

# Community-based tourism: Local participation and perceived impacts

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*A comparative study between two communities in Thailand*



Master Thesis  
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Community-based tourism: Local participation and perceived impacts  
*A comparative study between two communities in Thailand*

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# Acknowledgements

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This is the final piece of work of my studies. This thesis serves, most of all, to complete the Research Master Social and Cultural Science at the Radboud University Nijmegen. However, I also used knowledge and skills from my bachelor degree in Tourism Management and pre-master in Development Studies. To me, the intersection between tourism and development is fascinating and full of opportunities. Already during an internship in Guatemala six years ago I became interested in the ways in which tourism has an impact on a destination country, or more specifically on the local population. These impacts may be both positive and negative, but often seem to be the strongest in developing countries. Tourism can be seen as just an economic sector that creates employment and income, but the interaction between tourists and locals makes the tourism industry very dynamic and unique. In many ways tourism can contribute to the development of communities, or even countries. I chose to focus on this topic for my thesis, and study community-based tourism projects.

For this thesis I went to Thailand for three months to do fieldwork. It was not only my first time to Thailand, but also the first time to Asia. I can say that it was a great experience of which I have learned a lot. I met so many friendly Thai people who made me feel welcome to their community. I would like to thank some persons who have in particular helped me with my research. This is first of all Potjana of the Community Based Tourism Institute, who has played a key role in introducing me to leaders of the communities of my research and took the time to help me set up my questionnaire properly. In Mae La Na I would like to thank Panot from Tour Merng Tai and Kanchanok in particular for helping me to take the questionnaires and interviews and translate. In Koh Yao Noi I owe a special thanks to Bang Bao for guiding me around the island and helping me with the questionnaires and interviews. While I am not going to name all of them I would also like to thank all of the families with whom I stayed in the communities. Although there was a language barrier, I felt welcome at each family and really enjoyed the good food. I will never forget this great hospitality.

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# 1. Introduction

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During my third week on the island Koh Yao Noi, I came to stay with the family of Bang Sar, a carpenter, and his wife, Jah Bat. Their friendly smiles made me feel welcome immediately. They enthusiastically showed me their house and the room I could stay in. It was all very plain, but clean and comfortable. During the next days I felt like I was being spoiled a lot. The family prepared delicious meals, invited me on boat trips to other islands, took me out to local Roti stands and moreover they tried to teach me a lot about their culture. At the same time I was able to teach them some English. On the first night at their house we were watching TV. After their favorite show ended Bang Sar took some papers and books out of the closet. With a lot of pride he started showing me a collection of postcards from tourists who had once stayed at his families' house. Also he showed a travel magazine from a Thai airline. On the cover was a beautiful picture of a turquoise sea with limestone rocks. In the middle was a typical small Thai long tail boat, with Bang Sar standing on it. The article in the magazine describes Koh Yao Noi as a tranquil and tropical destination with friendly Muslim fishermen. The article pays special attention to the community-based eco-tourism project that offers homestays. The author had also stayed at Bang Sar and Jah Bats' house.

I had seen the same pride and enthusiasm with more people on the island before, for instance on the first day when I arrived. I was picked up from the pier by Bang Bao, the community-based tourism coordinator and initiator. He showed me the meeting and information center of the members of the community-based tourism group. One of the things he showed me there was a map of the Phang Nga bay, in which the island is situated. Bang Bao explained that in the 1980s the entire bay was filled with large (foreign) fishing boats, which made the fish population go down rapidly, leaving the local fishermen unemployed. Together with a non-governmental organization he started a tourism project, in which tourists could stay at the houses of local fisherman and go fishing with them. This was done to attract attention for the problem and pressure the government to take action. Bang Bao's project became successful and nowadays only local small-scale fishermen are found in the bay. Because of the success community members decided to continue receiving tourists in their homes. The community also received several awards from the Tourism Authority Thailand (TAT) as well as the World Legacy Award for Destination Stewardship from National Geographic Traveler magazine. These awards were all rewarded due to sustainable tourism management practices on the island.

Sustainability is a concept that is frequently used in relation with tourism development. While there does not exist a universal definition of sustainability, many scholars agree that sustainable development includes long term positive economic, social and environmental outcomes (Hunter, 1997; UNWTO, 2004; Goodwin, 2011). In relation to tourism development, sustainability often enters the discussion regarding different forms of tourism and their impacts. Conventional mass tourism, for instance, is known to have many negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts, while at the same time the economic benefits are also frequently not enjoyed by the local population (Telfer & Wall, 2000; Torres, 2003; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008), for instance when large resort chains are owned by foreign investors. Several alternative types of tourism, such as cultural tourism and ecotourism, have been introduced as

being more sustainable, and beneficial for the local population (Scheyvens, 2002; Brohman, 1996; Mowfort & Munt, 1998).

Community-based tourism (hereafter referred to as CBT), is often recognized as a perfect example of sustainable tourism development. The reason for this is mainly that local community participation in the development and practice of these projects is supposed to be high, and that the whole community benefits from the projects (Brohman, 1996; Hatton, 1999). Community development is at the heart of CBT. Most CBT projects are small scale and they often include community owned and operated lodges and other facilities. This would provide positive economic benefits, such as income, for large parts of the community. Besides that, CBT is regarded as being less harmful to the socio-cultural environment. Because the local population is in control, they decide which cultural traits they share with their guests. Finally, CBT projects would also have less negative impacts on the natural environment. Community members are often the best to judge what is best for their natural surroundings. The small-scale character of CBT also means that small amounts of tourists are visiting and therefore do not cause overcrowding of the socio-cultural and natural environment.

While CBT is very popular for sustainable tourism development, it has rarely been critically reviewed (Goodwin, 2011). CBT projects come with risks. Some studies for instance find that the revenues gained from CBT are relatively small (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008; Goodwin, 2006) and sometimes do not even outweigh the costs. CBT projects can also fail because of a lack of access to markets and poor governance. Other researchers have also found limitations to participation of the local community, such as lack of knowledge and resources, and the fact that the local community does not always operate as one group (Koch, 1997; Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens, 2002; Timothy, 1999). While there is little discussion about if the local community should participate in tourism planning and development, the question is how community members should participate.

This study sets out to explore in what way the community members are involved in CBT projects, both at the individual and the community level. While CBT projects in general imply high local involvement in tourism planning and development, this study does not take that as a given and explores in what ways individuals, and the community as a whole, participates. At the same time the locals' satisfaction will be analyzed with a focus on the three types of impact; environmental, economic, and socio-cultural. The main question of the research is *'How does the type of local participation in community-based tourism projects influence the satisfaction of the local population with the outcomes of tourism development?'*. It is expected that the more locals participate in CBT projects, the more favorable their attitudes towards tourism in their area they will be.

The setting of the study is Thailand, a country in which mass tourism has taken over in some places, while in other areas efforts are made to avoid mass visitations and remain sustainable destinations. CBT projects have developed throughout the country, but mostly in the northern provinces of Thailand. Also around some of the coastal zones and islands various CBT projects have been initiated. In this research two communities are selected as case studies and will be compared with each other. The first community is Mae La Na, a small village in the northern highlands of Thailand. Situated in the province Mae Hon Son, the area is not among the most popular areas for tourists to visit. However, for those who

take a little more time to get to know the country, Mae Hong Son is a great destination to find unspoiled nature and culture. The population of Mae La Na are Shan people who are originally from Burma. They mainly live from rice cultivation, but also grow other vegetables. Tourism has developed itself mainly due to the many caves around the village. A CBT project has started in 1999 and is generally regarded as successful in the region. The second community is Koh Yao Noi. This island lies in the southern part of Thailand, in Phang-Nga province. The region is well known as a very touristic area in Thailand. Popular destinations such as Phuket, Koh Phi Phi and Krabi are located around Koh Yao Noi. However, the island has far less visitors than the places around it. The population of Koh Yao Noi consists mostly of fisherman, and the majority is Muslim. The island is regarded as a tropical, quiet getaway and offers some variety in accommodation. A community-based tourism project here started in the 1990s.

To examine the relationship between participation and local satisfaction with tourism outcomes a mixed methods approach, including surveys and interviews, is used. Fieldwork was done over a three months period, including a month at each community. A total of 143 questionnaires are used to measure locals' opinion about the impact of tourism in the community. The scores on impact will be analyzed and compared by peoples' involvement in tourism development, by means of regression analysis. The interviews serve to understand the process of CBT development as well as to understand the impact of tourism in the two areas.

This thesis consist of seven chapters including this introduction. In the next chapter the theoretical framework will be presented. Here we will look in depth at the main concepts of the research, namely tourism impact, community-based tourism and local participation in tourism development and planning. This will result into the analytical framework which shows the research questions and expectations of the study. In Chapter 3 the data and methods will be discussed. In the next two chapters both communities will be introduced separately. For each location will be analyzed how locals feel about tourism impact and how they participate. In Chapter 6 the locations will be compared with each other, and the main research question will be answered. Finally the conclusion will be presented as well as a discussion of the results.



## 2. Theoretical Framework

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In this chapter we will discuss the main concepts of this research. The theoretical framework consists of five sections. In the first section we will take a closer look at the sustainable tourism debate and how CBT can contribute to sustainable tourism. In Section 2.2 we will elaborate on the ways in which local communities can participate in tourism development. In the third part, the impact of (community-based) tourism on communities will be explored. In Section 2.4 will be illustrated what the tourism market in Thailand looks like, and what role CBT has in the Thai tourism industry. In the final part of this chapter the analytical framework is presented, along with the research questions.

### 2.1 Tourism, sustainability and community development

In the 1970s some critique on tourism development was brought forward mainly due to the negative impacts that it can bring to a destination (Scheyvens, 2002). At the same time neopopulist approaches to development emerged, which held that bottom-up, rather than top-down, development is preferred. Development became more about empowerment of communities through knowledge, skills and resources. Neopopulist approaches stressed the importance of an increased role of civil society in tourism development, rather than it being market led, or state controlled (Scheyvens, 2002). This thought brought forward the idea of sustainable tourism.

Hunter (1997) describes sustainable tourism as *'a set of principles, policy prescriptions, and management methods which chart a path for tourism development such that a destination areas' environmental resource base (including natural, built, and cultural features) is protected for future development'* (p.850). The World Tourism Organisation defines sustainable tourism as *'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities'* (UNWTO, 2012). Goodwin (2011) believes that sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable tourism are too abstract and therefore lack meaning and do not encourage action. He uses the term responsible tourism instead to indicate the importance of encouraging and motivating people to take responsibility for sustainable tourism development.

The distinction between environmental, economic and social impacts is widely used within the tourism sustainability debate. Although these three are found to be equally important, or that their importance varies per location, the term sustainability is often associated primarily with the natural environment. The UNWTO (2004) indicates that sustainable tourism guidelines and management practices are relevant to all forms of tourism and in all locations, also including mass tourism destinations and niche segments. Generally sustainable tourism development projects are also referred to as *'alternative tourism'* (Scheyvens, 2002). Brohman (1996) believes that the label alternative tourism is used so frequently that it can mean almost anything except for conventional mass tourism. However, he does acknowledge that there are five recurring features of alternative tourism. The first is that it involves small scale development, usually within villages or small communities. The second common feature of alternative tourism is that local ownership of businesses is preferred, such as family businesses instead

of multinational corporations. Third, local involvement in the local and regional tourism development planning is encouraged in alternative tourism projects. The fourth characteristic is an emphasis on (environmental) sustainability. Finally, Brohman states that alternative tourism development should not harm the local culture, but rather respect local traditions and create opportunities for cultural exchange.

With a special focus on the second, third and final feature of alternative tourism as described by above, we can say that community-based tourism is a perfect example of sustainable/alternative tourism. Brohman (1996) states that *'community-based tourism development would seek to strengthen institutions designed to enhance local participation and to promote the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the popular majority'* (p.60). Hatton (1999) describes CBT as innovative tourism development in local communities, involving individuals, groups, small business owners and local organizations and governments. Through a research comparing various CBT projects in Asia, Hatton found some patterns; many of the CBT projects started with the prospect of economic gain; they are frequently led by the initiator, which is often one person or group; cultural heritage as well as natural environment are the main attractions for tourists; CBT creates employment opportunities for marginalized groups; and finally, cooperation between corporations and local communities is stimulated. Two elements are thus of importance for CBT projects: on one side local participation or even initiation, and on the other side economic, social and environmental sustainability (of which the first would typically stimulate the second).

## **2.2 Community participation in tourism development**

Already in 1985, Murphy stressed the importance local involvement in tourism development. He indicated that the success of tourism relies on the goodwill and cooperation of local people because they are part of the tourism product. He argues that if tourism development and planning does not match with the local aspirations and capabilities, this can destroy the industries' potential. However, there are various ways in which local communities can be involved in tourism activities. Thus, while there is little discussion as to whether or not locals should be involved in tourism development, there is discussion about how they should be involved (Mowfort & Munt, 1998). Because local participation is generally regarded as a contributing factor in the success of development projects, it is now incorporated in policies of many NGOs and governments (Pretty, 1995). Many organizations talk about having locals participate in their programmes, which makes their projects look good on paper. In reality however, there is not one form of participation, and therefore the term may sometimes be used inappropriately. Mowfort and Munt indicate that it is the uncritical manner in which participation is conceptualised and practiced that draws increasing attention (1998).

Several authors have discussed the different ways in which local communities can be involved in tourism activities. Timothy (1999), for instance, has made a distinction between participation in the decision making process and the involvement in the benefits of tourism. Pretty (1995) has created a more refined typology of participation in development projects, mainly focussing on the agricultural sector. This has been useful in many (rural) development projects (Mikkelsen, 2005). Prettys' typology has later been adapted by France (1998) to fit the context of tourism development. Table I provides an overview of their typologies. Both start off from a rather passive form of participation in which the community has

Table I: Overview typologies of participation

Prettys' typology of participation*	Frances' adapted typology of participation**
<p><b>1. Passive participation</b> People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened, with no ability to change it. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.</p>	<p><b>1. Plantation</b> Exploitative, rather than developmental. Possibly paternalist. Payment in kind. No attempt to participate on the part of workers, who are commonly racially and culturally different from 'management' and owners. Purely for material gain of owners.</p>
<p><b>2. Participation in information giving</b> People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers and developers. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.</p>	<p><b>2. Manipulative and passive participation</b> Pretence of participation. Local workers is told what is decided. Some highly centralized multinational corporations based in developing countries. Neo-colonial attitudes prevail through the use of expatriate labour, capital and technology. Employees in tourism in non-menial jobs are likely to be expatriates or non-indigenous residents.</p>
<p><b>3. Participation by consultation</b> People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to views. External professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light peoples responses. The consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.</p>	<p><b>3. Consultation</b> Residents consulted but external definition of problem and control. Operations of some MNC's is devolved from metropolitan centres to local elites.</p>
<p><b>4. Participation for material incentives</b> People participate by providing resources such as labour and land, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. People have no stake in prolonging activities when incentives end.</p>	<p><b>4. Material incentives</b> Locals contribute resources, but have no stake holding. Local employment in tourism services where local expertise is used and locals are hiring in some managerial positions.</p>
<p><b>5. Functional participation</b> People participate by forming groups or committees which are externally initiated. Groups/committees are seen as means to achieve predetermined goals. The groups tend to be dependent on external initiations and facilitators, but may eventually become self-dependent.</p>	<p><b>5. Functional participation</b> Participation seen by outsiders as a way of achieving goals. Major decisions are external. Increasing use of local technology, capital and expertise. Some small, locally owned hotels. Minority élites often the most likely to participate. In larger hotels, some decisions made locally, but according to external forces.</p>
<p><b>6. Interactive participation</b> People participate by being involved in analysis and development of action plans, for example. Participation is seen as a right and not just as a mechanical function. Groups may be formed and together with partner (donor agencies) make use of systematic and structured learning processes. Groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.</p>	<p><b>6. Interactive participation</b> Residents contribute to planning. Groups take control of local decisions. Hotels owned by local people or groups of local people. Locally owned taxis, tour agencies, and restaurants. Maintenance of cultural events for the benefit of residents and tourists.</p>
<p><b>7. Self-mobilization</b> People participate by taking initiatives to change systems independent of external institutions, although the latter can help with an enabling framework. They retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.</p>	<p><b>7. Self-mobilization</b> Independent initiatives. Local people who have accumulated capital from tourism strengthen and extend their activities.</p>

\*Pretty (1995), \*\*France (1998)

no say in the project planning and is not involved in any of the benefits either. Through various steps, including consultation and some other types of partial participation, the highest level of community participation is self-mobilization. In this phase local communities have full control over the decision making process as well as over the execution and benefits. In this case, tourism development is seen as sustainable and the local community is independent.

Based on both these typologies, Tosun (2006) developed another typology for community participation in tourism, including three levels. He distinguishes between coercive, induced and spontaneous participation. Spontaneous participation is here regarded as a bottom-up type of participation, meaning that the ideas and decisions were made at the local level. Coercive and induced participation are both top-down, and can be distinguished mainly by having no control at all (coercive) or having limited choices (induced). Tosun's research focussed on the expected nature of local participation by asking people about the ways in which they would like to participate. He found that different groups have different expectations, which often conflict with each other. In his earlier research Tosun (2000) also explains that participation is ideal when power shifts to people who are originally excluded.

There are several constraints to community participation in tourism activities (Koch, 1997; Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens, 2002; Timothy, 1999). Scheyvens (2002) provides two arguments as to why the involvement of local communities in tourism development is often difficult. The first is that communities are heterogeneous (Blackstock, 2005). A community consists of many different kinds of people, often with unequal positions and different aspirations. This leads to an unequal opportunity of community members to participate in tourism activities. Community members with a higher status are more likely to participate in tourism development, and will not always act in the best interest of other community members. The question that thus remains is who and how many people in the local community should participate (Tosun, 2006). The second difficulty identified by Scheyvens is that communities frequently lack information, resources and power. This makes it especially difficult to reach the market. The community is thus dependent on other stakeholders, and therefore vulnerable. Based on a research of tourism ventures in South Africa, Koch (1997) identifies the same and two other constraints to participation, which are applicable to multiple settings. Communities often do not have ownership over the natural resources and land. Thus when land is owned by outsiders, locals are limited by the owners. Another constraint is that most poor communities have difficulties with attracting capital or resources to build the facilities and infrastructure that is necessary for tourism development.

A more profound analysis of the limitations to community participation was done by Tosun (2000). He distinguishes between three general categories of limitations. First, there are limitations at the operational level. This includes the centralization of tourism administration which makes it too difficult for the locals to become involved, as well as a lack of coordination due to fragmentation in the tourism industry. Structural limitations in community participation in tourism development are the second type. One of the structural limitations is the attitudes of professionals who are frequently unwilling to negotiate with locals, or locals are not in the position to negotiate with them properly. Another structural limitation is that there frequently does not exist a legal system in developing countries to protect the rights of local communities. Other structural limitations include some of the already discussed problems, such as the lack of human and financial resources and the dominance of the elite in

tourism development. Furthermore, community participation is time consuming and costs relatively a lot of money. The final set of constraints as defined by Tosun are the cultural limitations, which relate to the low level of awareness of the local community concerning the social-cultural, economic and political consequences of tourism development. The incentive for participation is therefore relatively low. In a research on local participation in tourism planning in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Timothy (1999) found that many locals did not find it necessary to be involved in tourism planning.

In CBT projects, community participation ought to be high. As Scheyvens (2002) states, *'CBT ventures are those in which members of local communities have a high degree of control over the activities taking place, and a significant proportion of the economic benefits accrue to them'*. One would expect that most CBT projects would thus match the self-mobilization type of participation as defined by Pretty (1995) or France (1998). However, as Goodwin (2011) indicates, CBT projects have rarely been critically reviewed, and the idea that communities have full participation is not a given. Rather he indicates that many of these projects might still be dependent, for instance, on donor agencies. Research by Mitchell and Muckosy (2008) on CBT ventures in Latin America also shows that many projects are failing to achieve their goals because the costs do not outweigh the revenues. Local communities therefore become vulnerable.

To sum up, there are many ways in which the local community can be involved in tourism planning and development. Authors generally agree that locals should be involved in these processes, but do not know what is the best way for them to participate. Of course, this also depends on local situations, including the other stakeholders and the limitations that locals have to deal with. While in CBT projects the local participation is supposed to be high, this is not always the case.

### **2.3 Taking a closer look at tourism impacts**

It is generally understood that tourism development affects local communities. While tourism activities can also be very beneficial at the national level through foreign earnings (Hall & Lew, 2009) among others, the focus in this research is on the local level impacts, or more specifically the perceived impacts. Rather than looking at actual impact indicators, such as real income or environmental degradation, this study focuses on the attitudes of residents towards tourism development in their community. As Telfer and Sharpley (2008) indicate, the perception of the tourism environment varies significantly across groups. When tourists for instance might value an authentic environment, the local community might be more interested in exploiting a certain attraction for economic gains. Of course, the opposite also happens; locals want to protect places that are sacred by keeping them from large groups of tourists. Again, it is important to note that the local community is not a homogeneous group, neither are tourists. Different interest and expectations will shape the way in which tourism development is perceived.

To find out what local attitudes towards tourism development are, it is necessary to gain some understanding of the possible impact of tourism development on a community. Generally, three types of impact are distinguished in the field of tourism development; Economic, socio-cultural and environmental impact (Hall & Lew, 2009; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). While the study of the impact of tourism is not a new one, it remains relevant because of the rapid innovations in the industry. An

example is the rise of alternative types of tourism as discussed previously, which will be more appropriate for community development. Also the relation between tourism and development is expressed in the outcomes of tourism and therefore cannot be ignored. These outcomes may be positive or negative depending on many factors such as tourist attitudes, tourism development processes, economic and political structures, etc. (Hall & Lew, 2009). The next paragraphs will discuss the three types of impact in more detail, with a specific focus on the potential outcomes for community development.

Economic impacts are often the most tangible kind of impacts. At the local level, the most important economic benefit is income generation. Tourism provides an income for any individual or business that provides goods or services for tourists. This includes hotels, restaurants, bars, transport and entertainment, etc. All the owners and employees in these businesses gain directly from the tourism industry. Indirectly, however, many more people gain their income (partly) from the tourism industry (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Suppliers of food, water and electricity to hotels and restaurants, as well as construction workers, for instance, gain an income through tourism. Also those who earn their money with tourism activities might spend their money within the community again, causing the so called 'multiplier effect'. Tourism activities are mostly very labour intensive and often require low levels of skills. Because of the seasonal character of tourism, many jobs might be provided to certain groups of people such as students or the elderly (Bull, 1995). Besides, foreign ownership of tourism businesses, which is often typical in developing countries, can cause high levels of leakage (Telfer & Wall, 2000; Torres, 2003; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). The tourism industry also competes with other economic sectors, such as agriculture. While in some destinations locals might be completely dependent on the tourism industry for their income, in other places it might provide a nice way to gain some extra earnings besides regular income. Tourism development may also cause inflation. Shops and restaurants might increase their prices, and land and housing might become more expensive as well. For the local community this might result into a relative drop of purchasing power, unless the income throughout the community has increased accordingly.

Social or cultural impacts are usually experienced in the encounter between hosts and guests. They tend to be greater in developing countries because of the large differences in cultural and economic characteristics between local residents and (Western) tourists. While tourism has the potential to achieve greater international understanding and harmony (WTO, in Telfer & Sharpley, 2008), it is usually better known for its negative impacts. The tourism industry is a contributor to globalization, creating all kinds of opportunities for local communities as well as potential loss of cultural traits. The severity of the socio-cultural impacts which are experienced tend to be influenced by the amount and type of visitors, the pace of tourism development and the relative importance of the industry. The host-guest relationship is important for all these encounters (Lea, 1988; Hall & Lew, 2009).

Potential positive social impacts include the improvement of infrastructure, the physical environment, and facilities such as hospitals. Those facilities, which are introduced for tourists, can also be used by the local population. The encounter between hosts and guests can also become a mutual learning experience. Especially in small communities which are segregated from the outside world, the community can be positively influenced by connections and experiences from outside their own cultural

environment. Social capital is thus stimulated, not only by connections with guests, but also with each other. The tourism industry may empower marginalized groups, such as women or indigenous people, through employment and cultural connections (Scheyvens, 2002). Some possible negative impacts are an increase of crime (frequently specifically aimed at tourists) and sex tourism (Hall & Lew, 2009). Loss of cultural traits or the degradation of sacred places or rituals are potential negative impacts as well. However, in some cases cultural traits are preserved because tourists find them interesting, or because locals feel pride to show them (Hall & Lew, 2009).

The tourism industry is well known for having disastrous effects on the natural environment. Many nature based tourism activities, such as diving and hiking, might harm to the natural environment, especially when large numbers of tourists are visiting the sights (UNWTO, 1998). Diving activities for instance may result into the degradation of the coral reef. Pollution by irresponsible tourists, such as litter on the beach or in forests, also harms the natural environment visibly. It often is the local population that knows the environments best, and might be able to know best what is good for the environment. Like with cultural monuments and traits, the environment might also be either harmed or protected as a result of tourism, depending on the type of development and the regulations. Regulated parks can for instance control the amount of visitors to an area and at the same time earn some money for preservation and maintenance. Finally, the tourism industry causes noise, air and visibility pollution. The construction of resorts and other tourist facilities may for instance cause a degradation of the environment in the eyes of locals. Noise and air pollution is caused by the increased use of transportation.

Each destination is unique and experiences a different set of impacts. Depending on these impacts, communities might respond differently to tourism development. Several authors have studied the responses of communities and came up with different frameworks to understand these responses. Already in 1975, Doxey came with an irritation index, also called 'irridex', which specifically focuses on the attitude of locals towards tourists. He argues that these attitudes change according the stage of tourism development in the area. While tourists are first welcomed enthusiastically, attitudes change into apathy, annoyance and finally even aggression. A highly developed tourism destination is, according to Doxey, more likely to show irritation. This framework receives only partial empirical confirmation. Weaver and Opperman (2000) criticize the model for perceiving the community as an homogeneous entity. Irandu (2004) also indicates that the reaction towards tourists is influenced by the participation in the tourism development process, and the degree to which the community enjoys the economic benefits of tourism. Communities which rely on tourists will be less likely to show irritation. Other frameworks of community attitudes towards tourism (Dogan, 1989; Ap & Crompton, 1993) also show a continuum from acceptance to resistance.

## **2.4 The tourism industry and CBT in Thailand**

Thailand is a popular destination for travellers. The country has seen large increases in tourist arrivals in the last three decades, and still the number of international arrivals is rising. In 2009, the total number of international tourist arrivals was close to 14.2 million, while in 2010 this was already close to 15.9 (World Bank, 2010). Over 50% of these visitors are from East Asia and almost 28% come from Europe.

Needless to say, the tourism industry brings large revenues. In 2011, tourism revenues in Thailand accounted for 760 billion Thai Baht, which is an approximated 7.1% of the Gross Domestic Product (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2012). Tourism is therefore an important economic contributor in Thailand, which facilitates many jobs.

While a large part of the tourism industry in Thailand consists of business travellers as well as the so called VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourists, the country is also known to have large resorts and to attract backpackers (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2012). The large number of visitors has boosted the tourism infrastructure throughout many parts of the country. The popularity of Thailand as a holiday destination can be attributed to its beautiful scenery (including beaches and islands in the South and forest in the northern parts), the friendly people (Thailand is often referred to as 'land of the smiles'), and the relatively cheap facilities. Bangkok, Chiang Mai and some other cities also draw many tourists because of their cultural attractions such as temples and festivals.

However, the tourism industry in Thailand has not only brought positive developments. One major concern is sex tourism, for which Thailand is well known. Bangkok and Pattaya both have large sex industries, which attract many tourists. While this sex industry already existed before the large touristic developments, it has increased due to tourism and became a major tourist attraction to many. The sex industry in Thailand has a negative image, mainly because of the high number of child prostitution, poor working conditions, and the forced prostitution of women from poor rural areas to provide for their family. Although prostitution is officially illegal in Thailand, little efforts are made by authorities to enforce the laws against prostitution.

A second major concern in tourism development in Thailand is overcrowding, which leads to environmental degradation. Due to fast pace of tourism development in the coastal areas, little attention was paid to the negative environmental consequences, such as deforestation and soil erosion. Due to recreational activities such as diving and snorkelling, as well as fishing activities, pressure is put on the famous Thai coral reef areas. In the last two decades the Thai government has made more regulations for the use of natural resources. National parks, both in the coastal areas and the mainland, have been created to protect the environment. Many areas in Thailand are also regarded as being 'visually' spoilt because of the high numbers of tourists, hotels, bars and restaurants. Islands which were once peaceful getaways are now highly developed touristic areas. However, also within the mass tourism areas in Thailand, like Phuket, efforts are made to involve communities in tourism activities. Kontogeorgopoulos for instance found that some tour operators involved in community-based ecotourism activities settle in mass tourist destinations on purpose (2005). He also concludes that such practices are successful, even though there are many trade-offs.

In the last decade some external factors also influenced Thailand's tourism industry. The SARS outbreak in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for instance caused a temporary drop in tourism arrivals and receipts. The Tsunami in December 2004 also had a great impact on the tourism industry. Large parts of the tourism facilities, such as roads and hotels in the touristic parts of Thailand, such as Phuket, needed to be rebuild. However, the amount of visitors only decreased with 1% in 2005 (World Bank). Even more recently political unrest (in 2009 and 2010) and floods (in 2011) have caused some negative travel



advises to Thailand by authorities. While this led to a decrease in tourist arrivals in some months (World Bank, 2010), the overall tourism industry does not seem to be affected negatively.

Tourism development in developing countries often proceeds in an ad hoc way (Tosun & Jenkins, 1998), meaning that there is a lack of planning and coordination. Kontogeorgopoulos and Chulikavit found that the barriers to starting a tour operator or travel agency in Thailand are extremely low (2010). Tourism in Thailand is characterized by the fast pace of development, leading to both positive and negative impacts. While little efforts were made to make tourism development sustainable when Thailand first started to attract large groups of tourists, sustainability now becomes increasingly important. The Tourism Authority Thailand (TAT), also pays attention to sustainable tourism development by providing training to different actors in the tourism industry in Thailand.

The development of many community-based tourism projects also shows the demand for more sustainable tourism activities, both by the local community and tourists. CBT is especially popular in the northern part of Thailand, in the provinces Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. Here, activities such as hill tribe home stays are popular, as well as trekking. CBT is thus combined with nature-, and culture-based tourism. In the southern parts of Thailand, such as the Andaman coast area, also many CBT projects are developed. In these locations, beach tourism is frequently combined with home stays. There are several organizations which coordinate or assist the development of CBT projects. The community-based tourism institute (CBT-i) is a country-wide organization which works together with communities and the government. It aims at gaining and sharing skills and knowledge to help communities with the development of tourism in a way that is beneficial to them. They do this by, among other things, research and training. There are also several regional organizations that provide similar services, such as the northern Thailand community-based tourism network (CBT-N) and the north Andaman community tourism network (N-ACT). In general they have the same goal, which is to empower communities in sustainable tourism development.

## 2.5 Analytical Framework

In this final section of the theoretical framework we will formulate the research questions. These questions are based on the analytical framework, which is shown in Figure I. All concepts of the analytical framework were discussed in the previous sections. We find the two main concepts of the research in the circles; *community participation* and *satisfaction with CBT project*. The latter will also simply be referred to as tourism impact or impact satisfaction throughout this thesis.

Based on the previous information we can start off with a couple of general assumptions. First, it is assumed that tourism activities can stimulate community development. However, local participation in tourism development is necessary to create the desired outcomes for communities. The level and type of participation matters. It is questioned whether a higher level participation will automatically lead to better results. As several authors have argued (Koch, 1997; Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens, 2002; Timothy, 1999), there are many constraints to local participation in tourism development. Tourism development projects might therefore even be more successful with the involvement of external stakeholders, even if this reduces the level of participation of the local community.

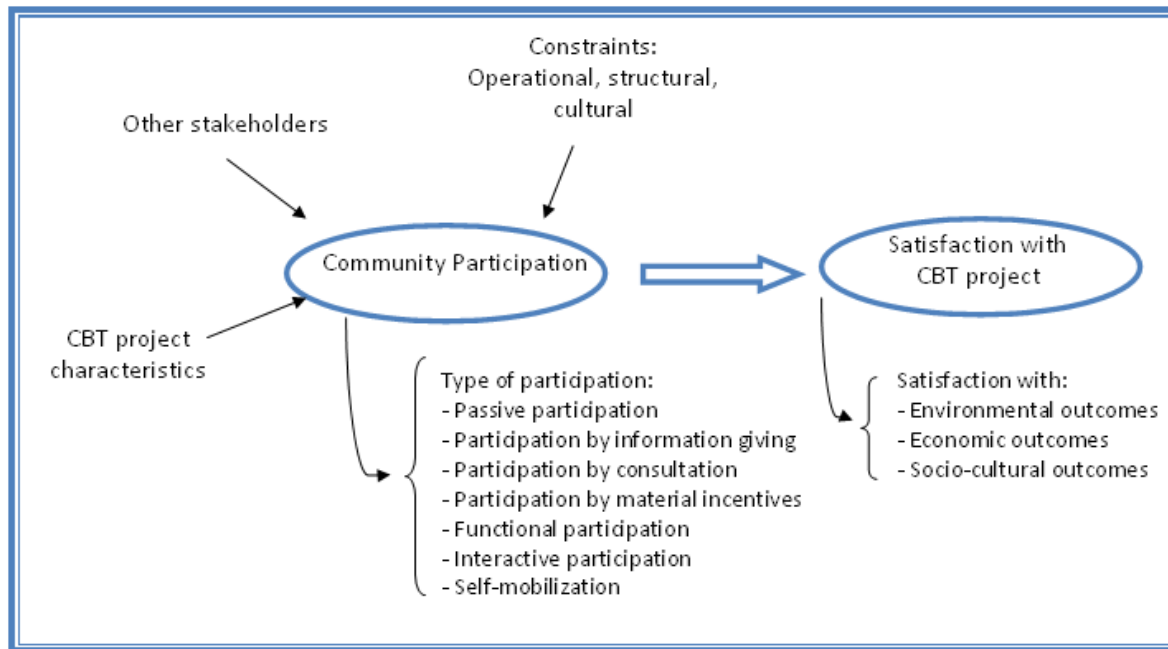


Figure I: Conceptual framework

The purpose of this research is to examine the exact link between the type of participation of the local community in tourism development, and the local's perception on the outcomes of the tourism project. The main research question of this thesis reads as follows; *'How does the type of local participation in community-based tourism projects influence the satisfaction of the local population with the outcomes of tourism development?'*. This main question is supported by five sub questions, which are now discussed one by one.

1. *What are the characteristics of the CBT projects?*

In this first question, the general nature of the CBT project is explored. Of importance are the nature and scope of the tourism project, as well as the activities which are enjoyed by tourists. Furthermore, the development process of the CBT project will be studied, including possible struggles.

2. *Who are the stakeholders in the CBT projects and what are their roles?*

In the second sub-question, the actors who are involved in the project and their roles will be explored. These actors range from organizations such as the CBT-I, to any regional organization which aims at assisting CBT initiatives, as well as the government, tour operators, NGOs and other businesses. Elements that will be looked at when determining what their role is, are whether they have invested money, if they are still involved, where they are from and what they gain from the project.

3. *What are the constraints to local participation in the CBT projects?*

In addition to the previous question about actors, the third sub-question will address the constraints for the local community to participate in tourism development. The three different sets of constraints identified by Tosun (2000), operational, structural and cultural, will be used to determine how local participation is limited.

4. *Which type/s of local participation in CBT projects is/are shown by the local community?*

In the fourth sub question, the exact type of participation of community members is studied. This is done two ways. First, because communities should not be regarded as a homogeneous group, individual participation will be studied. Individual community members were asked whether they have participated in meetings, decision making or consultation concerning tourism development. Second, the type of participation of the community as a whole is determined with use of Prettys' framework (1995).

5. *Which social, economic and environmental impacts are encountered in the CBT projects, and how satisfied is the local community with these impacts?*

The final sub question relates to the satisfaction with the outcomes of tourism development. It should be noted that the *satisfaction* with the tourism outcomes is measured as the dependent variable, and not the actual outcomes. Community members are thus asked whether they are satisfied with CBT development regarding several environmental, economic and social-cultural outcomes.

## 3. Data and methods

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In this chapter we will take a look at the methods that are used for this study. Fieldwork has been done in a mixed methods approach, including interviews and questionnaires. Together they serve to answer the main research question. In Section 3.1 we will take a closer look at the mixed method approach of the research. In the next section we will take a closer look at the quantitative part of the research, which are the questionnaires. We will end in Section 3.3 with the interviews.

### 3.1 A mixed methods approach

This study uses a mixed methods research design through using quantitative and qualitative data. A mixed methods research design has many advantages, the main one being that it gives the opportunity of triangulation (Mikkelsen, 2005). Two main methods are used: questionnaires and interviews. These two methods will be further discussed in section 3.2 and 3.3. All data is gathered by the researcher herself during eleven weeks of fieldwork (March to June 2012). Four weeks were spend on each location, and next to that some time was spend in cities like Bangkok, Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai to arrange practicalities, such as translations, printing and contacts.

By staying within the community, observations of the local community and their participation in tourism activities were also made. However, within this study, observation is not used as an official method, but minor references to observations are sometimes included. Also documents and information on websites about tourism development in the regions are used for analysis. Special attention in the document study is paid on the roles of different actors and especially the role of the local community. This also formed a base for the interviews that were held later on.

The two communities, Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi, were selected because of several reasons. First, both were small enough to get a good impression of the location in the limited time frame of this research. Secondly, both communities initially had very similar goals with their CBT projects, making it easier to compare the perceived outcomes. Another criteria that was essential in the selection of the communities was the fact that they are involved in CBT development for a period between 10 and 20 years. This way the community members have had enough time to notice the effects of tourism development and also still know how life was before it.

### 3.2 Questionnaires

The main part of the analysis in this study is formed by the questionnaire. It serves to test the analytical model directly, or more specifically to test the relation between community participation and the perceived impact of the project. The questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix I, consists of three parts. First, background characteristics of the respondents such as age, occupation, and income were asked. These background characteristics serve as control variables in the analysis. The second part serves to measure respondents' involvement in the tourism industry and participation in various aspects of planning and development of tourism in their community. This part will help to answer sub-question

number four, as well as the main research question. The final part of the questionnaire concerns peoples' opinion about the impact of tourism on their community, which will both help to answer sub-question number five and the main research question.

Exactly the same questionnaire has been executed in both Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi. A total of 150 respondents (59 in Mae La Na and 91 in Koh Yao Noi) completed the questionnaire. However, after removing those respondents who had too many missing values on important questions 58 valid cases remained in Mae La Na and 85 in Koh Yao Noi. Respondents were selected randomly throughout the communities. The selection has created representative sample of men and women with a large spread of different ages. In Chapter 4 and 5 we will take a closer look at the samples of Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi respectively (sections 4.1.3 and 5.1.3). For the purpose of comparing groups who differ in participation it has been tried to include an approximately equal amount of respondents who are involved in tourism development and who are not. The questionnaire was translated into Thai by a local language institute based in Chiang Mai. While the questionnaire has been designed by the researcher, the Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I) has added and reformulated some questions and statements. The same organization also offered help with the practicalities of translators and contact persons in the communities. In both locations someone from the local CBT group helped finding respondents. While in general respondents filled in the questionnaire by themselves, a member of the CBT group was there to help the respondents if they had any questions. In Mae La Na not all respondents were able to read, and some did not speak Thai, but the local Shan language. Therefore the CBT member took the questionnaires orally.

Locals' satisfaction with tourism outcomes is the dependent variable in this research. In the questionnaire this is measured through a variety of statements with Likert-scale answer categories ranging from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'. The statements are largely based on existing research on residents' attitudes towards tourism development (Hu, Chancellor & Cole, 2011; Choi & Sirikaya, 2005; Nepal, 2008; Ap, 1992). For those statements which were formulated negatively, the answers have been recoded to point them in the same direction. Meaning that if someone strongly disagrees with a negative statement, this persons' response of 1 is recoded to 5. This way, we can state that in any case, the higher the score, the more positive someone evaluated tourism impact. Four statements were included to measure *economic impact*, three for *environmental impact* and twelve for *social impact*. Average scores on these types of impact were calculated with a minimum requirement on the amount of statements that were answered by the respondents. This means that, for instance, for the average score on *environmental impact* respondents needed to have a valid score on at least two out of three statements. If not, the value was missing for this variable and the respondent has been removed. For the calculation of the *economic impact* at least 3 statements need to be answered and for *social impact* at least 8. The reliability of the scales was tested with the Cronbachs Alpha, resulting into a ,769 for *environmental impact*, a ,672 for *economic impact* and ,768 for *social impact*. This indicates that they are sufficiently reliable to be used for analysis<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Because the sample sizes and relatively small number of items (Cortina, 1993) a minimum Cronbachs Alpha of ,600 was used. For both environmental and economic impact statements were deleted to improve the reliability.

Besides the measurements on the three separate types of impact, also a more general statement (*I believe that tourism development in my community has brought more advantages than disadvantages*) is included. The mean of the three types of impact and this general impact statement is used as the overall measurement of *tourism impact*. The Cronbachs Alpha for this scale is ,676. Scores on all statements, as well as the mean scores per type of impact and the overall impact, can be viewed separately for each community in Tables IV and VII in Chapter 4 and 5, as well as in the overview table in Appendix III.

Local participation in CBT development is measured through a set of six questions. The first question (number 7 in the questionnaire) concerns the general idea whether or not people are in some way working in the tourism industry in their community. The answer categories to this question include 'no', or incase the respondent does work in the tourism industry, which type of work they have. The original questionnaire contains nine possible tourism professions ('accommodation', 'guide', 'shop', 'restaurant', 'traditional performance', 'cooking', 'transportation', 'occupational groups' or 'other'). Multiple answers to this question were possible. For the analysis the categories are recoded into 'not working in tourism', 'accommodation', 'guide', 'shop/restaurant', 'other' and 'multiple tourism professions'. The latter category indicates that people work in several different tourism related jobs, and the category 'other' includes the professions traditional performance, cooking, transportation and occupational groups.

The second variable (question no. 8) concerning local participation, *tourists contact*, is whether people have direct contact with tourists. This question could be answered with the categories 'yes, on average more than once a week', 'yes, but less than once a week', 'yes, monthly', 'yes, rarely' and 'no, never'. The next variable, *meeting*, (no. 9) is a question about whether locals have been involved in any type of meeting where they discussed tourism development in the community. The answer categories are 'yes, many times', 'yes, but only once or twice', and 'no, never'. The fourth variable, *opinion*, (no. 10) offers the same categories, and asks the question whether someone has been asked about his/her opinion on tourism by anyone who plans tourism development. The next variable, *informed*, (no. 11) is a question about whether people have been informed when major decisions concerning tourism development were made, and had three answer categories slightly different from the previous two variables. These are 'yes, always or most of the time', 'yes, sometimes' and 'no, never'.

These first five variables are combined into the variable *participation*. This variable adds up recoded responses and then makes a value between zero and twelve in which twelve is the maximum participation, and zero means no participation at all. Respondents receive zero when they do not work in tourism, two when they do have a tourism profession and four when they work in the tourism industry in multiple ways. Respondents in the first and second category of *tourist contact* have another two points on the variable participation, one point when they answered the third and fourth category, and zero on the fifth category that indicated no contact. For the other three variables counts that two points are added to variable participation if respondents answered the first category, one on the second and zero on the last variable.

Finally two statements concerning participation are added, and could be answered according to the Likert-scale as used for the measurement of impact, namely from 1, 'strongly disagree', to 5, 'strongly

agree'. The first statement is 'I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community', and the variable is called *community control*. The second statement is 'I believe that I personally have control over tourism development in my community', with the variable name *personal control*.

The background characteristics in the questionnaire include *age, gender, occupation, income*, and for how long the respondent is *living in Mae La Na or Koh Yao Noi*. *Age* is included as the actual age at the time of the questionnaire. For *occupation* respondents were able to choose from 'currently not employed', 'farming/fishing', 'services', 'student', and 'other profession'. In the questionnaire was asked for the absolute income of people per month and per year. This was later recoded into categories of approximately equal spread of respondents. The categories are in Baht per year, and include '0 to 19.999', '20.000-39.999', '40.000-59.999', '60.000-79.999', '80.000-99.999', '100.000-149.999', '>149.999', and 'missing'. The final variable is for how long respondents live in their community and could be answered with 'all my life', 'more than 20 years', 'less than 20 years', and 'less than 10 years'.

The results of the individual variables will be presented in chapters 4 and 5 for Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi respectively. In Chapter 6 the relationship between local participation and perceived tourism impact is studied in detail. This is done by several regression analyses. As a dependent variable we will first take a look at the separate types of impact. Later on *overall impact* serves as the dependent variable. Each regression analysis will be performed for each location separately as well for both locations together. An interaction variable between *location* and *participation* is included in the overall model to find out whether participation has a significantly different effect for each location. The background characteristics serve as control variables.

### 3.3 Interviews

Interviews form the qualitative part of the research methods. They were held with different actors of tourism development in the two communities. In total ten interviews were completed in Mae La Na and four in Koh Yao Noi. A list of respondents with their main characteristics can be found in Appendix II. They will also be introduced for Koh Yao Noi and Mae La Na separately in Chapter 4 and 5. Respondents are referred to by their names or functions. In some cases the names are real, in other cases they are nicknames (the use of nicknames is very common in Thailand). Among the respondents are community leaders, CBT coordinators, CBT members, and random villagers. Most of the interviews were held after the questionnaire had been completed. The respondents were selected because of their role in tourism development in the community. Most respondents of the interviews have also completed the questionnaire.

The interviews were based on semi-structured interview guides in which the questions were based on the function of the respondents. This means that the interview is structured by means of a list of topics, including some more specific questions. Language was a large limitation when completing the interviews. In both communities English is not well known, and therefore the use of an interpreter was necessary. As the locations are far from each other, there were two interpreters involved. In Mae La Na this was the owner of a tour operator, and in Koh Yao Noi it was the CBT coordinator. All interviews

were recorded (each respondent with permission) and transcribed, after which they were analyzed through a coding system.

The interviews serve to gain a better understanding of tourism development processes in the community. Specific attention was paid to the ways in which respondents are participating. Also the interviews served to make an overview of tourism impacts. The outcomes are used throughout chapters 4, 5, and 6. In some cases they will be used to strengthen the outcomes of the questionnaire, in other cases to further analyze the ways of local participation. The interviews are used for all sub-questions of this research.



## 4. Mae La Na

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In this chapter we will zoom into the first community of this research: Ban Mae La Na. After a general introduction of the community we will look at what it has to offer for tourists, and who the respondents in the research are. In the next part we will see how the community members are participating in tourism planning and development in their village and which other actors are of importance for tourism in Mae La Na. In the third section the social, economic, and environmental impact will be discussed. A short conclusion will close this chapter.

### 4.1 Introduction of Mae La Na

The goal of this first sub-section is to get a general idea of what the community of Mae La Na looks like. This is important background information for the following two sections concerning local participation and tourism impact. In this section we will start off with a description of the communities' geographical and cultural features. Then we will continue with a short description of tourism development in Mae La Na and in its surrounding area, and what the current state of tourism development is. Finally the respondents of the survey and interviews are introduced.

#### 4.1.1 Mae La Na: the community

Mae La Na, also referred to as Ban Mae La Na (Ban means village), is a small village in the northwest province Mae Hong Son. It is situated about 18 kilometers from the nearest large town Pang Ma Pha (Soppong), and about 50 kilometers in the other direction lies the provincial capital Mae Hong Son. Mae La Na lies close to the Burmese border in a mountainous area. The only access to the village is through a dirt road with steep slopes. A map of the area can be found in Appendix IV. Like the rest of Thailand, Mae La Na has roughly two seasons. The wet season starts in May and lasts till September. The dry season, from October to April, is also referred to as the summer. During the end of the dry season temperatures get up to 40 degrees Celsius. However, because of its location in the mountains, the nights remain relatively cool.

The population in Mae La Na are Shan people, like in the majority of Mae Hong Son province. The Shan people are originally migrants from Burma. There are about 5 to 7 million Shan people, of which it is expected that about 2 million Shan people live in Thailand nowadays (Shan Outreach Centre, 2010), mainly in the northern part. The Shan observe Buddhist beliefs and ways of living, but also have their own cultural traditions. They also have their own language and writing. The Shan community has come to live in Mae La Na over 100 years ago.

Approximately 600 people currently live in Mae La Na, belonging to 150 households. The main occupation of the villagers is farming. The main crop growing here is rice, which is harvested once a year in December. However, other crops, like beans, maize and sesame, are also grown on large scale. Besides that, the villagers also grow a wide range of fruits and vegetables for private consumption. Therefore they are almost self-sufficient. The village has a Buddhist temple, a school with basic education, a small hospital, and a few small shops where basic products can be bought. Although

electricity is available throughout the village, not every household makes use of it. Running water is scarcely available. Although Mae La Na is small and isolated, most basic facilities can be found here. Community members therefore generally stay within the village, with the exception of students.

#### **4.1.2 Tourism development and attractions in Mae La Na**

Mae La Na is located in a corner of Thailand which is relatively little visited by tourists. This is partly due to the remote location which can only be accessed by curvy roads through the mountains. Although both the city of Mae Hong Son and Pai (approximately 40 km from Mae La Na) can also be reached by air transportation, these routes are not frequently used<sup>2</sup>. Most tourists that visit the north of Thailand stay close to the more touristic places, such as Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai. Also group travels usually stick to these places. The people who visit Mae Hong Son province are frequently nature and/or culture lovers looking for a more authentic Thailand. Mae Hong Son provides relatively unspoiled nature which makes it an ideal location for hiking and climbing trips. Besides that, there are many different hilltribes living in the province which gives the opportunity for tourists to learn about traditional Thai culture.

There are various popular tourist attractions in the province Mae Hong Son. One of these are the so called 'long-neck'<sup>3</sup> Karen villages. There are three of these villages near Mae Hong Son city, which were originally refugee camps from Burma. They can be visited on day or half day trips. Another attraction are the many Buddhist temples, which in this area often have some Burmese influences and are therefore slightly different from those in other Thai places. A route that is frequently taken through the area by tourists is the so called Mae Hong Son loop, which leads from Chiang Mai up north through Pai, Soppong to Mae Hong Son, and can then be continued by a southern route back to Chiang Mai. The route is known for its many good viewpoints and curves. This route also passes the Mae La Na cave, a popular stop on the way. The cave can only be reached by passing through the village Mae La Na. It is because of this cave that the first tourists have started to come here since 1985. Mae La Na cave is 12 kilometers long and has a river running through it. It can be explored till the end, which makes a full day tour. Other caves around it are also open for visitors, such as the Pa Ka Rang (coral) cave, Petch (diamond) cave, and Khai Mook (pearl) cave.

The first tourists started to visit Mae La Na in 1985. They usually came with guided tours from tour operators from outside Mae La Na. There was little to no communication between the tour operators and the community members. The guides had only little knowledge about the communities' cultural traditions and way of life. Part of the reason that the inhabitants of Mae La Na were not involved in guiding tourists through the caves was that they believed that there was some sort of sacred power or ghost present in the cave. It was believed that a person would have bad luck when they went into the cave, or that they might not return at all. Therefore, the villagers never entered the caves and did not know anything about it. It were only people from outside Mae La Na that explored the caves and their surroundings.

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<sup>2</sup> According to a respondent (no.1) the airfare for the route between Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai has gone up in the last 12 years from 350 Baht (approx. 9 Euro) to 1500 Baht, making the trip almost five times more expensive.

<sup>3</sup> The Karen minority is generally associated with the sub-group of long-neck women, who wear brass rings on their necks. This makes their necks look longer.

From 1994 on locals became more involved in tourism development in and around Mae La Na. A cause of this was that the villagers first started to explore the caves together with a priest who came to live nearby. They found beautiful rock formations and felt comfortable inside the cave. However, they also found that some parts of the cave were already damaged by tourists. There were paintings inside the cave and some stalactites or stalagmites were broken. To protect the cave from further damage a group of people in Mae La Na decided to form a community based tourism group which provided guided cave tours. However, without any experience, this did not last long. Tourists still visited the caves, but with tour guides from outside.

In 1999 the effort for community-based tourism was revitalized by a group leader. This time financial support was requested from the Project for Recovery of Life and Culture (PRLC) in Mae Hong Son. Unfortunately the project failed again quickly due to the small number of tourists that were attracted. A year later the CBT group again contacted the Project for Recovery of Life and Culture, this time for consultation. Also contacts were made with government agencies and the private sector to strengthen knowledge and capacity. The CBT group now also actively participated in capacity building activities such as cross-learning experiences and study trips to other communities with CBT projects. The members of the CBT group gained more understanding of CBT management and were able to set up proper activities for tourists, which included tour guide and a homestay service. They also applied PR techniques to attract tourists. From 2001 until now there has been an increase in tourist visits to Mae La Na.

Nowadays Mae La Na has a well-organized tourism infrastructure. The community has about 30 families who participate in the homestay program, of which most can take about 2 to 4 guests in their house. Tourists can expect very basic facilities. Usually a mattress is placed on the living room floor. Also, the host families can prepare 3 meals a day. The homestays in Mae La Na have obtained the national Homestay Standard, which means that they offer sufficient comfort and cleanliness for their guests. Besides the homestay program there is also a small bungalow resort, called the Garden Home guesthouse. This guesthouse is operated separately from the CBT group. The six bungalows are simple, but offer a little more comfort and privacy than the homestays. These bungalows provide the only hot showers in the village.

While the caves are still the most popular attraction in Mae La Na, the community has created several other activities for tourists. There is a traditional dancing group, a weaving group and a traditional medicine group, which are all part of the CBT group. The weaving group, for instance, also sells their products (mainly scarves) to tourists. It is also possible to receive traditional Thai massages. Besides cave tours, the local guides provide hikes through the mountains. In the right season tourists are encouraged to help the locals with the rice cultivation or harvest as a volunteer. Another possibility for volunteering is by teaching English at the school.

Although there are no exact numbers known about the amount of tourists visiting Mae La Na, there are some indicators. The owner of the Garden Home guesthouse, for instance, mentioned she has received at least one guest each night since January till April, which was when I spoke with her. Two of the women who join the homestay program indicated they had received guests about six times in that same period. Both the homestay program and the guesthouse are mentioned in several guidebooks, among

which the Lonely Planet (Williams, 2012) and the French popular guidebook Guide du Routard (Guide du Routard, 2011).

Table II: General characteristics of respondents in Mae La Na

Characteristic	Mean	Min	Max
Age	37,9	15	88
Income (in Baht per year)	38.568,-	5000,-	200.000,-
Characteristic	No.resp.	%	
Gender	<i>Male</i>	28	48,3
	<i>Female</i>	30	51,7
Income (category)	<i>0-19.999,-</i>	14	24,1
	<i>20.000,- - 39.999,-</i>	13	22,4
	<i>40.000,- - 59.999,-</i>	2	3,4
	<i>60.000,- - 79.999,-</i>	3	5,3
	<i>80.000,- - 99.999,-</i>	4	6,9
	<i>100.000,- - 149.999,-</i>	1	1,7
	<i>&gt;149.999,-</i>	1	1,7
	<i>Missing</i>	20	34,5
Profession	<i>Currently not employed</i>	1	1,7
	<i>Farming / fishing</i>	27	46,6
	<i>Services</i>	16	27,6
	<i>Student</i>	9	8,6
	<i>Other profession</i>	5	8,6
Live in Mae La Na	<i>All life</i>	43	74,1
	<i>More than 20 years</i>	11	19,0
	<i>Less than 20 years</i>	4	6,9
	<i>Less than 10 years</i>	0	0,0
Work in tourism	<i>Nothing</i>	19	32,8
	<i>Accommodation</i>	16	27,6
	<i>Guide</i>	4	6,9
	<i>Shop / restaurant</i>	3	5,2
	<i>Other*</i>	4	6,9
	<i>Multiple activities</i>	12	20,7

*N=58, \*Other includes traditional performances, transportation, cooking, or any occupational group such as massages.*

#### 4.1.3 Characteristics of respondents

In Mae La Na both interviews and questionnaires have been conducted. The questionnaires focused on the general opinions of the local population on the impact of tourism and how they participate in tourism development, while the interviews served to gain more understanding of which processes are going on in the community. The respondents of the questionnaire and interviews will now be introduced by looking at their background characteristics. Later on, in section 4.2 and 4.3, we will use the questionnaires and interviews to analyze local tourism participation and tourism impact subsequently.

A total of 60 questionnaires were executed in Mae La Na, of which two cases were deleted due to missing values. Table II shows the characteristics of the respondents. Of the 58 remaining respondents 28 are males, and 30 females. The average age of the respondents is 37,9. The youngest respondent was

15 years of age, the oldest 88. 74% of the respondents are born in Mae La Na. Another 20% already live in Mae La Na for more than 20 years. The remaining respondents have moved to Mae La Na within the last 20 years. Almost half of the respondents is farmer, 28% work in the service sector, and 15% is student (either at the village high school, or in one of the colleges in towns outside of Mae La Na). The remaining respondents were either not employed or had other types of employment. We need to take into consideration, however, that in many cases people do not have one clear profession. During the rice harvest, for instance, almost everyone in the village will help on the land. And many farmers also take on other tasks when there is not much work to be done on the land. The average yearly income of the respondents is 38.568,00 Baht, which is the equivalent of almost 1.000,00 Euros. But because of large income differences, we must note that most of the respondents actually earn less than 40.000,00 Baht yearly.

Of all respondents over two third indicated to be working in the tourism industry, either as a main or side occupation. Most of these were homestay families, which only offer accommodation and are furthermore not actively involved in tourism. Also a large group is working in the tourism industry in multiple ways, which means that they can be in the homestay program and at the same time also work as a guide, or any other combination. Given that many community members have indicated that their main occupation is a farmer or some other occupation, we can say that working in the tourism industry is often an extra activity.

In Mae La Na eleven people were interviewed. Among these were two coordinating members of the local CBT group in Mae La Na, of who one is also the initiator of CBT in the village. Two woman of the families that take part in the homestay program were interviewed, as well as a local guide. The owner of a tour operator that frequently visits Mae La Na with groups of tourists was both a translator and a respondent. The Chief of Mae La Na was also interviewed, as well as one of his assistants who takes care of matters concerning tourism. Besides that, the owner of the guesthouse, a school teacher and a random villager were interviewed.

## **4.2 Local participation in Mae La Na**

In this section we will take a look at the first main concept of this research; local participation in tourism development. Like we have identified in the theoretical section in Chapter 2, local participation is, among others, dependent on other actors and community constraints for participation. In this section we will therefore first identify who the actors in tourism development in Mae La Na are and what their roles are or were. Next, we will determine what the constraints for local participation in Mae La Na are. Finally, we will discuss the ways in which way the local population participates.

### **4.2.1 Actors in Mae La Na**

In the introduction about tourism development in Section 4.1.2 some of the actors in tourism development in Mae La Na were already shortly mentioned. The tour operator Tour Merng Tai, the Project for Recovery of Life and Culture (PRLC), the Homestay Standard, and the CBT-Institute for instance. Other actors are the government, which plays a role on different levels, tourists and other

villages with whom the CBT group in Mae La Na cooperates. Each of them will be discussed in more detail in this sub-section.

One of the first actors to be involved in the initial phase of tourism development in Mae La Na was the non-governmental organization Project for Recovery of Life and Culture (PRLC). Around the year 2000, the CBT group in Mae La Na decided to call for help of this NGO because they were not able to run tourism by themselves. The PRLC was a local organization in Mae Hong Son which supported communities with different kind of projects. In Mae La Na they provided capacity building, and through coaching the capability of the CBT group members was strengthened. Members of the homestay service and the local guides were trained. Besides that, the PRLC also made a financial contribution. Another NGO that became actively involved in tourism development in Mae La Na was the Thai Research Fund (TRF). The TRF is an organization that aims to enhance the knowledge and wisdom in Thai society and to strengthen local communities, which they do by creating solutions for problems based on the outcomes of their research (Thai Research Fund, 2011). A specific team of the TRF was dedicated to CBT projects and helping local communities to improve tourism in their community. In Mae La Na both the PRLC and the TRF played a role in, among others, creating an understanding of the concept of CBT and preparing the community to develop tourism properly.

In 2006, the two organizations, PRLC and TRF, joined together and formed the Thailand Community Based Tourism Institute (CBT-I). This organization still exists and is well known around Thailand for their involvement in CBT projects. Their goal is to *'provide support and facilitate cooperation among stakeholders from grassroots to international levels, in order to strengthen the capacity of Thai communities to manage tourism sustainably'* (CBT-I, 2008). Although tourism is now well developed in Mae La Na, the CBT-I remains involved. They, for instance, help the community members with the process of getting the Homestay Standard certificate and when necessary, they provide additional training. Also the CBT-I is a stimulator of regional CBT networks, which are formed to share experiences, learn from each other, and share benefits.

In Mae Hong Son, a provincial CBT-Network is recently developed. Around seven different communities take part in this network, of which Mae La Na is one of the most experienced and successful. As the network was established to learn from each other, Mae La Na is often visited by other (potential) CBT communities for study trips. In the network a few members of each community participate and one of the CBT-I employees is involved as a leader. Besides working with regional CBT Network, Mae La Na also tries to work with other communities which have CBT project one on one. An example is the cooperation with Ban Ja Bo, which is a Lahu village a few kilometers from Mae La Na. Local guides often try to combine their tours and visit each others' village. This way both communities can benefit from tourism, and the tourists can enjoy the benefit of learning about two different cultures at once. The cooperation between communities also means they learn from each other, like in the local CBT network. In reality however, Mae La Na is more often the example community, and thus teaching others, instead of learning from other communities' CBT development. The CBT coordinators in Mae La Na are well aware of their importance as a teacher and welcome communities to visit and learn from their experience.

The tour operator Tour Merng Tai plays an important role in the regional CBT Network and works closely together with the CBT-I and the communities within Mae Hong Son. Tour Merng Tai, with its base office situated in the city Mae Hong Son, is a tour operator specialized in ecotourism and CBT. They offer day- and multiple day trips to communities around the province, as well as more adventurous hiking, biking and elephant trips. They offer a variety of standard tours, but it is also possible to arrange custom made tours. Tour Merng Tai keeps close contact with all of the communities, and designs its tours according to the needs and possibilities of the communities individually. This means that they keep in mind the communities goals and perspectives on CBT, and try to create tours with this in mind. As the founder and owner of Tour Merng Tai, Panot, explains, tourists might not always get to experience whatever they would like to, simply because it might not fit the communities schedule. An example is a traditional Buddhist ritual, or a traditional dancing show. These are performed in the CBT communities according to their own cultural schedule, and are not planned especially for tourists. This is in contrast with other communities, for instance around Chiang Mai, who claim to show tourists traditional shows, while actually they are only performing for tourism purposes. Or even worse, Panot states that not even the people in these communities really live there, they are hired from elsewhere to perform these cultural rituals. And this is, according to Tour Merng Tai, exactly what makes the villages like Mae La Na more special. Nothing is staged, and the community members live their everyday lives while tourists can visit.

In a way Tour Merng Tai works as a facilitator for the communities that they visit during the tours. In Mae La Na, as well as in the other communities that Tour Merng Tai visits on tours, they make use of local guides, and only have a facilitator who translates. The tour operator is sometimes in charge with the training programs of the CBT-I, and organizes pilot tours to new communities. The office of Tour Merng Tai in Mae Hong Son is also used as the meeting point for the regional CBT Network to have meetings, and as a work space. When the CBT-I receives requests for information about, or help within, any of the communities in Mae Hong Son, they often pass it on to Tour Merng Tai. Because Tour Merng Tai is so actively involved with the CBT development in the villages, Panot states that his company is often mistaken for a NGO. Tour Merng Tai also plays an important role for the communities as a distribution channel. A CBT coordinator in Mae La Na indicates that a large amount of tourists which visit Mae La Na come through Tour Merng Tai. There are some other tour operators which offer tours to Mae La Na, but not on a regular base.

The national and regional government play a relatively small role in tourism development in Mae La Na. While the national government, or more specifically the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, tries to invest a lot in tourism development and improvement, most of it is divided through a governmental system with many layers before it reaches the communities. Each province, for instance, has its own Tourism Authority Thailand (TAT) office which takes care of tourism promotion. In Mae Hong Son the TAT tries to market the province as a green and cultural destination. The national TAT also organizes two-yearly tourism awards in different categories. Mae La Na won the 2010 award of outstanding performance of community-based tourism projects. While the TAT is relatively clear about its goals in tourism promotion, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports does not have clear plans for the development of tourism, at least not according to the some locals. Budgets are divided at the local level. In Mae La Na, the local government has a small budget for tourism development. This is mainly used for infrastructure

and some small practicalities, such as making signs from the main road which indicates that there is a homestay program in the village. Neither the local, regional or the national government directly provide any training for CBT projects.

The CBT group in Mae La Na recently received a budget from the Chiang Mai University (CMU) in return for a study trip. CMU offers a tourism program with the possibility to focus on sustainable tourism development such as CBT. A group of students visited the community for a research about the needs of Mae La Na to improve CBT, with a focus on the needs of tourists. They found that a possible improvement would be to replace local style (squat) toilets by so called European toilets with seats. The students raised money at their university to gain money for this purpose. Some of these new toilets were being built at the time of this fieldwork.

Finally, tourists are of course a major actor in tourism development. Like any industry, tourism also depends on a balance between demand and supply. The demand in the tourism industry depends on the needs of tourists. Due to its remote location and little facilities, Mae La Na used to have a lot of difficulties attracting tourists. Only in the last few years the amount of tourists have increased up to a level with which most community members are satisfied. The behavior of tourists will in large parts also influence the socio-cultural and environmental impact of tourism development. Of course the local community is able to influence this impact. This will be further discussed in Section 4.3 about tourism impact.

#### **4.2.2 Constraints to local participation**

As we have seen, Mae La Nas' CBT project knows many stakeholders. However, the goal of a CBT model remains to have a local community actively involved in the planning and development of tourism in their village. There are some constraints for the local population to have full control on tourism development, which are discussed here.

The first constraint concerns the lack of basic knowledge about the tourism industry, or more specifically about CBT. This used to be a large problem for the CBT coordinators. While some community members knew that tourism would be a useful tool for community development, they had no idea how to develop Mae La Na into a tourism destination. After a lot of help from NGOs, as discussed in the previous section, Mae La Na now has knowledge about the tourism industry and knows best practices. The initiator of the CBT project in Mae La Na indicated that it took a long time before people in the community understood what the purpose of CBT was and how this would benefit them. He says that slowly more and more people become aware of the advantage of tourism and started to show interest.

A second concern is that community members, even those who are highly involved in tourism development, do not speak English, except for the very basics. In the tourism industry this is a major constraint. Especially in a CBT project which aims at the development of a community, it is important that tourists can communicate with the locals and the other way around. Considering the background of many tourists, it is unlikely that they will speak Thai, or even more unlikely that they speak the local Shan language. To reach the effect of educating tourists about the community development, a translator is necessary, making the community members very dependent on tour operators or other types of



organizations. While some small development organizations have visited the community with the purpose of teaching English, this was never in a consistent manner, and thus always sticking to the basics. However, both the lack of knowledge about the tourism industry and the lack of English will become less of a problem for younger generations who receive special tourism education in school. The school teaches children about the tourist attractions in the region and about sustainability. At the same time children receive English classes (although this is largely dependent on volunteers, who work on a temporary base), which are mostly focused at the tourism industry.

Another major constraint for tourism development is the remoteness of the location in combination with the small size of the village. There is only a small amount of tourists who come in the larger town near Mae La Na. Only those who visit the province Mae Hong Son might potentially also visit Mae La Na. There is no public transportation going to the village, and it is often recommended to tourists with their own transportation to avoid the dirt roads. Again, this means that the local community is for a large part dependent on the tour operators that bring tourists with their transportation.

A final constraint is the lack of the use and knowledge of the computer and internet in the village. Most community members do not have computers or access to internet, and don't know how it works. Those who work or study in nearby towns do use the computer, but it is not used for CBT purposes. The limited online information about the community can be found on the websites of the CBT-I and Tour Merng Tai. It means, in combination with the lack of English by community members, that tourists cannot have any direct contact with community members for information or reservations. The owner of the Garden Home guesthouse mentioned that her guesthouse cannot be booked online, only through telephone. She says many tourists ask her about this, and she tells them that she does not know how to use the computer.

#### **4.2.3 Local community participation**

Although there are some constrains to full local participation, we can see that these problems mainly occur with the communication between the community and outsiders. Within the community however, community members seem to be very involved with tourism development. Also, despite the constraints, community members seem to be confident that they are in control over the tourism development in their village. In Table III we can see that overall community members agreed with the idea that the community has control over tourism development in Mae La Na.

There is an active CBT group in Mae La Na, which consists of homestay members, guides, coordinators, and people who are involved in any of the occupational groups such as traditional dancing. Members are spread around the entire village. Over thirty families are taking part in the homestay program alone, and although they do not receive many tourists in their homes, they are very much involved with tourism in the community. The members of the CBT group meet once a month to discuss new developments in their community. A large part of the community is thus actively involved in tourism development in Mae La Na.

When looking at how often community members have contact with tourists (Table III) we see that there are only a few people with very frequent contact. These are (full-time) guides and coordinating CBT

members. There is a large group of people, 60%, who have contact with tourists, but only very rarely. This could indicate that tourism is more on the background for most of the community members. A lot of the homestay members will actually have rare contact with tourists simply because they are with a large group and only few tourists make use of the homestays.

Table III: Community participation in tourism in Mae La Na

Statement*	Mean	Min	Max
I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community	4,29	3	5
I believe that I personally have control over tourism development in my community	3,72	1	5
<b>Overall participation</b>	<b>5,95</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>
Question		No.resp.	%
Do you have direct contact with tourists?	<i>Yes, more than once a week</i>	8	13,8
	<i>Yes, less than once a week</i>	3	5,2
	<i>Yes, monthly</i>	5	8,6
	<i>Yes, but rarely</i>	35	60,3
	<i>No, never</i>	7	12,1
Have you been involved in any type of meeting where you discussed tourism development in your community?	<i>Yes, many times</i>	23	39,7
	<i>Yes, but only once or twice</i>	17	29,3
	<i>No, never</i>	18	31,0
Have you been asked about your opinion on tourism by those who plan tourism development?	<i>Yes, many times</i>	24	41,4
	<i>Yes, but only once or twice</i>	11	19,0
	<i>No, never</i>	23	39,7
When major decisions concerning tourism development in your community, were you informed?	<i>Yes, many times</i>	18	31,0
	<i>Yes, but only once or twice</i>	23	39,7
	<i>No, never</i>	17	29,3
Do you think that major decisions concerning tourism development in your community are made primarily by .....	<i>The whole community</i>	11	19,0
	<i>A group of people in the community</i>	48	81,0
	<i>People outside the community</i>	0	0,0
<i>N=58, *Statements were answered on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating strongly disagree, 5 indicating strongly agree</i>			

The next three questions in Table III concern community members' involvement in tourism planning and development. More specifically the questions concern whether community members have been involved in meetings, were asked their opinion or were informed about tourism development. The answers are rather equally distributed among the answer categories. Like mentioned before, the CBT group meets once every two months. It is clear that those who are in the CBT group are also frequently asked their opinion about tourism development, and are informed about the major decisions. What is very striking is that there is little to no communication about tourism development between the members of the CBT group and the owner of the Garden Home guesthouse. She indicates that she would like to be more involved, especially when it concerns training.

Some people have indicated that they have never been involved in any of the above mentioned activities at all. Jamroon, the founder and coordinator of the CBT project, explains that anyone can become a part of the CBT group when he or she would like to. Villagers can easily join the homestay

program or any other group such as the traditional dancing or massage group. The CBT coordinators welcome anyone in the community to do so. However, to join the homestay program, a new member must meet some criteria. They must, for instance, keep their house clean, and have a good mattress with clean sheets. Even though the CBT group has been growing fast, they do not refuse people to join simply because there are enough members already. Jamroon also explains that recently the amount of members is relatively stable. Older families, for instance, leave the group, and are being replaced by new ones. When people want to join the CBT group, they do not receive any special training, they are just asked to join a special meeting in which information will be given and the new members can ask any questions they still have. Before people actually participate in the CBT project, they must have a good understanding of what CBT exactly is.

When talking to Chai, a community member who was not a member of the CBT group, he indicated that he could see that the community members, especially those who are in the CBT group, benefit a lot from tourism development. He has never participated in any of the tourism planning and development, or was informed, but still he says he can notice that the tourism group is doing very well, and that tourism benefits the community. Therefore he sometimes thinks of joining the group, or more specifically the traditional medicine group, as he already has the knowledge.

The final question regarding tourism participation concerns who takes the major decisions about tourism development in the community. By far the most respondents indicate that this is done by a group of people in the community. There are a few respondents who believe that the whole community makes the major decisions, while no one believes that this is done by people outside the community.

The variable overall participation shows the sum of the different variables concerning local tourism participation. A score of zero indicates that there are people who are not involved at all: they do not work in the tourism industry, they have never participated in meetings concerning tourism planning, were never informed about the decisions taken, were never asked their opinion and never have direct contact with tourists. There are five respondents who fit to this category. At the same time there are two respondents who have a maximum score of twelve and who thus participate fully in tourism planning and development. Most people participate in some way in tourism in the community.

## **4.3 Tourism impact in Mae La Na**

In this section we will explore what kind of impact tourism has in Mae La Na. The first three sub-sections will discuss subsequently the social, economic and environmental tourism impact. This is done by looking at the interviews to see which processes of impact are going on. Besides that we will take a look at the scores on the statements concerning impact, which measure the attitude of community members towards tourism. The statements, including the mean of the responses can be found in Table IV.

### **4.3.1 Social impact**

In the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 we have seen that tourism can have many impacts on a community, especially when it concerns a small community with a high amount of tourists. In Mae La Na tourism is well regulated and there are no high amounts of tourists, however, it is a perfect example of

how even small scale tourism can have both positive and negative social impacts. Fortunately positive impacts are the majority, and the evaluation of the statements in the questionnaire shows that people predominantly have a positive opinion.

Table IV: Social, environmental and economic impact in Mae La Na

<b>Statement<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>St.dev.</b>
1. I often feel irritated because of tourism in my community <sup>2</sup>	4,25	1,00	5,00	1,21
2. My community is overcrowded because of tourism development <sup>2</sup>	4,17	2,00	5,00	0,94
3. Tourism is growing too fast <sup>2</sup>	4,03	1,00	5,00	1,04
4. My quality of life has deteriorated because of tourism <sup>2</sup>	4,27	1,00	5,00	0,92
5. I think that tourism development makes our community stronger	3,93	1,00	5,00	0,80
6. I think that tourism development makes our community dependent on people outside of the community <sup>2</sup>	3,24	1,00	5,00	1,05
7. I think I (could) learn a lot from interaction with tourists	4,10	1,00	5,00	0,90
8. Tourism promoted pride in the way of life and culture among community members	4,12	1,00	5,00	0,73
9. Tourism promotes cultural restoration and conservation	4,22	1,00	5,00	0,84
10. Tourism becomes a platform for skill training and learning new ideas for the community	3,99	1,00	5,00	0,89
11. Tourism unites various groups inside the community to work together	4,24	1,00	5,00	0,80
12. Most tourists are respectful to the community	4,10	1,00	5,00	0,77
<b>Average score social impact</b>	<b>4,05</b>	<b>2,18</b>	<b>4,92</b>	<b>0,50</b>
1. Community recreational resources are overused by tourists <sup>2</sup>	3,90	1,00	5,00	1,10
2. The environment in my community has deteriorated because of tourism <sup>2</sup>	3,95	1,00	5,00	0,94
3. I believe tourism in my community causes pollution <sup>2</sup>	3,55	1,00	5,00	1,01
<b>Average score environmental impact</b>	<b>3,80</b>	<b>1,00</b>	<b>5,00</b>	<b>0,81</b>
1. Tourism benefits other industries in my community	3,89	2,00	5,00	0,77
2. Tourism diversifies the local economy	4,03	2,00	5,00	0,84
3. Tourism creates new markets for our local products	3,74	2,00	5,00	0,66
4. Tourism invites other organization to invest in our community	3,89	2,00	5,00	0,83
<b>Average score economic impact</b>	<b>3,89</b>	<b>2,00</b>	<b>4,75</b>	<b>0,56</b>
I believe that tourism development in my community has brought more advantages than disadvantages	4,14	1,00	5,00	0,78
<b>Overall impact score</b>	<b>3,97</b>	<b>2,30</b>	<b>4,85</b>	<b>0,49</b>

N=58

<sup>1</sup> Statements were answered on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating strongly disagree, 5 indicating strongly agree

<sup>2</sup> Answers of statements are reversed for the purpose of making the scores in the same direction, e.g. higher scores mean more positive attitudes

One of the positive impacts which is frequently mentioned by the locals is that tourism causes a revival of the local culture. For example traditional dances are performed for tourists, and the local population enjoys doing this. Also some traditional products, like woven scarves, are made more frequently for tourists. Tourists are interested in these traditional activities and the local population enjoys doing it, a win-win situation. One of the coordinating members of the CBT group also explained that the community has started to recover and reuse some traditional tools like a sesame extractor and a sugarcane extractor. This was done with the purpose of teaching tourists about the local traditions, but because they were recovered now also function again. In school, children also learn about traditions

from their Shan culture. Because of tourism, locals have more pride in their way of living. Statements 8 and 9 in the first section of Table IV confirm that tourism promotes pride in the local culture, as well as cultural restoration and conservation. Another high score is found in Statement 11, which is that tourism unites various groups of people in the community. This also became clear during several interviews. People indicate that the revival of old traditions makes the community closer. The traditional dance performances, for instance, are good opportunities for the locals to come together.

Tourism brings education to Mae La Na in various ways. This is not always limited to the CBT group members or to the tourism industry alone. At first the education was directed specifically to the CBT group in terms of sustainable tourism development, but later on other NGOs have visited the village and gave other types of training related to agriculture. Community members for instance received training about diversification on their field, and about food preparation. It is unlikely that these NGOs would have come to the village if the CBT project didn't exist according to the CBT group. English education has been primarily directed to the CBT members, but also children nowadays benefit from this. Children are sometimes even better English speakers than their parents and they like to practice with tourists. Tourism thus creates the opportunity to learn from each other; tourists learn from their hosts, but also the other way around.

A negative side effect related to education is that many organizations have been coming to Mae La Na unwanted. The CBT coordinator explains that this might be the result of the success of the CBT project. Because the community has won a few prizes for the CBT project they have gained a lot of media attention. This draws attention of some organizations who wanted to become involved and help. However, there was no need for certain projects and the community members needed to make an effort to stop the projects from happening. The same counts for the English education. The community received several organizations that have come to teach English, but each time started from the beginning, or with different methods.

Another negative side effect of tourism in Mae La Na is caused by tourists who visit the village and caves independently and do not make use of a guide. Both the guide and some people from the local government expressed concerns about this. The community has made it obligatory to use a guide when visiting the caves because of safety reasons. It is important to have the right equipment and know the way, or else it can be very dangerous, explains one of the guides. However, some tourists do not want to pay for the guides and go by themselves anyway. There is little control on this as the guides are not always around the caves and the road leading to the cave can be accessed by anyone.

Looking at the behavior of tourists regarding respect towards the local culture and traditions, community members do not encounter many problems. The great majority of the respondents agreed with the statement that most tourists are respectful to the community. The owner of the Garden Home guesthouse explains that sometimes guests ask advice on how to behave properly in the village. She says that some people, for instance, want to visit the temple in shorts, which is not proper in the Buddhist temples. She tries to give these tourists advice and even sometimes lends them special typical pants.

Another social change in the community, which might not be fully due to the tourism development, is that the women in Mae La Na are getting a larger role in tourism development. While their role used to stay limited to cooking for guests and making their house ready to receive guests, they are now highly involved in the planning of the homestays. A small group of women arranges which guests go to which homes, and are the ones who receive the guests when they arrive.

Besides the impacts which have just been described, the CBT project also benefits community funding. A strategy of the CBT project is that guides and homestay members give away 10% of their income from tourism to the CBT fund. This fund is used mostly for the expenses of CBT related matters, for example for the transportation to meetings, or for the equipment of guides. However, when there is sufficient funding available, the remaining money goes into other funds, such as the school or the temple. In this way the income of tourism benefits not only those who work in the tourism industry, but the whole community. The CBT members decide in which project the money is invested.

Overall we can say that the community members in Mae La Na have a very positive attitude towards the social impact of tourism in their village. The average score on the statements concerning social impacts is a 4,05. Which means that people generally agree with most positively formulated statements and disagree with negatively formulated statements. Most negative impacts that tourism can bring to a small community are not experienced. In the interviews especially, respondents were emphasizing the positive effects of tourism for their community.

#### **4.3.2 Economic impact**

The economic impact of tourism in Mae La Na is in general small, but positive. The most noticeable impact is the employment and additional income due to tourism. Most people who were asked about their income from tourism indicate that it is an extra for them, and not a main income. There are only a few people for who the tourism industry is a main occupation. These are the owner of the guesthouse, two of the CBT group coordinators and a few guides. For most of those in the homestay program, tourism only brings in a small percentage of their income. However, this small extra income means that they at least have some income in the period when they do not get any income from their work on the fields. Tourism in this way creates another possibility to earn money, and makes people less dependent on the harvest of their fields. The Garden Home guesthouse also does not employ any fulltime workers, but has a few employees who can be approached when necessary. Due to an increase in the amount of tourists, the local guides especially have enjoyed a large increase in their income. On average their yearly income from tourism has doubled from 10.000,- Baht in 2010 to 20.000,- in 2011. Compared to the average yearly income of community members in Mae La Na, which is close to 40.000,-, this is half. Besides those who directly work for tourists as a homestay member or guide, there are also other businesses who benefit from tourism. Local shop owners indicate that they do get some tourists as customers and even sell some products especially for tourists.

A socio-economic impact, both positive and negative, is that the standard of living in Mae La Na is changing due to tourism. This is visible mainly in the maintenance of houses. Like mentioned before, the members of the homestay program are receiving European style toilets. Other improvements in houses also frequently occur. While these investments are usually made by the families themselves, they

sometimes receive money or help from the CBT club in order to improve their homes for tourist comfort. Because these improvements in the standard of living remain for an exclusive group, the inequality between people in the community increases.

That tourism brings positive results to the economy in Mae La Na does not only become clear in the interviews, but also when looking at the statements. Community members evaluate the economic impact related statements positively. They are especially in agreement with the statement that tourism diversifies the local economy. The average score of the statements is 3,89, which is slightly lower than for social impact, but remains a positive score.

#### **4.3.3 Environmental impact**

Unlike general impact patterns in the tourism industry, the community members of Mae La Na have mostly registered positive environmental effects from tourism development. Most notable is that people actually see that the streets in the village have become a lot cleaner since tourists structurally come to visit. The community members are trying to keep their village clean for when tourists visit. The local government has also introduced a better waste system and villagers are monitoring whether there is still unnecessary garbage on the streets. The village headman gives daily short speeches to the villagers through speakers. In these talks he sometimes directly asks community members to keep the streets clean to welcome tourists. Tourism thus provides a good motivation to improve the environment.

Not only the streets in Mae La Na are better maintained, but also the forest around the village. The cutting of trees used to be a large problem in the area. Most trees were cut by locals who were looking for wood. Since the tourism industry has been growing and villagers have received training, the local population is more aware of the importance of nature conservation. The local guides are now made responsible for the conservation of the forest. One of the guides explains that he now knows the forest so well that he would notice when any of the trees is cut. He states that nowadays no more trees are cut down.

Within the caves, however, it is more difficult to eliminate any negative impact from tourism development. A local guide explains that tourism still causes harm to the caves. It can be devastating to touch the stalactites or stalagmites, because these will die in a way, or at least it will stop growing. The guides try to explain these things to tourists, but the language barrier is still a problem. Also, as explained earlier, not all tourists visit the caves with the guides. Tourism will therefore always be harmful to the caves, but efforts are made to keep this impact low.

While the community in general has a positive attitude concerning the environmental impact of tourism development, the scores on the statements in Table IV are a little lower than for the social and economic impact. The average score of the three statements is 3,80, and there is no large variation between the statements.

## 4.4 Conclusion

The fieldwork, including interviews and questionnaires, has given a clear insight of what is going on in Mae La Na concerning (community-based) tourism development. Although the village is relatively difficult to reach and is not well known, it seems to succeed in attracting a stable amount of tourists. Tourists seem to be mainly attracted to Mae La Na due to the caves around the village, but also to learn about the local culture. Local community members have created a tourism model which fits with the tourist needs and at the same time does not harm the local environment or culture. To do this they received help from several NGOs, and faced some constraints like the lack of knowledge about the tourism industry and the English language. However, they proved to become a successful CBT project and nowadays locals generally feel like their community is in control with tourism development. The local community takes initiative concerning new developments and therefore we can regard the type of participation here as self-mobilization, the highest form of participation as defined by Pretty (1995) and France (1998).

Community members also believe that tourism had brought many positive impacts such as a revival of cultural traditions, forest maintenance and an additional income. People evaluated the social impact as the most positive, after which the economic and finally the environmental impact. The project in Mae La Na may be regarded as a perfect example of community-based tourism in which the local community has control, and experience almost exclusively positive outcomes. In Chapter 6 we will find out whether there is a relationship between participation and impact satisfaction. For now, it is sufficient to state that both local participation and impact satisfaction are high.



## 5. Koh Yao Noi

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In the previous chapter we have introduced Mae La Na. In this chapter the second location of this research, Koh Yao Noi, will be thoroughly introduced. The same elements as in the previous chapter will be discussed, meaning that the chapter starts with an introduction of the community and how tourism has developed. In section 5.2 the ways in which different actors and the local community participate will be discussed. In the next section we will take a look at the social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism development. Finally, a short conclusion of the chapter will be presented.

### 5.1 Introduction of Koh Yao Noi

Although Koh Yao Noi and Mae La Na are both small Thai CBT communities, they are very different from each other. We will therefore introduce Koh Yao Noi as thoroughly as we did in the previous chapter with Mae La Na. This introduction starts off with some general characteristic of the community such as geographical and cultural features. Next, we will take a look at the tourism development, both history and current status. In the final part of this section the respondents of the questionnaires and interviews will be introduced. Although this chapter is meant to introduce Koh Yao Noi specifically, we will sometimes refer to Mae La Na to show differences or similarities between the locations. This is not done to compare the locations, which will be done in Chapter 6, but rather to show the specific situations of the two communities.

#### 5.1.1 Koh Yao Noi: The community

Koh Yao Noi (which means as much as ‘small long island’) is a small island situated in the south of Thailand, in Phang-Nga bay. The island belongs to the Yao district, which consists of 44 islands. Only the two largest, Koh Yao Noi and Koh Yao Yai (‘large long island’) are inhabited. The Koh Yao group is surrounded by many of Thailand’s famous tourist hotspots. On the western side of Koh Yao Noi lies the island Phuket, Krabi is situated only 35 km from Koh Yao Noi on the eastern side. Also many smaller islands, such as the Koh Phi Phi islands and the so called ‘James Bond island’ lie within 40 kilometers of the Koh Yao islands. Due to its location, the islands of Koh Yao were protected during the Tsunami in December 2004. Only some smaller waves reached its coast and caused some houses near the shore to collapse. Koh Yao Noi is situated north of Koh Yao Yai. The island can be reached by boat, with frequent daily connections to and from Phuket and Krabi, which in turn both have (international) air connections. Koh Yao Noi is about 15 kilometers long from north to south and about 10 kilometers wide. The island has a diverse landscape with a mountainous backbone as well as plain fields. On the south and western coastlines one can find mangroves, while the east coast has some small beaches.

Koh Yao Noi consists of seven villages, which are mostly located in the southern half of the island. The total population counts 3,500. The main village is Ban Ta Kai where most of the shops can be found as well as the daily market. The main occupation of the inhabitants of Koh Yao Noi is fishing. Phang Nga bay is full of different kinds of fish and sea food such as shrimps and crab. Most of the fishing is done at a small scale with sustainable methods. There are also some fish farms where more expensive fish such as lobster is grown. With many generations of experienced fishermen, the inhabitants of the Koh Yao

islands have created their own traditions and make their own nets and fish traps. Other sources of income are the rubber plantations in the forest areas and rice cultivation. There are also some coconut and cashew farms. The population of Koh Yao is, contrary to most of Thailand, predominantly Muslim (approximately 95%). This brings in very specific traditions and a lifestyle that is different from those of Buddhist Thai people. There are seven mosques on the island, which are mainly used for the Friday prayers. The five daily prayers are done at home. Because of their religious beliefs, the people of Koh Yao do not eat pork and do not drink alcohol. They take part in the yearly Ramadan fast month and try to make their once in a lifetime journey to Mecca, the holy city in Saudi Arabia.

Education on Koh Yao Noi is available at three primary schools around the island, and two secondary schools. Most children finish both primary and secondary school here. For further education it is common to go to universities elsewhere in the Phang-Nga district like Phuket, or Krabi. However, many of the young people on the island tend to follow up their parents' profession in farming or fishing. Infrastructure on the island is well developed. Most of the roads are paved, only in the far northern part are dirt roads. There are only a few cars on the island, which are often used also as a sort of taxi/bus service. A more common mode of transportation is the motorbike. As distances are never large on the island, the motorbike can be used to go anywhere around. There is one hospital on the island which includes an operation and emergency room. Running water and electricity are available throughout the island, but are used by approximately half of the population.

### **5.1.2 Tourism in Koh Yao Noi**

The area around Phang Nga bay is very famous as a Thai tourist destination. The island of Phuket, for instance, has been a mass tourism destination for decades already. There is no question as to what attracts tourists to the area. The limestone cliffs, white sandy beaches in combination with clear blue waters and coral reefs create a paradise-like landscape. Although the climate is not stable whole year round, sun seekers can be satisfied most of the year. It is the ideal destination for anyone who loves sun, sea and sand. The area attracts a wide variety of tourists such as young backpackers, families, and retirees. The whole area has seen a major development in tourist facilities in the 1990s. Nowadays tourists can find any kind of accommodation, ranging from simple bungalows of about 300 Baht (approximately 6,50 in euros) a night, up to luxurious resorts which can be afforded only by the extremely wealthy.

Although mass tourism is predominant in this area, the Koh Yao district is relatively quiet. Between the Koh Yao islands, Koh Yao Noi has the most tourist facilities. There are various simple bungalow parks, and a few luxurious resorts. The island is visibly less touristic than the ones surrounding the bay. Small scale tourism has been in Koh Yao Noi for a long time already. The focus on community-based (eco-) tourism started only around the 1990s as a means to fight the degradation of the marine ecosystem. In the 1980s large scale, illegal, fisher boats started to enter the Phang Nga bay frequently. They used illegal fishing methods such as electric shocks and big drag nets. This soon led to a degradation of the coral reefs which are vital to the areas' ecosystem. Besides that, the fish stock became low and it was extremely difficult for the small scale fishermen of Koh Yao to catch enough to make a living. The local fishermen gathered themselves in the Koh Yao Noi Small Fishers Group in 1984, which tried to combat the illegal fishing activities. They tried to gain awareness among local village leaders and community

members about the importance of the marine ecosystem. To create more attention they soon formed a larger network, the Andaman Network, which included other districts in the province Phang Nga, and the provinces Krabi and Phuket. Their goal was to communicate with the Thai government and create a solution for the small fishermen. This was difficult and still the problem remained local without much attention from the rest of Thailand. It was in the 1990s that the Small Fishers Group gained some assistance from the Responsible Ecological Social Tours project by the Thailand Volunteer Service (TVS-REST). They developed a community-based tourism program with the goal to share their struggles with Thai society and demand law enforcement. This project succeeded and the island was visited by many journalists, academics and cultural tourists. By 2001 the island had received many attention and through law enforcement Phang Nga bay became free of illegal fishing activities.

Members of the Small Fisher Group enjoyed the CBT project and decided to continue educating the visitors about local fishing traditions. They established the Koh Yao Noi Community-based Ecotourism Club. The goals of the club were to educate guests about the life of fishermen, to create tourism which is sensitive towards Muslim culture, to support local conservation work and provide an additional income to the host families. To achieve this the local population took guests into their homes and also took them along with fishing trips. The Koh Yao Noi CBT group has also set up a few ground rules for the behavior of tourists on the island. The first rule is to not drink alcohol or use drugs in public places, or host families' houses. Secondly, tourists should wear appropriate clothing around the island (bathing suits are allowed only on beaches and within a resorts' property). The third rule is not to litter and finally tourists are not to collect sea shells or break off any coral. These rules are displayed on large billboards around the island. Tourists who have had contact with the CBT group are also informed about the rules before coming.

The CBT group in Koh Yao Noi is regarded as an example for CBT projects in Thailand, or even worldwide. In 2003 they were rewarded with the World Legacy Award by the National Geographic Traveler and Conservation International. Besides that, the group has won several awards from the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). In 2005 the CBT group received the license of the Homestay Standard. They are still successful and have a slight increase in visitors over the years. The goals have remained the same over time, but the form of the CBT project has taken a different shape. While the emphasis used to be on marine protection, now the money raised by the CBT group is used for other community development projects, such as the (maintenance of the) school and the mosques.

The activities that can be enjoyed by tourists nowadays are very much the same as they were in the initial phase of the CBT project. Many families offer their guests a tour around the island, or take them on a boat tour for fishing or relaxation and a visit to nearby islands. The main product of the CBT group remains the homestays at local families, of which there are about thirty spread over the island now. More information about what a typical homestay in Koh Yao Noi looks like can be found in Appendix IV, along with pictures.

### **5.1.3 Sample in Koh Yao Noi**

In this sub-section we will introduce the respondents of the questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire is exactly the same as in Mae La Na, with the three parts including background

characteristics, tourism participation and tourism impact. In this sub-section we will take a look at the background characteristics of the respondents, which include age, occupation and income. In Koh Yao Noi 91 questionnaires have been taken, but due to many missing values six respondents were deleted from the sample. Now a total of 85 respondents remain valid for analysis. While Mae La Na is only one village, in Koh Yao Noi the questionnaire has been conducted in all villages throughout the island, as they are all part of the same CBT project.

Table V: General characteristics of respondents in Koh Yao Noi

Characteristic	Mean	Min	Max
Age	37,2	17	63
Income (in Baht per year)	99376,56	3500,00	360000,00
Characteristic	No.resp.	%	
Gender	<i>Male</i>	34	40,0
	<i>Female</i>	51	60,0
Income (category)	<i>0-19.999,-</i>	6	7,1
	<i>20.000,- - 39.999,-</i>	3	3,5
	<i>40.000,- - 59.999,-</i>	5	5,9
	<i>60.000,- - 79.999,-</i>	14	16,5
	<i>80.000,- - 99.999,-</i>	9	10,6
	<i>100.000,- - 149.999,-</i>	19	22,4
	<i>&gt;149.999,-</i>	8	9,4
Profession	<i>Missing</i>	21	24,7
	<i>Currently not employed</i>	2	2,4
	<i>Farming / fishing</i>	32	37,6
	<i>Services</i>	27	31,8
	<i>Student</i>	8	9,4
	<i>Other profession</i>	16	18,8
Live in Koh Yao Noi	<i>All life</i>	60	70,6
	<i>More than 20 years</i>	8	9,6
	<i>Less than 20 years</i>	10	11,8
	<i>Less than 10 years</i>	7	8,2
Work in tourism	<i>Nothing</i>	25	29,4
	<i>Accommodation</i>	26	30,6
	<i>Guide</i>	3	3,5
	<i>Shop / restaurant</i>	4	4,7
	<i>Other*</i>	13	15,3
	<i>Multiple activities</i>	14	16,5

*N=85, \*Other includes traditional performances, transportation, cooking, or any occupational group such as massages.*

Of the respondents, the majority (60%) are females. The average age of the respondents here is 37,2, with the youngest respondent being seventeen years old, and the oldest 63. By far the most respondents (70%) have lived their whole lives in Koh Yao Noi, and only seven respondents indicated that they live in Koh Yao Noi for less than ten years. 32 Respondents indicated that their main occupation is farming or fishing, which makes this the largest professional group in this sample. The service industry, with 27 respondents makes a close second. Only two people indicate that they are unemployed at the moment, and eight respondents were students. The remaining sixteen respondents

have indicated that they have another type of profession. The average income of this sample is close to 100.000,- Baht per year. This is two and a half times more than the sample in Mae La Na. A possible explanation for this difference is that Koh Yao Noi is more developed. Also the residents of Mae La Na live more self-sufficient in terms of growing their own food. The range of income in Koh Yao Noi is wide, with 3500,- being the lowest and 360.000,- as the highest. Most people have an income between the 60.000,- Baht and 150.000,-. However, almost 25% of the respondents did not give any information about their income.

Almost 30% of the respondents does not have any work in the tourism industry. The same percentage offers some type of accommodation, mostly in the form of a homestay. Three guides and four shop or restaurant owners were included in the sample. Also thirteen respondents work in some other way in the tourism industry. Finally there were fourteen respondents who are involved in the tourism in more than one of the categories. On the island, many people who are in the homestay program are actually also the guides of their visitors.

Besides these questionnaires there have been four interviews in Koh Yao Noi. Among the respondents were two teachers from the high school on the island. Both are involved in the CBT project as they participate in projects organized by the CBT group and also try to teach their students about the tourism industry on the island. Another interview was held with the chief of the main village on the island, who is closely involved with tourism development on the island. Finally the coordinator and initiator of the CBT project in Koh Yao Noi, Bang Bao, was interviewed. He coordinates all the members of the homestay group, but also maintains the contact with other stakeholders on and off the island. Besides that, Bang Bao is also the contact person for foreign visitors. An overview of the respondents can be found in Appendix II. Many informal conversations were also held with several of the homestay members, and some shop, bungalow and restaurant owners.

## **5.2 Local participation in Koh Yao Noi**

In this section we will take a look at how local community members participate in tourism planning and development in Koh Yao Noi. To get a clear picture of this local participation we will first look at the actors that are involved in tourism development on the island, and what their roles are. Next, we will discuss the constraints for participation of the local community. Finally we will come to the most important element, which is how local community members participate. This will be done by looking at the results of the questionnaire, as well as the interviews. However, before turning to the actors it is important to note that there has been tourism development on Koh Yao Noi for many decades already. Some bungalows and resorts exist already for a long time. The CBT project has developed next to this already existing tourism development. This is very much in contrast with Mae La Na, where only one bungalow resort existed next to the CBT project. In this section, as well as in the next section about tourism impacts, the focus will be specifically on the CBT project. However, for respondents it is not always possible to make a distinction between these two different developments. On occasion a reference will be made to tourists from the resorts, or to resort development on the island.

### 5.2.1 External actors in Koh Yao Noi

In Koh Yao Noi we find that similar actors as in Mae La Na are involved. However, due to the different development of tourism on the island and its surroundings, the actors sometimes have other roles in tourism development as we have seen in the previous chapter. Important actors are the CBT-I and other NGOs, the (local) government, tourists, and other tourism facilitators on the island and the area. The media has also played an important role in the initial phase of CBT development on Koh Yao Noi. Finally there are also external investors who have a stake in tourism development on the island. The roles of these actors are discussed one by one in the next few paragraphs.

As explained before, CBT development was not the initial goal of community members on Koh Yao Noi. Rather, the goal was to combat large foreign companies from emptying the sea in Phang-Nga bay. This drew the attention of the TVS-REST, Responsible Ecological Social Tours, which was the first organization to be involved in CBT development on the island. They were the ones to initiate the idea of an ecological form of tourism, which could help the locals in their struggle against their problems. The REST organization has not only introduced the idea of tourism, but also helped to organize tourism development on Koh Yao Noi. Through tourism, both national and international, people could learn about the problems in the sea. The goal then was to raise attention from the government, who would be able to intervene. The focus of CBT in this initial stage was thus on tourists who would go fishing with the locals and learn from them. The idea of homestays was later on added to this, and was also initiated by the REST. The role of REST was thus a crucial one in tourism development. Still, the CBT members on Koh Yao Noi work together with the REST, which is now part of the CBT-Institute. The organization still gives training to the community. Like Mae La Na, Koh Yao Noi is also part of a regional CBT Network. The CBT group has regular meetings with both the regional CBT Network and the CBT-I.

The government plays a modest role in tourism development on the island. After a lot of pressure from the locals and the NGOs involved, the national government has helped the community with their problems concerning the fishing industry. After the CBT project on the island gained a lot of attention from the media, the government even became well aware of the project. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has also awarded the community with several awards for their community-based tourism program.

The CBT group on Koh Yao Noi works together with a few tour operators in Thailand. The two tour operators with who they work most frequently are located in Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Both have only about three groups of tourists each year. Most of the tourists from these tour operators are from France and England. In general, most visitors are from Europe and the United States or Canada. Also Thai people visit Koh Yao Noi and stay with the homestay group. The homestay project is very popular with backpackers. Mostly they are young and travel either alone or in a small group. They often contact the CBT group directly instead of through a tour operator. The homestay program is also mentioned in the Lonely Planet guidebook, as well as in several other travel information resources.

Because some of the nearby locations are very crowded with tourists, Koh Yao Noi is currently a popular place for investors who want to develop resorts. The regional government is a proponent of these investments, because they offer the possibility to expand tourism in the region. However, the local

population, as well as the local government, would like to limit the amount of new resorts. They believe that the amount of tourists should be limited for reasons of sustainability.

### **5.2.2 Constraints to local participation**

Besides the many stakeholders who are involved, there is something else that influences whether or not people are actively involved in tourism development and planning on the island. These are the constraints for the locals to participate. Some of the constraints are the same as the locals in Mae La Na deal with, but the different type of tourism development on Koh Yao Noi also creates different constraints. In this sub-section, the first will be mentioned shortly, while the focus will be on the latter. Also, we will take a look at the constraints for CBT development due to the already existing conventional tourism development on the island.

A first set of constraints for local participation is similar to what was seen in Mae La Na, namely a lack of knowledge about the tourism industry and the English language. In general, the local community is a bit more developed than in Mae La Na, and there is primary and secondary education possible. Most of the community members therefore do speak a little bit of English, especially younger people. However, some community members do not speak any English at all, or seem a little afraid to do so. The main coordinator of CBT in Koh Yao Noi speaks relatively good English and he is usually the one to arrange practicalities with tourists. Further knowledge about the tourism industry is also not widespread. Of course, the tourism industry is a relatively new one, and community members are still focused on their main occupation in which they have many generations of experience; fishing. However, they do seem to realize that tourism is upcoming and could be beneficial for them, they therefore do find it important to learn about this. The group of people who were involved in CBT from the beginning of the project did receive training from the NGOs, and occasionally new training sessions are given. But again, progression is made at the moment, with children who are educated about tourism starting at secondary school.

Contrary to Mae La Na, Koh Yao Noi is easy to reach for tourists. The island is surrounded by tourist hot spots, which has created sufficient infrastructure for tourists to travel comfortably. Frequent boats depart from Krabi and Phuket, which in turn have (international) airports. These conditions are ideal for tourism development as such, however it also causes disadvantages for specific CBT development. Although Koh Yao Noi has remained far behind in tourism development compared to its neighboring destinations, there are many resorts on the island which fit into the conventional tourism development. Many of these are owned by investors outside the island. The CBT project thus has to cooperate and at the same time compete with these other forms of tourism development. This puts them in a disadvantaged position, especially since the locals have little knowledge of the tourism industry.

A final constraint for local participation lies in the size and composition of the population. The population is scattered around the island in seven villages and in total there are about 3500 inhabitants. Each village also has their own council. This makes it more difficult to get everyone on the island involved, or even aware of the project and how they could benefit from-or contribute to- it. The local government of the main village on the island indicated that it would like to see more cooperation between the different villages. He says he has plans to increase the cooperation on the next few years, and that cooperation is necessary for the conservation of nature and culture on the island. Also, with a

large and scattered population it is more difficult to take into account everyone's wishes. However, there are about 30 families who participate in the CBT project, who are from different villages around the island. This does not mean that everyone on the island knows about the CBT group. When talking to a (foreign) resort owner on the island, she was unaware of the existence of the homestay program, and she was not the only one.

Table VI: Community participation in tourism in Koh Yao Noi

Statement*	Mean	Min	Max
I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community	3,69	1	5
I believe that I personally have control over tourism development in my community	3,22	1	5
<b>Overall participation</b>	<b>6,53</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>
Question		No.resp.	%
Do you have direct contact with tourists?	Yes, more than once a week	19	22,4
	Yes, less than once a week	19	22,4
	Yes, monthly	3	3,5
	Yes, but rarely	36	42,4
	No, never	8	9,4
Have you been involved in any type of meeting where you discussed tourism development in your community?	Yes, many times	34	40,0
	Yes, but only once or twice	29	34,1
	No, never	22	25,9
Have you been asked about your opinion on tourism by those who plan tourism development?	Yes, many times	41	48,2
	Yes, but only once or twice	21	24,7
	No, never	23	27,1
When major decisions concerning tourism development in your community, were you informed?	Yes, many times	28	32,9
	Yes, but only once or twice	36	42,4
	No, never	21	24,7
Do you think that major decisions concerning tourism development in your community are made primarily by .....	The whole community	22	25,9
	A group of people in the community	60	70,6
	People outside the community	3	3,5

*N=58, \*Statements were answered on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating strongly disagree, 5 indicating strongly agree*

### 5.2.3 Local community participation

We have now seen who the main actors are in CBT development on Koh Yao Noi, and which constraints make it difficult for the locals to participate. In this final sub-section we will take a closer look at how exactly the local population is participating. For this purpose the questionnaire is used, as well as information from interviews and observations. The results of the questionnaire concerning local participation in Koh Yao Noi can be found in Table VI. Within the community, participation in tourism development is rather fragmented, with many different stakeholders. The main stakeholders are the CBT group members, the local government and the (bungalow)resort owners.



Let us take a look first at the two statements at the top of Table VI. There is not a high level of agreement with the first statement, which is that people believe that they have personal control over tourism development. The average score here is 3,22, while a 5 would indicate that people fully agree with the statement. More people agreed with the idea that the community as a whole has control over tourism development, but a score of 3,69 is also not very high. For both statements we find that there are people who indicate that they do not agree at all, as well as people who completely agree. Ideas about whether individuals and the community have control over tourism development are thus widespread.

Among the respondents of the questionnaire a large group of 42% indicates that they only rarely have direct contact with tourists. Another 45% has indicated to have contact either more than once a month or more than once week. Most families who participate in the homestay program indeed have very rare contact with tourists. They usually do not have any other tourism related occupation and only receive tourists in their homes a couple of times a year. It is remarkable that less than 10% never has any contact with tourists, while almost 30% indicated not to be working in the tourism industry in any way. This would indicate that it is easy for locals to run into tourists and have contact, even though they are not directly involved through their work.

A large group of the respondents, 40%, has been involved in meetings concerning tourism development many times, while 25% has never participated. There are several types of tourism related meetings in which the locals could be involved. Members of the CBT group, for instance, have meetings every month in which everyone can participate. Frequently several members of the families join the meeting. Both women and men seem to have an equal involvement in the CBT meetings. Topics which are discussed during the meeting include new investments, general experiences with tourists, and any new plans. The board members of the CBT group also participate in meetings concerning tourism development with other actors on the island such as resort owners and the local government.

In the next two questions in Table VI we find a similar spread of responses along the answer categories. We see that 27% has never been asked their opinion on tourism development by those who are in charge. Also 25% of the respondents has never been informed when major decisions concerning tourism development were made. These numbers are close to the amount of respondents that actually do not have any tourism related job, and we indeed find strong overlap. Several reasons could explain this absence of people in any tourism related activities. First, locals might not be aware of what is happening on their island. They may see that there is tourism development on the island, but they might not know who the key stakeholders are and how they could become involved. Secondly, they might not care enough about tourism development to make an effort.

Besides the residents of the island, the local government is also quite involved in tourism development in the community. They have also supported the CBT project in several ways. They, for instance, helped to create a website<sup>4</sup> and brochures for promotion purposes. The municipality also contributed to the funding of the meeting area of the CBT group, and helped to gather furniture and equipment. The

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.koh-yao-noi-eco-tourism-club.com>

mayor of the main village on the island recognizes the importance of tourism for the development of the local community on the island and therefore contributes in these ways. As mentioned in Section 5.2.2, he also wishes to cooperate with the other villages more thoroughly, as to make sure tourism development remains sustainable.

When asking who people think is responsible for major decisions concerning tourism development on Koh Yao Noi, the large majority indicated that it is a group of people in the community. Only three persons think that people outside the community in reality make most decisions, while just over 25% believes that the whole community makes major decisions.

Finally, we should take a look at the average scores on overall participation. Here, we find that the respondents on average score a 6,53. There are five people who do not participate at all, meaning that they do not work in the tourism industry, or are involved in any of the activities included in the questionnaire. At the same time there are four people who actually participate in all the activities, and

Table VII: Social, environmental and economic impact in Koh Yao Noi

<b>Statement<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>St.dev.</b>
1. I often feel irritated because of tourism in my community <sup>2</sup>	4,19	1,00	5,00	1,02
2. My community is overcrowded because of tourism development <sup>2</sup>	3,31	1,00	5,00	0,94
3. Tourism is growing too fast <sup>2</sup>	2,81	1,00	5,00	0,87
4. My quality of life has deteriorated because of tourism <sup>2</sup>	3,29	1,00	5,00	0,95
5. I think that tourism development makes our community stronger	3,73	1,00	5,00	0,85
6. I think that tourism development makes our community dependent on people outside of the community <sup>2</sup>	2,51	1,00	5,00	0,95
7. I think I (could) learn a lot from interaction with tourists	3,91	1,00	5,00	0,70
8. Tourism promoted pride in the way of life and culture among community members	4,06	2,00	5,00	0,68
9. Tourism promotes cultural restoration and conservation	3,89	1,00	5,00	0,79
10. Tourism becomes a platform for skill training and learning new ideas for the community	4,01	1,00	5,00	0,66
11. Tourism unites various groups inside the community to work together	4,00	2,00	5,00	0,69
12. Most tourists are respectful to the community	3,93	2,00	5,00	0,61
<b>Average score social impact</b>	<b>3,63</b>	<b>2,75</b>	<b>5,00</b>	<b>0,37</b>
1. Community recreational resources are overused by tourists <sup>2</sup>	3,21	1,00	5,00	1,01
2. The environment in my community has deteriorated because of tourism <sup>2</sup>	3,11	1,00	5,00	1,06
3. I believe tourism in my community causes pollution <sup>2</sup>	2,52	1,00	5,00	1,06
<b>Average score environmental impact</b>	<b>2,96</b>	<b>1,33</b>	<b>5,00</b>	<b>0,83</b>
1. Tourism benefits other industries in my community	4,13	2,00	5,00	0,65
2. Tourism diversifies the local economy	4,23	2,00	5,00	0,61
3. Tourism creates new markets for our local products	3,98	1,00	5,00	0,71
4. Tourism invites other organization to invest in our community	3,87	2,00	5,00	0,67
<b>Average score economic impact</b>	<b>4,05</b>	<b>2,75</b>	<b>5,00</b>	<b>0,45</b>
I believe that tourism development in my community has brought more advantages than disadvantages	3,92	2,00	5,00	0,69
<b>Overall impact score</b>	<b>3,64</b>	<b>2,38</b>	<b>5,00</b>	<b>0,40</b>

N=85

<sup>1</sup> Statements were answered on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating strongly disagree, 5 indicating strongly agree

<sup>2</sup> Answers of statements are reversed for the purpose of making the scores in the same direction, e.g. higher scores mean more positive attitudes

work in the tourism industry in multiple ways. In Mae La Na we found a slightly lower average score on participation. This does not mean, however, that residents in Mae La Na participate less. This is because the respondents were selected according to their involvement in any tourism occupation (in each location was tried to have about half of the respondents that work in tourism, and the other half not). In reality there is a larger percentage of people who work in tourism in Mae La Na than in Koh Yao Noi, while in absolute numbers it is almost equal.

## **5.3 Tourism impact in Koh Yao Noi**

In the final section of this chapter we will take a closer look at the impact of the CBT project, or more specifically at the opinion of the local population on the impact of tourism. This will be done for each type of impact independently; Social, economic and environmental impact. The statements in the questionnaire are used for this analysis, as well as the information gathered through interviews and documents. The results of the questionnaire are displayed in Table VII.

### **5.3.1 Social impact**

The community members of Koh Yao Noi have very mixed attitudes considering the social impact of tourism development on their island. Some of the negative impacts are caused by the number of tourists. Other impacts are influenced by the different cultural values between tourists and locals, of which the latter is formed by Muslim traditions.

The responses on statement 2 and 3 indicate that tourism development is very prominent on the island. Many people agreed with the statements that the community is overcrowded and that tourism is growing too fast. It is likely that this impact is mostly caused by non-CBT related tourism, because the number of tourists in the CBT project is relatively small and does not grow very fast. When talking about tourism development and growth for the future, the mayor of the main village on the island indicated that he would like to see a small increase in tourists in the next two years, and then stagnate. Bang Bao, the initiator and coordinator of the CBT group, indicates that he is satisfied with the amount of tourists coming now, and would not like this to grow. Although the community members do not have a positive opinion about the number of tourists on the island, they do not feel irritation because of tourism, as we can see in the first statement.

While none of the respondents explicitly mentioned it during any of the conversations, many people seem to feel that tourism development makes the community dependent on people outside of the community. This is shown by the mixed responses on statement 6. A possible explanation is that many investors of resorts on the island come from other places in Thailand, or even from other countries. It can also relate to the high numbers of tourists. Locals might feel they do not have any control over this and thus are dependent on outsiders.

The majority of the population on Koh Yao Noi is Muslim, unlike the surrounding islands and mainland. The Muslim culture has specific traditions which do not always match with tourists. It is important for tourists to adapt their behavior to gain respect of the community. This means that tourists should wear appropriate clothing (e.g. knees and shoulders covered, especially for women) when they are out of

their resort, and that they can only drink alcohol in the bars and restaurants which sell it, or in their own room (when not staying with a homestay member). This has, especially during the past, caused some problems. Mainly those tourists who stay at resorts outside of the villages were frequently not dressed appropriately when going on trips around the island. Tourists who come to the island through the CBT project are usually well prepared. The coordinators inform the tourists about the rules before they come, or they will even correct their guests when they are already on the island. In the last ten years the CBT group has paid a lot of attention to these matters. They, for instance, have made signs around the island which indicate hot tourists should behave to respect the local culture. At the same time, the CBT members and the local government, have also talked a lot with the owners of resorts, who now also inform their guests about these matters. The local government also expressed that they would like to have more Muslim tourists on Koh Yao Noi. The chief explains that he believes that Muslim tourists would feel at home on the island and that the locals would also enjoy meeting other Muslims. In general, the local population seems positive concerning the behavior of tourists, and agree that most tourists are respectful to the community (statement 12).

Finally, like in Mae La Na, the locals on Koh Yao Noi also feel that tourism has promoted pride in the way of living and their culture (statement 8). This concerns especially the fishermen, who have the opportunity to show tourists the generations of experience in fishing industry. The story in the introduction of this thesis also reflected the pride of local families who participate in the homestay program. At the same time locals also agree that tourism unites various groups within the community to work together and that there becomes a platform for skill training and new ideas. Especially the CBT members have enjoyed training and often have tourists who also teach English in their house. However, some community members seem to be ashamed for not speaking that much English, and apologize to tourists for not being able to communicate in English. They frequently ask the help of someone in their family or the coordinator of the CBT group who speaks English. Still the community members say they can learn a lot from tourists.

Besides all of these social impacts which are not always planned, the CBT group supports some projects for the development of the community. Like in Mae La Na, the CBT group here also works with a community fund. This fund is used primarily to cover expenses for CBT development. However, the remaining funds are always equally divided between the school and the mosques on the island. Currently a new mosque is built with money raised from CBT.

### **5.3.2 Economic impact**

The economic impact of tourism on Koh Yao Noi is, according to the respondents, very positive. The tourism industry on the island has obviously created a lot of employment and has therefore also increased the income of many residents. For people who take part in the homestay program, CBT is usually just an extra income, next to for instance fishing or working on the rubber plantations. For Koh Yao Noi, tourism diversifies the local economy, meaning that residents are not only dependent on the money they receive for their rubber, which fluctuates highly, or on the fish catch. Bang Bao explains that he tries to have as many people on the island benefit from tourism development. When he takes tourists on a tour around the island he stops at some places which are otherwise not frequently visited by tourists. These places include local shops, special restaurants and a coconut farm, where tourists can

drink fresh coconut milk. All of these places are owned by locals. This way the tourist can enjoy something different, and at the same time local businesses are supported. Also the homestay members are supported to take tourists to a locally owned restaurant once during their stay (the other meals are mostly traditionally home cooked). There are also many people on the island who work in one of the (bungalow) resorts. These are sometimes seasonal, or full time workers. The community members, including the local government, believe it is important that the resorts offer jobs to local people, instead of hiring people from elsewhere in Thailand. One of the teachers of the high school on the island indicates that it is important that children get the right education to be able to work in the resorts. The school now has some contracts with resorts on the island to offer students internships or jobs in the summer holidays.

A negative impact of tourism, which is not included in the questionnaire, is that prices, for instance of food, have been rising. This also relates to a higher standard of living. It is not only caused by tourism development on the island, but moreover, because of the booming tourism industry in places around Koh Yao Noi, such as Phuket and Krabi. Residents from Koh Yao Noi frequently visit the market or shops in Phuket and can feel the effects of tourism inflation. Tourism thus creates income and at the same time inflation. This is an effect that is caused by tourism in general, and not specifically by CBT, which is too small scale. Residents, however are more positive than negative towards the effects of tourism on the economy. One of the teachers who was interviewed also stated that she noticed that there has been an increase in consumerism. People on the island used to live simple lives, she says, but now have to compete more.

### **5.3.3 Environmental impact**

Unfortunately tourism on Koh Yao Noi has brought many environmental problems. It is again difficult to make a distinction between the CBT project and other tourism development on the island, but it is for sure that tourism causes pollution. Locals complain about rubbish on the island, mainly on the beaches. Most respondents agree with the statement that tourism has caused pollution. This problem is recognized also by the local government, which tries to combat this by making tourists aware of the problem. They have also placed signs, especially in the beach area, that tourists should not leave their rubbish behind. This environmental problem is also known by the CBT group, who has initiated a cleaning program, which is called the 'big cleaning day'. Once a month, the CBT group, the school and the local government, work together to clean the island. They emphasize that people need to work together in order to keep Koh Yao Noi clean.

There is some agreement with the statement that community recreational resources are overused by tourists. This mainly applies to some of the beaches. The island does not have that many beaches, as most of the coastline is covered with mangroves. All resorts and restaurants are located among the few stretches of beach. This also means that most local food stands have made way for more expensive restaurants, which are unaffordable for local community members. While most beaches are still open to everyone, there are also some luxurious resorts which have private beaches and often large privatized lands.

The final, and maybe most obvious, environmental impact of the CBT project on Koh Yao Noi is the revival of sustainable fishing in the bay. It is not only the fact that large ships have stopped fishing in Phang Nga bay and that the fish population is healthy again, but also the idea that tourists get educated about sustainable fishing methods.

We thus find that there are negative environmental effects of tourism in Koh Yao Noi, but that these are combatted by the local government and the CBT group. Negative effects are therefore reduced to a minimum, but are still too strong at the moment according to the questionnaire. Compared to the other two types of impact, environmental impact has the lowest score. The most positively evaluated type of impact is the economic impact, while the social impacts are very mixed. This is in line with the general expectations of tourism impacts, as were introduced on the theoretical framework.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

Koh Yao Noi has a very different CBT project than Mae La Na. The community on the island is diverse and there are different tourism projects spread over the island. The region around Koh Yao Noi is known for its booming tourism industry, while this island has been relatively tranquil in tourism development. However, the island knows tourism development besides the CBT project. This project has started with the goal of eliminating illegal fishing activities, but once this was achieved, the community members continued to educate tourists about their traditions. The CBT project with its homestays, is now one of the possibilities in accommodation for visitors.

Many community members participate in tourism development on the island. There are resort and restaurant owners, CBT members and the local government. The cooperation between these groups often fails and objectives sometimes conflict with each other. This constraint is identified as particularly harmful for local participation (Blackstock, 2005; Scheyvens, 2002). Local participation in Koh Yao Noi may best be described as interactive participation (Pretty, 1995; France, 1998), in which groups of local people have a stake, but have difficulty to gain full control.

Although CBT is only a small project compared to some of the resorts on the island, it does have positive influences. Besides the projects that are directly supported with the income of the CBT group, the CBT project also created awareness about the way tourism can be developed without harming the local traditions and environment. The impact of tourism in general is positively evaluated, except for the environmental impact, which is mainly caused through the overuse of by tourists of recreational resources and litter.

## 6. Community participation and tourism satisfaction

This final empirical chapter involves the main analysis of this research. While in the previous two chapters the two locations were analyzed individually, they will now be compared. This chapter consists of four sections. In the first section we will start to examine the direct relationship between participation and perceived impacts. In Section 6.2 we will take another look at the three types of tourism impact to further analyze the influence of participation. Section 6.3 continues to explore the overall impact. In sections 6.2 and 6.3 regression analyses will be the main component, which are used to find out whether there is a relationship between participation and impact. Also information from interviews will be used, and connections with previous chapters will be made. At the end of this chapter a short conclusion will reflect the main findings.

### 6.1 Direct relation between participation and impact

In this first part we will take a closer look at the direct relationship that exists between local participation and the different types of impact. This is done by means of a Pearson correlation, which shows whether or not the variables are influencing each other, or more specifically in this case, whether participation influences impact. This correlation shows the change in the evaluation of impact when participation increases with one point. The Pearson correlation is calculated per location for each type of impact separately as well as for overall impact. The results can be found in Table VIII. The first thing that is notable in the results of Table VIII is that all correlations are positive. This means that the evaluations of impacts are more positive for people who participate in tourism development more actively. More specifically, the average difference on social impact between two persons in Mae La Na with one point difference on participation is 0,291.

Table VIII: Correlations between participation and impact

Variable	Mae La Na		Koh Yao Noi	
	Pearson cor.	Sig.	Pearson cor.	Sig.
Social impact	,291	.027*	,095	,387
Economic impact	,259	,050*	,262	,015*
Environmental impact	,272	,039*	,102	,352
Overall impact	,243	,066	,173	,112

\* significant at 0,05 level, \*\* significant at 0,01 level.

As we see in Table VIII, for Mae La Na, the effects of participation on social, economic and environmental impact are all significant. The correlation of participation and overall impact is not significant, but is close to it. In general, we can state that there is a difference in perceived impact between people who participate more and those who participate less in tourism development. Respondents who participate in tourism more actively have significantly more positive attitudes towards the impact of tourism in their community. Because this effect is not found for overall impact, we may assume that people, regardless of their participation, were positive towards tourism in general.

For Koh Yao Noi, we only find a significant effect of participation on economic impact. A logical explanation for this is that many of those who actively participate in tourism development in Koh Yao Noi also benefit from tourism directly through income. With environmental impact, for instance, there are some effects found throughout the island, which do not necessarily affect only people who participate in tourism. The correlation between participation and the overall impact in Koh Yao Noi is high, but not significant. We can therefore not state for sure that people who participate more also experience the impact of tourism more positively.

On first sight we can thus see that in Mae La Na there is a stronger relationship between participation and the satisfaction with tourism outcomes than in Koh Yao Noi, because we found significant correlations for all three types of impacts. This result may however not be conclusive because other influences may also be of importance. Therefore, we will need to take a closer look at these relations, which will be done in the next two sections.

## **6.2 The influence of participation on individual types of impact**

In this section we will explore which factors have an influence on social, economic and environmental impact. In the previous two chapters these types of impact were already discussed, and we have found positive and negative effects of tourism in both locations. For each type of impact three regression analyses have been executed. One for each location, and one overall in which we will see the differences between Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi. The mean of the statements per type of impact, as shown in the previous chapters, form the dependent variables. The results of the regression analyses can be found in Table IX<sup>5</sup>, and are further discussed in the next sub-sections. In all three analyses the background characteristics are included, next to the main predictor participation. In the analyses of both locations at once, the difference between the two locations is estimated as well as the difference in the effect of participation.

### **6.2.1 Analysis social impact**

In Chapter 4 we have seen that in Mae La Na, the average score on the statements concerning social impact of tourism in the village was 4,05 and in the beginning of this chapter that this is positively correlated with tourism participation. This means that people in Mae La Na who participate more in tourism planning and development have a higher level of satisfaction concerning the social outcomes of tourism. However, we did not take into account any other factors which could explain the variation regarding social impacts, which we will do now by including background characteristics. In the left column of under the heading 'social impact' in Table IX the results of the regression analysis for Mae La Na are shown, in which the relationship between participation and the evaluation of social impact is controlled for the background characteristics of the respondents. Here we can find a constant value of 4,366. This means that a man who is 15 years of age, works as a farmer, receives between 0 and 19.999 Baht per year, has been living in Mae La Na his whole life and has no involvement in tourism whatsoever would be likely to have an average score of 4,327 on the statements concerning social impact.

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<sup>5</sup> Table IX includes the B values and an indication of to which level this is significant.



The analysis shows that women in Mae La Na tend to have higher scores, and older people lower scores. Both are not significant however, and therefore we have to be careful making statements about this. When looking at employment we do find a significant predictor, which is the category *services*. This means that in Mae La Na people who work in the service industry on average score 0,458 lower on social impact compared to farmers. It is remarkable that these people actually score lower, as the service industry includes jobs (eg. guides, shops and restaurants) which in general would benefit from tourism development. People who work in the service sector often have contact with tourists. This means that they are more likely to benefit from the positive social impacts of tourism such as learning from interaction, cultural restoration and skill training. However, they also might experience more negative impacts, such as irritation, overcrowding, and a deterioration of culture. Considering the significantly lower mean scores of those working in the services sector we might conclude that tourism might appear to bring positive social impact, but in reality do not bring these positive impacts to this group of people. The data does not provide any evidence that income influences the evaluation of social impact related statements. Finally we can see that our main variable, participation, does not have any systematic effect on social impact. Although the direction of the effect is positive, we cannot say that there is indeed a real link between participation and social impact in Mae La Na. We may thus conclude that the significant correlation which was found in Section 6.1 is influenced by other characteristics.

Table IX: Regression analysis with social, economic and environmental impact

		Social impact			Economic impact			Environmental impact		
		MLN	KYN	All	MLN	KYN	All	MLN	KYN	All
<b>Background characteristics</b>										
Gender (ref: male)	<i>Female</i>	,048	-,044	,028	,304*	,108	,157*	-,159	-,083	-,152
Age		-,003	-,002	,001	,003	-,006	,002	,001	,011	,005
Employment (ref: Farming/fishing)	<i>Not employed</i>	-,393	-,113	-,172	-,408	-,413	-,243	-,191	,670	,374
	<i>Services</i>	-,458**	,163	-,002	-,234	,291**	,204*	-,528	,553**	,228
	<i>Student</i>	-,381	-,007	-,041	-,129	-,173	,072	-,697	,283	-,004
	<i>Other</i>	-,110	-,208	-,208	,170	,034	,170	-,353	,444	,155
Income (ref: 0-19.999)	<i>20.000-39.999</i>	-,152	,093	-,146	-,265	-,135	-,274	,137	-,253	,007
	<i>40.000-59.999</i>	,168	-,084	-,100	,154	-,599**	-,484**	,288	-,033	-,182
	<i>60.000-79.999</i>	-,069	,118	,091	-,107	-,102	-,136	-,252	,467	,160
	<i>80.000- 99.999</i>	-,306	,092	-,016	-,371	-,089	-,198	-,142	,262	-,043
	<i>100.000-149.999</i>	,144	-,028	,015	,319	-,159	-,109	,934	,762*	,196*
	<i>&gt;149.999</i>	-,288	-,053	-,052	-,497	-,239	-,344	,227	-,008	-,148
	<i>Missing</i>	,054	,059	,101	-,064	,109	,015	,282	,939**	,542**
Live in community (ref: whole life)	<i>&gt; 20 years</i>	-,185	,191	,065	-,380	,193	-,082	-,253	-,150	-,052
	<i>&lt; 20 years</i>	-,178	,406**	,223	,021	,116	,064	-,004	,523	,471*
	<i>&lt; 10 years</i>		,155	,082		-,008	-,115		-,211	-,179
<b>Main Variables</b>										
Which community (ref: MLN)				-,238			,193			-,756**
Participation in tourism		,008	,019	,048**	,016	,050**	,059**	,015	,059**	,080**
Participation * Community				-,034			-,010			-,033
<b>Constant</b>		4,327	3,458	3,725	3,822	3,798	3,454	3,976	1,533	2,980
<b>R square (adjusted)</b>		-,038	,045	,177	-,024	,166	,081	-,100	,107	,237

\* significant at 0,10 level, \*\* significant at 0,05 level

MLN= Mae La Na (n=58). KYN= Koh Yao Noi (n=85). All = Complete sample (n=143)

The next column in Table IX shows the regression results for Koh Yao Noi. In Chapter 5 we have seen that the average score on the social impact statements was 3,63. The constant score which is found in the regression analysis is close to this, with 3,458. Again we see that age and gender do not have a significant effect on the social impact. However, we also do not find any evidence for other background characteristics that would influence the evaluation of social impact in Koh Yao Noi, except for the group of people who live in Koh Yao Noi less than 20 years. We find that on average, they have higher scores on social impact than those who have lived their whole lives in the community. A plausible explanation for this effect is that people who are originally from outside the island are less attached to the cultural values and traditions of the islanders and experience less negative effect such as the deterioration of culture. As we have seen in Chapter 5, a major concern for the community members is that tourists do not always adopt the rules of the Muslim population, like dressing properly or refraining from alcohol. For people who were not born and raised on the island, and may not even be Muslim, the behavior of tourists might not seem harmful, while for the original community it is. In Section 6.1 we have seen that there is no direct correlation between participation and social impact in Koh Yao Noi. It is therefore also very unlikely to find a relation between the two variables in this regression analysis. The B-value of 0,019, although higher than in the case of Mae La Na, is indeed not significant. Again we may not conclude that participation influences social impact.

Finally we will take a look at the third column in Table IV, which shows the regression analysis for both locations, and includes the difference between locations. On first sight we can note that there is quite a large absolute difference between Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi in their evaluation of social impacts, with the mean scores 4,05 and 3,63 respectively. In Chapters 4 and 5 we have also seen that the average participation score for Mae La Na is 5,95 and for Koh Yao Noi is 6,53. In this way you would expect a negative relationship between the two concepts. The regression analysis will have to show whether this difference is simply caused by other factors. The constant value in this model is 3,725 which is again an estimation of the score of a male who is 15 years of age, works as a farmer, receives between 0 and 19.999 Baht per year, has been living in the community his whole life and has no involvement in tourism whatsoever<sup>6</sup>. The reference community is Mae La Na and the interaction between the variables *participation* and *community* shows whether in one community participation is of more influence than in the other.

In this case none of the background characteristics have a significant influence on the evaluation of social impact. However, the model does show evidence for the influence of participation. With an increase of one point in tourism participation, the average score of social impact increases with 0,048. This means that the average difference in social impact score between persons with the lowest and the highest form of participation is 0,576, regardless of which community they live in. Although not significant, the B value of -,238 is a clear indication that Koh Yao Noi has a more negative attitude concerning social tourism impacts. The interaction variable between participation and community is not

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<sup>6</sup> Although the value of the Constant in the first column (MLN) and third column (All) estimates the score of someone with exactly the same characteristics, the values do slightly vary due to the added variables and larger data file.

significant and therefore indicates that there is not much difference between the two locations concerning the way participation influences social impact.

As a conclusion we can say that those people who are more involved in tourism development have more positive evaluations of social tourism impact, when controlled for other variables. There is thus a positive relationship, which only comes to light when looking at the sample that includes both communities. For the individual location such an effect was not found, even though there was a significant direct correlation between participation and social impact in Mae La Na.

### **6.2.2 Analysis economic impact**

While a positive relationship between participation in the tourism industry and the perceived impact is expected for all three types of impact, it seems to be the most logical for economic impact. This is because participation in the tourism industry frequently results into direct economic benefits such as a job and an increase in income. The direct correlations between participation and economic impact, as shown for both locations separately in Section 6.1, were significant and positive. We will now see whether or not the same can be concluded when controlling for other variables.

The middle three columns in Table IX show the same analyses as the first three, but with economic impact as the dependent variable. For Mae La Na we know that the average score on the statements concerning economic impact is 3,89. The constant value of the regression analysis in Mae La Na is 3,822. A remarkable outcome of the analysis is that women have a significantly higher score on economic impact than men, namely an increase of 0,304. In Mae La Na both men and women seem to receive economic benefits from tourism development. In general the tourism industry is regarded as particularly beneficial for women (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; Wall & Mathieson, 2006), as many jobs within the tourism industry are especially suitable for women, such as being the host. In Mae La Na, none of the respondents indicated that tourism has resulted into more jobs especially for women. However, Panot, the owner of Tour Merng Tai, states that he notices that women are getting a larger share in the CBT project over time. He now sees them organizing the homestays, while this was previously done by men. None of the other background characteristics shows significant effects on the evaluation of economic impact. Also participation in tourism does not have a significant influence, even though the B value is higher than in the case of social impact. We can thus conclude that in Mae La Na the relation between participation and economic impact does not last when controlling for other factors.

For Koh Yao Noi the average score on economic impact is 4,05, which is high compared to the other two types of impact, and even compared to generally positive evaluations in Mae La Na. With the regression analysis we hope to find out which factors contribute to the high evaluation of economic impact. Looking at the background characteristics we find two significant effects. The first one is a positive relation with people working in the services industry. People who have a service related job have higher score on economic impact. This is a result which is in line with the expectations, because the service industry might include jobs which are tourism related, and thus people who directly benefit from the economic advantages of tourism. The second significant effect concerns the third income category (40.000-59.999). All income categories show negative effects on the evaluation of economic impact compared to the lowest income category, which is the reference, but only the third is significantly

different. Finally we come to the relationship between economic impact and participation in the tourism industry. Here we find a positive, and significant, relationship with a B value of 0,050. This means that in Koh Yao Noi our expectation is met, and that people who participate more also evaluate the economic impact more positively. It is likely that this is indeed a result of the income respondents generate through tourism activities.

In the final model concerning economic impact we will compare the two locations again. In the regression analysis we find that gender has a positive, significant, relationship, meaning that women on average have higher scores on economic impact, just like we have seen in the model of Mae La Na. The two background characteristics which were significant in the model of Koh Yao Noi, services and the third income category, also remain valid predictors in the overall model. None of the other background characteristics are influential in predicting the responses concerning economic impact. We do find a relationship between participation and economic impact in this final model. With an estimated increase of ,059 on the score of economic impact per point rise in participation, it is clear that more participation in the tourism industry leads to a better evaluation of the economic outcomes. The difference between the two locations, however, is not significant. Neither does participation have a significantly different influence on economic impact between the two communities, which we can see in the interaction between community and participation. We may thus conclude that, concerning the evaluation of economic outcomes, participation is indeed of importance.

### **6.2.3 Analysis environmental impact**

The final type of tourism impact is environmental impact. In Section 6.1 we found that there is a direct correlation between participation and environmental impact in Mae La Na. This correlation was positive, meaning that the more a person participated in tourism, the better the environmental impact was perceived. For Koh Yao Noi, there was no significant direct correlation found. However, when taking into account other characteristics of respondents we might find a different result. The results of the regression analyses with environmental impact can also be found in Table IX, in the three columns on the right side.

In Mae La Na the average score of the respondents on the statements concerning the environmental impact of tourism was 3,80. This is lower than for economic and social impact. Tourism activities are known to be harmful to the environment (Holden, 2000; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; Wall & Mathieson, 2006). In Chapter 4, however, we have seen that in Mae La Na tourism has also brought positive changes for the environment, like a better practices concerning waste management and a reduction of deforestation. A score of 3,80 is not particularly low, and still shows that the population in general is positive. The regression analysis shows no significant influences of background characteristics on the environmental impact. Also, like in the previous two sections, we do not find a significant effect of participation on environmental impact. We may thus conclude that there is no relationship between participation and social, economic, or environmental impact in Mae La Na when taking into account the background characteristics.

In Koh Yao Noi, the environmental impact as perceived by the community members scored a low 2,96, which is slightly below the neutral opinion of 3. This low value can be explained by the problems on the

island concerning litter. No direct relationship with local participation was found in Section 6.1. The regression analysis shows that in particular people who work in the service sector score an average of 0,553 higher than fisherman or farmers. Also people who earn more than 60.000 Baht per year score higher than the lowest income category, and for the group of people who fall in the category of 100.000-149.000 Baht counts that they significantly have higher scores. It is unclear why these people with higher incomes would evaluate the environmental impact more positively. In this regression analysis we do find a significant positive effect of participation on environmental impact.

In the overall model concerning environmental impact we see that some of the background variables which were significant in the model of Koh Yao Noi, remain significant here. At the same time, participation is also significantly of influence on the evaluation of environmental impact. With a B-value of 0,080 we see that people who participate more in tourism planning and development have a more positive attitude. Also there is a significant difference between the locations in the environmental impact. The absolute difference is almost 1 point, with Mae La Na being the most positive. After controlling for the other characteristics we see that people in Koh Yao Noi on average still evaluate the environmental impact with 0,756 point lower. In Chapter 4 and 5 the different environmental impacts were already discussed and it became clear that in Mae La Na there are many positive effects, and in Koh Yao Noi some negative environmental effects were caused by tourism. It is therefore no surprise that these differences are significant.

### **6.3 Overall analysis**

In the previous section we have seen how local participation in tourism development affects social, economic and environmental impact, and whether there are differences between the two locations in the evaluation of these impacts. In this section we will take a closer look at the overall evaluation of impact. Three different models were made. The first one includes all background characteristics and the variable participation, and is thus the same model that was used in the previous section. In the second model the variable overall participation is replaced by the two statements concerning the community and personal control over tourism development. The third model includes all individual participation variables. Like in the previous section all models were estimated three times; for Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi separately, and one model in which the locations are compared. The results of the regression analyses can be found in Table X. However, before discussing the analyses, it is important to take a look at the absolute scores on impact which were previously discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 for each location separately. Here we have seen that in Mae La Na the impact of tourism was evaluated with a 3,97 and in Koh Yao Noi with 3,64. The difference between the locations is thus apparent and using a t-test we find that it is also significant.

In Model I of Table X we find the regression results with only overall participation as a main predictor. Compared to the models in the previous section there are no surprises in the effects of the background characteristics. Only in the analysis of Koh Yao Noi we find that people who work in the service industry have significantly higher evaluations of tourism impact. Looking at the main effect of participation on impact we see that in Mae La Na we do not find any significant effect. In Section 6.1 we did not find any direct correlations between participation and tourism impact for both locations. In this analysis

Table X: Regression analysis with overall impact

		Model I			Model II			Model III		
		MLN	KYN	All	MLN	KYN	All	MLN	KYN	All
<b>Background characteristics</b>										
Gender (ref: male)	<i>Female</i>	,074	-,012	,011	,085	-,024	,005	,068	,008	,010
Age		,003	-,003	,003	,004	-,002	,003	,004	-,002	,005
Employment (ref: Farming/fishing)	<i>Not employed</i>	-,344	-,086	-,112	-,356	-,325	-,288	-,504	-,057	-,090
	<i>Services</i>	-,349	,308**	,156	-,373**	,223**	,015	-,466*	,276**	,131
	<i>Student</i>	-,423	-,067	-,059	-,454*	-,150	-,219	-,323	-,034	,009
	<i>Other</i>	-,138	,020	-,004	-,149	-,056	-,092	-,054	,069	,043
Income (ref: 0-19.999)	<i>20.000-39.999</i>	-,180	-,176	-,242	-,156	-,180	-,234	-,373	-,355	-,361**
	<i>40.000-59.999</i>	,224	-,359	-,284	,269	-,212	-,173	,043	-,495*	-,309
	<i>60.000-79.999</i>	,010	,080	,048	,034	,126	,082	-,041	-,061	,031
	<i>80.000- 99.999</i>	-,403	,005	-,142	-,388	,084	-,139	-,609	-,153	-,175
	<i>100.000-149.999</i>	,306	,080	,081	,359	,175	,172	-,116	-,093	,013
	<i>&gt;149.999</i>	,011	-,255	-,267	-,070	-,165	-,189	-,431	-,383	-,284
	<i>Missing</i>	,101	,187	,176	,113	,240	,162	-,108	-,036	,074
Live in community (ref: whole life)	<i>&gt; 20 years</i>	-,252	,177	,031	-,220	,088	-,112	-,424	,156	,003
	<i>&lt; 20 years</i>	-,190	,286**	,184	-,127	,094	,006	-,275	,306*	,183
	<i>&lt; 10 years</i>		-,067	-,126		-,233	-,289		-,004	-,065
<b>Participation</b>										
Participation in tourism		-,004	,038**	,047**						
Community control					,112	,166**	,057			
Personal control					-,086	-,066	,001			
Work in tourism (ref: nothing)	<i>Accommodation</i>							,112	,255	,255*
	<i>Guide</i>							-,270	,348	,360*
	<i>Shop / restaurant</i>							,120	,328	,333*
	<i>Other*</i>							-,201	,181	,077
	<i>Multiple activities</i>							,028	,447**	,348**
Contact with tourist (ref: never)	<i>&gt; Once a week</i>							-,422	-,033	-,081
	<i>&lt; Once a week</i>							-,1,21**	-,131	-,297
	<i>Monthly</i>							-,653	-,073	-,074
	<i>Rarely</i>							-,491	,065	-,018
Involved meeting (ref: never)	<i>Many times</i>							,080	,066	,025
	<i>Once or twice</i>							,336	-,008	,075
Involved opinion (ref: never)	<i>Many times</i>							,223	-,055	,136
	<i>Once or twice</i>							,054	,113	,154
Involved informed (ref: never)	<i>Always/mostly</i>							-,025	,184	,018
	<i>Sometimes</i>							-,206	-,091	-,158
<b>Community differences</b>										
Which community (ref: MLN)				-,272			-,643			-,326**
Participation * Community				-,017						
Community control * Community							,134			
Personal control * Community							-,059			
<b>Constant</b>		4,152	3,304	3,582	3,928	3,165	3,747	4,630	3,428	3,679
<b>R square (adjusted)</b>		-,006	,212	,183	-,004	,226	,182	-,136	,145	,172

\* significant at 0,10 level, \*\* significant at 0,05 level

MLN= Mae La Na (n=58). KYN= Koh Yao Noi (n=85). All = Complete sample (n=143)

however, there is a positive significant effect of participation in tourism development and planning on the impact. In the model with both locations we can see that the effect of participation becomes even stronger. We find that the evaluation of the impact of tourism increases with 0,047 point when there is one point of increase in participation. This means that the average difference in score on impact between someone who does not participate in tourism development at all and someone who has maximum participation is 0,564. This large difference is indeed significant. We may therefore conclude that participation influences tourism impact satisfaction. In the same model we find that there is no significant difference between the locations in the evaluation of tourism impact. Also, although participation was a significant predictor in the analysis of Koh Yao Noi and not for Mae La Na, we see that the effect of participation is not significantly different between locations (see interaction participation\*community).

Instead of looking at the overall participation of locals, Model II tests whether peoples' feelings about their own, and their communities control on tourism development have an effect on tourism satisfaction<sup>7</sup>. Again we do not find any remarkable results from the background characteristics which are included as control variables. In the model of Mae La Na we also see that there is no significant effect of either community control, or personal control on tourism impact. For Koh Yao Noi we do find a significant effect, indicating that people who believe that their community has control over tourism also evaluate tourism impact more positively. There are some possible explanations for this effect. The first relies on the idea that people who might respond high on both impact and community control do this simply because they are more optimistic by nature. Secondly, people who believe that their community is in control with tourism development might be the same people who actually are involved themselves. Therefore the same effect as participation occurs. However, the latter idea would mean that it is also more likely that there is an effect from the variable 'personal control', which in this case is not significant. In the model in which the two locations are compared we do not find the same significant effect of the 'community control' on tourism impact satisfaction, neither of personal control. Although the B-value for community is -,643, meaning that Koh Yao Noi on average scores a lot lower than Mae La Na when controlled for all variables, it is not significant. We therefore find no significant estimators in the overall version of Model II.

The final model includes the separate variables which make up participation. For Mae La Na, no particular trends are found, except for the contact locals have with tourists. People who have contact with tourists generally seem to be more negative concerning the impact compared to those who do not. However, only those people who have contact less than once a week have significantly lower scores. As we previously did not find any significant (positive) effect of participation on tourism impact satisfaction, it is not surprising that we do not find such a trend in this model either. In Koh Yao Noi we can see that there is some positive effect of tourism employment on the evaluation of tourism impact. People who are employed in tourism in some way have reacted more positively on the statements concerning tourism impact than those who do not work in the tourism industry. However, only the people who have

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<sup>7</sup> The statements were 'I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community' and 'I believe that I personally have control over tourism development in my community', and use the answer categories from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'.

multiple tourism jobs have significantly higher scores. In the overall model we can find that the effect of working in a tourism related job is even stronger. People who have a job in a tourist accommodation, shop, restaurant, or work as a guide, or multiple of the previous, have significantly higher tourism impact satisfaction scores. There is a slight trend that people who have contact with tourists have a lower impact satisfaction. However, people who are involved in tourism related meetings, were informed, or were asked their opinion all have better evaluations of tourism impact than those who are not involved, but this effect is not significant. There is a significant difference in perceived tourism impact between the two locations, in which people from Koh Yao Noi on average score 0,326 lower than people in Mae La Na.

## 6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have taken a look at the influence of participation in tourism planning and development on the perceived tourism impact. We found that in Mae La Na there is a direct relation between participation and social, economic and environmental impact, while in Koh Yao Noi this was only found for economic impact. In the second section we found that participation has a significant influence on social, economic, and environmental impact when looking at the complete sample. For Mae La Na, we did not find any significant influence of participation, while in Koh Yao Noi we do find significant effects on economic and environmental impact. Also, we found that the locations significantly vary from each other in their evaluation of environmental impact, in which the community members of Koh Yao Noi have lower scores than those in Mae La Na.

The most remarkable result in this is that the direct correlations between participation and the three types of impact show significant values for each case in Mae La Na, while none of the lasts in the regression analysis. We may thus conclude that the correlations that were found can actually be explained by other factors than participation only. In Koh Yao Noi the opposite effect occurs partly. When looking at environmental impact, participation did not have any direct influence, but when controlling for background characteristics it does become significant.

Looking at overall tourism impact we also find a significant effect of participation on impact in Koh Yao Noi and in the overall sample, but again not for Mae La Na. When testing whether the feelings of personal and community control over tourism development influence the evaluation of tourism impact we find that only in Koh Yao Noi people who have the feeling that their community is in control have higher scores on impact than those who believe their community has little control. Finally, we see that people who work in the tourism related jobs have a more positive attitude concerning tourism impact than those who do not. Involvement in other types of tourism planning and development seems to be less of influence.

We can conclude that there is an effect of participation on tourism impact as experienced by the community members, but that this effect is by far the most visible in Koh Yao Noi. At the same time people in Koh Yao Noi experience more negative impacts of tourism development than the people in Mae la Na.



## 7. Conclusion and discussion

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In this thesis we have taken a close look at two concepts which are crucial for community-based tourism projects; *Community participation* and *tourism impact satisfaction*. Most important in this study, however, is the relationship between these two concepts, which is also at the core of the central research question. To explore the relationship between participation and tourism impact, two case studies in Thailand were selected. In each location questionnaires and interviews were taken with a focus on the two main concepts, of which the results are presented in the previous three chapters. In this final chapter we will first take a look at the main findings and answer the research question. We will then zoom out and discuss what this thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge, what its limitations are and possibilities for future research.

As a small, isolated village in the north of Thailand, Mae La Na does not naturally receive many tourists. However, the natural and cultural resources in and around the village have the potential to attract the interest of tourists. The locals have created a community based tourism project in order to protect these resources, and at the same time the community was to benefit from tourism with economic and cultural gains. The project really started take off around 15 years ago and is nationally considered to be a success. This research also shows that the project indeed has many positive effects, according to the local population. Residents evaluated social, economic and environmental impact as very positive. There have only been minor negative effects, but even these did not make the average evaluations lower.

In Mae La Na we can see that there is high involvement of the local population in tourism planning and development. There are many participating families in the homestay program and even a lot more are involved in tourism activities such as dance performances and cooking. This is despite the fact that the local population deals with structural and operational constraints for participation in tourism development, such as a lack of knowledge. Several actors, among which several NGOs, have contributed their knowledge, and with their help the locals of Mae La Na now have control over their own CBT project. When looking at how the community participates in tourism development nowadays, it shows most signs of self-mobilization, which is the maximum participation in the typologies as defined by Pretty (1995) and France (1998). This means that the locals do not only benefit from the outcomes of tourism optimally, but also that everyone in the community has the possibility to participate, and that the community as a whole takes the initiative. Previous studies on local participation in CBT projects have found far less active involvement (Stone & Stone, 2010).

The relationship between local participation and tourism impact satisfaction is remarkable in Mae La Na. We found significant, positive correlations between the two variables for the three types of impact individually, but not for overall impact. In the regression analyses, however, none of the effects of participation were significant. This means that the found correlations were influenced by other characteristics of the respondents. This result means that in Mae La Na, people who participate in tourism planning and development actively do not necessarily evaluate the impact of tourism better. Or to state it differently, we may conclude that the benefits that tourism brings to the communities are

experienced by all members. With both high levels of participation, and positive tourism impacts, Mae La Na appears to be the ideal example of CBT according to its goals.

Koh Yao Noi is a dream destination for many tourists who seek the well-known Thai tropical island experience. While the island is already a tourism destination for several decades with its many resorts, the CBT project has also successfully established itself. The original goal of the project to protect Phang Nga bay from over fishing was achieved already 15 years ago, but residents of the island remained interested to continue the project and further gain from the tourism industry. In many ways the residents do benefit from this, mainly concerning the economic impacts, such as the extra income. However, in Koh Yao Noi, the residents also experience negative cultural and environmental impacts. This has made the average evaluation of impacts less positive than in Mae La Na.

The involvement of the local population in tourism planning and development in Koh Yao Noi is complex, mainly due to the fact that the CBT project is only a part of the tourism development on the island. Tourism development on the island knows many stakeholders. One of the problems that arises from this is that the different tourism projects partly conflict with each other. Like previous studies also found (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008; Goodwin, 2006), there seems to be a failure in the connection between CBT and mainstream tourism in Koh Yao Noi. Cooperation between stakeholders on the island (eg. the local government, the CBT group and resort owners) would need to improve in order to create a form of tourism development which is beneficial to the local population. Also, only a relatively small part of the community is involved in the (community-based) tourism industry. To place the community participation of Koh Yao Noi in the typologies of Pretty (1995) and France (1998) it would mostly fit into the category interactive participation. While the CBT project has full control over their own project, they are restricted by other actors on the island, and not exclusively local community members.

In Koh Yao Noi we do find that there is a relationship between participation and the perceived tourism impact. A direct correlation was only found for economic impact. In the regression analyses however, significant effects were established for both economic and environmental impact, as well as for overall impact. Except for social impacts, we may thus state residents of Koh Yao Noi who participate more actively in tourism development also evaluate tourism impacts more positively. It also means that the effects of tourism are only enjoyed by a part of the community.

There are many similarities between the CBT projects in Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi. They for instance both started off with comparable goals, and the product offered by the CBT groups is rather similar, namely homestays. The communities partly dealt with the same actors and constraints to participate in tourism development, but the minor differences are crucial. There is a large absolute difference in the evaluation of impacts between the communities, and it is significant. It must be noted that there is especially a large difference concerning environmental impact, in which Koh Yao Noi scores remarkably lower. At the same time the residents of Koh Yao Noi also have a lower level of participation.

A possible explanation for the different outcomes between the communities might lie in the community structures, and the position of the CBT project within the community. Mae La Na is a small community in which people are closely related, while Koh Yao Noi, on the other hand, is a larger community that is

more fragmented (one of the constraints as defined by Blackstock (2005) and Scheyvens (2002)). In the latter case it is more difficult to make a program that fits the needs of all community members. While individual community members participate in the CBT projects in similar ways in both communities, it seems that the CBT project itself has a different place in the community in each location. In both case studies the CBT project involves about twenty to thirty families, but this is relatively a lot more for Mae La Na as its population is almost six times smaller than of Koh Yao Noi. In the case of Mae La Na it is therefore more likely that even though community members are not personally involved, their interests are still covered by neighbors or friends who are involved.

With this information the main research question of this thesis can now be answered. The two cases provide evidence that there is indeed a relationship between local participation in tourism planning and development and locals' satisfaction with tourism outcomes. This relationship is positive, meaning that the more an individual participates in tourism, the more satisfied he or she is with the outcomes of tourism in the community. At the same time the two cases also show that the relationship is not always apparent. In Mae La Na there was no significant difference between the people who were and who were not involved, while in Koh Yao Noi there was.

In short we may conclude that in both locations CBT has brought many advantages to the communities, and that the original goals have been achieved. In Mae La Na however, residents have evaluated tourism impact slightly more positive, especially considering environmental outcomes. The relationship between local tourism participation and perceived impact is generally positive, but also strongly depends on community structures. It is likely that the CBT concept is most successful in small communities in which all community members can easily influence the project.

Although this research has given a good insight into CBT projects, there are also several limitations. First of all the research is limited in its scope. While the sample of the questionnaire represents a large part of both communities, there are still only 143 respondents in total. This number makes thorough statistical analysis difficult, especially when analysis is split up per community. At the same time the research is limited to a comparison between only two communities. This means that it is impossible to draw conclusions about general patterns. It is therefore that the conclusions remain only valid for these two communities.

Another limitation lies in the nature and comparability of the two selected communities. This is most obvious in the cultural differences. For instance that in Mae La Na the population is almost without exception Buddhist, while in Koh Yao Noi people are predominantly Muslim. They are from different ethnic groups and have different cultural traits. Due to these cultural differences it is more difficult to compare these two locations. More specific attention concerning culture could be paid to the selection of the communities. However, in a country with so many ethnic groups which sometimes live relatively isolated, it is nearly impossible to find such comparable cases. Therefore we should take into consideration that different attitudes concerning tourism impact may also be influenced by cultural differences (think for instance of the clothing and alcohol values in Koh Yao Noi, which are specifically related to religion). Future research could perhaps give more insight into this.

There is another difference between the locations which makes the cases difficult to compare. This is the already existing conventional tourism on Koh Yao Noi, which naturally interferes with the CBT project. While the CBT project on the island is relatively well known, the majority of the tourists on Koh Yao Noi are guests at the resorts. In this research the perception on the impact of tourism was central. In the interviews it was possible to distinguish between conventional tourism effects and those of CBT. In the questionnaires, however, this was not possible especially since respondents (who are not involved in CBT) cannot always make this distinction.

This study gives a number of insights concerning the debate about community participation and (perceived) tourism impacts. Some are in line with expectations, while others are contrary to the results found in previous studies. First of all, concerning the participation of local community members there seems to be a difficult dynamic. In this research both communities dealt with a high number of constraints for participation. Many of the constraints to participation as defined by Koch (1997), Tosun (2000), Scheyvens (2002) and Timothy (1999) were found. In this research we find that the help of several actors, among which NGOs, was indeed crucial for the initiation of the CBT project. However, we also find that the local population nowadays has high levels of control, and in the case of Mae La Na even self-mobilization, which indicated the highest level of local participation (Pretty, 1995; France, 1998).

Conforming with previous research (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008; Goodwin, 2006), this study also finds that the revenues gained from CBT are relatively small. However, the initial investments in the CBT projects in Mae La Na and Koh Yao Noi were also small, and therefore no losses are reported. Both projects can thus be viewed as financially viable. A general problematic feature of CBT is the lack of connection with mainstream tourism (Goodwin, 2006). Especially in Koh Yao Noi we find that there is little cooperation between the CBT group and other tourism facilitators. Also both CBT projects have relatively little connection with tour operators and travel agencies. It is questionable whether these connections with mainstream tourism are crucial, as both projects can be regarded as successful without it, and the participants even express that they do not want to grow considerably.

More importantly however, we find two cases with different results concerning the relationship between local participation and tourism impact. Though it is not certain what exactly causes that there is an effect on one location and not on the other, there is a likely explanation. In Mae La Na a relatively larger number of the population is involved in the CBT group. This automatically would make it easier to look after everyone's interests. Those who are involved will make decisions in the best interest of themselves, but also their family members, friends and neighbors. As Tosun (2000) explains, participation is ideal when power shifts to people who are originally excluded. This type of participation would lead to better results for community members.

This research also shows the importance of using a different methodology like multiple regression analysis, which makes it possible to analyze the relationship between variables while at the same time controlling for other effects. We have seen that the relationship between participation and perceived tourism impact changes when including other characteristics. This analysis thus makes it possible to look

beyond the results on first sight. Regression analysis has not been used in any study before to examine the relationship between local participation and (perceived) tourism impact.

This thesis started off with the idea that several forms of tourism are perhaps more sustainable than conventional (mass) tourism (Scheyvens, 2002; Brohman, 1996). Community-based tourism would be one form of sustainable tourism, which is distinct because of its small scale character in which the community has full participation. CBT projects would therefore act in the best interest of the local population which would lead to community development. Previous studies in the field of tourism and development, however, have found that there are many constraints to local participation (Koch, 1997; Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens, 2002; Timothy, 1999), even concerning CBT projects (Stone & Stone, 2010). Besides that CBT projects were not always found to be successful because of their small scale, large investments and lack of connection with mainstream tourism (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008; Goodwin, 2006).

For this study we have taken a look at how locals perceive the impact of tourism in their community, and if this perception is influenced by whether they are actively involved in tourism development. It was found that it does matter whether locals are involved, both on the personal and community level. Within a community that actively participates in tourism planning and development opinions on tourism impact are less dispersed. A higher level of local participation thus leads to more positive perceived impacts, and may therefore be regarded as more sustainable.

## 7. References

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# Appendix I: Questionnaire

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## Part I: General characteristics

1. What is your name? .....
2. What is your age? .....
3. What is your gender?      Male / Female (Please circle the appropriate)
4. For how long do you live in this community?
  - All my life
  - More than 20 years
  - Less than 20 years
  - Less than 10 years
5. What is your main occupation?
  - Not employed
  - Farming / fishing
  - Services industry
  - Student
  - Other, namely .....
6. What is your average monthly income approximately? .....
- And/ or yearly income? .....

## Part II: Participation in tourism

7. Do you, in any way, provide services or products to tourists?
  - No
  - Yes, namely
    - Accommodation
    - Guide
    - Shop
    - Restaurant
    - Other, namely.....
    - Traditional Performance
    - Cooking (in case of a large group of tourists, homestay will assign a group of members to cook and prepare food for tourists)
    - Occupational Group, specify \_\_\_\_\_
    - transport

8. Do you have direct contact with tourists?

- Yes, more than once a week on average
- Yes, but less than once a week on average
- Yes, monthly
- Yes, rarely or sometimes
- No, never

9. Have you been involved in any type of meeting where you discussed tourism development in your community?

- Yes, many times
- Yes, but only once or twice
- No, never

10. Have you been asked about your opinion on tourism by those who plan tourism development?

- Yes, many times
- Yes, but only once or twice
- No, never

11. When major decisions concerning tourism development in your community, were you informed?

- Yes, always or most of the times
- Yes, sometimes
- No, never

12. Do you think that major decisions concerning tourism development in your community are made primarily by ..... (please select the appropriate)

- the whole community
- a group of people in the community
- people outside your community (eg. government officials, tour operators, NGO's, financial contributors, etc.)

13. The following question consists of statements. Please indicate to which level you agree or disagree with the statements by circling the appropriate number.

1= Strongly disagree

2= Disagree

3= Neither disagree nor agree

4= Agree

5= Strongly agree

13a. I believe that my community has control over tourism development in my community      1    2    3    4    5

13b. I believe that I personally have control over tourism development in my community      1    2    3    4    5

### Part III: Attitude towards tourism

14. The following part also consists of statements. Please indicate to which level you agree or disagree with the statements by circling the appropriate number.

- 1= Strongly disagree
- 2= Disagree
- 3= Neither disagree nor agree
- 4= Agree
- 5= Strongly agree

14a	I often feel irritated because of tourism in my community	1	2	3	4	5
14b	My community is overcrowded because of tourism development	1	2	3	4	5
14c	Community recreational resources are overused by tourists	1	2	3	4	5
14d	The environment in my community has deteriorated because of tourism	1	2	3	4	5
14e	Tourism is growing too fast	1	2	3	4	5
14f	My quality of life has deteriorated because of tourism	1	2	3	4	5
14g	Tourism brings in the major revenue to the community	1	2	3	4	5
14h	Tourism benefits other industries in my community	1	2	3	4	5
14i	Tourism diversifies the local economy	1	2	3	4	5
14j	Tourism creates new markets for our local products	1	2	3	4	5
14k	I believe that tourism development in my community has brought more advantages than disadvantages	1	2	3	4	5
14l	I think that tourism development makes our community stronger	1	2	3	4	5
14m	I think that tourism development makes our community dependent on people outside of the community	1	2	3	4	5
14n	I believe that because of tourism the environment in my community is well preserved	1	2	3	4	5
14o	I believe tourism in my community causes pollution	1	2	3	4	5
14p	I think I (could) learn a lot from interaction with tourists	1	2	3	4	5
14q	Tourism promotes pride of their way of life and cultures among community members	1	2	3	4	5
14r	Tourism promotes cultural restoration and conservation	1	2	3	4	5
14s	Tourism invites other organizations to assist the community	1	2	3	4	5
14t	Tourism makes the community well known to outsiders	1	2	3	4	5
14u	Tourism becomes a platform for skill training and learning new ideas for the community	1	2	3	4	5
14v	Tourism unites various groups inside the community to work together	1	2	3	4	5
14w	Most tourists are respectful to the community	1	2	3	4	5
14x	Tourism is another form of education for tourists to understand and appreciate way of life of the host community	1	2	3	4	5

15. Do you have any final questions or remarks? (If you have a question please write your contact information)

.....  
 .....

## Appendix II: Overview of interviews

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In this appendix a list of the respondents can be found. They are numbered in chronological order of when the interviews took place. Please note that the names of the respondents are not real names. They might be nicknames, fake names, or translations from Thai to English, depending in the respondent.

### Interviews in Mae La Na

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date and time</u>	<u>Name of respondent</u>	<u>Profession</u>
1	20-04-2012, 10.00	Panot	Owner tour operator
		Panot is the founder and owner of tour operator Tour Merng Tai. He is very involved with community based tourism projects in the region of Mae Hong Son. Besides this interview with him, he was also the translator for all other interviews in Mae La Na	
2	20-04-2012, 11.30	Tientong	Local guide
		As a local guide, Tientong, has been involved in tourism for 13 years already. Being a guide is his main occupation, and he also keeps an eye on the maintenance of the forest. Tientong is the coordinator of the group of local guides.	
3	20-04-2012, 12.30	Kanoi	Shop owner and homestay
		Kanoi owns a shop in her house with very basic products like bottles of soda and beer, and durable foods. Besides that she has been participating in the homestay program for almost 10 years.	
4	20-04-2012, 14.00	Ampha	Owner of guesthouse
		Ampha is the owner of the only guesthouse in Mae La Na, the Garden Home guesthouse. She started it about 11 years ago. Her guesthouse now consists of 6 bungalows and receives and increasing amount of tourists. Ampha also has a shop and small restaurant in the town and wants to expand het guesthouse with another restaurant.	
5	20-04-2012, 15.00	Ting	Homestay program
		She has been in the homestay program for 6 years. Before that she was already part of the local CBT group. Besides the homestay, she makes several local products, such as brooms.	
6	21-04-2012, 09.00	Jamroon	CBT coordinator
		Jamroon is the initiator of CBT in Mae La Na. He is the person who first thought tourism would be an opportunity for development of the village. Nowadays he is still very involved and coordinates the different groups within the village (local guides, homestay, etc.). Besides that, he keeps contact with other actors such as the CBT-I, Tour Merng Tai, and the local government.	
7	21-04-2012, 11.00	Chaleen + Met	Village chief + assistant

The local government of Mae La Na is not very involved in tourism development in the village. However, they have a small budget for tourism development through the national government.

- |   |                   |            |                 |
|---|-------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 8   | 21-04-2012, 12.00 | Wichin     | School teacher  |
| Wichin only lives in Mae La Na since five months. He is a teacher at the local school, and has seen how the school cooperates with the CBT group.   |                   |            |                 |
| 9   | 21-04-2012, 13.30 | Chai       | Farmer          |
| Chai has never been involved in tourism planning and development, but sees how tourism changes the village. He moved to Mae La Na 35 years ago from Burma, and is now in his sixties.   |                   |            |                 |
| 10  | 21-04-2012, 17.00 | Kancha Nok | CBT coordinator |
| Kancha Nok is only in his twenties but very involved with tourism development in the village. He cooperates a lot with the CBT-I and was the leader of the CBT youth group last year. Also he is the coordinator for people outside of the community. |                   |            |                 |

## Interviews in Koh Yao Noi

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date and time</u>	<u>Name of respondent</u>	<u>Profession</u>
1	24-05-2012, 10.00	Jane	Teacher
Jane is an English teacher at the high school of Koh Yao Noi. She teaches the children about tourism on the island and also works together with tourism actors on the island to facilitate the children.			
2	24-05-2012, 11.00	Tiep	Teacher
Tiep also is an English teacher at the high school. She coordinates volunteers who come to teach English at the school.			
3	26-05-2012, 13.00	Dan	Mayor
Den is the mayor of the main village on Koh Yao Noi. He is actively involved with tourism planning and development on the island and cooperates with the CBT group.			
4	06-06-2012, 15.00	Bao	CBT coordinator
Bao is the initiator of CBT development on the island. Before that he was a fisherman. He is now involved as a coordinator and mainly welcomes foreign tourists as he is the only one of the CBT group who speaks English.			

## Appendix III: Tourism impact overview table

The next table shows the average scores on the statements per community as well as the t-test results, which indicate whether there is a significant difference between the two locations.

Table XI: Social, environmental and economic impact; differences between locations

Statement <sup>1</sup>	Mean per location		
	MLN	KYN	T-test <sup>3</sup>
1. I often feel irritated because of tourism in my community <sup>2</sup>	4,25	4,19	0,36 (140)
2. My community is overcrowded because of tourism development <sup>2</sup>	4,17	3,31	5,42(141)**
3. Tourism is growing too fast <sup>2</sup>	4,03	2,81	7,63(141)**
4. My quality of life has deteriorated because of tourism <sup>2</sup>	4,27	3,29	6,11(139)**
5. I think that tourism development makes our community stronger	3,93	3,73	1,41(140)
6. I think that tourism development makes our community dependent on people outside of the community <sup>2</sup>	3,24	2,51	4,31(140)**
7. I think I (could) learn a lot from interaction with tourists	4,10	3,91	1,48(141)
8. Tourism promoted pride in the way of life and culture among community members	4,12	4,06	0,52(141)
9. Tourism promotes cultural restoration and conservation	4,22	3,89	2,40(141)**
10. Tourism becomes a platform for skill training and learning new ideas for the community	3,99	4,01	-0,22(141)
11. Tourism unites various groups inside the community to work together	4,24	4,00	1,92(141)*
12. Most tourists are respectful to the community	4,10	3,93	1,51(141)
<b>Average score social impact</b>	<b>4,05</b>	<b>3,63</b>	<b>5,73(141)**</b>
1. Community recreational resources are overused by tourists <sup>2</sup>	3,90	3,21	3,83(141)**
2. The environment in my community has deteriorated because of tourism <sup>2</sup>	3,95	3,11	4,88(141)**
3. I believe tourism in my community causes pollution <sup>2</sup>	3,55	2,52	5,80(140)**
<b>Average score environmental impact</b>	<b>3,80</b>	<b>2,96</b>	<b>6,11(141)**</b>
1. Tourism benefits other industries in my community	3,89	4,13	-1,96(140)*
2. Tourism diversifies the local economy	4,03	4,23	-1,66(141)*
3. Tourism creates new markets for our local products	3,74	3,98	-2,00(141)**
4. Tourism invites other organization to invest in our community	3,89	3,87	0,21(141)
<b>Average score economic impact</b>	<b>3,89</b>	<b>4,05</b>	<b>-1,87(141)*</b>
I believe that tourism development in my community has brought more advantages than disadvantages	4,14	3,92	1,77(141)*
<b>Overall impact score</b>	<b>3,97</b>	<b>3,64</b>	<b>4,48(141)**</b>

MLN= Mae La Na (n=58). KYN= Koh Yao Noi (n=85).

<sup>1</sup>Statements were to be answered on a 5-point scale, 1 indicating strongly disagree, 5 indicating strongly agree

<sup>2</sup>Answers of statements are reversed for the purpose of making the scores in the same direction, e.g. higher scores mean more positive attitudes

<sup>3</sup>Independent-Samples T-Test values, degrees of freedom between brackets

\* significant at 0,10 level, \*\* significant at 0,05 level.

# Appendix IV: Impressions of locations

## A: Mae La Na



Overview Thailand



Area overview

### The CBT experience in Mae La Na

Visiting Mae La Na is a unique experience for many tourists, starting from the journey to the village. The dirt road through the mountains leads through the village of Ja Bo, where you need to be careful for animals like goats or cows on the road.

Continuing a steep road, you enter Mae La Na. Immediately on the right side is a small wooden house, which is the CBT information center. It is unlikely, however, that someone is here to welcome you as it is rarely occupied. Moving along the road the first houses will appear. While no one might speak English, anyone will lead you to a person who can help you. Once they found a family where you can stay, you can settle in the house. One night will cost you 100 Baht (approximately 2,50 euros), and a meal 50 Baht. The first thing you will notice is the simplicity. There are no beds, chairs or tables in the house, just mattresses and pillows on the floor. Most houses are built on poles and are made of wood or sometimes concrete.

The village is small and can therefore be explored by foot, although some host families might take you on the back of their motorbike. Make sure you visit the temple, rice fields and the weaving workplace. The road passing through the village only leads to one other village, meaning that only very little vehicles pass Mae La Na. The tranquility of the village with its rice fields, surrounded by mountains is almost magical. Back at the house the family will most likely have prepared a meal for you. It is normal to eat rice together with several dishes including a lot of vegetables and some meat. You will eat while you sit on the floor, most likely on the outside patio. As a desert you will have fresh fruits like bananas and mangoes are picked from the garden.

After a good night of sleep you will wake up early from the roasters' crows, or from other animals walking around and under the houses. Locals start working early in the day and stop for a few hours around noon to avoid the heat. Being in such a small community with little tourists, makes it easy to learn about the local lifestyle. Finally, a visit to Mae La Na is not complete without a hike to one of the caves with a local guide, which can be arranged through the host family.



## Pictures



Inside the Coral cave



The village temple



Community ricefields



A homestay



Tourist information centre

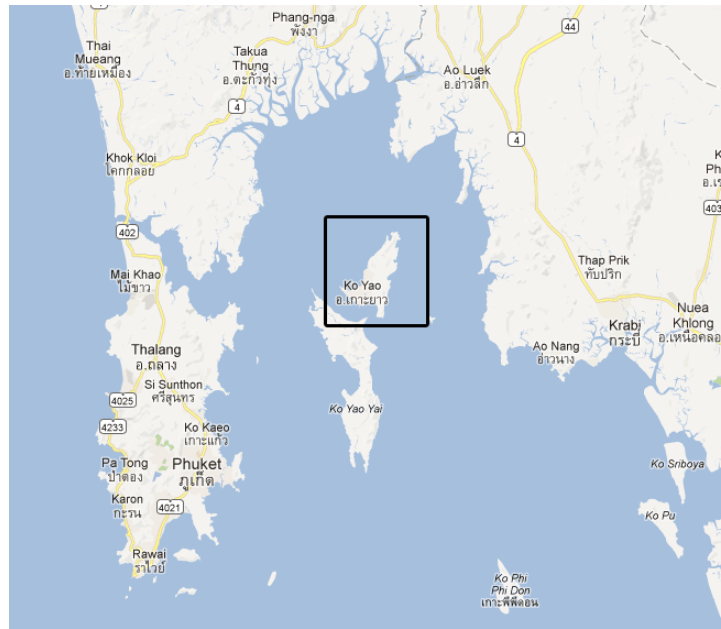


Basic bedroom in homestay

## B: Koh Yao Noi



Overview Thailand



Area overview

### A community based tourism holiday at Koh Yao Noi

A typical 2-night CBT trip to Koh Yao Noi begins at Manoh pier on the southern part of the island, where you will be picked up by someone from the CBT group. You will be brought to your host family by shared taxi, which is the only form of public transport available on the island. Host families are spread around the island, and it depends on the availability of the families where guests will be placed. Depending on your time of arrival the host family will prepare a lunch or dinner. Meals, especially lunch and dinner, will include rice and a large variety of vegetables, meat and fish. Of course, the fish is freshly caught. Large shrimps and crap are frequently on the menu.

On the first day, you will be able to explore the beautiful island by yourself, or with your host family who can take you to places that you would normally not see, like a coconut farm, rubber plantation or to see the locals come home with the catch of the day. After that you can take a refreshing shower at the host families house. In the evening the host family might take you out to eat Roti in one of the many local restaurants in the central town. Around 10 PM it is time to go bed. You will most likely have your own bedroom with a double bed. Bed nets are of course available to be clear of mosquitos.

The next day starts early, with breakfast 7 AM. The host family will most likely take you for a boat trip. You can go fishing, or visit any of the islands around Koh Yao, which are good for swimming and snorkeling. Also the fish farm can be visited to see lobster and other kinds of fish. Back at the host families home, another meal will be prepared. Most meals are enjoyed with a group of family members. While they usually do not speak English very well, they will still try to communicate.

The next day it is time to leave already. Host families will ask you to write in their guestbook, which they keep with a lot of pride. It is an unforgettable experience for tourists. The hospitality of the host family, good food and a simple life...

## Pictures



Fishing area



Rubber plantation



Beach



Sea food



Main street



Typical house