



The Sustainable Development of Thai Community: A Case Study of Ban Lo Yo Local Village, Chiang Rai

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Abstract

Hlo Yo Village, Tambon Pa Tung, Mae Jun District, Chiang Rai, is a village of Christian hill tribe community with rich culture and interesting tradition. The architectural style represents their concept of living and also reflects their belief. Additionally, buildings are built integrated harmoniously with local wisdom which binds people and their mother nature together. Due to globalization, community development has been based on economic and industrial aspects. Local identity and uniqueness are strongly arranged and controlled to flat standard of central authority. Globalization and westernization are suggested as a current social standard. Local tradition and value have been blended with modern belief and bent into materialism. This causes environmental degradation such as air pollution, water pollution and deforestation. Fundamental criteria that enrich the culture of the community has disappeared leading to a failure of local development. The research methodology is to collect data via interviewing to find the best method and potential to develop the village in an appropriate way. The goals of this research are as follows. First of all, the first goal is to encourage positive perception in cultural diversity and recreate positive ethical beliefs and dignity, which are considered as an important foundation of rural communities. Additionally, the research encourages people to develop their community in the way of decentralization from the capital authority and to provoke the community human right. The final goal of this research is to create sustainable development in every aspect of this charming hill tribe community.

Keywords: Sustainable, Masterplan development, Sustainable case study, Hlo Yo Village, Sufficiently economy, ecotourism.

1. Introduction

Hlo Yo community is located on Doi Mae Salong hills close to the Myanmar border in Chiang Rai province of Thailand, at the altitude of 2,000 meters above sea level. Hlo yo is named after their current Akha tribe leader. This village is an Akha hill tribe village where there remains a traditional way of life, a unique identity based on nature. The Akha have their language, costume style, and simple and happy living. The vernacular architecture is built with local materials such as bamboo, wood, and clay. The village economy is running by ecological tourism and also basic agriculture (Figure 1). –From 2013 to 2016, Ban Lo Yo community was supported by the USAID Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change program.



Figure 1 Hlo Yo Villager Lifestyle

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The USAID is a project whose objective is to help enhance the quality of living and increase flexibility for the local ecosystem of the community, in order to connect local knowledge and scientific knowledge. In addition, communities can use adaptation plans as basic information for applying in community development.

1. Encourage villagers to participate in community management.
2. Assist villagers to create their water management plan, integrated agriculture and forest preservation.
3. Create a sustainable economic system by integrating ecological tourism with agriculture. Provide knowledge of property development to the homestay system.

Therefore, from the direction of development that has occurred in the environment, economy, education, and health, Hlo Yo Village needs a clear direction to keep a reasonable benefit to the people in the community. In addition, the most important part is to develop from ideas of the villagers who know their own strength and weakness. The research methodology is based on the involvement of community to reach the goal that sustainable development is created by the villagers themselves.

2. Objectives

1. To study the potential of the community including existing buildings to recommend the sustainable guideline used for sustainable development based on community participation.
2. To launch the strategic plan and the initial village master plan that compiled from community involvement.

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology of this research is to collect data via interviewing to find appropriate strategies of development for the village. The data are collected by interviewing 20 villagers including the community leader from the total population of 58 houses and 280 people. The interview mainly focuses on finding SWOT analysis to find the most strength and weakness of existing context. These consequences lead to proper strategies to develop a new site plan of the village. The procedure is as follows.

1. Data collection: The purpose is to study community, the existing buildings and the environment of the village focusing on lifestyle, activities, landscape system, and the physical characteristics of the local building and materials.
2. Analysis: The data provided from the criteria of the community will be analyzed, using SWOT analysis as a tool to illustrate the masterplan of the village needed to be considered to find the best solution.
3. Synthesis: Recommendations for sustainable development strategies will be synthesized and presented in the initial village masterplan to suit this particular village.
4. Summary: The strategic plan and sustainable development strategies will be concluded to reach the goal of sustainable development.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Existing Land Use Survey and People Activities

The results of interviewing show the villager's perception of how to develop their existing strengths and to compromise the weakness. Main issues of the result are compiled from the land use and activities.

There is only one main road to access Hlo Yo Village (Figure 2). Highway 1089 is the main route for villagers to transport their goods to the lower mainland. By the way, the same road is also the main road for tourists who are traveling to Mae Salong. This causes the numbers of tourists pouring into the village. Therefore, planning thoroughly for ecotourism is an important part for villagers to gradually adapt their traditional lifestyle to the rapid changes in modern lifestyle.

Hlo Yo community began to adapt by turning some villagers' houses into a homestay, which has the advantage of resulting in more money from tourists circulating in the village. At the same time, there is a negative consequence in the privacy and security of villager daily routine.



Figure 2 Access of Hlo Yo village and village boundary

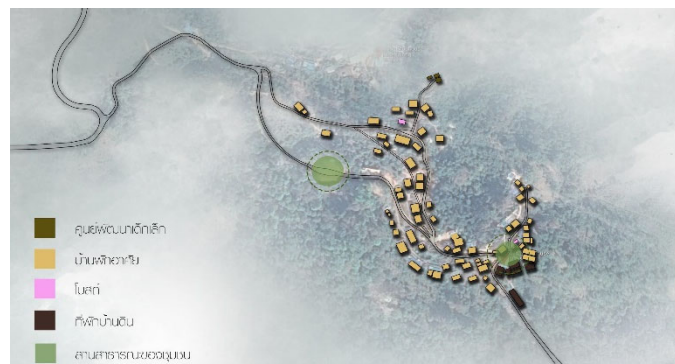


Figure 3 Existing Buildings

There are only 58 houses and 280 people in this village, where the villager built their house mostly with modern contemporary materials along the road (Figure 3). There are only 4 homestays built with bamboo in vernacular style and 2 public spaces for outdoor activities in this village.

In the social and cultural aspects, the way of life of the people of the village is unique, simple, and simply tied to nature. Most people inherit their ancestors' farms with a river running through the village. These factors facilitate the agriculture business and create a stable income. The tribe makes their living on agricultural occupation. At the same time, some people create handmade crafts made from bamboo and also traditional style fabric. These products earn income for the villagers (Figure 4).



Figure 4 The Way of Life of Hlo Yo Village



4.2 SWOT Analysis

From the data collected on site, SWOT Analysis was applied to illustrate the village strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Table 1 SWOT Analysis of Hlo Yo Village

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethnic group a unique identity. - Own culture and traditions. - Unique style housing style - Tourism development potential - Get support from the authority to activate sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of education and health area - Low privacy for villagers - No appropriate waste management system - Lack of awareness of developing architectural style in their unique traditional style.
Opportunities	Treats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential to develop the tourism economy. - Rich natural resource. - Own local wisdom. - Positive response to tourists. - Sense of local appreciation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a proper development plan - Lack of construction skills in applying local materials with industrial materials.

From Table 1, it shows the part of the development direction that should be emphasized. Local wisdom that uniquely identifies local identity should be focused and developed to add more value to the community. Tourism should be well planned and set the best strategy to enhance the tourism business that can go along with concentration on ecological and cultural travel (Young, 1974). Besides the tourism development, the basic facility that can secure the privacy, security and the normal lifestyle of villagers. Basic infrastructure such as sanitary systems, waste management systems should be established to elevate the quality of living of people in the village and also tourists that temporarily visit the site. Education facilities should be set and developed; school and child centers. However, every development plan should be based on sustainable development and a self-sufficient economy (Naveh, 1995).

4.3 Recommendations for Sustainable Development of Hlo Yo Village

From the data analysis, it is shown that ecotourism is the best option to support the strength of the community to create sustainable local economies. Ecotourism supports villagers to gain income from the tourism business and also support them to comply with their local living lifestyle with the tourists living together. This strategy needs a clarity strategic plan to respond to new requirements in infrastructure and proper facilities that needed to prepare according to tourism. The villagers needed to be informed and to be involved in planning their community development. This leads to sustainable development (Figure 5).

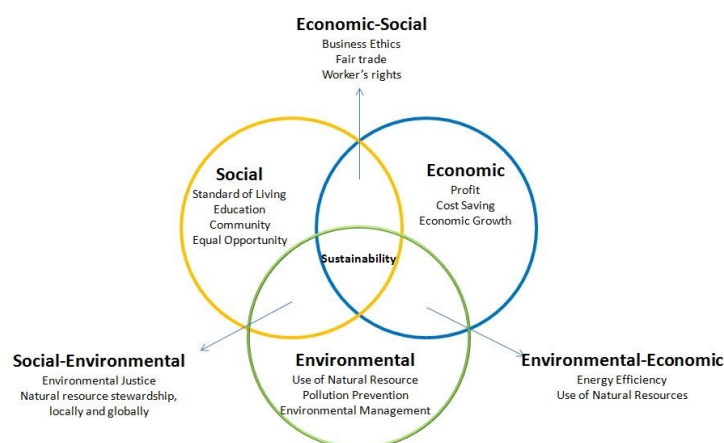


Figure 5 Three Spheres of Sustainability (Lydgate and Amos, 2018)

In Thailand, the strategic development plan published by the Community Development Department, Ministry of Interior set the goals for sustainable design as follows (CDD,2017):

1. To improve the quality of living for people in the community, to increase economic growth that does not affect the environment and local resource, and to encourage the community to have the self-sustainability.
2. To create a strong sustainable community along with preserving the existing lifestyle, to encourage people to manufacture, and to select environmental friendliness products.
3. To support local involvement in the community development plan which strengthens community based on self-sufficient economy.

From this policy, the development strategies applied for this village together with suggested development directions and sustainable goals will be highlighted as follows:

1. Conservation issues: The goal is to develop ecotourism in the village and to attract the prospect's positive attitude of tourists who are interested in cultural tourism and ecology tourism. Additionally, local people can assist them to learn the local lifestyle and local wisdom which is the most important criterion to preserve local identity.

- ☐ Encourage villagers to understand vernacular architecture and local style building.
- ☐ Preserve the local way of living and tradition.

2. Economic issues: Encourage ecotourism to increase community income. This develops local economy and consequences a better quality of living.

- ☐ Improve facilities that support tourism.
- ☐ Prospect ecological and cultural tourists.
- ☐ Zoning is designed and arranged to increase the security and privacy of the villagers.
- ☐ Build a tourist information center.
- ☐ Create a multi-purpose public open area.
- ☐ Establish OTOP center to distribute local products.

3. Quality of life issues: The improvement of infrastructure, public areas, village landscape, and education system, is the key to provide better living quality of people in the village.

- ☐ Sanitary system facilitation.
- ☐ The electrical system facilitation.
- ☐ Relocate children center to the location far from the main road to increase security.



- ☐ Relocate the church to a newly expanded area of the community to get the proper size and function.
- ☐ Design landscape to match contour and slope.

4. Environment issues: To manage and preserve the environment in time of expansion.

- ☐ Educate villagers about environmental impact.
- ☐ Integrate new knowledge with local wisdom.
- ☐ Create waste management and recycle garbage bank.
- ☐ Encourage people to use local natural materials.

4.4 Applying to the Village Masterplan

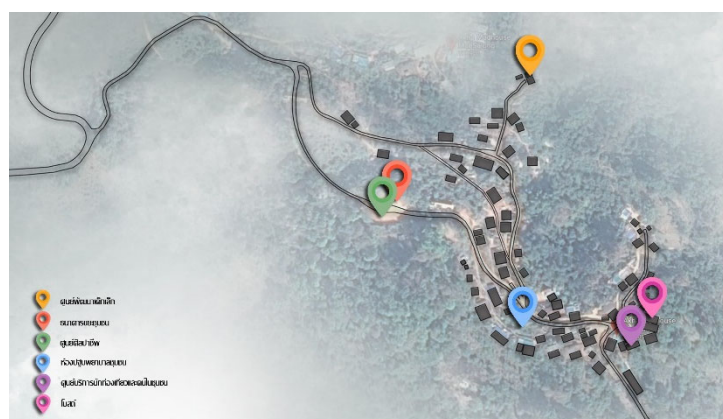


Figure 6 Recommended Master Plan for Hlo Yo Development

The masterplan (Figure 6) shows the zoning of the village and the border of developed areas. Most of the building expansion goes along the main road located on the ridge. Most properties are built along the main road so they can overlook their agriculture zone from the residential zone. Approaching from the main road, the focal point is the village leader's property laid next to the main multi-function open area. Then, there are other properties located next to. Finally, at the end of the residential zone, there is a house built by clay and bamboo using as a homestay for tourists.

This homestay location is probably inappropriate in the sense of its location. Tourists have to walk through the private residential zone of villagers to access the homestay. This causes security and privacy problems. Moreover, some tourists use the shortcut to reach their homestay and cut across the villager's agricultural area and destroy the grown crops. These factors lead some people who are affected to want to move to the front area of the village.

Therefore, the area arrangement focuses on preserved existing lifestyles. This refers to an existing village fabric to conserve the inherited local lifestyle. This increases the value of tourism. Tourists can absorb and understand local experiences concerning context. This is the most important concept for cultural and ecological tourism.

A group of buildings is designed to locate next to a multipurpose yard in front of the village to be a tourist information center and an OTOP center to organize the retail area. Waste management is arranged by establishing "Trash Bank" to recycling recyclable waste. The waste management facility should be placed in the front of the village to gain easy access and avoid the waste truck to enter the village local road. Additionally, the waste management system raises awareness about cleanliness and the environment. Child development centers are established in the former village center building which has been abandoned. This building group is far from the main road of the village Children are therefore safe from cars that sometimes



come at a speed. Community first aid room is provided to facilitate villagers in case of illness or minor injuries. This is a center for the mobile medical unit entering the area.

The last zone is at the end of the village it is arranged for tourists' accommodation and there is a tourist service center nearby to ensure the security of the tourists. This zone can be expanded as needed in the future without affecting the people in the community. Main infrastructure, main road, requires landscape design and sanitary arrangement. The lighting is set along the main road also the drainage system that transfers wastewater to the wastewater treatment pond. This creates a nice atmosphere and clean public area.

These recommendations may help develop the village to gain sustainable development and overcome its weaknesses and threats. This enhances the quality of living. Finally, it could be a prototype for high quality and sustainable community development.

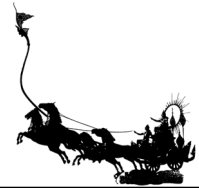
5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Hlo Yo is an interesting example case study due to their identity and history, their culture and their living lifestyle. The community has the ability to grow sustainably and peacefully using the integration of local wisdom and applied knowledge. When the community faces globalization and capitalization, they cope with their strong background and wisdom. Tourism changes every aspect of the community. Therefore, strategic planning to cope the global change is very important. Ecotourism is the best option currently due to the situation to improve the community economy. The development plan should start with how to combine tourism with the old charming agriculture community. Along with preserving the existing lifestyle and increase security and privacy, these mentioned criteria can be achieved by masterplan arrangement, creating infrastructure, facilitating the sanitary system, hygiene management and improving the education system. Well-arranged zoning and proper location of each facility such as a very private area like sacred church location and the very public area must be separated. A commercial facility like tourist supporting facilities such as tourist information center shops for agricultural products will be placed properly in a suitable zone.

The management of the multi-purpose area of the project is an important part that must be considered in the improvement of the area because the villagers have a way of life that is bound to the outdoor central area, obviously from having a multipurpose yard and a small open space that connects the whole community. Although the villagers are willing to open the way for people to travel through private areas as a shortcut to other public areas in the community, people in the area will not invade each other's privacy. Therefore, when planning to open for tourists, it requires an in-depth understanding of life so that the area management will benefit the most for both the villagers and tourists who enter as part of the community by educating tourists to stay concerning the community culture.

The sufficiency economy philosophy is a concept that has helped a lot in building awareness of nature conservation both to the locals and tourists. Learning and applying the lifestyle of harmony with nature to the tourist activity demonstrates the local wisdom and vision of the community, including the use of various methods used to help deal with change in response to the environment, such as setting up a recyclable waste bank to collect garbage that cannot naturally decompose. Also, encourage a good public awareness of the environment including the support to use natural materials as much as possible for sustainability in the community.

From all of these recommended development strategies, the village will be helped to achieve the goals of sustainable development which is balancing economic, social, and environment. Besides, it creates a positive opportunity that comes from tourism. This combination of balancing social, economic and environment creates a sustainable community. Although the masterplan recommended in this research is just suitable for Hlo Yo village only, the wisdom gain from this research will create the possibility of sustainable development and strengthen the local community in the time of rapid change.



6. Acknowledgements

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