2013). Accounting for 9% of global GDP, the tourism industry has huge potential to create meaningful global benefit (UNWTO, 2013). In 2013 annual tourism arrivals continued strong growth, with a 5% increase over the prior year; this trend is projected to continue (UNWTO, 2014).

Ecotourism, a tourism subset with normative aims that include improving local welfare, is the most obvious candidate to create meaningful benefit from the huge global tourism market (Honey, 2008; TIES, 1990; UNEP & UNWTO, 2005). Yet, while ecotourism is widely believed to be the fastest growing subset of tourism, it is an opaque and often abused concept (Honey, 2008).

Ecotourism is widely believed to be the fastest growing tourism subset (Boo, Lindberg, & Hawkins, 1993; Cater, 1993; Donald E. Hawkins & Khan, 1998; Hvenegaard, 1994). However, data to support such claims is severely lacking. Most measures of ecotourism growth are assessed by proxy: growing consumer demand for ecotourism (D. E. Hawkins & Lamoureux, 2001). Yet true ecotourism operators must meet high standards, and growth of actual ecotourism operators is mostly unmeasured.
Southeast Asia Regional Tourism
For 2012 the Asia and Pacific region had the strongest tourism growth of any UNWTO region, a trend that is forecast to continue. SE Asia is the strongest growing sub-region with 10% growth in arrivals in 2013, and has been the leading sub-region since 2005 (UNWTO, 2014). Thailand is second only to Malaysia in international arrivals, but displays the highest absolute growth with a 16% jump in arrivals between 2011 and 2012 – hosting over 22.3 million international visitors in 2012 (UNWTO, 2013).

Ecotourism
The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as: “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (1990). Martha Honey takes this definition one step further by laying out seven characteristics of “real ecotourism” (2008):

1) Involves travel to natural destinations
2) Minimizes impact
3) Builds environmental awareness
4) Provides direct financial benefit for conservation
5) Provides financial benefit and empowerment for local people
6) Respects local culture
7) Supports human rights and democratic movements

Unlike nature, wildlife, or adventure tourism, ecotourism is meant to contribute to conservation and local communities (Honey, 2008). Conflating ecotourism with other types of tourism is dangerous. If visitors choose a resort based upon the resort’s purported ecotourism ethos, but the resort does nothing to benefit local people or minimize impacts, then the concept of ecotourism will lose meaning. Using tourism to aid development is a worthy goal, and other forms of tourism that fail to provide local benefit should not benefit from the ecotourism label.

Honey believes that the rarity of true ecotourism should not be taken as a failing: “What is most important is to view ecotourism as a set of principles, and to monitor and measure them in practice. Viewed this way, ecotourism is still in its infancy.” (2008). This injunction to “monitor and measure” ecotourism ventures needs enacting. Ecotourism certifications are touted as the best solution to uncertainty surrounding many ecotourism claims (Bien, 2007;
Bowman, 2011; Honey, 2008). However, many ecotourism certifications remain costly and impractical for small and medium operators.

**Andaman Discoveries**

After the 2004 tsunami devastated Southeast Asia, numerous relief organizations arose to assist with the rebuilding effort. North Andaman Tsunami Relief (NATR) worked in Phang Nga and Ranong provinces, one of the hardest hit regions of Thailand (“Our story,” n.d.). When the relief efforts concluded two years after the tsunami, NATR asked locals if they had interest in pursuing other livelihoods. Many locals were still fearful of resuming fishing and expressed interest in community-based tourism (CBT). NATR became Andaman Discoveries (AD), a nonprofit, secular, community tourism facilitator. Under the new name, AD leverages connections formed over two years of relief work to facilitate local tourism in many Phang Nga and Ranong villages.

AD acts as a tour agency, sending tourists to partner communities with community-based tourism (CBT) groups. As the tour agency, AD earns a percentage of total revenue for work marketing, booking, and coordinating tours. A percentage of AD’s income goes back into community conservation, education, and development work across the region. Community partners also benefit directly by earning income providing homestays, guiding, and leading activities. Each community also directs a percentage of income into a community fund that finances conservation and development projects within their village.

In 2012, AD decided to transition from a nonprofit, into a for-profit social enterprise. AD’s social and environmental mission remains intact, but amidst the financial and staff change AD needs to modify their thinking about the social and environmental side of their mission.

Sustainability in tourism has been a concern for AD from the start. However, after attending a sustainable tourism management training sponsored by Travel Life in Bangkok in November 2012 Nicole Lemmo, the AD Program Manager, was disappointed by the insubstantial conference recommendations to increase sustainability, which included “use organic coffee” and “recycle” (personal communication, January 28, 2013).
Lemmo decided to create a more substantial sustainability commitment for AD that would evaluate existing AD programs, and to find space for potential improvements.

Cultural Respect
Andaman Discoveries is founded upon ties of mutual respect between cultures. Ultimately all guests AD brings into partner villages need to adhere to local expectations whether they are national or religious.

Thailand is about 95% Buddhist, so Buddhist and Thai cultural expectations are generally conflated. Muslim villages, though, hold additional cultural expectations.

Thai Cultural Expectations
Thais are generally very culturally forgiving and understanding with outsiders. Thais do regard feet as dirty though, so visitors must remove shoes before entering shops, homes, and temples. Using feet to point or pick up objects is also disgusting to most Thais. Showing the bottom of one’s feet to a Thai is also incredibly rude, so visitors must be mindful, especially when dining. Most meals are eaten sitting on the floor of Thai houses, so guests need to carefully consider their sitting position.

Thai people dress somewhat more conservatively than farang. Women should cover their shoulders, and avoid shorts or skirts falling more than an inch above the knee. Swimsuits are permissible at the beach for Buddhist Thais, but not away from the beach. Touching anyone’s head is also taboo. While there are many other Thai cultural idiosyncrasies, these can generally be learned in country without causing excess distress. Indeed, sabai, roughly translated as “a comfortable, easy, relaxed, state of being” is the primary goal of most Thais.

Muslim Thai Cultural Expectations
Most Thai Muslim women wear a hijab, but more enveloping garments are nearly nonexistent for Thai women. Muslim villages expect slightly more conservative attire from their guests than Buddhist villages, but the difference is not extreme. Women must cover their knees and shoulders, and not wear overly tight or revealing clothing. Bikinis are not welcome in Muslim villages. Female guests can swim in t-shirts or rash vests and long shorts. While in Muslim villages guests are also expected to refrain from alcohol, drugs, or pork consumption.
Methods
My research encompassed two main traditions of inquiry: formative evaluation and participatory action research (PAR). Formative evaluations are aimed at improving an existing program, as opposed to the results focus of a terminal evaluation (O’Leary, 2005; Patton, 1997). AD wanted to learn more about stakeholder sustainability perceptions so they could guide program and organizational improvements. AD also wishes to have high stakeholder engagement, and the PAR focus on “developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes” is well suited to the community development objective of both AD and ecotourism (Bradbury & Reason, 2001).

Interviews were the main research method as they allowed for emergence of novel ideas and perspectives. Observation was another important method that allowed me to more fully understand local tourism. Lastly material culture data on tourism sustainability and secondary data from AD surveys added greater depth to my data collection.

Pilot Research
From January – April 2013 I conducted a front-end evaluation to determine the best way to approach the issue of sustainability in ecotourism (Ernst et al., 2009). This portion of the research was broad, and exploratory, examining the question: What has been done to ensure the sustainability of ecotourism elsewhere in the world?

In order to better understand ecotourism, I collected ecotourism case studies from journals, and analyzed them in NVivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software, for congruence with Honey’s “real ecotourism” characteristics (2008). I selected ecotourism case studies that examined areas similar to Khuraburi in the following ways: developing regions, small and medium sized enterprises, Southeast Asian countries, tropical and coastal areas, high community participation, and similar cultures. I selected one case from a developed country, Australia, because it is the only country in the Asia-Pacific region with a well-established regional ecotourism certification. This case is set in a relatively remote tropical area and focuses on Aboriginals and ecotourism, so it has sufficient congruency with the other cases to be relevant (Sofield, 2002).
I also conducted unstructured, exploratory, interviews with people experienced in tourism, program development, and interviewing via a translator. These interviews guided my decision to frame the sustainability protocol after a regional ecotourism certification.

After deciding to frame my research around regional ecotourism certification I asked: how are regional ecotourism certifications created?

I collected journal articles and literature on ecotourism certification. The articles provide information on the process of implementing certifications and information on creating certifications. Grey literature came from multiple NGOs, including the Center for Responsible Tourism, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, TIES, and the Rainforest Alliance. These data were coded for relevance to AD in NVivo 10. Most data on certification focuses on Latin America, as that is where most of the research on ecotourism certification in the developing world has been conducted to date.

I also collected certification criteria from various ecotourism certifiers. Most of these data came from the websites of global certifiers. Most criteria available online were from large global, not regional, certifiers. However, I did obtain some regional criteria from Australia, Botswana, and Costa Rica. These were also coded in NVivo 10.

Community Fieldwork

Site Selection
Over the summer of 2013 I spent 12 weeks in Thailand collecting data on the tourism AD facilitates. I spent the first two weeks in the AD offices familiarizing myself with nearly ten years of program and project documentation. During this time I consulted with AD staff on which villages I should focus my research. Villages were chosen to represent a mixture of Buddhist (Ta Pae Yoi, Ban Lion), Muslim (Ban Talae Nok, Tung Nang Dam), and Moken (Tung Dap) cultures (see Figure 1). Villages also represented a temporal spread of involvement with AD. Some (Ban Talae Nok, Tung Nang Dam, Tung Dap) had been involved since AD’s inception shortly after the tsunami, and bonds with locals formed when AD was still a
humanitarian relief organization, while Ta Pae Yoi and Ban Lion had only known AD as a community-based ecotourism operator.

Selected villages also represented the most consistent and cohesive CBT groups. Ban Talae Nok and Ta Pae Yoi are by far the busiest of the villages AD represents, while for various reasons tourism in Ban Lion, Tung Dap, and Tung Nang Dam is slower.

Tung Dap was selected for inclusion despite minimal tourism activity for several reasons. First we wished to include at least one Moken community. Koh Surin, the other Moken community working with AD is far more active in tourism than Tung Dap, but my fieldwork was conducted during the rainy season. Koh Surin is far off the coast and only accessible during the dry season. Tung Dap was also included because AD wished to learn more about how locals would like to proceed with tourism as communicated to an outside observer.
Interviews
I began with a structured interview guide to maximize the effectiveness of a translator (see Appendix VIII), but allowed flexibility to add questions as issues arose. The interview guide covered programmatic questions relating to AD’s programs and relationships with the local communities. Sustainability questions asked for the respondent’s opinion on tourism’s social, economic, and environmental impacts. Sustainability questions also asked for the respondent’s vision for the future of the local community, and how tourism would play in that future. Lastly I asked if subjects had implemented any environmentally-friendly technologies and why. I also asked if there were other technologies they were researching, or interested in adopting.

To ensure effective and appropriate translation I spent time working out interview guide details with several AD staff who were also experienced translators. First, I sent the guide to all AD staff to gain input. This allowed Thai staff to make any culturally necessary modifications. Once all the staff had a chance to comment on the guide, I began training with my translator.

Piyawich Budhagesorn or “Mai”, translated during all village interviews. Mai is a Thai national who has conducted translations for many television and documentary programs in Thailand, with companies such as the BBC. Mai provided translation services at a reduced rate as he previously worked for NATR and AD, and believes in their mission. He left AD five years ago. Mai’s preexisting relationships with many community members made finding respondents easier, and occasionally lead to more honest and open responses.

The day before commencing interviews Mai and I went through the interview guide in detail. This allowed me to explain the aims of my research in depth. I then explained the questions, and why I was asking them. Since our interviewees came from a variety of educational backgrounds – none more than high school, and many not past fourth grade level – Mai was not sure that all of them would understand the questions the first time posed. Explaining my aims in detail to Mai made me comfortable that he could rephrase questions as necessary to ensure respondent understanding.

Interviews were generally conducted in the respondent’s home, and usually took 45 – 60 minutes. Occasionally we used a neighbor’s home. All interviews were recorded for later transcription, and also to
allow translation verification. Mai would ask questions, and translate answers a few sentences at a time.

Pauses for translations proved unexpectedly beneficial for two reasons. Often respondents with rudimentary English would understand part of the translation and clarify their meaning if they felt the response imprecise. Secondly, the pause required for translation often gave respondents a chance to think of additional examples or parts to their responses.

After the interview trip concluded I transcribed the interviews. My translator was a native Thai speaker, and I wanted to check translation reliability. As I had 30 hours of recorded interviews I was unable to verify translation for all interviews, but I selected portions of several interviews to check with different translators. I played selected interview segments separately to two different native English speakers who speak Thai fluently. One of the two translators I used for a reliability check has lived and worked in Thailand for 10 years and the other for five years. After playing the respondent speaking in Thai I asked the translator to translate the segment into English, and compared the native English speaker’s translation to my original translation. All selected translations were verified accurate by the native English speaking translators.

**Sampling**
My interview sampling was a combination of a judgment sample using a snowball method, and a sampling of convenience. Judgment sampling is non-random selection of the population most likely to provide information relevant to a research question (Marshall, 1996). In this case CBT coordinators were selected as the potentially knowledgeable respondents. My sampling pool was then expanded by using the snowball method (O’Leary, 2005), or asking coordinators who we should interview next. When time allowed we interviewed additional community members in a convenience sample (Marshall, 1996), as not all community members we present during my visits to the village. Respondents selected for convenience served to add additional perspectives, as they usually were not currently involved in tourism, so could provide an outside view. My sampling methods were appropriate, because this was an exploratory study, and we mainly needed input from those most involved in tourism.
Upon entering a village, Mai and I approached the coordinator(s) of the local CBT group and scheduled an interview. We would then ask the group leader for suggestions on who else we should interview. When there was extra time we interviewed additional community members outside the group leader’s recommendation to add breadth to our research. In the villages where we had time to interview more than three people we added community members with more peripheral ties to tourism (e.g. a former homestay host, or a guide’s wife who often assisted other villagers with cooking for tourists). These additional interviews helped shed light on broader community views on tourism from people outside the CBT group.

By starting with the CBT leaders we gained input from the people who are presumably the most knowledgeable about local tourism due to their intimate involvement in local tourism matters. CBT group leaders should also represent most of the community’s opinion, since their position is elected.

**Volunteer Research**

AD conducts a volunteer tourism program. Voluntourists are placed in a school near Khuraburi for 2 or more weeks, usually as English teachers. AD asked me to evaluate their voluntourist program via interviews. For this, I conducted interviews with all voluntourists who came through Khuraburi during my three months at AD. The interviews were semi structured (See Appendix IX), and asked about motivations for volunteering, opinions on sustainability of volunteer programs, and suggestions for AD. All volunteers spoke English, so no translator was necessary. Interviews were conducted in a casual setting at a local coffee shop, and generally lasted about 30 minutes.

**Material Culture**

I received IRB permission to used secondary data gathered by AD. At the conclusion of every tourist’s trip with AD they fill out a guest satisfaction form. I obtained all the forms from the last two years before my time at AD (2011 and 2012), and also the forms from the preceding months of 2013 (January through July). The forms allowed me to gain additional breadth as I was unable to interview tourists myself, and I only interviewed the volunteers present during my time at the AD office in Khuraburi (6/13 – 8/13). I used NVivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software, to organize and analyze my data.
Analysis

After transcription all interviews were entered into NVivo 10. I started by coding interviews for suggestions, training requests, and the most obvious tourism impacts. I broke down the results by village, as the villages are all autonomous and unique communities with different relationships to AD. Some requests were consistent across villages, but often villages were unique in outlooks and situations.

After writing up my initial findings I met with a senior manager from AD and the founder – who is still the chairman of the board, although he is no longer involved in AD’s daily operations. Both these people are westerners, and this meeting was a chance to present my initial findings, and gain feedback on how culturally best to present the information to the rest of the AD staff who are all Thai.

A few days later I presented my initial recommendations, along with my top ten recommendations to AD (see Appendix VI). I then discussed the findings with AD staff, and this feedback led to the development of the tools in Appendices I - V.

After departing from Thailand I returned to the interviews and coded them more thoroughly for sustainability factors: economic impact, social impact, and environmental impact. This coding approach helped determine which sustainability areas were most important to local stakeholders, and where AD’s programs were having the most positive and negative impacts.

Increased or decreased community cohesion is often linked to tourism ventures, and well-organized communities can be key positive environmental outcomes (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Changes to community organization were frequently mentioned in interviews, so I began coding for increased community organization or community conflict, and considered this among my social factors of sustainability.

Discussion

In my pilot research I used Honey’s seven characteristics as a framework to evaluate ecotourism case studies. Out of six cases with sufficient information to evaluate along the Honey framework, only two met all seven of Honey’s “real ecotourism” characteristics (Byczek, 2011; Hill & Hill, 2011). Three of the six cases only
missed one or two of the criteria, and could be considered borderline cases (Hill & Hill, 2011; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005). Two cases were merely nature tourism (Charnley, 2005; Hunt & Stronza, 2011). In the Hunt and Stronza article on the resort Morgan’s Rock of Nicaragua, the resort was deliberately misleading guests about their positive impact on the local community (2011). True ecotourism enterprises that provide local community and conservation benefit are believed to be rare, and my pilot research supports this belief. My interviews and observations of AD facilitated tourism show AD to be one of the rare tourism operators truly fulfilling the ecotourism ethos.
Bodhi Garrett, the NATR and AD founder, spent part of the year before the 2004 tsunami volunteering at a local gibbon (an ape native to Thailand that is often illegally and misguidedly taken as a pet) rehabilitation center in Ban Talae Nok. At that time Ban Talae Nok had a few homestays to support the gibbon center's volunteers. Some wealthier locals were also considering constructing a resort. The tsunami killed the men planning the resort, and caused the loss of most local wealth.

Ban Talae Nok – literally “village by the sea” – is a Muslim village of just over 200 people nestled between a mountain and the Andaman Sea (see Figure 1). The village possesses one of the largest untouched mangroves in the North Andaman. Just offshore lie the uninhabited Gum Islands.
When Garrett started NATR in early 2005, Ban Talae Nok was one of the first villages he began aiding. Close ties, and memories of fresh fruit and vegetables from NATR in the difficult months after the tsunami, led Ban Talae Nok residents to be among the first to begin work with AD two years after the tsunami. Ban Talae Nok has consistently been one of the most visited villages working with AD.

Most local livelihoods are a mixture of fishing, rubber tapping, and palm oil farming. Currently, 9 of the 67 households in the village host homestays. Many other villagers supplement their income with work guiding or hosting other tourist activities. Local tourism activities include trips to the Gum Islands, batik or soap making, hikes through the mangrove or tropical forest, and cooking classes.

Findings
All BTN interview subjects wanted more tourism. Supplemental income and fun were the two biggest reasons for desiring an increase in tourist numbers.

Three subjects qualified their desire for more tourism by recognizing that it must happen slowly, and in line with the village’s capacity (interviews with Khem, Nok, & Pam). However, two older women also stated that becoming more like Khao Lak would be good, and wanted more modern ocean activities, like Jet-Skis (interviews with Namtan & Waan). Several people mentioned how the relationship between the village and AD had changed over the last two years, and they longed to return to the relationship of past years that was less businesslike and more p and nong (interviews with Khem, Namtan, Nok, & Quid).

Training
All interviewees wanted more tourism trainings for the area. Guide (interviews with Khem, Neung, Nok, Quid, & Waan), language (interviews with Chaisee, Dara, Nok, Pam, & Waan), and hospitality (interviews with Neung, Namtan, Pam, & Quid), were the most popular training requests. These interviews occurred before the guide training June 29th to July 1st, but one subject made the point that trainings should be repeated frequently (interview with Quid). Other trainings people requested included conservation (interview with Namtan), farang food (interview with Pam), and study trips (interview with Neung).
When asked about a future without AD most subjects thought the village capable of continuing without outside assistance (interviews with Chaisee, Khem, Namtan, Neung, Nok, Quid, & Waan). Marketing was the one area where villagers were unsure of their ability. One interviewee suggested that AD take village students as marketing interns (interview with Neung).

**Activities**
Everyone interviewed wanted more tourism. Three people suggested additional tourist activities (interviews with Chaisee, Namtan, & Neung). All three of these people focused upon creating more aquatic activities, like scuba diving, snorkeling, and Gum Islands trips.

**Sustainability**

**Environmental**
Locals could only think of positive environmental impacts from tourism. Every interviewee mentioned at least one specific environmental improvement from tourism. Since AD tends to bring in environmentally conscious guests, guest behavior influences local behavior. A pronounced anti-littering norm is developing in BTN: “when locals see the outsiders coming in, and the tourists collect garbage, it makes locals feel guilty.” (interview with Khem). In one of only two qualms I heard about tourism’s environmental impacts in BTN it was displeasure over Thai tourists littering on the beach (interview with Neung).

One of the CBT coordinators did make sure to mention that increased tourism would likely lead to increased impacts, especially with increased garbage (Interview with Quid). However, he was confident that the CBT group’s regulations could mitigate potential environmental impact.

**Social**
Six subjects discussed how community solidarity, pride, and organization increased in due to demands of local tourism (interviews with Chaisee, Dara, Khem, Neung, Pam, & Quid). Four people talked about local community conflicts due to tourism, however they all emphasized that the conflicts were fairly minor, and they were capable of handling them internally (interviews with Chaisee, Khem, Neung, & Pam). This assertion was supported when I attended a CBT group meeting a few weeks later, and witnessed the group
address and resolve an issue of “creative accounting” with humor and camaraderie (personal observation, June 29, 2013).

Economic
All but one person mentioned the economic benefit of tourism (interviews with Chaisee, Dara, Khem, Neung, Nok, Pam, Quid, & Waan). The one person who did not mention income benefits is no currently involved with the CBT group, and she comes from a wealthier household that would be less concerned with additional income (interview with Namtan). Although, income benefits were generally lauded, one respondent did mention a slight increase in people’s concern with financial matters and how community members have grown “a bit less easy-going, more uptight, about financial things” (interview with Khem).

Recommendations
• Explore taking a village student as a marketing intern. Look into creating a scholarship for this position.
• Work with the village to create more activities focused upon the ocean and the islands. This will probably necessitate more training that has not been proposed by villagers.
• Discuss creating a co-managed, community-run resort.

“Although there have been trainings and workshops before about tourism, the more you can do the better. First of all there are different kinds of people. Some people might learn all the hospitality and guiding ideas from one workshop, but there are also some other people you might have to tell the same things more often. If you can come more frequently for trainings, it would help imprint the ideas more strongly.” – Quid
Tung Nang Dam is amid mangrove and jungle, and accessible by boat (see Figure 1). Homes are not gathered in a central area, but rather scattered among the forest. Official estimates from the local Phu Yai Baan claim over 360 people reside in Tung Nang Dam, but AD surveys show only 33 people residing in 12 households (personal communication, N. Sektheera, October 7, 2013). Few young people live in Tung Nang Dam, as most move to more urban areas, or to Khuraburi on the mainland. Tung Nang Dam locals are Muslim, but outsider businessmen have purchased most local land, leaving locals vulnerable to undesirable development.

One outside investor is currently constructing a large Chinese Buddhist temple.

Livelihoods largely rely upon subsistence agriculture. Locals cultivate fruits and nuts, and raise goats and chickens. Fishing, aquaculture, and rubber tapping are other common livelihood activities.
Like Ban Talae Nok, Tung Nang Dam was an early collaborator with AD. Shortly after the tsunami NATR helped construct a dock and walkway to help locals and visitors reach the mangroves and households from boats. In the beginning the village was very busy with homestay visitors. However, in 2007 conflict arose between local CBT coordinators and a new Phu Yai Ban. Conflict over money led the two groups to split into two separate homestay groups. Each group currently hosts 3 homestays. Group fragmentation combined with large portions of local jungle being converted to rubber or palm oil plantations led to a severe reduction in tourist visits.

Findings
Tung Nang Dam had the most experience with tour operators other than AD, such as Rak Thai, but several people made it clear that they preferred guests from AD (interviews with Jet & Ying). Firstly AD does a great job filtering guests. Secondly AD usually brings young and fun guests.

People wanted more tourism, but were uncertain of their capacity due to the lack of youth in the community (interviews with Jet, Song, & Ying). They could see the encroachment of mass tourism, and wanted to guard against its influx. However, outsider businessmen already own most of the local land. Several people mentioned the proposed beach road as their best weapon against these business interests (interviews with Hom & Piat). After encountering resistance to the road from some local landowners villagers believe AD has lost interest in the road, while they would like to continue pushing for beach road construction.

Training
Language training was the most popular request with three of the five interview subjects asking for more training (interviews with Jet, Piat, & Ying). Conservation training was also a popular request (interviews with Jet, Piat, & Song). Two people requested another ACE training for the people who had been unable to
participate in the last one (interviews with Jet & Piat). One was a former ACE trainee, and the other had not completed the program, but saw its value. A third person did not name ACE specifically, but asked for conservation training and environmental education (interview with Song). Ideally she wanted to include the newcomers in the conservation training, because she recognized that they would be a part of the community, and felt that including them in local conservation training would help preserve the character of the village.

**Activities**

One subject mentioned how new plantations had spoiled the local hiking, thereby reducing activity options (interviews with Piat). Previous orchid planting activities were curtailed by theft. Three people mentioned a project that could create a new tourist activity; they want to build a walkway through the mangrove to the fish farm, but cite lack of capital access as their primary barrier (interviews with Hom, Piat, & Ying). Once on the fish farm people could explore daily life on the fish farm, and help feed the fish. Canoeing through the mangroves was another suggestion (interview with Jet). One interviewee also expressed interest in handicraft activities (Interview with Song). She said people make hats and weavings with bamboo. However, due to the lack of local youth, workshops would be necessary to pass along these skills.

**Sustainability**

**Environmental**

None of the interview subjects thought foreign tourists caused negative environmental impacts, and they all believed tourism provoked positive environmental impacts (interviews with Hom, Jet, Piat, Song, & Ying). The positive impact mostly involved how the visitors changed locals’ view on their own environment. One subject did mention that an excessive concern for the environment could be detrimental (interview with Jet). TND only became electrified three months prior to my visit. According to my interview subject electrification was delayed because of organizations protesting the associated mangrove removal. This interviewee, though, believes “that to get something sometimes you have you have to also lose something” (interview with Jet).

“Through tourism the local people have learned. With the forest chickens, you can shoot them right now and eat them, or you can keep them so the tourists and guests can come and see the forest chicken, and that can be used for much longer. People have started to see different values for how important nature can be, aesthetically and for guests.” – Song
Social
As a Muslim community TND is very concerned with potential social impacts. Two subjects mentioned disrespectful behavior by tourists, but these tourists did not come from AD (interviews with Jet & Ying). Everyone interviewed agreed that the tourists from AD are always culturally aware and respectful.

Economic
Three of the five interviewees specifically cited income generation as a benefit of local tourism (interviews with Jet, Song, & Ying). Of two who did not mention economic benefit, one simply thought that environmental benefit was far more important (interview with Piat). Both subjects who omitted income as a tourism benefit agreed that the type of tourism AD facilitates was not disrupting their preexisting livelihoods (interviews with Hom & Piat).

Although no interviewee said increased income is harmful, I should note that the rift between the two CBT groups in TND was initially caused by a dispute over finances.

Recommendations
- Look for ways to include the outsider businessmen in CBT group activities.
- Continue working on building the road.
- Help locals obtain microloans to finance new activity ideas.
- Bring in a third party to start discussions between the two groups and attempt remediation.
Ta Pae Yoi is a Buddhist village on the northwestern edge of Koh Phra Thong (see Figure 1). Ta Pae Yoi is the newest village affiliated with AD, and already one of the busiest. Ta Pae Yoi’s early success with AD is largely thanks to a young and forward thinking Phu Yai Ban and the local CBT coordinator. The CBT coordinator formerly held that position in Ban Lion before moving to Ta Pae Yoi for better job prospects. Fishing is the main local livelihood.

The 205 person village comprises 45 households, four of which currently provide homestays. More households are joining the CBT group as the coordinator recruits actively. Tourist activities include snorkeling, kayaking, bicycle tours, and grassland tours. Koh Phra Thong contains an unusual grassland
savannah ecosystem where early morning visitors can see Sambar Deer. Local mangroves contain monitor lizards, hornbills, and monkeys. Local seagrass beds host active research and conservation projects, and sometimes dugong.

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<td>• Guides</td>
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Findings

This village is new to tourism and still enthusiastic.

Interviewees were hopeful about the future and full of ideas for new activities. Some expressed suspicions of outsider businessmen starting resorts on the island, but were willing to give them a chance if they worked with the community (interviews with Dam & Tia).

Training

Everyone asked for language training. Two of the three interviewees requested guide training and hospitality (interviews with Dam & Mad). One unique training request emerged in these interviews. One respondent asked for equipment training, meaning for tourism related equipment like binoculars or snorkeling gear (interview with Mad). He would like to learn how to choose, use, clean, and maintain such gear.

Activities

Everyone wanted more tourism, but they wanted it to develop slowly, partly due to low capacity, and partly to avoid becoming like Surin or Phuket. All interviewees had activity suggestions, but one pointed out that they should conduct an assessment to see what tourists wanted (interview with Mad). Two wanted more guest involvement with local children (interviews with Dam & Tia). One thought guests could go to the school for activities to help with English and allow local children to become comfortable around farang (interview with Tia). The other wanted kids to come along on the nature tours, especially out to the savannah. He thought this would be a good interaction for everyone, and would help kids learn necessary skills for guiding when they are older (interview with Dam).

Other suggestions included early morning biking to see the birds and smell the orchids, and also something – study groups or observation – with the local lotus.
Sustainability

Environmental
Currently none of the subjects do not see any environmental issues caused by tourism. As in the other villages all interviewees mentioned how seeing farang see their environment made them consider nature’s value differently. All interviewees also mentioned that with future increases in tourism garbage issues will likely increase too. The Phang Nga municipal government does not collect garbage from islands or more isolated islands like Koh Phra Thong or Tung Nang Dam. Koh Phra Thong currently has an ‘eggs for garbage’ exchange program. People can exchange saleable waste (anything recyclable can be sold) for eggs. On the mainland people sell their recyclables directly, but on Koh Phra Thong the ease of egg exchange over transporting everything to the mainland has led to complete participation in the exchange program. Non-recyclables can still be problematic though, since they are not exchangeable. Non-exchangeable refuse is buried or burned by those living outside the main town, while those in town dump their trash, which has led to a rat issue (interview with Tia).

Koh Phra Tong is not electrified. People rely upon a mix of solar panels and diesel generators. Solar is preferred, even though a single panel is not capable of powering a TV – an important point mentioned by one respondent in TPY and another in TND (interviews with Mad & Song). Currently Koh Phra Thong is enmeshed in the same debate that TND underwent the previous year over whether to sacrifice some mangrove for island electricity. Island views are mixed on the possibility of electricity: Moken in Tung Dap are vehemently opposed, while Ban Lion and Ta Pae Yoi residents are more ambivalent. One TPY respondent did not want electricity (interview with Dam), while another was interested (interview with Mad). The respondent who expressed interest in electrification stated that his solar panels were great in the dry season, but the panels were ineffective during rainy season (interview with Mad). He wanted to try to get wind power to Koh Phra Thong, because then there would be clean power available year-round. If he could get wind power to cover his rainy season needs he would no longer need electricity from the mainland. Preserving fish for consumption – most locals rely on fish for subsistence – was the main reason he wants more consistent electricity.
Social
The type of tourism AD brings was lauded by the respondents for allowing people to continue with their original livelihoods. One respondent even said that tourism was helping them maintain local culture, and even enhancing cultural knowledge, because people need know their own culture in more depth so they can tell visitors about it (interview with Tia). TPY is still new to tourism, but the coordinator I interviewed expressed a desire to use tourism increase local community organizing, so residents could resist outside forces that might enter the island in future as tourism increases (interview with Dam).

Economic
Everyone interviewed welcomes additional tourism income. Two subjects mentioned rapid growth they believe is soon coming to TPY (Interviews with Dam & Mad). They both are interested in maintaining CBT, and have no interest in potentially greater incomes that could come from more mass tourism. Cultural interchange with guests is a large part of CBT’s appeal for them.

Recommendations
• Explore options for including local children on more activities.
• Look into microloans to help purchase tourism related equipment.
• Discuss setting up volunteer weekends with the Khuraburi based volontourists.

“Some people ask ‘what are you doing the conservation for?’ I say we’re keeping it for future generations. Some people will say conservation is keeping it as it is. Actually, deeply, what I believe is if you are living with the environment, and you don’t make use of the environment, then it’s no use. Here people make use of the wood [points at wooden bungalows]. It’s not that we don’t cut it at all, but we have a way to manage it. We can replant, or otherwise regulate, so we can have a sustainable source of wood.” — Dam
The 2004 tsunami destroyed the Buddhist village Pak Chok, and killed 75 people. The Lions Club International (www.lionsclubs.org) funded construction of a new village on the north end of Koh Phra Thong. The village is now called Ban Lion. Unfortunately a lack of oversight combined with rent-seeking led to construction of 170 identikit homes. Of the 170 homes, there have never been more than 75 occupied (interview with Taeng). Many mainlanders, in search of a free house, falsely claimed to have lost homes in the tsunami.

Currently 18 people reside in Ban Lion, although official estimates claim 141 residents (personal communication, N. Sektheera, October 7, 2013). Lack of jobs is the main factor in the migration (interviews with Baw, Dam, & Taeng). Due to the miniscule population the local school closed, so any families now must bring children more than 7km to Ta Pae Yoi over bad roads to school. The school closure led to the loss of more families.
Many local men fish, but tourism is the main local activity. Five of the twelve local households host homestays. Local women also have a tie-dye cooperative that uses all natural dyes. Small NGOs Nauocrates (www.naucrates.org/) and the Mangrove Action Project (www.mangroveactionproject.org) sometimes host turtle conservation activities. AD has worked with Ban Lion for seven years, but is unsure of the future of the village. Locals are pessimistic, and numerous abandoned houses create a ghost town atmosphere. According to local residents the abandoned houses are occupied, by king cobras (interview with Baw).

### Findings

Villagers in Ban Lion do not know what will happen to their community in the future, and were the least willing to talk about the future. Everyone agreed that Ban Lion needed to acquire more residents, but did not have any ideas for how. All interviewees also wanted more tourism business, and realized Ta Pae Yoi was far outpacing them in tourism growth. Interviewees were also realistic in realizing that Ta Pae Yoi had more to attract tourists. Two subjects thought that emphasizing conservation and promoting conservation volunteering projects might be the village’s best hope at survival (interviews with Baw & Taeng).

### Training

Two respondents asked for language training (interviews with Lamai & Taeng), and one wanted hospitality training (interview with Baw).

### Activities

Everyone interviewed wanted more activities, but no one had any ideas for what kind of activities would be best.

### Sustainability

#### Environmental

Ban Lion residents used to actively poach local Sambar Deer and turtles, but “when tourism started to be active around here people realized that this was not a good image for the community” (interview with Taeng). A local turtle conservation project influenced locals to stop eating turtle, and concern over image has

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<th>Dates in Village</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Homestay hosts</td>
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<td>• Activity leaders</td>
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drastically reduced illegal hunting. As with other villages, all respondents stressed that there were no negative environmental impacts only positive ones. Positive impacts ranged from increased concern over tidiness of local homes to tourists helping improve the environment as part of local conservation projects (interviews with Baw & Lamai).

Social
Two people mentioned local conflict over money and guest distribution (interviews with Baw & Taeng). Both agreed that these conflicts were mostly in the past. One of these two also talked about how local tourism was also working to increase community organization (interview with Taeng). People used to live very separately, but the process of coming together for CBT group meetings and discussing pricing and regulations helped local unity.

Economic
Everyone welcomed additional tourism income. Ban Lion was the only village where an interviewee mentioned that some people were entirely dependent upon tourism income (interview with Lamai). Everywhere else tourism income was supplemental, but Ban Lion is severely lacking possible jobs, which is causing the mass out-migration.

Recommendations
• Emphasize conservation voluntourism.
• Clarify why AD wants to know about the community fund.

“I had one experience. It was the earliest experience that made me think about garbage. I was driving the boat for the resort. I saw foreigners smoking cigarettes and they would throw the ash away and keep the filter. They would carry them around. I always wondered about their shirts and pants. The tourists are dressed very well, sometimes expensively. Are they not afraid that the cigarette butts would stain the clothes? But still they do it. Even the foreigners, they care about the things that they use, so I should also care about these things as well.” – Dam
AD has close ties with Tung Dap due to early tsunami relief involvement by NATR. Tung Dap is a Moken community that has existed on the southwestern tip of Koh Phra Thong for about 80 years (see Figure 1). Moken are an historically marginalized ethnic group (Arunotai, 2006). Often called “sea gypsies” they prefer the term sea nomad. Many Moken live on their fishing boats for a large portion of the year. Tung Dap is almost entirely self-reliant. Fishing, crabbing, forest product collecting, and tin mining are the main livelihood activities.

Tung Dap is mostly uninterested in tourism. A close friend of Garrett hosts the only homestay in the village. She hosts tourists out of friendship, and is uninterested in tourism income, although AD pays her commensurately with the other villages. Unlike every other village visited Tung Dap locals are uninterested in more tourism (Interviewees Aom and Dao). Despite community protestations against tourism some AD staff would like to continue working with Tung Dap. Some AD staff, wishing to continue and expand the tourism
relationship with Tung Dap, cite threats posed to the community by outside mass tourism interests in the area that could be better fended off via a strengthened partnership with AD (personal communication, 8.15.13).

Findings
This was the only village that saw no positive local benefits to tourism. No one was interested in supplemental income, which was an incentive for every other interviewee. Tourism related benefits were recognized as existing in other places, but not for Tung Dap (interviews with Aom & Dao). While some might see CBT as a weapon against mass tourism, both interviewees were completely uninterested in tourism in Tung Dap. The one thing both respondents wanted was a good road to better connect to Ban Lion and Ta Pae Yoi.

Like Ban Talae Nok, both Tung Dap interviewees commented on how the relationship with AD has cooled in recent years.

Training
Neither of the interviewees wanted any type of tourism training.

Both respondents stated they had not learned anything from AD. There were occasional suggestions, but nothing they found beneficial.

Sustainability
Environmental
Moken are known to be more in touch with their natural environment than Thais (Arunotai, 2006). One Ta Pae Yoi resident backed up this conviction, saying: “if people around here could be half as conservation minded as Tung Dap that would be really cool” (interview with Dam). Tung Dap residents plant mangroves and fish based upon detailed local knowledge. This was the only village where residents saw no environmental benefit from tourism. Tourists simply tagged along on the conservation residents were doing regardless.
Both subjects foresaw many potential negative impacts from increased tourism. More people would scare local animals, cause more deforestation, and increase litter.

**Social**
Local tourism has already disrupted Moken livelihoods. Golden Buddha, a high end resort on the western coast of Koh Phra Thong, prevents the Moken from engaging in traditional jellyfish and shrimp fishing on their beach. One respondent specifically said the presence of tourists in their village distracted locals from more important traditional livelihood activities like mending fishing nets (interview with Dao).

**Economic**
Neither respondent is interested in tourism income (interviews with Aom & Dao). Tung Dap is the only community where interview subjects were completely uninterested in money.

**Activities**
People in Tung Dap are not interested in more tourism, and are not interested in more activities.

**Recommendations**
- Reevaluate the relationship.
- Try to uncover needs that AD can meet, which might create more demand for trainings.
Findings
Every volunteer mentioned an adjustment period in his or her placement. Adjustment time ranged from a few days to a week. Due to the short time periods of some placements this can significantly detract from the experience. Volunteers understood those adjustment periods were inevitable, but suggested ways AD could lessen the adjustment time.

One volunteer noted that he was lucky to come at a time when there were other volunteers. He thought that having more options for weekend trips would be beneficial for future volunteers (interview with Ludo). Considering most villages are eager for more language training, and others – especially Ta Pae Yoi – want increased interaction with local kids, AD should discuss discounted weekend volunteer trips to the villages with CBT groups.

Volunteers Interviewed

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<td>Tung Rak School</td>
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Recommendations

- Create binders for each school.
- Start Thursday evening check-ins. Take 30 minutes to get updates, and have them write a paragraph on what they are doing.
- Add a page onto the feedback form to capture more specifics on what was covered in the classroom.
- Create a resource guide for teaching. Email to them prior to the programs, and post in the volunteer room.
- Connect incoming volunteers with previous volunteers via email (if both are willing).
- Explore discounted weekend volunteer placements in the villages.
- Put environmental education materials in the volunteer teaching tools (there are some lesson plans in the data server already).
Findings
AD’s mission can be opaque to outsiders. This is further complicated by the existence of N-ACT and the forthcoming foundation. The mission statement needs to be more prominent, and staff should be able to quickly and easily “elevator pitch” AD and the various branches. The relationships – and separations – between these branches should be clarified. Clarification of roles and missions will help outsider understanding and internal planning.
Clarification is not only necessary for AD staff, foreign guests, and donors, but also for the villages. Many people, especially those with the closest ties to Bodhi and NATR, were confused at how AD has changed in the last two years. AD needs to become more transparent to the villages, and what minor suspicions I encountered over the course of my interviews should mostly dissipate. Clarity with regard to AD’s mission and goals would also be helped with increased CBT group meeting attendance. Some villages also requested AD meeting attendance for the increased decorum that came with AD staff presence.

Overall there are a lot of passionate people with great ideas at AD, but they are often unable to enact many of these ideas due to a lack of staff. More staff are necessary. This will allow better distribution of resources. More senior staff will be able to shift focus to more long term thinking from the day-to-day mentality that currently prevails.

**Recommendations**

- Post the mission statement somewhere prominent
- Work out clear and concise descriptions for: N-ACT, AD, and the Foundation. Make a one paragraph “elevator pitches” for each. Make differentiations and linkages clear between the groups.
- Reexamine the sustainability or partner organizations (tour operators, hotels, and transportation). Explore alternative options if the poorer-performing partners refuse to modify unsuitable practices.
- Create codes of conduct for tourists, volunteers, interns, and researchers to sign prior to commencing programs or entering villages.
- Attend more CBT meetings. Make a minimum attendance commitment.
- Hire more staff; even if they only speak Thai initially, working in the office can help them learn English.
- For any of my recommendations, propose them at a CBT meeting, and allow community discussion before following up. I was restricted in terms of time, so I was unable to speak with all community members.

**Tools**

After analyzing the data and presenting my initial findings to AD staff I created tools based upon my findings.

**Codes of Conduct**

More than half the villagers interviewed mentioned their appreciation of AD guest’s respect for cultural norms. AD maintains this high degree of cultural respect by sending out village conduct guidelines prior to guests’ arrivals, and also by orally briefing guests and voluntourists upon arrival. However, sometimes guests
book though tour agencies that fail to pass along AD’s packets. Also, as AD grows office staff changes or the same person might not be in the office every day. To maintain consistency I recommended that AD have guests sign a written code of conduct in addition to the oral briefing. This code will be included in the packet of release forms every guest signs upon arrival at AD.

AD is also experiencing an increase in the number of researchers asking to study their work or use their community connections to further their research. Recent experiences with researchers passing through for short time periods and not sharing information led AD to request creation of a Researcher Code of Conduct (see Appendix IV), so academics would enter villages with an appropriate sense of humility and openness.

I wrote up codes of conduct for the various types of guests based upon information AD already has in their pre-departure village guide, and also information from oral briefings (Guest code of conduct, see Appendix I; volunteer code of conduct, see Appendix II; intern code of conduct, see Appendix III). Codes were refined based upon ongoing communication with AD staff. The researcher code of conduct is largely based off Tracy Perkins’ recommendations for working with communities (2011), as well as consultation with AD staff.

**Sustainability Commitment**

As I progressed in my research, the need for a regional ecotourism certification focusing on Southeast Asia became more apparent. Whereas one guide to ecotourism certification lists databases of regional certifiers in Latin America, I found no databases for Asia Pacific (Bien, 2007). Further, current ecotourism certifications do not fit well with the homestay-centered tourism AD facilitates. Certifications also tend to be overly expensive for a smaller organization such as AD. Therefore, AD decided to continue monitoring ecotourism certifications, but will not be pursuing certification at this time. To demonstrate AD’s commitment to ecotourism and sustainability I created a webpage summarizing my results, and what AD is doing to ensure their continued sustainability (see Appendix V). This page will help AD promote their programs to prospective guests.
Conclusion

Based upon my research Andaman Discoveries programs meet the demands of true ecotourism. AD activities uphold both the TIES ecotourism definition and Martha Honey’s characteristics (Honey, 2008; TIES, 1990). Local communities benefit economically and via increased empowerment and community organization. Environmental impact is minimized and mitigated by various conservation projects. Interactions between locals and visitors are respectful, and local culture is maintained. While some financial conflicts exist, the community building impact of local tourism from AD offsets any major detrimental impact.

Socially, local tourism has mostly beneficial impacts. As AD’s programs currently operate there is no detrimental cultural impact. In fact, several villagers mentioned how explaining local traditions to tourists improved villager knowledge of their own heritage. Tourism from AD is also flexible, so traditional livelihoods are maintained alongside tourism work. AD brings in culturally aware and responsible guests, keeping interactions respectful. Newly written codes of conduct will help clarify expectations, and ensure this trend continues.

The process of managing tourism has also served to unite communities. Tourism fostered community development. The process of deciding upon local rules, procedures, and prices helped villages come together. Well-organized communities are better able to manage their environment, so this could also have positive environmental ramifications.

Some social conflict does exist, partly perpetuated by tourism. Most conflict arose from monetary disputes. However, these disputes are generally minor, and the community strengthening effect of tourism enables villages to settle disputes internally with minimal strife.

Environmentally, none of the locals interviewed believed current tourism caused negative impact. Locals identified both direct and indirect positive impacts from tourism. Direct positive impacts included tourists participating in conservation projects. Local children could also attend environmental education classes funded by tourism income.
Indirect positive environmental impacts were mainly attitudinal. Local people pay attention to how tourists act. Seeing tourists appreciate natural beauty, or disapprove of litter and illegal hunting makes an impression. Villages working with AD demonstrate an emerging anti-littering norm that is unusual across most of Asia. This observation is a mixed blessing, though, as less environmentally and socially conscious guests could cause serious issues in villages.

Locals recognize the potential for negative environmental impacts from tourism too, though. If tourism grows too quickly, or is not managed well by community groups and AD, the environment could suffer.

Economic impacts are also mostly positive. Local communities appreciate additional tourism income. Tourism income is supplemental. Many people appreciated how tourism work with AD could fit alongside pre-existing livelihood activities without disruption. Additional tourism income could produce conflict over use and distribution. However, these conflicts were minor and generally resolved internally by the villages.

As AD transitioned to a for-profit, conservation and development projects have decreased. Partly this is due to a lack of staff and partly due to delays incorporating a foundation caused by the Thai government. Villages with longer-term involvement with AD were disappointed with decreases in AD’s project involvement. AD is already hiring more staff, which allows for more organizational attention to community development and conservation projects. Further, AD management recently pledged at least 25% of AD’s annual profits to such foundation projects (personal communication, N. Lemmo, 4.9.14).

The forthcoming foundation should focus upon capacity development in the villages and projects requested by the communities. Facilitating community-managed resorts should be among the foundation’s primary tasks. Tung Dap and Ban Talae Nok recently expressed interest in starting such resorts (personal communication, N. Lemmo, 4.9.14).

Overall, AD’s willingness to heed and act upon local community preferences and requests makes them well equipped to progress sustainably. Good communication between AD and local communities is crucial AD’s continued good service to both tourists and local communities. Villagers welcome AD staff presence at
community tourism meetings. Staff can assist meetings by acting as mediators and moderators (interview with Neung). Increased staff attendance could also help strengthen the close p and non type ties that the communities appreciate. As part of the new sustainability commitment AD staff will now attend at least one community tourism meeting per month (personal communication, N. Lemmo, 4.9.14). Meeting attendance will help ensure that AD continues to send guests that adhere to village standards, and also allow villages to meet high standards for visitors.

The current state of ecotourism certifications does not fit well with AD’s unique and complicated tourism model. Certifications also remain pricy, and generally lack recognition. While ecotourism certifications might currently be impractical AD will continue to monitor developments in this field, and apply for certification when appropriate. Until then, AD will work stringently to remain transparent and maintain high ecotourism standards.

References


**Appendix I – Guest Code of Conduct**

**Andaman Discoveries Guest Code of Conduct**

The Andaman Discoveries (AD) Guest Code of Conduct sets out guidelines for guests and the standards of individual behavior required of all people visiting the Communities of the North Andaman Coast through AD.

This code has been designed to ensure all guest are aware of local customs to ensure a respectful, enjoyable and positive experience for both the guests, the communities and natural environments they visit. By accepting the intent of the code and through complying with its provisions, AD guests acknowledge their status as foreign ambassadors and representatives of AD within local communities. Failure to comply with the code may lead to the early end of the tour experience.

1. All guests will read and understand the “AD In Village Guide” and “Pre-Departure Information” prior to starting the tour
2. Wear appropriately modest clothing and swim wear when in Muslim villages. Women should dress modestly so as to cover knees, chest and shoulders. Please avoid low cut tops and low
hung jeans. We recommend T-shirts and board shorts over your bikini when at a beach near the villages

(3) Respect Thai culture by:
   a. refraining from touching heads
   b. removing shoes before entering temples and Thai homes
   c. not pointing feet at people or Buddha images
   d. not speaking disrespectfully about the royal family
   e. take off your shoes before entering a house, temple or building
   f. Please do not show strong affection in public

(4) Do not consume alcohol or pork in Muslim villages
(5) Please ask and smile before taking photos of people
(6) Do not feed any wild animals or marine life
(7) Reduce the negative environmental impact of the visit by:
   a. Never take anything from nature (shells, tree seeds, animals, etc.)
   b. Do not litter or leave large items of trash, please take with you and dispose in a main town
   c. Use refillable water bottle and shopping bag

(8) Display respect and courtesy for community members, AD staff, other guests and property
(9) Respect local customs, abide by the rules where you are staying, and avoid discrimination of any kind.

We that our guests are to be patient, open-minded, and willing to accept new things.

Appendix II – Volunteer Code of Conduct

Andaman Discoveries Volunteer Code of Conduct

The Andaman Discoveries (AD) Volunteer Code of Conduct sets out guidelines for volunteers and the standards of individual behavior required of all people volunteering through AD.

This code has been designed to ensure all volunteers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities to AD and the communities they serve. By accepting the intent of the code and through complying with its provisions, AD volunteers acknowledge their status as foreign ambassadors and representatives of AD within local communities. Failure to comply with the code may lead to the withdrawal of a person from a project.

(1) All volunteers will read and understand the “In Village Guide” and “Pre-Departure Information” prior to working on projects;

(2) Volunteers working in field locations, including local communities, the Burmese Learning Center, Rural Thai School, Kuraburi Junior School, Southern Thailand Orphanage or Ranong Special Center will read and understand the corresponding Volunteer Guide for that site

(3) All volunteers will read and sign the “Volunteer Agreement” prior to working on projects;
Before committing to AD, all volunteers must research the AD programs thoroughly and prepare themselves appropriately for cultural, monetary, and physical conditions; this includes purchasing suitable insurance;

Volunteers will work diligently to achieve not only your own personal goals but also those of the communities that you are helping; and will not accept payment of any kind for the work;

Display respect and courtesy for community members, AD staff, other volunteers, guests, clients and property;

Respect local customs, abide by the rules where you are staying, and avoid discrimination of any kind.

Regular work hours, sick leave, vacation time and a long and short term work plan will be discussed and approved by your Volunteer Coordinator at AD. In the case of remote volunteer positions, the Volunteer Coordinator will liaise with the worksite supervisor on behalf of the volunteer;

Inform your Volunteer Coordinator or other AD staff if you are at any time unable to fulfill the duties to which you have committed;

If you are experiencing any problems with your work program, fellow colleagues, or if you have any practical problems or need advice in terms of accommodation, visas, medical assistance, communication and area orientation, please speak to your Volunteer Coordinator first. The volunteer coordinator is here to help, and they can help you to find a solution.

By signing below, I, __________________________ (print name), acknowledge and agree to the above terms and conditions of being a volunteer at AD.

_________________________________________ (signature)  _________________ (date)

Appendix III – Intern Code of Conduct

Andaman Discoveries Intern Code of Conduct

The Andaman Discoveries (AD) Intern Code of Conduct sets out guidelines for interns and the standards of individual behavior required of all people interning through AD.

This code has been designed to ensure all interns are aware of their obligations and responsibilities to AD and the communities they serve. By accepting the intent of the code and through complying with its provisions, AD interns acknowledge their status as foreign ambassadors and representatives of AD within local communities. Failure to comply with the code may lead to the withdrawal of a person from a project.

(1) All interns will read and understand the "In-Village Guide", "Pre-Departure Information" and "Ultimate Guide to AD" prior to working on projects;

(2) All interns will read and sign the "Intern Agreement" prior to working on projects;

(3) Before committing to AD, all interns must research the AD programs thoroughly and prepare themselves appropriately for cultural, monetary, and physical conditions; this includes purchasing suitable insurance;

(4) Interns will work diligently to achieve not only your own personal goals but also those of the communities that you are helping; and will not accept payment of any kind for the work;
(5) Display respect and courtesy for community members, AD staff, other interns, guests, clients and property;

(6) Respect local customs, abide by the rules where you are staying, and avoid discrimination of any kind;

(7) Regular work hours, sick leave, vacation time and a long and short term work plan will be discussed and approved by your Intern Coordinator at AD. In the case of remote intern positions, the Intern Coordinator will liaise with the worksite supervisor on behalf of the intern;

(8) Inform your Intern Coordinator or other AD staff if you are at any time unable to fulfill the duties to which you have committed;

(9) IF you are experiencing any problems with your work program, fellow colleagues, or if you have any practical problems or need advice in terms of accommodation, visas, medical assistance, communication and area orientation, please speak to your Intern Coordinator first. The Intern Coordinator is here to help, and they can help you to find a solution.

By signing below, I, _____________________ (print name), acknowledge and agree to the above terms and conditions of being an intern at AD.

______________________________ (signature)   ________________________ (date)

Appendix IV – Researcher Code of Conduct

Andaman Discoveries Researcher Code of Conduct

The Andaman Discoveries (AD) Researcher Code of Conduct sets out guidelines for researchers and the standards of individual behavior required of all people conducting research of any kind (journalism or academic) within the Communities of the North Andaman Coast through AD.

This code has been designed to ensure all researchers are aware of local customs to ensure a respectful, enjoyable and positive experience for both the guests, the communities and natural environments they serve. By accepting the intent of the code and through complying with its provisions, persons conducting research through AD acknowledge their status as foreign ambassadors and representatives of AD within local communities. Failure to comply with the code may lead to the withdrawal of a person from a project.

(1) All researchers will read and understand the “In Village Information” and “Pre-Departure Information” prior to starting the research

(2) Wear appropriately modest clothing (see pre-departure village guide) and swim wear when in Muslim villages

(3) Respect Thai culture by:
   a. refrain from touching heads
   b. removing shoes before entering temples and Thai homes
   c. not pointing feet at people or Buddha images
   d. not speaking disrespectfully about the royal family
e. take off your shoes before entering a house, temple or building

(4) Not consume alcohol or pork in Muslim villages

(5) Please ask before taking photos of people or their property

(6) Do not feed any wild animals or marine life

(7) Reduce the negative environmental impact of the visit by:
   a. Never take anything from nature (shells, tree seeds, animals, etc.)
   b. Do not litter or leave large items of trash, please take with you and dispose in a main town
   c. Use refillable water bottle and shopping bag

(8) Display respect and courtesy for community members, AD staff, other guests and property;

(9) Respect local customs, abide by the rules where you are staying, and avoid discrimination of any kind.

(10) We ask of visitors and volunteers is to be patient, open-minded, and willing to accept new things.

(11) Appropriately compensate groups and individuals for advisory roles

(12) Whenever possible, increase the capacity of existing community groups, rather than replicating or replacing their work when it comes to community engagement and community trainings (i.e. train the trainers)

(13) Researchers will act as a conduit to funding and resources when possible.

(14) Researchers will value community opinions and voices.

(15) Researchers will be permitted at community meetings as guests with the village’s permission

(16) Researchers can perform in an advisory capacity in the villages, but they are not decision makers

(17) All final research products will be shared with Andaman Discoveries and involved villages; If possible the researcher will present relevant results to the community

(18) If academics are offering grant writing assistance, Andaman Discoveries will make the final review and submission

By signing below, I, _____________________ (print name), acknowledge and agree to the above terms and conditions of being a researcher at AD.

_______________________________ (signature)  _____________________ (date)

Appendix V – AD Sustainability Commitment

Our Commitment to Sustainability

Our Mission
To support community-led development by acting as a bridge to respectful visitors and volunteers through sponsorship of education, conservation, and cultural empowerment.
**Our Vision**

To be a small, high-quality organization with a fair distribution of profit between our business, communities, the environment, and partner groups in the North Andaman region.

ANDAMAN DISCOVERIES strives to maintain quality, sincerity, respect and personal service to our guests and community partners. By seeing the value of each individual we aim to create meaningful, educational and memorable experiences for both the guest and the host. We works towards addressing global issues such as climate change, human rights, nature conservation and sustainable development through the grass roots level. Our programs are created in collaboration with the communities in which we work and use local resources to have a positive human, environmental and financial impact. We conduct community based development projects to assist our partners to reach their desired goals and aspirations. They take into consideration the impact on both the environment and culture, and aim to provide a better quality of life for our communities, guests and partners. We seek to create innovative approaches to help foster knowledge sharing, environmental stewardship, and cultural exchange.

**Benefits To Partners**

Village Experiences: The villagers – the guides, host families, handicraft cooperatives – receive fair wages as stipulated by the community-based tourism committee. We ensure that a majority of the money from each trip goes directly to the villagers and contributes to the community fund. This creates jobs to help families stay together instead of working in towns far away, and supports scholarships, youth activities, and other initiatives.

Regional Tours: Andaman Discoveries partners share our commitment to responsible travel. Our accommodation and destination partners ensure respect for both the environment and local culture. When you book with us, you can be sure that you will have a responsible and fun-filled tour.

Volunteer and Service Placements: Volunteer time, effort, and attention are of great value to the villages, schools, and children’s homes that we serve. We also provide our partners with financial support as they rely on limited government funding and/or donations. A project donation to the volunteering location is included in the program.

**Ensuring Continued Sustainability**

June to August 2013 Andaman Discoveries asked a graduate student from Duke University to assess local tourism sustainability and find ways for AD to improve sustainability. Andaman Discoveries wanted a comprehensive view of sustainability, so research assessed environmental, economic, and social impacts of AD programs as perceived by locals and tourists.

Overall AD has extensive positive impact on local communities. What few negative impacts exist are more than offset by the beneficial impacts. Andaman Discoveries is the rare enterprise truly providing ecotourism as defined by the International Ecotourism Society: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people."

The full report is available online through the Duke University Libraries’ collection ofNicholas School Master’s Projects.
Environmental Impact

None of the locals interviewed believed there was any negative impact from tourism. Locals identified both direct and indirect positive impacts from tourism. Direct positive impacts included tourists participating in conservation projects. Local children could also attend environmental education classes funded by tourism income.

Indirect positive impacts were mainly attitudinal changes. Local people pay attention to how tourists act. Seeing tourists appreciate natural beauty, or disapprove of litter and illegal hunting makes an impression. Villages working with AD demonstrate an emerging anti-littering norm that is unusual across most of Asia. This observation is a double-edged sword, though, as less environmentally and socially conscious guests could cause serious issues in villages.

Locals recognize the potential for negative environmental impacts from tourism too, though. If tourism grows too quickly, or is not managed well by community groups and AD, the environment could suffer.

Social Impact

Culture was included in the social category for this study. As AD’s programs currently operate there is no detrimental cultural impact. In fact, several villagers mentioned how explaining local traditions to tourists improved villager knowledge of their own heritage. Tourism from AD is also flexible, so traditional livelihoods are maintained alongside tourism work.

Villagers want to maintain local social and cultural norms. Due to AD’s thorough pre-departure guides and briefings visitors from AD respect local expectations regarding attire and behavior. One village, with experience with a different tour operator, was able to say decisively that AD guests were more respectful, and fun too!

Tourism also fostered community development. The process of deciding upon local rules, procedures, and prices helped villages come together. Well-organized communities are better able to manage their environment, so this could also have positive environmental ramifications.

Some social conflict does exist, partly perpetuated by tourism. Most conflict arose from monetary disputes. However, these disputes are generally minor, and the community strengthening effect of tourism enables villages to settle disputes internally with minimal strife.

Economic Impact

Local communities appreciate additional tourism income. Tourism income is supplemental. Many people appreciated how tourism work with AD could fit alongside pre-existing livelihood activities without disruption.

Additional income could produce conflict over use and distribution. However, these conflicts were minor and generally resolved internally by the village.

Actions

To progress sustainably AD pledges the following:

- Send an AD staff member to at least one village community-based tourism meeting per month. Meeting attendance will help ensure AD maintains close ties with villages, and keeps village
interests at the forefront of AD's agenda. Community members also requested increased staff attendance at meetings, because AD staff can act as moderators and mediators.

- Give back at least 25% of AD's profits back to local area conservation and community development projects.
- Utilize written codes of conduct for guests, volunteers, interns, and researchers. Codes will ensure everyone is aware of AD and village cultural and environmental expectations, and help maintain healthy relationships with local communities, and avoid inequitable interactions.
- Partner with Travel Life to ensure there is a third-party supervising organizational sustainability.
- AD will track suitable ecotourism certifiers, and pursue full ecotourism certification when there is an appropriate certification available for their unique and complex community tourism model.

About the Researcher

Anna Flam is a 2014 Master of Environmental Management candidate at Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment. Prior to graduate school Anna worked as a dive instructor on Koh Tao and Koh Phi Phi for three years, and spent a few months teaching English in Trang. She loved the spicy food, the sabai culture, and the incredible environment above and below the water. However, she also witnessed encroaching mass tourism and the toll it took on local the local people and nature. By studying sustainable development and community-based conservation, and working with organizations like AD she hopes to allay detrimental development impacts.

Methods

Anna spent 12 weeks in Thailand working with Andaman Discoveries staff, volunteers, and partner communities. During this time she conducted interviews with villagers in Ban Talae Nok, Tung Nang Dam, Ta Pae Yoi, Ban Lion, and Tung Dap. Anna also interviewed volunteers at the Mulberry Learning Center, Muan Mit Thai, and the Tung Rak School. She observed local community tourism group meetings, and visited local ecoldges. Andaman Discoveries also gave Anna access to four years of guest surveys to include in analysis.

Andaman Discoveries’ Sustainability Commitment is available online at: http://www.andamandiscoveries.com/commitment-sustainability/

Appendix VI – Top 10 Initial Recommendations to AD

- Restart ACE training.
- Promote AD as an ecotourism provider, not just CBT. This label fits; embrace it. Join the International Ecotourism Society.
- Work out clear and concise descriptions for: N-ACT, AD, and the Foundation. Make a one paragraph “elevator pitch”. Make differentiations and linkages clear between the groups (this is probably something good to discuss at the staff retreat).
- Attend more CBT meetings.
- Create a resource guide (about 1 page) for teaching. Email to volunteers prior to their programs and post in the volunteer room.
- Explore discounted weekend volunteer placements in the villages.
- Help communities obtain microloans; teach them about the process.
- Do not forget about Tung Nang Dam. Send a third party to assist in CBT group mediation. Try to integrate the newcomers into conservation training. Continue work on a beach road.
- Work on creating a community run (or co-managed) resort in Ban Talae Nok.
• Hold more frequent trainings for all the villages, especially for guiding, language, and hospitality.

Appendix VII – Researcher Positionality
I am a white privileged woman. Being from a wealthy country I have clean local environmental resources, such as clean water. I also appreciate the benefits of strong environmental regulation that prevents the dumping of sewage and trash in to the ocean. My local infrastructure is already well developed, so there is minimal struggle over the conflict between good shelter and the beautiful natural landscapes that shelters replace. My priorities are different from people in developing nations. Although we both want and need the basics – food, water, shelter – I already have those basics, and am therefore more inclined to push for the protection of natural resources. My urge to protect the environment can lead to blindness to the continued need for economic development to meet the basic needs of people elsewhere in the world.

I lived in Thailand for several years. This gives me a better understanding of local cultural values, but my personal cultural values and identity are weak. Often, in Thailand, I am asked about the difference between American culture and Thai culture. I struggle to find an answer. Partly the struggle arises because I cannot ascribe one overarching culture to a place so large and diverse as the United States. The struggle is also more personal. While not anti-culture, I find myself outside of culture. I have grown up with parents of two distinct religions, traveled frequently, and lived internationally from a young age. I cannot assign a distinct culture to myself. My ‘aculturalism’ could be seen as a strength, because I respect and value many differing cultural viewpoints, but it can also be a weakness. Although I can accept the validity of local culture intellectually, it is more difficult to reconcile on a deeper level, when I know that some traditional cultural practices are environmentally unsustainable, sometimes due to growing populations, changing economies, and new technologies. Since I do not have my own set of closely held cultural values, I struggle to empathize with what can sometimes be seen as an arbitrary belief system. Thailand has strong historic, religious, social, and occult cultural values. I need to empathize with the local culture of Khuraburi, if I wish my research to respect local people.
My personal position lends me strength when evaluating human rights. As a privileged blonde American, this statement might seem incongruous, but I am also a female. I was raised to believe that all people are truly equal. Should I unquestioningly accept equality as axiomatic, that faith could lead me to blindness with regard to existing inequity, whether structural or otherwise. However, I received a rude awakening when I began encountering rampantly misogynist bosses. Though, I never personally experienced racism or classism, discrimination can be thinly veiled as joking in any of these discriminatory categories. I am dedicated to fighting such discrimination whether it is of a category I personally experience or not, and due to my experience with sexism I am now more aware of multiple forms of discrimination.

I am not an objective observer; I have biases, and I do not believe that I could be objective. I do not believe objectivity is necessary, or even desirable for this research, though. True objectivity would not allow for the consideration of cultural biases, which I believe are important in in the context of Khuraburi, Thailand. I am studying a region that places high value on culture, and objectivity would not allow for different weighting of cultural values. Regional context, specificity, and individual storytelling will all contribute to the final, regionally specific, interpretation of my research.

Appendix VIII – Villager Interview Guide

Date:  
Time:  
Location:  
Town:  
Name:  

Oral Consent – Start Recording

1) What is your relationship to local tourism?
2) How long have you worked with AD?
3) Have you worked in tourism outside of the AD programs?
4) Do you think there are positive or negative consequences to local tourism? If yes, what?
5) Do you think AD can improve their services? If yes, how?
6) If AD no longer existed would the programs (youth groups, conservation projects) be maintained?
7) Do you want more tourism training in the area?
8) Do you want more tourism activities in the area?
9) How do you see tourism continuing in the future?
10) What do you want to see happening in the future?
11) Do you see positive or negative environmental impacts from tourism?
12) Has local tourism helped or hurt your livelihood?
13) In the past, have you tried technologies to reduce environmental impacts? (e.g. solar panels, composting, etc.)
   a. If yes – what have you tried?
   b. Were there barriers to implementing this technology?
   c. Was the new technology successful or a failure? Why?
   d. How did you decide to adopt this technology? (go back to start of 13 for each new technology)
14) Are there any other environmental technologies you would like to try?

Appendix IX – Volunteer Interview Guide

Date/Time/Location:
Name:
Nationality:
Age range:
Occupational Field:
Email:

Oral Consent – Start Recording

1) Which project did you work with?
2) How long?
3) What did you do?
4) Have you been to Thailand before? If yes, ask for elaboration.
5) Why did you choose to volunteer?
6) How would you define sustainability?
7) Did sustainability play a role in your decision to volunteer with AD?
   a. Why, or why not?

Two common descriptions of sustainability are:
• Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
• An aspiration to balance environmental, social, and economic needs.

8) Do you think the project (where you volunteered) is sustainable?
   a. Why, or why not?
9) Do you have any general impressions from the project you would like to share?
10) Do you have any thoughts about AD you would like to share?

Thank you.
Appendix X – AD Guest Feedback Form

Andaman Discoveries continues to work on improving and developing our tour programs and making the experience more valuable for both guests and villagers. Guests’ feedback and comments are invaluable to us in improving and further developing the services we provide. Your comments would help us immensely in achieving this goal. We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to respond to the questions below. Feel free to provide as much (or as little) detail as you would like.

Your Name: ___________________________  Nationality: ___________________________
Age:  Under 20 □  21 – 35 □  36 – 45 □  46 – 60 □  Over 61 □
Occupation: ___________________________  Email address: ___________________________

(Would you like to receive our monthly newsletter about new activities and the villages that we work with? Your email address will be used for this purpose only.) Yes □  No □

How did you hear about Andaman Discoveries? ____________________________________

If through the internet, what keywords, websites, and/or search engine did you use? ____________________________________

What motivated you to book a tour with Andaman Discoveries? (check all that apply)

To see the “real” Thailand □  To get off the regular tourist trail □
To experience something different □  To experience a homestay □
To learn about local Thai life/culture □  To benefit local communities/organisms □
Other: ____________________________________

Tour Date(s): ___________________________  Tour Name: ___________________________
Name of Interpreter: ___________________________  Name of village guide: ___________________________

1. How would you rate the pre-trip preparation (e.g. pre-trip information provided)
(1 = low and 10 = high)

Information provided by Agent □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
Information provided by AD □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
Support provided by AD □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □

Suggestions for improvement

2. Village Guide
(1 = low and 10 = high)

Suggestions for improvement

3. The Village Experience Did the tour meet your expectations in terms of:

A. Cleanliness □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
B. Comfort & Facilities □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
C. Hospitality of host family □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
D. Food □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
E. Safety/Security in village □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
F. Overall experience □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
Suggestions for improvement

7. Activities

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Suggestions for improvement

Did the trip meet your expectations? No □ Yes □ Exceeded □

Would you come back again for:
- a. Different activities? No □ Yes □ Maybe □
- b. Different village(s)? No □ Yes □ Maybe □

Any other comments / suggestions:

We would love a testimonial from you. Please share some of your thoughts about your experiences in the village.

Many thanks for supporting Andaman Discoveries! We appreciate your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to share with us any photographs from your trip.
Appendix XI – AD Volunteer Feedback Form

Andaman Discoveries
Become a part of the story...

120/2 Sukaphiban 3 Road
Moo 1, Kura
Kuraburi District
Phang Nga Province,
Thailand 82450

Volunteer Feedback Form

Andaman Discoveries continually works to improve and develop our volunteer placement and make the experience more valuable for both the host organization and the volunteers. Comments and suggestions from volunteers are invaluable to us for improving the programs. You would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to respond to the questions below. Feel free to provide as much (or as little) detail as you would like.

Your Name: ___________________________  Nationality: ___________________________
Email address: ___________________________  Occupation: ___________________________
Age: Under 21 ☐  21 - 35 ☐  36 - 45 ☐  46 - 60 ☐  Over 60 ☐

Would you like to receive news updates from AD about new activities from the community and projects? (Your email address will be used for this purpose only.) Yes / No: ________________

How did you hear about Andaman Discoveries? ___________________________

If via the internet, what keywords, websites did you use? ___________________________

What motivated you to book a volunteer placement with Andaman Discoveries? (please tick all that apply)

☐ To benefit local people and communities  ☐ Personal or career development
☐ To visit/learn about Thailand  ☐ Part of a longer trip to the country/region
☐ Other: ___________________________

Placement Information:

Placement Dates: ___________________________  Program: ___________________________

1. How would you rate the pre-trip preparation/support from AD (e.g. information provided and expectations)?

1 = low and 10 = high

☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Comments/suggestions for improvement:

__________________________________________________________________________

2. If you booked the placement through an agent, how would you rate their services?

1 = low and 10 = high

☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Comments/suggestions for improvement:

__________________________________________________________________________

3. Your accommodation

Accommodation  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐
Cleanliness  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

The area

Food  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐
Safety/security  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

Your placement

Your work/role at the placement  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐
Overall placement  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐
Helpfulness of staff at your placement  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐  ☐

4. Would you come back again for:
The same placement? Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐
A different placement? Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

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4. Would you recommend Andaman Discoveries to family and friends?
   Yes □       No □

5. Any comments are particularly appreciated as it helps us to develop our placements and give other volunteers a better idea of what they can expect. Please describe a typical day at your project.

   _______________________________________________________________________

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6. What did you find most rewarding?

   _______________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________

7. What did you find most challenging?

   _______________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________

8. Any other comments / suggestions:

   _______________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________

   _______________________________________________________________________

9. We would love a testimonial from you. Please feel free to share your thoughts about your placement.

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10. Many thanks for supporting Andaman Discoveries! We value your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to share with us any photographs from your trip.

    _______________________________________________________________________