Additional and Alternative Occupations for the Urak Lawoi Sea Nomads of Phuket, Thailand

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ABSTRACT

There is only very limited knowledge of alternative or supplemental livelihood or income diversification projects implemented in Thailand focusing on marine dependent indigenous communities. This study focuses on extracting lessons learned from past livelihood projects in three Urak Lawoi indigenous communities in Phuket Province, Thailand – Sapam, Laem Tukkae, and Rawai villages. The major occupation of the villagers in the three communities is small-scale fisheries. Although it involves hardship and uncertainty, it is preferred by many, especially men over 30 years of age, as it is self-employed, and yields a considerable sum of money on "lucky" days. However, the main challenge for the Urak Lawoi nowadays is that fishing is increasingly limited due to increasing fishing restrictions (protected areas, species and equipment restrictions, etc.), rising cost of equipment and diesel oil, and degrading marine resources, and there are occupational hazards. Further, fishers' income fluctuates, and there is a risk of getting trapped in a debt cycle.

Numerous projects focusing on providing alternative or supplemental livelihood opportunities and training for the Urak Lawoi have been carried out over the years. However, most of these projects and activities have been fruitless because many were short-term activities; the trainings were done with little market support; those who worked with the communities did not know the strengths and weaknesses or limitations of the villagers; and there exists a deeply-root bias against the Urak Lawoi. There has also been a lack of coordination and collaboration among different agencies and organizations working with the Urak Lawoi. Priority interventions for community development and livelihoods improvement should include increasing effort in understanding and appreciating special characteristics of the Urak Lawoi communities, coordinating and integrating work among different agencies and organizations, providing small-scale long-term alternative occupational activities while promoting markets for Urak Lawoi food and crafts, and creating innovative methods in working with the communities.

INTRODUCTION

The Urak Lawoi or the former sea nomads of the Andaman Sea have lived by and from the sea for a long time and are particularly dependent on coastal and coral reef resources. Traditionally they collected sea produce, including different species of shellfish, sea cucumbers, lobsters, etc. However, they have

Obura, D.O., Tamelander, J., & Linden, O. (Eds) (2008). Ten years after bleaching - facing the consequences of climate change in the Indian Ocean.CORDIO Status Report 2008. Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean/Sida-SAREC. Mombasa. http//:www.cordioea.org

gradually transformed from marine hunter-gatherers to artisan fishermen and have adopted more sophisticated gears like boat engines, large fish traps, fishnets, and diving with air supply from compressors or hookah. This requires more investment, which has led to indebtedness to middlemen or entrepreneurs. It also puts them into a stronger competition with local Thai fishers. The two differences between Urak Lawoi fishers and local Thai fishers are that the former are more engaged in hunting and gathering (shooting fish and collecting shellfish and other sea animals) and they are the only group in Thailand who use hookah for professional deep-water fisheries.

Ensuring sustainable socio-economic wellbeing while protecting the culture of the Urak Lawoi communities is very important, and there have been attempts, both by the state and private agencies, to provide different forms of support for supplemental or alternative livelihoods. Unfortunately these experiences were rarely documented or published, let alone evaluated. This survey was conducted to review alternative livelihood activities or projects conducted by individuals, the private sector, government and non-government agencies, to assess success or failure of such activities and compile these as guidelines to aid and support further livelihoods initiatives.

The Urak Lawoi

Coastal areas and islands in the Andaman Sea have been the home to "sea gypsies" or "sea people" (Chao Lay in Thai language) for many centuries. In Thailand, there are 3 ethnic groups of sea people – the Moken (population about 800), the Moklen (population about 3,500), and the Urak Lawoi (population about 5,500). The three groups are Austronesian language speakers, but their culture and traditions vary in detail. The Moken live on islands in Ranong and Phang-nga Provinces and although they have became more settled within the past 10 years, traditional hunting-gathering activities and major rituals are kept relatively intact. The Moklen have long settled along the coastal areas in Phang-nga and Phuket Provinces, they have adopted Thai language and culture and their occupations are diverse, ranging from mangrove foragers and strand collectors to wage workers and pararubber plantation owners. The Urak Lawoi are the most populous group of sea people, they have settled in large communities on islands and coastal areas in Phuket, Krabi, and Satun Provinces.

The Urak Lawoi are an ethnic group who have their own unique language and culture. The Urak Lawoi are skillful swimmers, divers, navigators, and gatherers. The name which they call themselves also reflects the identity and ties with the sea and marine resources ("Urak" means people and "Lawoi" means sea). In the old days, they traveled and moved frequently especially when there was an epidemic or many deaths in the community. Nowadays the Urak Lawoi have adopted a sedentary life.

Although the Urak Lawoi are old-time residents along the Andaman Sea shore, they were not accepted or welcome by the local people. In the past the term "Chao Lay" was used as a derogatory term in several parts of southwestern Thailand especially Phuket. "Chao Lay" connotes negative characteristics like dirtiness, uneducated, wasteful spending, etc and stems from a lack of understanding of their traditional culture and lifestyle. This is derived from deeply rooted ethnocentric attitudes, which are constructed out of stereotyping and creating "other-ness". The Urak Lawoi have admirable characteristics like modesty, honesty, and willingness to do laborious work, but these are rarely acknowledged by the larger society. The Urak Lawoi's physical appearance and preference is singled out and looked down upon without considering the whole cultural and environmental context (Narumon 2003).

Most of the Urak Lawoi are embarrassed by this "negative label" of "Chao Lay", and they often feel inferior to the local people. As a consequence, they have been exploited by many, especially entrepreneurs. Phuket tourism promotion and development has resulted in the expansion of businesses and industry, such as real estate and land development, and beachside land has gained a dramatically higher value and become a desirable "property". The Urak Lawoi have found that the land on which their forefathers

subsisted and made a settlement has been claimed, and they have been deprived of land rights and entitlement.

Traditionally, the Urak Lawoi were marine hunter-gatherers. They dived for sea cucumber, shellfishes and other sea animals to consume and to trade. Traditional extraction of marine resources requires the use of indigenous knowledge from navigation and tool making to identifying habitats and characteristics of each animal. Raw materials for building the boat and house, for tools, medicine, and firewood are found in the coastal forest. So the Urak Lawoi were knowledgeable about the forest as much as the sea.

Boats are very important for the Urak Lawoi because it is both a vehicle and tool for fisheries. Traditional boats called "prahu" were used to travel to different islands by oar or sail. More recently, they have adopted "hua thong" or local-style fishing boat with outboard motor or long-tailed engine. However, the detailed features of traditional boats are still vivid in the mind of elderly men and several of them make traditional boats in miniature form.

In the past, during the dry season, the Urak Lawoi traveled to different islands by boat. This traveling or "bagad" might last from 1-3 days to several months depending on island distance, weather, and the yield of their catch. During the bagad, the Urak Lawoi built small huts or lean-tos on the beach as their temporary home. Generally, the entire family traveled together to bagad sites which provided natural protection against winds and waves, and with fresh water source (Wongbusarakum 2002). During the rainy season, the Urak Lawoi lived in a larger settlement. They foraged in the forest frequently and some groups even grew wild rice, such as on Lanta Island. They used human labor instead of draft animals.

The Urak Lawoi semi-nomadic lifestyle was an immediate return system, meaning that they consumed whatever they caught or gathered almost right away. There was no need to preserve or stockpile the food since they could depend on this day-to-day subsistence. While Urak Lawoi men went out to sea for their daily or weekly round, the women helped with near shore fishing and collecting shellfish, including cooking and processing food (Wongbusarakum 2002). This division of labor became even stronger after the Urak Lawoi became more sedentary. Now only men go out to sea while women wait at home, doing their house chores and taking care of the younger family members.

At present, the Urak Lawoi no longer organize a bagad. Those who go out to sea are adult men and the fishing round is for commercial sale as well as for household consumption. Instead of using their bare hands, harpoon, hook and line, the Urak Lawoi now use larger motorized boats with diverse and sophisticated equipment. One of the important equipment is hookah - a compressor with a long air hose connected to a diving mask. This enables them to dive deeper and longer. Nevertheless, it poses a great risk for divers and several men suffer from the bends, or decompression sickness.

The Urak Lawoi also increasingly depend on entrepreneurs or middlemen for their fishing occupation. In the past, these middlemen were the Chinese or Chinese-Thai who lived in or nearby the Urak Lawoi communities. Later, a few Urak Lawoi have saved up enough to become the middlemen themselves. However, the majority do not earn enough capital to buy their own boat, motor, and fishing equipment all at once. They need to borrow the money or get the equipment in advance, then pay back in installments or deduct from their fisheries earning. Furthermore, many Urak Lawoi need to borrow for their daily household expenditure. Several middlemen who supply gear as well as market the fish caught by the Urak Lawoi also open grocery shops so that money paid to the Urak Lawoi for marine catch comes back to them through the sale of daily necessities.

Some Urak Lawoi in a few communities have enough land to cultivate vegetables, coconuts, cashew nuts, and fruit trees. However, most communities have limited land, and are often squeezed or encroached by private ownership. The three Urak

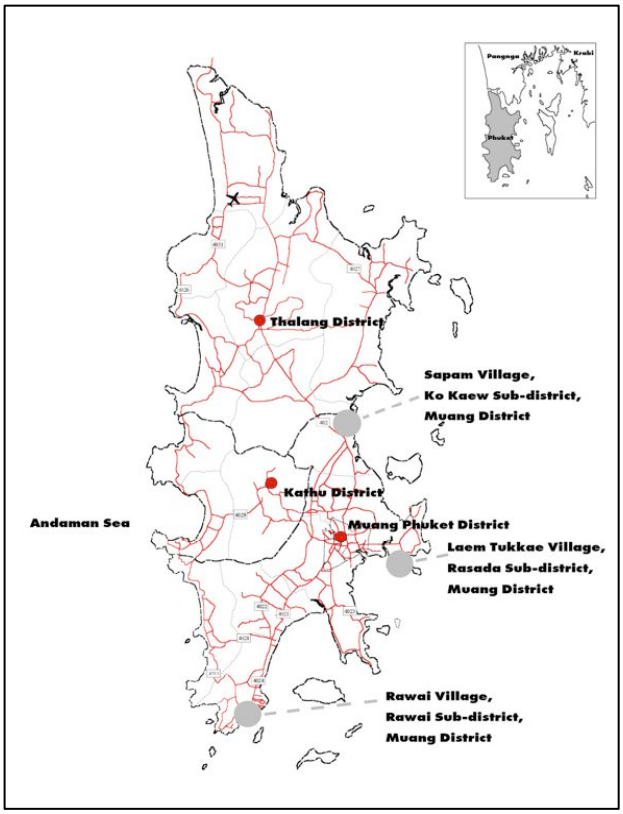

Figure 1. Map showing the island of Phuket and the three Urak Lawoi communities included in this project.

Lawoi communities in Phuket do not have enough land to do any small-scale cultivation. In addition, the communities become more crowded and dense because of population growth. In addition to fisheries and cultivation in certain cases, some Urak Lawoi also go out to find wage labor work like clearing land, harvesting coconut, construction work, etc. In the communities which are located in tourism areas, the Urak Lawoi have more chance to work in hotels or resorts – women work as maids, kitchen helpers, and dish washers, and men work as security guards or engaged in marine tourism businesses like working on boats. These jobs bring steadier income (if they are salary-based) and pose lesser health risk compare to fisheries work. Nevertheless, many Urak Lawoi still prefer fisheries because they have the knowledge and skills and are self-employed.

STUDY AREA AND METHODS

This survey focused on the three Urak Lawoi communities in Phuket Province (Fig. 1):

Sapam Village, Ko Kaew Sub-district, Muang District. Sapam Village consists of 226 Urak Lawoi living in 48 households (Data from Asian Resource Foundation 2006). The village is located on a mud flat with stilted houses connected by concrete walkways. There is a small canal by the village where boats are moored. This village used to be more open and spacious, but now the surrounding land falls under private ownership and the area is more populated. The Urak Lawoi in Sapam earn their livelihood through fisheries. The mud flat has abundant shellfish, so the main occupation is collecting and selling cockles and other shellfish. Nowadays, several sections of the mud flat are enclosed for raising cockles, so the open area where the Urak Lawoi can forage is even more limited. Besides, the area where the village sacred shrine is situated is encroached by a concrete structure, leaving only a small space for the shrine.

Laem Tukkae Village, on Sireh island, Rasada Sub-district, Muang District. There are 1,316 Urak Lawoi in 190 households in Laem Tukkae Village, with 666 males and 650 females (data from the District Office, 2005). Over 100 years ago, there was no community on Sireh Island other than the Urak Lawoi community. In 1983 private ownership of Laem Tukkae land was claimed. Some Urak Lawoi informants stated that they were asked to give their signature or fingerprint to "accept electricity", but were not aware of the details of the agreement. Later on, they were asked to pay rent for their occupancy. The Urak Lawoi filed a complaint to the Provincial Office, but the issue has not been resolved. The Phuket Provincial Office attempted to identify a new plot of land for Urak Lawoi settlement, but it was located in the inner part of Sireh Island, so the villagers refused to move. The Urak Lawoi in Laem Tukkae usually earn their livelihood through fisheries, mainly by fish trapping and collecting/extracting rock oysters.

Rawai Village, Rawai Sub-district, Muang District. The Urak Lawoi have made their residence here over 100 years, but the lands are under private ownership of local Thai persons. As a result, the Urak Lawoi residents are deprived of decent facilities, they cannot refurbish or extend their houses. Of all the Urak Lawoi communities in Thailand, this village is the most densely populated. There are also shrimp farms, a small fish-packing factory, and shell-processing factory (washing, polishing, and supplying seashells for local shops and export) in the village. On the western side, there is a Moken community. There are 1,200 people in the village in 201 households, 595 males and 605 females (surveyed by Aporn Ukrit in 2003). The Urak Lawoi and the Moken in Rawai engage in fisheries, fish sale, working on speedboats, working for tour companies, hotels and resorts, and wage other labor. The fact that the village is located right on the main road to several tourist attractions makes it an "open" community. Tourists and local people often come the village to buy fresh seafood and ornamental shells at the stalls in front of the village.

Reports, theses, and papers, as well as web-based information about alternative occupation development for the Urak Lawoi communities in Phuket undertaken by individuals, organizations or state agencies were reviewed. Most of the information on such activities appeared only after the tsunami in 2004.

Field surveys were also conducted. These consisted of interviewing representatives of over 10 state and local administrative offices or agencies, as well as Urak Lawoi from the target communities. Over 90 Urak Lawoi males and females from 3 villages were interviewed on occupation, experiences of additional or alternative occupation training, attitudes towards fisheries and the change of occupation, and aspiration for the younger generations. 30 Urak Lawoi were requested to give an in-depth interview on their past experiences in earning a livelihood, occupational training received, attitudes towards fisheries and changing occupations, and aspirations for their family and younger generations. Ten of these were with Urak Lawoi who are or have been engaged in non-fisheries occupations.

A community meeting was also held to discuss preliminary findings and receive comments and generate recommendations from Urak Lawoi representatives, individuals and agencies who engaged in developing livelihood options for the Urak Lawoi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Advantages of Fishing

Urak Lawoi hunting-gathering and fisheries are quite distinctive in that they are diverse in terms of methods, fishing and foraging grounds, labor, length, and market. The research team found that most Urak Lawoi villagers especially males over 30 years of age have preference for fishing because it is the only livelihood they have a distinctive advantage in being good at. They felt that they did not have any qualification or useful skills to compete in the job market. The strengths or advantages stated for fishing are:

- Self-employment: Fishing hours depend on the tides, the weather, and the Urak Lawoi themselves. Fishers do not have a boss or supervisor, so work depends on one's own free will. In addition, the co-workers are those whom one already knows very well - family members, kin, friends - so there is rarely competition or conflict at work.
- Good income: Fishers can earn a good income. A lucky day may yield 1,000 baht (approx. U$ 50) or more. Many Urak Lawoi men said they tried wage labor and salary work, but the money earned is not enough, as jobs are primarily menial tasks. For them, although the income from fisheries is irregular, it is generally better than other occupations.
- Already have the skills: Fisheries is the occupation handed down for generations. The Urak Lawoi have all the skills needed for fisheries, passed down from parents to children, so the Urak Lawoi learn to become expert divers and fishers.
- No need for job applications: Most Urak Lawoi feel that they get limited educational attainment so they

do not have qualifications to apply for jobs other than manual labor. They do not need to apply and compete to fish.

- Fishing can be done all year round and is subsistence in nature: Although fisheries are quite seasonal, most Urak Lawoi stated that it can be carried out all year round, with some shift in areas and methods, for example, shrimp netting can be done during the rainy season and silver sillago netting ("sand fish", literal translation from Thai) can be done during the dry season. Furthermore, fisheries is a fall-back occupation, e.g. after the tsunami when other jobs declined, several Urak Lawoi came back to fisheries to earn their livelihood, especially when supported by aid and development organizations and foundations with boats, engines and fishing equipment. Last but not least, fishing is also a subsistence activity, meaning that the Urak Lawoi can keep some of the catch (usually with the lowest market value) for their household consumption. This allows some money to be saved as they do not have to buy fresh food in the market.

Disadvantages of Fishing

There are also disadvantages to fishing. At present, fishers face more and more limitations, and fisheries rules and regulations seem to pose the greatest threat for the Urak Lawoi, followed by the rise in the cost of fishing, the degradation of marine resources, middlemen and the risk of being trapped in a debt cycle, uncertainty in catch and income, and health risks/occupational hazards.

Sanctuaries or Protected Areas

These have been designated and expanded. The Urak Lawoi often said that in the old days they could make an easy living from the sea and could travel and anchor anywhere they liked. Nowadays their foraging grounds are very limited because many areas have become marine sanctuaries or protected areas, and as such tourist havens that do not allow fishing. These areas are likely to be further expanded in the future. Apart from state designated areas and tourist areas, some local communities have started to declare their own protected areas as well, like Yao Island where local villagers prevent the Urak Lawoi from collecting oysters and threaten that if the Urak Lawoi continue to collect there, they will call the Sub-district Administrative Organization staff to arrest them. As the Urak Lawoi know little about laws, when they are threatened with jail they give up claiming their rights (Lertchai 2003). Many resorts drive the Urak Lawoi away from waters around them even though the waters are not formally protected (Sirirat 2006). With all these factors, they can no longer access many areas where their forefather roamed freely

The Urak Lawoi have increasingly been restrained and deterred by these and other rules and regulations, and increased enforcement by the government through patrols. Arrests have become more frequent, often including confiscation of the boat, motor, air compressor (for hookah), and other property. Additionally, they may also be forced to pay a penalty fee or fine, and other expenses.

The Urak Lawoi also face occasional tampering with their fish traps in ordinary fishing grounds like Kiew Island, Dok Mai Island, and Kai Island, e.g. by misinformed or ignorant recreational divers trying to strengthen conservation. In some cases the Urak Lawoi have been unable to stop such damage as their boats are slower, and because they are peaceful people they tend to avoid confrontation. The Urak Lawoi have also been accused of using dynamite and cyanide fishing so are seen in a very negative light by tourists and divers. When giant clams were stolen from protected area, the Urak Lawoi became an immediate scapegoat even though the real theft might have been from some other community.

Rising Cost of Fishing

The cost of fishing boats, engines, fishing equipment, and diesel oil has been on the rise. Currently, a long-tail boat with engine, second hand and in good condition, is around 70,000 baht (approx. U$ 1,800), 26 rolls of shrimp nets and 23 rolls of fishnets cost 30,000 baht (approx. U$ 750). The cost of a fish trap

Photo captions: a) Collecting polychaetes for fish bait, Sireh village (© Tamelander); b) Making fish trap, Rawai village. Traps made are getting larger and larger (© Tamelander); c) Sorting fish catch, Rawai village (© Tamelander); d) Seafood vendor, Rawai village (© Narumon); e) Extracting rock oyster meat, Sireh village (© Narumon); f) Extended family having a meal, Rawai village. Home-cooked food made from local marine catch and vegetables grown is household garden patches is important for the Urak Lawoi (© Tamelander); g) Traditional singing and dancing troupe from Sireh (© Narumon); h) Selling seashells, Rawai Beach (© Narumon).

is around 5,000 baht (U$ 125), or 2,000 baht (U$ 50) for a smaller one, and each trap lasts an average of 3-4 months. Nowadays the Urak Lawoi have to build a larger number of larger sized fish traps in order to obtain the same amount of fish. Further, while traditionally using simple tools and equipment made by themselves, the Urak Lawoi nowadays have to buy material, including building materials, as there is no open forest for them to cut wood and bamboo to make their fish traps.

Degradation of Marine Resources

Most of the Urak Lawoi agree that marine resources are declining. In earlier days they could catch more fish in less time, and within a short distance from their village. Nowadays they have to go further, but the catch is less. Even rock oysters become smaller in size and are more difficult to find compare to ten years ago. The advantage is that nowadays seafood is much more expensive than in the past, and many Urak Lawoi prefer present days when seafood fetch higher price though fishers are facing more hardship. The Urak Lawoi think that resource degradation is caused by large commercial trawlers, such as double trawlers, which catch both large and small marine animals. In addition, the coastal environment is increasingly polluted due to discharge from the shore, from shrimp farms, and oil spills. After the tsunami, the number of fishing boats has also increased so the Urak Lawoi need to fish at a greater distance from the shore, and much more money has to be spent on diesel oil.

The Entrepreneurial System and Debt Cycle

In the past, the Urak Lawoi usually worked with middlemen or entrepreneurs, because these were the mediators between the community and the outside world. This remains the case today, but increasingly the Urak Lawoi depend on the middlemen in times of need, particularly when money is needed e.g. to purchase equipment, when they get arrested or have to pay a fine, and when they are sick. The money advanced is paid back, with interest, out of the earnings from fishing. This situation is similar to other fishing communities, but the Urak Lawoi are in many ways more disadvantaged and thus more exploited. Therefore, although fishing can earn a relatively high income, the threat of a debt cycle is strong.

Uncertainty and Irregular Income

Catch varies with weather, season, and other factors, and the rainy season poses a problem for fisheries. This results in irregular income. For many Urak Lawoi, however, this irregularity and uncertainty is not the major problem. They can always work on shore, mending fishnets, building fish traps, and collecting shellfish at low tide. In other words, they can spend their time with the maintenance of their equipment and they can depend on fall-back resources (shellfish and other sea animals) from strand areas. Some Urak Lawoi assert that the yield during rainy season is actually better than in the dry season.

Occupational Hazards

Fisheries has its own occupational risk due to the weather and sea conditions. For the Urak Lawoi, there is an additional risk from diving due to the use of hookah. In the three communities, there are Urak Lawoi men who suffer from the bends - some are paralyzed, or have lost their agility and strength, and some have died.

Due to the above-mentioned limitations and disadvantages of fishing, some Urak Lawoi find it necessary to have additional or alternative occupation, and some see the value in supporting their children's education to earn enough qualification for other work. For many Urak Lawoi, however, the advantages of fisheries outweigh the limitations.

Past Support to the Urak Lawoi

Several agencies and organizations have extended livelihood support to Urak Lawoi communities, but data on these efforts were very difficult to find. At the government office levels, it is not a tradition to keep written or documentary records on activities done at the village level. Furthermore, the rotation and

shifting of office staff and officers made it even more difficult to trace those activities. At the community level, some Urak Lawoi villagers could remember the activities but they rarely remembered the names of government offices, private agencies, or non-governmental organizations, except those with long-term staff. Most of the information about livelihood support available is from after the tsunami in 2004. Livelihood support for Urak Lawoi men has included boat motor repair, and making miniature boats as souvenirs for tourists, and for women making batiks, handicrafts from local materials, embroidering, sewing, cooking and baking.

Support to fisheries livelihoods has focused on sustainable fisheries like adjusting or shifting fishing equipment and mariculture support. Mariculture is quite suitable for the Urak Lawoi due to their existing maritime skill. Nevertheless, it has some requirements and limitations - It offers a delayed return compare to fishing occupation; Capital investment is required for cages, larvae or seeds, feed, etc.; Official permission is needed for certain cage culture or farm enclosure; and regular attention is needed against disease, theft, etc. In the past, the Urak Lawoi were not interested in mariculture because fishing and collecting activities yielded satisfactory catch, and brought immediate return, compared to the difficulties and delayed returns of mariculture. However, after mariculture has become a success elsewhere and fisheries become more difficult, some Urak Lawoi turn their interest to mariculture and some even invest their own money in small mariculture activities.

Several Urak Lawoi men suggested that artificial reefs should be developed increasingly to provide more fishing sites and to enable the villagers to deploy their fish nets and fish traps without having to encroach on protected areas. In addition, such artificial reefs can deter push-net boats and large trawlers from near-shore fishing. Governmental organizations like the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources and Department of Fisheries, provincial offices, and even local communities have already participated in creating artificial reefs in several parts of the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand.

The main obstacles in working with the Urak Lawoi communities 10-20 years ago were language and cultural differences, extreme conservative attitudes, and limitations of formal education. More recently, between two and ten years ago, the main obstacle was that livelihood development did not quite fulfill the villagers' needs and expectations. Most recently, during the past 2 years, the main obstacle has been that many organizations come in to work with the communities during post-tsunami period, but with various conditions and demands and with little coordination. Many villagers have taken this opportunity to become passive recipients of help, which makes the community development work even more difficult.

Overall, occupational support for the Urak Lawoi extended by various agencies and organizations has largely not yielded satisfactory results – the villagers did not cooperate well, their interest was short-lived, the knowledge and skills were not practical or not applied and materialized into sustainable occupation, the villagers did not have capital nor necessary tools, and there were problems with demand for products or market access. In spite of some effort, the Urak Lawoi remain dependent on marine resources. In analyzing lessons learned from the past occupational support projects, several external and internal factors were identified that impede project success (Table 1). Due to lack of systematic documentation, inefficient assessment and evaluation, limited lessons learnt analysis and sharing, and the fact that interventions were primarily short-term, most past activities have fallen short of villagers' expectation as they could not become a real "alternative" for the Urak Lawoi.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In reviewing the history of support to the Urak Lawoi, we identified two sets of recommendations to guide future interventions. The first set of recommendations addresses the approach and type of assistance, the second identifies livelihood opportunities with greater likelihood of success.

Table 1. Factors obstructing the success of occupational support project.

Factor	Issue	Detail of issue
External factors—agencies and organizations providing support	Activity –Time	Activity or project is too short
	Activity –Type	Activity does not respond to the real need for or marketability of the product or service
	Staff	Staff have little experience with working with such a special community, they do not understand villagers, culture and needs sufficiently. One is not able to adapt or find innovative way to work with the communit
	Work and indicators	Work and indicators are rigid in nature. y
	Target group	There is no specification of target group
	Coordination	Too many agencies or organizations, some with different conditions, too little coordination
	Attitude	Ethnocentrism is deeply rooted and reflected in peoples attitudes and behavior
Internal factors – Urak Lawoi and their community	Lack of interest in supplementary occupation	Attitude and system of thinking about fisheries
		Villagers need immediate or short-term return
	Planning for the future	Lack of planning or vision of the future, traditionally a 'day-to-day' economy
	Group-oriented and self-organization	Lack of self-organization
		Lack of trust and confidence

Approach and Type of Assistance

- Serious attempts must be made to understand and appreciate special characteristics of Urak Lawoi communities, and getting rid of ethnocentric bias and stereotyped images. Community workers need to understand the community through insiders' views, which have been shaped by being treated as inferior and exploited by many. Positive attitudes towards the community need to be built and affirmed. It should be recognized that not all the individuals in the community are the same and not all of them are "anti-development". Government offices also need to overcome the social and ethnic bias, and should act as a role model for the local people. For example, if there is a strong bias against food made by the Urak Lawoi, then government offices could overthrow the bias by ordering the food for meetings or banquets. They should also disseminate more accurate information about the Urak Lawoi and create a more balanced image of the communities.
- Coordination among agencies/organizations and integration of work is necessary. The need for coordination has been raised repeatedly, but it is hardly accomplished because coordination and information exchange requires more time and effort than ordinary "reactive" work. Furthermore, it depends on the support of policy -level officials staff and up to the attitude and personality of the staff as well.
- There is a need for better dialogue and communication. Misunderstanding and bias between the Urak Lawoi and divers or diving companies can be transformed into opportunities for the Urak Lawoi with better communication and effective coordination. The Urak Lawoi are knowledgeable and skillful sea people, but they

lack self-confidence and tourism related skills. With the right approach the people who occasionally have been labeled as marine resource destroyers will turn into partner in conservation and promote the sustainable use of resources.

- Long-term and full-cycle projects are needed that respond to the needs of the community, make use of know-how, materials and equipment, and ensure market access. Occupational support should be carried out by staff well acquainted with Urak Lawoi communities, their strengths and limitations, and should give consideration to "income" and "market" possibility. Occasional and piecemeal support in various forms should be dissuaded. Agencies/organizations providing short and fruitless occasional training courses have generally lost their credibility in the eyes of the villagers.
- Innovation and flexibility in livelihood development work is needed, including regular evaluations and assessments and analyzing lessons learned. Projects with rigid work plans and inflexible budgets are neither realistic nor suitable for working with Urak Lawoi communities. Non-governmental organizations have many times been more successful in working with Urak Lawoi communities than government offices, because while the government offices have to work with many communities, non-government organizations can focus their work on specific communities and even tailor their work to suit each community. In addition, government offices have to follow bureaucratic procedures, so they cannot be flexible or innovative in their work style. Some projects or activities are determined from the top down, and sometimes this has made it difficult for operational level officers, who are not required, requested or allowed to think and work in a reformative or revolutionary way. This leads to a lack of innovation and prevents adaptive approaches.

Alternative Occupations

From the survey on occupational support for the Urak Lawoi, the research team found that possible additional and alternative occupation support could focus on handicrafts, tourism-related work, and mariculture. While these are activities that have been attempted before, they should be approached with the above recommendations in mind to avoid limitations and past mistakes. Particular attention should be made to innovation and flexibility (avoiding rigid work plans and budgets, and allowing for adjustment and readjustment), continued commitment (long-term support to the point of success), and dialogue (horizontal communication, sharing experiences and lessons learned).

Handicrafts

This is self-employed and suitable for work at home, so for women, this work will not interrupt house chores or taking care of children. Making miniature prahu is a success story in terms of skill and product output, and it is a suitable occupation for elderly men and men with disabilities, but it is problematic in terms of marketability. It is unfortunate that at a world-renown tourist destination such as Phuket, locally-made indigenous handicrafts do not have access to the large and hugely profitable souvenir market.

The problem of marketing can be alleviated if there is a strong coordination between communities, government offices, and business organizations. There should also be a small outlet at the communities. In November, 2006, empty stalls in front of Laem Tukkae were renovated and opened to sell souvenirs made of shells. This will help with product marketability, but it will require good public relations and skill development support in order to sustain the handicraft occupation. Specific recommendations include:

- identifying and assuring more market channels, identifying enabling measures for more access into the Phuket souvenir market;
- developing more attractive product designs and more product diversification, and skill improvement

training and workshops for small groups;

- developing attractive package designs for value adding purposes, like paper boxes for existing crafts, e.g., miniature boats;
- providing a revolving fund for production by individuals or small groups.

Tourism-related Work

For the Urak Lawoi communities, there are two ways of promoting livelihood development in tourism-related work: training and facilitating employment in the tourism sector; and promoting tourism in and around Urak Lawoi communities.

Training and Employment Opportunities, Sea Tourism

Some Urak Lawoi are already engaged in tourism occupations. Moreover, tourist places are expanding nearby the villages, including a spa resort near the Rawai community and a hotel resort near the Laem Tukkae community. This can be an opportunity for the Urak Lawoi if there is adequate preparation and proper management. The Urak Lawoi are familiar with the marine environment, and this is advantageous for marine tourism work. Recommendations for occupational support are as follows:

- providing knowledge or skill training such as communication skills, foreign language skills, and water safety;
- supporting applications for certificates or licenses for career advancement;
- preparing a list of Urak Lawoi who have passed a training courses and show serious attention toward an apprenticeship opportunity;
- providing an opportunity for apprenticeship or "learning by doing" under supervision. This requires cooperation with and support from tourist businesses. Work output should be evaluated regularly and additional support (advice, training, etc.) given when needed.

Promoting Tourism in and Around the Communities

The "sea gypsy villages" of Rawai and Laem Tukkae are already on several tourist maps distributed in Phuket, and the name "sea gypsy" is an attraction in itself. Several agencies/organizations have already suggested tourism promotion in and around the communities, and some even have plans for such support. Sea-based tourism, handicrafts and cultural tours are possibilities for income earning from tourism. Promoting villagers' participation in tourism work opens up an opportunity for additional and alternative occupations. Tourists will have a chance to learn and understand more about the Urak Lawoi's way of life and their hardship. Tourists can have an adventure with the Urak Lawoi: fishing, collecting polychaetes, cracking oyster shells, etc. Income can also be obtained from other products such as seashell accessories and pandanus crafts, and services such as tour guides, shuttle and charter boats, etc. With proper management, tourism can benefit the Urak Lawoi and make them proud of their language, culture, and identity as sea people. The recommendations for promoting tourism in and around the communities are as follows:

- setting up a community tourism plan with community participation, designated tourist areas, attractive sites in and around the communities, developing community-based tourism activities such as organizing a nature-culture or ethnobotany trail;
- collecting information about their way of life to set up a culture and nature interpretive program, including printing media such as pamphlet, booklet, poster, map, culture-nature interpretive guides, etc.;
- training local guides and developing tourist service skills, and developing guidelines or codes of conduct for tourists so that they show respect and courtesy towards local beliefs and customs;
- preparing systematic management of tourist services in the community such as setting up a tour boat cooperative group, setting up a boat

queue, setting up water safety rules such as providing life jackets, planning for tourist income distribution and sharing within the communities;

- promoting community-based tourism, following up on output, analyzing lessons learned to improve tourism activities in the future. Identifying measures to prevent cultural commoditization and negative impacts on the communities.

Mariculture

As indicated before, there are both pros and cons with mariculture, one major challenge being the delayed return on investment. However, some Urak Lawoi have changed their attitudes towards fishing and have even tried their hand on lobster keeping/raising. Therefore, mariculture can be introduced by starting with those who have some experience or have shown interest in such an activity. Training and apprenticeship in some mariculture farms is recommended as the Urak Lawoi trainees can be exposed to samples of best practices in mariculture activities. During the first phase, other supplementary occupation should be provided so that mariculture keepers can earn some income while waiting for a return from mariculture.

Apart from additional and alternative occupational support, it is necessary to focus on peoples' quality of life. Recommendations for community development related to livelihood support are to encourage savings and future planning, to build awareness and participation in natural conservation, to promote educational development, and to enhance community rights. In Urak Lawoi communities there are disadvantaged individuals and families who need extra help to enable them to be independent. This group includes people with disabilities, widows and widowers, elder people, orphans, etc.

It should be emphasized, however, that support for additional and alternative occupations does not aim to divert the Urak Lawoi entirely away from fishing occupations, but rather to build their capabilities and to enhance their opportunities for alternative occupations.

As mentioned earlier, the Urak Lawoi have been transformed from hunter-gatherers to traditional and modern fishermen within the last 30-40 years. Now they are dependent on boat motors and modern fishing equipment. As a result, more investment is needed and many Urak Lawoi are indebted to entrepreneurs. Their traditional lifestyle is gradually fading. Yet there are still a few Urak Lawoi who remain hunter-gatherers and use traditional methods of fishing. Like the Moken, the adept sea nomads, these Urak Lawoi are sea people who know how to make and use simple equipment and methods. The simpler the method is, the more skill and knowledge hunters and gatherers must have. If we talk about cultural rights, then this way of life as hunter-gatherers should be appreciated, respected, protected, and promoted. That means sustainable hunting and gathering should be accepted and possible allowed to some extent even in designated protected areas. Therefore, it is proposed that in addition to promoting additional and alternative occupation, the protection and promotion of the traditional hunting-gathering livelihood should also be carried out . Not only would that be beneficial to the natural resources and environment, but it will also encourage the cultural pride and identity of indigenous people like the Urak Lawoi.

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