

COMMUNITY-BASED (ECO)TOURISM

What is a community?

Community - a social group of any size whose members (Wikipedia, 2007):

- ✓ reside in a specific locality,
- ✓ share government, and
- ✓ often have a common cultural and historical heritage

Hence, implying individuals with some kind of collective responsibility,

...and the ability to make decisions by some representative bodies.



COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

'Community-based tourism' - that tourism activities involve local people.

It also means that local communities (often rural, poor and economically marginalized) are *actively participating in the development and management* of the tourism activities.

These communities actively involved in tourism usually *still retain a traditional way of life and culture* that is of interest to tourists.

Participating local residents encourage tourists :

- *visit* their communities,
- *partake* in their day-to-day activities,
- *learn and experience* their cultures,
- usually with the provision of *overnight accommodation*.

The residents *earn income* as land managers, entrepreneurs, service and produce providers, and employees.

At least part of the tourist income is set aside for projects which provide *benefits to the community as a whole*

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COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

Tourism Concern (UK-based NGO) states that CBT should:

- ✓ be run with the involvement and consent of local communities
- ✓ give a fair share of profits back to the local community
- ✓ involve communities rather than individuals
- ✓ be environmentally sustainable
- ✓ respect traditional culture and social structures
- ✓ have mechanisms to help communities cope with the impact of Western tourists
- ✓ keep groups small to minimize cultural/environmental impact
- ✓ brief tourists before the trip on appropriate behavior
- ✓ not make local people perform inappropriate ceremonies
- ✓ leave communities alone if they do not want tourism



COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

The Mountain Institute states that CBT:

- ✓ Must contribute to increasing and/or improving conservation of natural and/or cultural resources, including biological diversity, water, forests, cultural landscapes, monuments, etc;
- ✓ Must contribute to local economic development through increasing tourism revenues and other benefits to community participants, and ideally to an increasing number of participants;
- ✓ Must have a level of participation ideally progressing toward self-mobilization, but not always necessarily so; and
- ✓ Has a duty to the visitor to provide a socially and environmentally responsible product.



COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

The key rationale underlying the approach and objectives of community-based tourism is that:

- ✓ community-based tourism provide widespread economic and other benefits and decision-making power to communities through increased intensities of participation;
- ✓ these economic benefits act as incentives for participants and the means to conserve the natural and cultural resources on which income generation depends.



COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

Goodwin & Santili (2009) describe CBT as having the following characteristics:

- ✓ Benefits going to individuals or households in the community.
- ✓ Collective benefits – creation of assets which are used by the community as a whole, such as roads, schools, clinics, etc.
- ✓ Community benefits where there is a distribution of benefit to all households in the community.
- ✓ Conservation initiatives with community and collective benefits.
- ✓ Joint ventures with community and/or collective benefits, including an anticipated transfer of management.
- ✓ Community owned and managed enterprises.
- ✓ Private sector enterprises with community benefits.
- ✓ Product networks developed for marketing tourism in a local area.
- ✓ Community enterprise within a broader co-operative.
- ✓ Private sector development within a community owned reserve.

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COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

Suansri (2003) describe CBT as having the following characteristics:

- ✓ Recognize, support and promote community ownership of tourism.
- ✓ Involve community members from the start in every aspect.
- ✓ Promote community pride.
- ✓ Improve the quality of life.
- ✓ Ensure environmental sustainability.
- ✓ Preserve the unique character and culture of the local area.
- ✓ Foster cross-cultural learning.
- ✓ Respect cultural differences and human dignity.
- ✓ Distribute benefits fairly among community members.
- ✓ Contribute a fixed percentage of income to community projects.

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COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM CHARACTERISTICS

Based on a review (The Mountain Institute, 2000; Suansri, 2003; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Tourism Concern, 2009; Boonratana, 2009) the concept of community-based tourism should essentially comprise the following characteristics:

1. Host communities retain a traditional way of life and culture that is of interest to tourists;
2. Tourism in host communities are planned, developed, and managed with their consent;
3. Host communities are actively involved in the planning, developing, and managing the tourism products and activities;
4. The process of planning, developing, and managing the tourism help unify, empower, and instill pride in the host communities;
5. Host communities are empowered to plan, develop, and manage the tourism complementary to their lifestyles;
6. All residents of host communities have equal opportunities to earn income as land managers, entrepreneurs, service and produce providers, and employees;

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COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM CHARACTERISTICS

7. Income generated is an additional or alternative source, or used for poverty alleviation;
8. Part of the tourist income is reserved for projects that collectively benefits host communities;
9. Tourism in host communities contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and conservation of natural heritage;
10. Host communities, visitors, and other stakeholders are aware of the negative impacts of tourism, and have measures in place to mitigate such impacts;
11. Visitors are briefed about social and cultural norms of host communities before or upon arrival, therefore encouraging responsible behavior;
12. Exchanges between visitors and host communities foster tolerance, understanding, and cross-cultural learning; and
13. Host communities, visitors, and other stakeholders are obliged to avoid commoditizing rituals and ceremonies (especially sacred and/or religious).

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COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM REDEFINED

Community-based tourism (for Thailand) is defined as *economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally responsible visitation to local/indigenous communities to enjoy and appreciate their cultural and natural heritage, whose tourism resources, products, and services are developed and managed with their active participation, and whose benefits from tourism, tangible or otherwise, are collectively enjoyed by the communities.* (Boonratana, 2009)



CBT DEFINITION EXPLAINED

Phrase	Explanation
<i>economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally responsible visitation</i>	means that visitors are aware (to some extent and by whatever means, such as a pre-visit briefing or through personal enquiry) of the possible impacts of their visitations on the community, therefore would take precautions to minimize or avoid their impacts on (and preferably enhance) the community's local economy, physical environment, and social and cultural values.
<i>visitation to local/indigenous communities</i>	means that visitations are made because visitors have a genuine interest to learn firsthand about the community and their usually traditional life.

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CBT DEFINITION EXPLAINED

Phrase	Explanation
<i>to enjoy and appreciate their cultural and natural heritage</i>	means that visitors have the opportunity to observe the community's daily and cultural activities (e.g., farming and rituals), and their natural resources (e.g., waterfalls and forests). It also means that visitors have the opportunity to partake (within reasonable limitations) in the community's daily and cultural activities, and activities set in their natural environment (e.g., trekking and outdoor education).

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CBT DEFINITION EXPLAINED

Phrase	Explanation
<i>whose tourism resources, products, and services are developed and managed with their active participation</i>	means that the community is actively involved in the tourism development and the day to day management of some or all the tourism products, services, facilities, or activities. Some communities have established a partnership with a non-governmental organization or a business (Boonratana, 2009; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009) to assist them in developing and managing tourism (e.g., marketing and bookings) and some resources (e.g., developing and maintaining nature trails); and products (e.g., accommodation) may be owned by the partner, lending more flexibility to the rather restrictive ' <i>managed and owned by the community</i> ' as defined by REST (as cited in Suansri, 2003, p. 14).

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CBT DEFINITION EXPLAINED

Phrase	Explanation
<i>and whose benefits from tourism, tangible or otherwise, are collectively enjoyed by the communities</i>	means that the benefits can be tangible (e.g., monetary income and funds for repairs to community buildings) or intangible (e.g., pride, empowerment, cultural preservation, and nature conservation), and all members of the community are expected enjoy some or all those benefits. Although participating households are expected to gain financial benefits for their services and products, yet a portion of their monetary income goes to the community development fund that benefits both participating and non-participating households.

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COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM

Community-based tourism when associated with ecotourism enables the tourists to:

- ✓ discover local habitats and wildlife,
- ✓ celebrate and respect traditional cultures, rituals and wisdom, and
- ✓ contribute efforts and resources to their conservation and preservation.

The participating community will be aware of, and will appreciate the commercial and social values placed on their natural and cultural heritage through tourism.

In turn, this will foster community-based conservation of these resources.

Hence, community-based ecotourism is tourism that is based on a combination of both cultural and natural attractions.



COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM

It usually takes place in natural areas and involves local communities which still retain traditional cultures and which actively participate in the development and management of tourism activities.

The tourist accommodation and facilities will be simple and rural but just of sufficient standard for most visitors.

A well-established community may choose to partner with a private sector partner to provide capital, clients, marketing, tourist accommodation or other expertise.



COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM

In reality, most communities require some assistance - usually from NGOs.

Depending on the agreement made, the partner may or may not own part of the tourism enterprise.

The agreement usually centers around the ideals of supporting community development and conservation, and to planning the tourism development in partnership with the community.



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COMMUNITY-BASED ECOTOURISM DEFINED

Adopting and adapting the definition for CBT, therefore...

Community-based ecotourism is defined as *economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally responsible visitation to local/indigenous communities to enjoy, appreciate, and simultaneously enhance conservation of their cultural and natural heritage, whose tourism resources, products and services are developed and managed with their active participation, and whose benefits from tourism, tangible or otherwise, are collectively enjoyed by the communities.* (Boonratana, 2009)

The slight modification to the definition for community-based tourism i.e. *to enjoy, appreciate, and simultaneously enhance conservation of their cultural and natural heritage* means that...

...visitors have the opportunity and are obliged to assist the conservation of local natural resources...

...and the preservation of local culture through financial support and increased awareness.

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ADDITIONAL RE-DEFINITIONS

Community tourism

Community tourism as a generic term can be used to describe all forms of tourism associated with a local or indigenous community...

...to reflect the diversity of such tourism in Thailand...

...and to distinguish it from a true community-based tourism.

Thus, community tourism in Thailand is defined as *visitation to local/indigenous communities to purchase various products and services*. (Boonratana, 2009)

This means that visitors are not obligated to be economically, environmentally, socially, and culturally responsible...

...and the tourism products and services are primarily a collection of businesses that are individually owned, developed, and managed.

Hence, the local community may not collectively benefit from the tourism, and the benefits from tourism are mainly in the form of economic returns.

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ADDITIONAL RE-DEFINITIONS

Homestay

Homestay is a significant component of many, if not all, community-based (eco)tourism destinations...

...but the concept of homestay in Thailand is rather vague, referring to a diversity of accommodation types.

Lynch (2000) consider homestays as those *establishments that offer commercial hospitality within the private home, either serving as the primary home or secondary home for the hosts, and may include from private house bed and breakfasts to guesthouses, from many small hotels to townhouses, from self-catering cottages to host families*.

This classification may not be apt for Thailand...

...as homestays have been loosely used for a range of commercial hospitality that is located within or adjacent to a local or indigenous community, regardless of ownership.

These have included space or room within the private residences of host families, private bed-and-breakfasts, small lodges, privately owned guesthouses, community lodges, and small privately owned resorts, all of which are offered to visitors for a fee.

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ADDITIONAL RE-DEFINITIONS

Homestay

Lynch's classification does not suggest close interactions and cultural exchanges between the host and visitors.

However, an authentic homestay, usually within the community-based tourism setting, refers to accommodation in the host family's home (Suansri, 2003).

Visitors have the opportunity, for a nominal fee, to experience and learn simple or traditional lifestyles through close interactions and exchanges with the host family, including partaking in some of the host family's daily activities.

To distinguish homestays from other accommodations, it is thus defined *as room or space within the private homes of community members, offered to guests for a nominal fee, who expects to experience simple rural living or traditional lifestyles, and to interact and have cultural exchanges with the host family, therefore providing a meaningful learning experience for both host and visitors.* (Boonratana, 2009)

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HOMESTAY EXPLAINED

Phrase	Explanation
<i>room or space within the private homes of community members</i>	means that host families are members of the local/indigenous community, and that they will provide basic, but clean, beddings to visitors in a corner or a room within their homes.
<i>offered to guests for a nominal fee</i>	means that host families would be reasonably compensated (rather than earn an income) for allowing unfamiliar guests a place to board and lodge.
<i>who expects to experience simple rural living or traditional lifestyles, and to interact and have cultural exchanges with the host family</i>	means that guests have the opportunity to experience simple or traditional lifestyles, and learn local culture and traditions through close interactions and exchanges with the host family, and by partaking in some of the host family's daily activities.

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HOMESTAY EXPLAINED

Phrase	Explanation
<i>therefore providing a meaningful learning experience for both host and visitors</i>	means that both host and visitors benefit from the interactions and exchanges. The host is likely to gain awareness and understanding of their visitors and their diverse cultures, and possibly acquire some foreign language skills. The visitors are very likely to gain awareness and understanding of local culture, traditions, and simple rural lifestyles. In addition, they are likely to acquire respect for local wisdom, and acquire new skills such as cooking local fare and producing handicrafts.

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