



Development of Community-Based Tourism in Ban Khok Muang (Thailand) and Banteay Chhmar (Cambodia)

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study were to indicate the comparative effectiveness of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) management between Ban Khok Muang and Banteay Chhmar and the development guidelines for a trans-boundary CBT network between the two communities. Qualitative research methodology, including related documents, regional surveys, interviews, and a focus group tested for content validity, was applied and 30 stakeholders were chosen by purposive sampling and content analysis was used for data analysis. The findings indicated that there were four identical resources found in the communities, natural resources, community organization and participation, management, and learning among villagers and visitors. Similar historical backgrounds, environmental contexts, CBT management, nearby locations, and self-management found in the communities could be applied to create effective CBT communities, and there was a readiness for the extension of CBT destinations to nearby communities. In regard to development guidelines, there should be an increase in new tourism products and satisfactory services, skills of villagers, and tourism facilities and infrastructures. Public relations, including allocation support from government and private organizations, should be also determined for sustainable trans-boundary tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

According the first ASEAN Tourism Strategy, 2011-2015, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries had to cooperate to develop trans-boundary tourism in three ways, tourism products, tourism personnel, and facilities [1]-[3]. The second plan, 2016-2025, focused on single destinations because of the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 to create a single connection among economic, social, and political security among all member countries. However, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic might change conditions in the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) development because personal safety, getting off the beaten path, and going away from crowds, would be a priority for many travelers as they navigated a world changed by the pandemic and made choices about what kind of experiences they wanted to have going forward [2].

Thailand and Cambodia have a 798 kilometer-long international boundary. They have similar historical backgrounds and cultural perspectives, and friendly relationships that include several co-operative border trade arrangements in six border crossings and nine temporarily permitted areas [2]. Also, the tourism development plans of the two countries are consistent. The National Tourism Development Plan of Thailand, 2012-2015, placed

importance on tourism enhancement especially in the lower north-eastern region, through Lower ESAN Civilization Tourism [3]-[5]. In Cambodia, Tourism Marketing Strategy 2015-2020 targeted on employing tourism as a tool for the solution of poverty and the establishment of a good quality of life for people, especially in remote areas. The strategy also paid attention to Community-Based Tourism (CBT) to increase annual tourist numbers by 7% to achieve an average annual number of 7.5 million tourists [2]-[6].

As well as a consistency of the two countries' tourism development plans, regional connections in the areas were indicated. The lower north-eastern area of Thailand (ESAN), consisting of the provinces of Buriram, Surin, Sisaket, and Ubon Rathchathani, and the northern region of Cambodia, including Banteay Meanchey, Oddar Meanchey, and Phreah Vihear, are considered as the connected area having similar tourism resources and called Tourism of Ancient Khmer Civilization [2]-[4]. Attractive tourism destinations surrounding Phnom Dong Rak Mountain, the border between Thailand and Cambodia, were initially supported by the governments and private organizations of the two countries to be developed as potential CBT communities [3]-[5]. Nevertheless, cross-cultural communication among villagers and stakeholders of the countries and continued tourism support policies

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indicated major problems in advancing trans-boundary tourism. Consequently, many beautiful tourism attractions located along the areas may be undeveloped and lacking necessary infrastructure and other significant facilities.

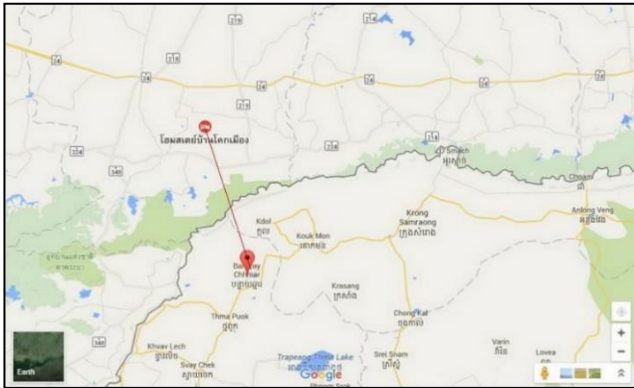


Fig. 1. Regional relationship between Ban Khok Muang (Thailand) and Banteay Chhmar (Cambodia).

This study considered the development of trans-boundary tourism in the area that corresponded to the current ASEAN Tourism Strategy of a single destination for a diversity of visitors. The findings of the research may be applied to promote cultural tourism and villagers' quality of life simultaneously. The results may also be used to establish an effective tourism network as an example of best practice of a trans-boundary networking pattern of CBT leading to sustainable security between the countries. The purposes of this study included a comparative analysis of the potentials of CBT management between Ban Khok Muang and Banteay Chhmar and recommendations for development guidelines for a trans-boundary CBT network among the two communities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research employed a range of theories, concepts, and related studies as follows:

2.1. Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

The references of [5], [6], and [13] stated that CBT became the effective tourism development as cooperation and knowledge management of local people were considered as significant for maintaining community resources and establish a reasonable advantages to the villagers. CBT concept was appropriately connected to the notion of SCBT (Sustainable Community-Based Tourism) as the sustainability of society, environmental resources, and traditional cultures of a village were focused on. Villagers played as tourism entrepreneurs having rights to manage their community resources for their satisfactory advantages, leading to tourism competitive benefits to the villagers and the community. CBT appeared to be appeared from a co-operation of a group of community

representatives by applying their local properties, local lifestyles, and cultural aspects for determining an interesting tourism itinerary. The villagers took part in administrations and activities, such as tour guides, home stay accommodation, reception and cultural performances, facilities, and public relations. This management form mainly focused on enhancement of CBT and promotion of people's participation in a village [10]-[14].

2.2. Contexts of Community-Based Tourism

Contexts of community-Based Tourism consisted of tourism resources, local agencies, management, and learning are shown in [4], [7], [12], [13]. Tourism resources referred to unique environments and cultures in a community, such as archaeological site, ancient remains, indigenous knowledge, local intelligences, and abilities of villagers. Local agencies gave an importance on co-operation among villagers, skilled persons, and local agents, mostly found in community development, management, considerations, and operational evaluation. The management factor was engaged in fair benefit sharing, development assets, learning of local people and guests, environmental conservation, and improvement of facilities and infrastructure. Learning focused on SWOT analysis of personnel, areas, management patterns, and participation to produce creative tourism activities and comprehension of traditions and cultures by tourists. It was necessary that the four contexts worked together for sustainable CBT development [5] [9] [15].

2.3 Meaning and importance of networks

A network is a pattern concerning connection or association of members with commitments aiming to establish a powerful organization, conduct business negotiations, and be well-recognized, especially increasing their significant profits [8]-[12].

2.4 Development of community networks

A community network may be strengthened by several performances such as focus group interviewings, knowledge management, training activities, and outside observations [8]. The main objective was to enhance the participation in terms of a distribution of fair benefits and solutions of problems found in the communities including its stake holders.

2.5 Related Studies

Studies by [9]-[13] stated that CBT networks were considered as substantially significant relating tourism development because it led to an increased worth of local tourism, beneficial distribution, and good communication skills of villagers. Successful CBT network depended on association and human skill development, particularly of villagers along with their leaders. They did not have enough positive viewpoints and professionalization on tourism management on finding an

interesting target group and possible rivals, bringing about incompetent advancement and community success. Moreover, attitudes of local people including visitors and stakeholders were important to apply for preparing satisfactory services and sustainable CBT development. Although the related studies focused on CBT along the route of the two countries was missing. Therefore, it was important to find the trans-boundary tourism in the chosen areas the mentioned theories and concepts, related studies, and research results, were employed to draw some development guidelines relating trans-boundary CBT network among the two communities.

3. METHODS

3.1. Population

There was a total of 30 participants chosen by non-probability sampling [14] consisting of 15 representatives and stakeholders of Ban Khok Muang and 15 of Banteay Chhmar, comprising of village leaders and key villagers who were responsible for trans-boundary tourism management and could present significant information concerning their communities. All samples were appropriate as they would be applied to observe their particular issue needs in-depth and content analysis, based purely on knowledge and credibility fitting to participate in this research study. Perspectives of comparative CBT, community organizations and people’s participation, comparative management, and tourism learning were discussed among the focus group and the derived data were summarized to determine the development guidelines for trans-boundary CBT potentials. For regional selection, Ban Khok Muang and Banteay Chhmar were considered as they were established as tourism communities for over five years. Additionally, their locations were directly and closely connected with similar historical information, environmental contexts, people’s lifestyles, and tourism management [16].

3.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments found in this research were applied from qualitative methodology, concentrating on obtained data deriving from two-ways communications, for in-depth interview with further probing and questioning of the samples based on their responses. The obtained data would be helpful to understand their feeling and how they took decisions, for deriving conclusions in the CBT development guidelines. By doing this, a focus group, among 30 representatives, along with regional survey, and interview forms were used for data collection while content analysis, checked for content validity, were used for data analysis. A total of 30 participants were totally informed the issue, the risks including participation’s advantages, and collection of data while confidentiality was kept by using Focus Group Consent Form. Participants would be

also informed before the beginning of the focus group in that the audio and video during the conversation would be recorded in order to analyze the results of the study. The findings were then established for content analysis to evaluate the four contexts of CBT and later determine guidelines for appropriate trans-boundary CBT network development.

4. RESULTS

The comparative potentials of CBT in this study included tourism resources, community organizations and people’s participation, management, and learning. All topics and its factors used to describe the results were applied from CBT interview forms of the reference [6] and [9]. Research findings were indicated as follows:

4.1 Comparative Analysis of Potentials of CBT Management between Ban Khok Muang and Banteay Chhmar

4.1.1 Tourism Resources

The results of existing tourism resources of the two communities are indicated in the following table.

Table 1. Comparative CBT between Ban Khok Muang and Banteay Chhmar Communities

Factors	Ban Khok Muang	Banteay Chhmar
Core tourism resources (historical sites)	Muangtam Castle (16 th Buddhist century) presented in Baphoun art style	Banteay Chhmar (18 th Buddhist century) presented in Bayon art style
Year of CBT establishment	2006	2007
Establishment organization	Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior	Agir Pour Le Cambodge (APLC) & Global Heritage Fund (GHF)
Awards	Champion of Development and Self-protection Project in 2006 OTOP Village Champion in 2006	Hidden Treasures Cambodia Winning Destination 2010
Homestay accommodation	✓	✓
Tour guides	✓	✓
Foods	✓	✓
Handicrafts / silk production	✓	✓

Factors	Ban Khok Muang	Banteay Chhmar
Excursion tours	✓	✓
Musical/local performances	✓	✓
Demonstration of rice cultivation	✓	✓
Local lifestyles / traditions	✓	✓
Sailing	-	✓
Castle tours	Phanomrung Historical Park, Khao Plai Bat Castle, and Barai Muangtam	Ta Muang and Ta Kuai Temples (along Thai-Cambodian border)
Learning of food making	✓	✓
Bicycle touring	✓	✓
Traditional massage	✓	-
Trekking	✓	✓

According to the table, the tourism resources to survey the two communities held identical historical sites, castle tours, and several tourism activities. Tourism resources found in the two communities were almost identical, except for sailing and traditional massage. In addition, silk-making was a distinctive occupation of the villagers since it was a major natural resource of the communities providing high incomes, as shown in the following pictures:



Fig. 2. Silk Production in Ban Khok Muang (1st-2nd Pic.) and Banteay Chhmar (3rd-4th Pic.)

4.1.2 Community Organizations and People’s Participation

The findings about the two perspectives found in the communities are demonstrated in the following table.

Table 2. Comparison of Community Organizations and People’s Participation in the Two Communities

Factors	Ban Khok Muang	Banteay Chhmar
1. Occupational groups in the community	✓	✓
2. Self-management and co-operative management	✓	✓
3. Harmony of villagers	✓	✓
4. Scholars/skillful persons in the community	✓	✓
5. Participation in management processes among representatives of occupational groups	✓	✓

The table demonstrates the two points found in two villages were similar.

Table 3. Comparative Management of the Two Communities

Factors	Ban Khok Muang	Banteay Chhmar
1. An organization established for management and connection between tourism and community development	✓	✓
2. Rules and regulations for environmental, cultural, and tourism managements	✓	✓
3. Reasonable benefit sharing	✓	✓
4. Community funds supporting development of economy and community	✓	✓
5. Cognitive processes among villagers and visitors	✓	✓
6. Consciousness (both villagers and visitors) of environmental and cultural protections	✓	✓
7. Management of tourism destinations	✓	✓
8. Management of tour guides and tour services	✓	✓
9. Management of accommodation and services	✓	✓
10. Enhancement of products and souvenirs	✓	-
11. Public relations	✓	✓

4.1.3 Management

The results of the management aspect are presented in the following table.

The table reveals that tourism management in the communities was similar, except for the lack of the development of products and souvenirs in Banteay Chhmar.

4.1.4 Learning

The findings of learning factor are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Comparative learning of the Two Communities

Factors	Ban Khok Muang	Banteay Chhmar
1. Tourism activities enhance learning and comprehension of diversified local lifestyles and cultural perspectives	✓	✓
2. Competencies of villagers, learning awareness, and compatible cooperation	✓	✓
3. Regional potential and abundance of natural resources, culture, and folk wisdom	✓	✓
4. Awareness of natural conservation and useful application of existing natural resources including a readiness for learning	✓	✓
5. Comprehension of CBT fundamentals and regional management	✓	✓

The table demonstrates that learning perspectives found in the two communities were similar.

4.2 Development Guidelines for a Trans-boundary CBT Network of the Two Communities

As ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), the location of the two areas along national borders together could be provided cooperative integrated management of tourism development, which was at an increasing level. However, some tourism attractions located along the areas considered as undeveloped and lacking important infrastructure, other facilities, and cooperation in development. Therefore, the guidelines conducted in this study intended to place the enhancement activities into a trans-boundary contexts whenever possible, contributing to a tourism promotion and a further development of cooperation, not only of the local tourism, but also of other stakeholders such as municipalities, districts, regional governments, and the private sector. Overall, guidelines for trans-boundary CBT network development, drawing from content analysis among the participants, were explained as follows:

1. New tourism products and services, especially sailing in Ban Khok Muang, traditional massage, and

development of local products together with souvenirs in Banteay Chhmar, should be provided for tourists.

2. Public relations, including allocation support from government and private organizations, should be established.
3. English communication skills of local tour guides of the communities, especially Ban Khok Muang, should be promoted.
4. Tourism facilities, such as tour car services, important roads, toilets, and rest areas in tourism destinations, should be developed, especially in Banteay Chhmar.
5. Mutual observation, knowledge management, and exchange of opinions should be arranged continually.
6. Mutual activities on General Agreement on Trade in Service, an internal business policy between Thailand and Cambodia, should be established to strengthen the CBT network of the communities.

All guidelines are required to perform as a cooperation of the two countries to strengthen collaboration, and partnership in improving the process, institutional and infrastructural foundations of efficient and effective tourism facilitation within the regions.

5. DISCUSSION

The results found in this study corresponded with the studies of [9], [11], [15], [16], and [17] have showing that a network contributed to a successful co-operation of organizations and a powerful association between customers, suppliers, investors, and competitors. A Network was important to establish an efficiency of organizations' products and services. The findings were also consistent with [5]-[7], stating that successful CBT management mainly depended on network association. For trans-boundary tourism, networking contributed to highest benefits and satisfactory services derived from local resources of villages. Significantly, networking may promote unknown tourism destinations in the communities and lead to an enhancement of infrastructure in the areas.

6. CONCLUSION

CBT and trans-boundary tourism are related to stakeholders in a village and other nearby communities maintaining their competitive advantages and highest profits for local people. The findings demonstrated that communities should develop tourism products and services, tourism personnel, and necessary facilities to increase new targets of tourists, powerful business negotiations, CBT sustainability, and trans-boundary tourism competitiveness. These guidelines will lead to mutual benefits of the two countries contributing more

tourists to visit their communities and more incomes for local entrepreneurs and its employees. The benefits offers advantages to visitors as tourists can discover local lifestyles and experience different cultures between Thailand and Cambodia. Significantly, CBT was helpful to promote cross-cultural perception and local people would be granted to learn each other from different historical backgrounds and environmental contexts.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Further studies should include the following perspectives:

1. CBT networking development consistent with communities' needs and policies of environmental conservations of the two countries, with least effect on local economy, society, and culture.
2. Enhancement of people' s skills for satisfactory services
3. Marketing promotional methods to advance CBT sustainability and positive association between the countries.
4. Mutual benefits applied or utilized in the development of the CBT between the two tourism borders

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