

RESEARCH BRIEF

# A Community-Based Tourism Approach in Advancing the Sustainability of the Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project

**Pajaree Ackaradejruangsri and \*John Paolo R. Rivera**

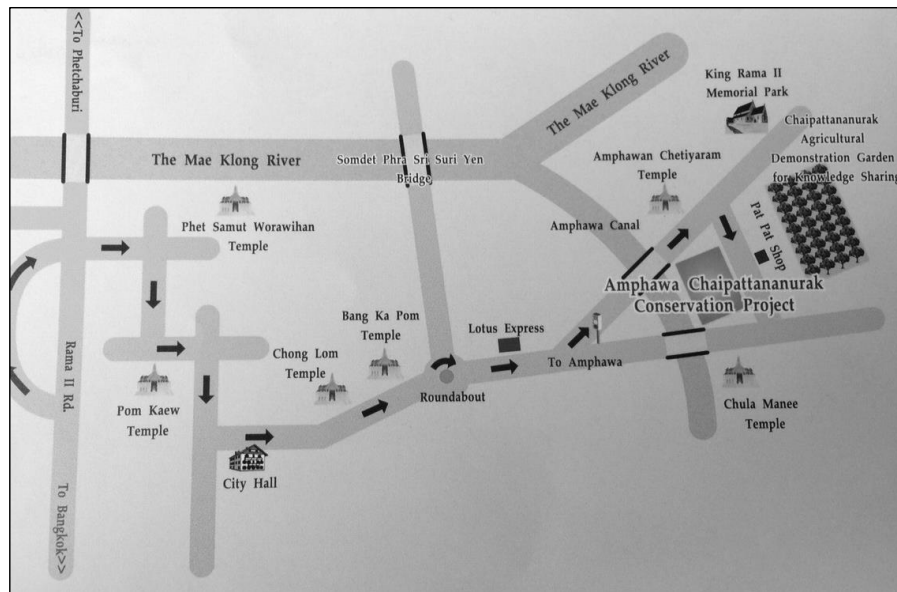
Asian Institute of Management, Philippines

\* john.paolo.rivera@gmail.com

Amphawa is a popular day trip destination that is connected by rivers and canals, situated on the outskirts of the Thai capital (63 kilometers, west of Bangkok). It is the second most popular floating market near the capital, though not as large as Damnoen Saduak<sup>1</sup>, but more authentic, operates in the late afternoon, with majority of its visitors are Thai. It is home to a small community of old-fashioned cafes, restaurants, and wooden shop-houses retailing artsy souvenirs, books, and Thai sweets. The community is located on the banks of the Mae Klong (canal) River (as seen in Figure 1). Here, vendors, riding on boats, park along the two canal banks ready to sell noodles, rice porridge, grilled squid, shellfish, and river prawns, among others. Long-tail boats are usually used to go on scenic tours of the Mae Klong and muse at the stilt houses, fruit orchards,

and temples adorning its banks. Besides the floating market, Amphawa's attractive riverside panorama, relaxed ambience reminiscent of a long-gone era, and a lineup of waterfront infrastructures lie at the core of its enduring popularity among heritage enthusiasts. While commercially developed, the old wooden houses and shop fronts retain some of their original charm.

Tourism in Amphawa goes beyond taking a scenic boat ride to watch the fireflies at nightfall, an activity that requires an overnight stay. Shopping has now taken over as the main activity since the afternoon floating market and shop-houses flanking the Khlong Amphawa became the main attraction. Likewise, food stalls have expanded from the riverbanks and stretched far into the surrounding streets. Consequently, it has become such a big attraction for the Thais and is starting to become an item on foreign tourists' itinerary.



**Figure 1.** Location of the Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project.  
© Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project

## History of Amphawa

Amphawa has a long history dating from the Ayutthaya<sup>2</sup> period, when it was known as Khwaeng Bang Chang<sup>3</sup>—a small agricultural and commercial community, where floating markets, houseboats, and wooden houses were prominent along the river. It is described as a riverbank community where people grew fruit trees and vegetables in such profusion.

During the reign of King Prasat Thong<sup>4</sup>, the district began to expand with fruit orchards and vegetable crops. It can be construed that the agricultural sector prospered that allowed trade to propagate. Eventually, the district developed into what was then known as the Bang Chang Market<sup>5</sup>—the largest floating market and trade center in the province, where people from Bang Chang and nearby villages gathered to sell their agricultural products.

Another notable event in Thai history that occurred in Amphawa happened in 1766, when King Buddha Loetla Nabhalai (also known as King Rama II) was born. His father was then the incumbent governor of Ratchaburi<sup>6</sup>. His birthplace is now a memorial park displaying the art, architecture, and the lifestyle of that time.

In the contemporary period, the lifestyle of the past is still evident. The community has been working together to maintain Amphawa's original condition and appearance (famous for the wooden houses lined up along the river where people live a simple life), and preserving the beautiful art, culture, and heritage. All of which are essential in inviting tourists, both Thai and foreigners, to visit Amphawa regularly.

With the rapid growth of business in Amphawa, it has been positioned as an evening market, operational only during the weekends. It was positioned as such because it is located just about 30 minutes from Damnoen Saduak, which is a morning market. Damnoen Saduak is open daily and is geared towards serving mostly foreign tourists and large tour groups. On the other hand, Amphawa, geared towards serving Thai weekenders from Bangkok and other cities from neighboring provinces, is open during the evening to avoid competition with Domnoen Saduak (Vajirakachorn & Nepal, 2014).

Local residents praised the mayor's ability to find funding support, for example, from the Government Housing Bank that provided basic infrastructure necessary for the market. The mayor had recently made an agreement with a painting company to renovate

and paint some buildings; the project was successfully completed in 2011. Thus, many residents in Amphawa deemed the mayor as media-savvy.

Given this backdrop, we would like to address the challenge: *How can Amphawa sustain its unique charm and preserve its heritage while welcoming rapid development?* To answer this, we have the following specific objectives:

- To identify the opportunities that Amphawa can harness in order to allow for its growth while at the same time mitigate the negative impacts of this growth;
- To analyze the competitive advantage of Amphawa that it can leverage on in order to make its operations sustainable; and
- To create policy and business recommendations to the stakeholders of Amphawa in order to create an environment that is conducive to the community, business, and tourists.

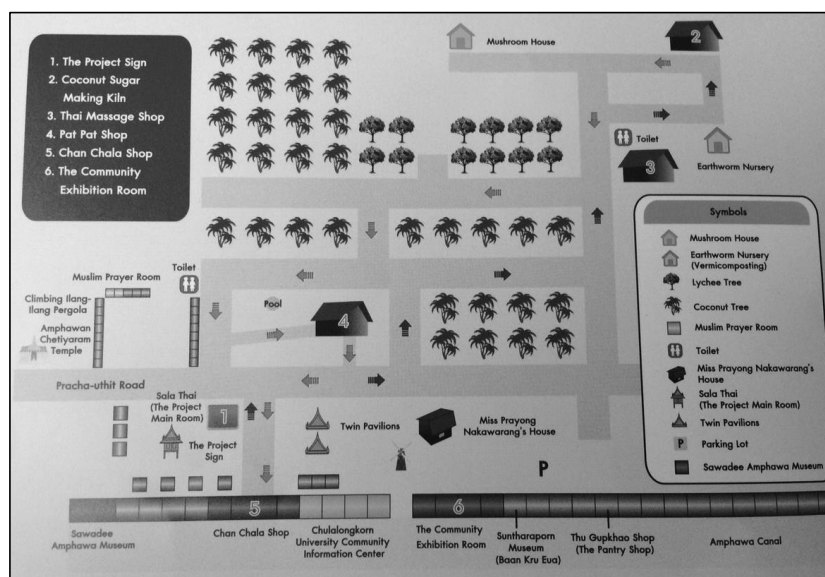
This study is significant to the stakeholders of Amphawa as the recommendations to be generated will help them bridge the gap between economic development and heritage preservation. A conservation framework is essential so that Amphawa can contribute to the economic well being of its stakeholders and at the same time preserve the essence that is Amphawa.

## The Chaipattana Foundation and the Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project

Having preserved its authenticity, from its architecture to the community's lifestyle, Amphawa is becoming one of the most attractive of all floating markets. To allow the future generations to experience an authentic Amphawa environment, the Chaipattana Foundation is actively engaging in preserving and developing the community under a project called "Amphawa Chaipattananurak" (also known as the Amphawa Preservation Project of the Chaipattana Foundation), as seen in Figure 2.

The Chaipattana Foundation was authorized by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn<sup>7</sup>, to make use of a piece of land thoughtfully donated by Prayong Nakawarang, an Amphawa resident. Princess Sirindhorn wanted that the land be utilized to benefit the people and the community of Amphawa.

From this marching order, the Chaipattana Foundation took charge of facilitating the management and development of the land aimed to forge and strengthen mutual collaboration among all of Amphawa's residents. Its operations are consistent with His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's development principles of "geo-social conditions"<sup>8</sup> and the idea of "sufficiency economy"<sup>9</sup> as a roadmap



**Figure 2.** The Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project Map.  
© Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project

for the area's growth and development. The primary objective is to have the people of Amphawa take part in the project by preserving and reviving the customs of the community (ASEAN Cooperation on Environment, 2015). As such, the community can remain strong, uncomplicated, sustainable, and happy, amidst rapid developments in the society.

The following have been the initiatives spearheaded by the Chaipattana Foundation:

- **The Agricultural Demonstration Garden for Knowledge Sharing.** This is an integrated fruit farm and a reserved place where people can learn the folk wisdom and local ways of life centered in agriculture in the Amphawa community. The main focus is on the cultivation of various kinds of fruit trees, which are essential for Amphawa. The garden is also a center where agricultural scholars, farmers, fruit gardeners, and other interested people can gather and share knowledge with each other.
- **Pat Pat Shop.** This shop is part of the Amphawa Chaipattananurak Conservation Project. It was established to provide strategic marketing assistance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and function as a community shop selling products from Samut Songkram<sup>10</sup> and nearby provinces, including the products of the Chaipattana Foundation. Moreover, it ascribes to development around the local way of life so that people have jobs and are able to earn their living. Apart from that, the shop welcomes observations, study groups, tourists, and anybody who are interested in buying local products. It promotes local goods so that they would become renowned.
- **Chan Chala Shop (The Platform Shop).** This shop is uniquely decorated and is alfresco, sells beverages, and snacks. Inside, there is a corner selling the project's souvenirs, products from the Chaipattana Foundation, and other local goods. This is also the project's activities promotion center where tourists can find information on where to go and what to do within the Amphawa community.
- **The Community Exhibition Room.** This is an area for exhibitions and activities involving culture and the way of life in the Mae Klong and Amphawa communities. Themes and contents of the exhibitions always correspond to local culture and are rotated occasionally. It is aimed to promote Amphawa's heritage by strengthening mutual pride and circulating folk wisdom.
- **The Nakawarang Community Market Ground.** This is a multi-purpose area where activities related to lifestyle of the people along the Mae Klong are demonstrated. These activities include traditional Thai music; traditional Thai masked dance drama (Khon performances); demonstrations of the preparation of local dishes (Pin Suwan's Thai desserts, mackerel, and crispy noodles); puppet and string puppet performances; "Nang Yai" performances (shadow screen cutouts on leather); Thai extemporaneous entertainment (Lum Trud); and Thai garland dancing. These performances are rotated monthly. Furthermore, local products can be purchased here as well such as pure coconut oil products for hair and body treatment, skin care products from rinds of pomelos, models of traditional Thai houses and boats, classic Thai masks, Thai clothing, egg art, stuffed dough dessert mixed with sesame (Khanom Tian Salad Nga), and many other Thai desserts. This market area was given the name "Nakawarang" to honor the donor of the land – the donation that resulted in numerous benefits to all the people of Amphawa and to those who value the Thai traditional way of life.

### Creating a Sustainable Business Environment

The primary consideration of the success of an enterprise is profitability, which originates from competitive advantage. According to Kay (1995),

Competitive advantages may increase or diminish. The evidence from Western economies is that competitive advantages do persist, but

as they persist they erode. The best measure of the sustainability of competitive advantage is the extent to which a firm continues to enjoy above-average profitability year after year. (p. 166)

Yet, making the operations of Amphawa Chaipattananurak sustainable is a vast undertaking. There are certain issues that need to be addressed as well as resource constraints that have to be hurdled. According to Krit Methawee, Director of the Amphawa Chaipattananurak, whose primary responsibility is to manage the operations and logistics of the project, in an interview (personal communication, June 7, 2015), together with the observations we have gathered during the field visit, the following are the ongoing challenges that need an immediate response.

**Marketing.** To stimulate profitability, the Amphawa Chaipattananurak must invest in its marketing and advertising. According to Heaton (n. d., par. 4), “it is no secret that the universal mass media barrage as a method for demand creation and establishing a brand has for the most part gone the way of the advertising jingle.” That is, there are already various media channels available and that contemporary markets are diverse, enabling everyone to create an impact to consumers’ collective consciousness.

For the case of Amphawa Chaipattananurak, it has been doing passive press releases. For instance, every month, there are about three to four television programs that visit to feature the market. There is a shortcoming here. Since it is a cultural tourism place, not all television programs are appropriate because the right message is not conveyed to the right target market. As emphasized by Heaton (n.d., par. 4), “it is much better to get your story straight and tell that story only to the audience that is ready to listen.”

Demand theory implies that the creation of demand pursues creation of desire. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2005), marketing is geared towards satisfying consumers’ existing needs and wants. Heaton (n. d.) accentuated that “in demand creation, the ultimate quality of the product is often secondary to the power of the marketing effort that pushes it out” (par. 3). That is, the capacity to stimulate demand comes directly from the organization and its accompanying products. By showcasing the true essence of Amphawa

Chaipattananurak, they would be able to market the place, eventually generating referrals, promotions, and testimonials not because they heavily advertised but because they are true to their value proposition—the reason why consumers engage in word of mouth marketing (WOMM). Whitley (2014) considered WOMM as the most trusted initiative by consumers, that will most likely to drive sales for any company.

However, in recent times, marketing initiatives have been focused on “collecting” instead of “connecting.” That is, organizations are focused more on collecting social media fans rather than connecting with them. Traditional marketing put emphasis on the so-called 4 Ps of marketing (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005). On the other hand, contemporary marketing highlight on 3 Es—engage, equip, and empower (Whitley, 2014)—the strategies that Amphawa Chaipattananurak must practice.

Adapting the discussion of Whitley (2014), *engage* means listening to what the consumers are telling and being part of the conversation about a company’s product. *Equip* means give consumers reasons to talk about your company’s amazing products and services, insider knowledge, social elevation, astonishing stories, fanciful facts, or funny anecdotes. Lastly, *empower* means giving consumers different ways to talk and share—letting consumers know that their opinions are important for the company.

**Skills formation.** The current setup of Amphawa Chaipattananurak in terms of its manpower can be characterized as predominantly run by local people on a voluntary basis. Manpower is composed of mostly the young (defined by the United Nations as those who are 15 to 24 years old). Being part of this age group, it is apparent that most of Amphawa Chaipattananurak’s manpower still requires training and skills formation specifically in the fields of business, enterprise development, and project management. The tasks being carried out at the Amphawa Chaipattananurak require both hard and soft skills. In any business organization, investment in both kinds of skills training is vital.

In bridging the skills gap of Amphawa Chaipattananurak’s manpower, it is essential that its management recognize the extensiveness of training requirements in fostering a solution to their shortcoming. In any organization, there are various

staff roles that require different weightings of both soft and hard skills. Likewise, it also depends on the proficiency of manpower; hence, the requirements for optimal efficacy of manpower will also vary (Sanders, 2015). To advance Amphawa Chaipattananurak's human resource development, it would require sufficient time and high level of engagement. Majority of the employees of Amphawa Chaipattananurak reside (and have lived) in nearby areas in Amphawa. Thus, it might be necessary to harness their competitive advantage in growing agricultural products; and at the same time augment their skills in terms of the language of business, enterprise development, project management, and marketing.

**Economies of scale and scope.** The Amphawa Chaipattananurak is delegated to conserve and add value to the local culture for sustainable community development. The issue here is: there is no clear cut about the scope of work. This has cost implications on how Amphawa Chaipattananurak operates. The variety of activities being done impede the full harnessing of economies of scale<sup>11</sup> and scope<sup>12</sup>. However, since the initiatives of Amphawa Chaipattananurak are geared towards community development, it would always have an impact on the way Amphawa residents and other stakeholders think, behave, and live. Hence, there is a need to balance the creation of new initiatives with sustaining existing initiatives.

**Rapid growth.** Revitalizing the floating markets of Amphawa stirs competition with other existing floating markets Thailand has been known for. The competition imposes challenges (see Table 1 and Figure 3). These business challenges are even reinforced by sustainability issues. Due to the rise in economic and tourism activities in Amphawa, residents and locals will see this as an opportunity to engage in practices that will generate profits, which may or may not be aligned with the objectives of the Amphawa Chaipattananurak. They may rent or lease their lands and properties to big enterprises trying to take advantage of the tourism collateral of Amphawa. Just like in any other cultural sites in other developing economies, such move will eventually lead to the alteration of the historical landscape and building structures to become modern hotels, stores, and other business infrastructures. It is also possible that this

development will disperse residents of Amphawa who have already sold their assets to businessmen—incidence of elite capture (Roxas, 2015).

On another note, as businesses thrive, Amphawa's comparative advantage in agriculture might diminish as residents become tour guides and providers of boat services, instead of becoming farmers. Here, regulation must come into place.

Economic development has its pros and cons. The rise of economic and tourism activities in Amphawa will be beneficial to the communities, as this will allow them to reap profits and make a living for their households. However, Todaro and Smith (2008) argued that economic development also creates damages at the expense of the environment, heritage, and local identity. If the local government will not impose regulatory frameworks, then Amphawa will not be spared by the negative repercussions of economic development. Such consequences may not be the long-term goal of the Amphawa Chaipattananurak.

### **The Community-Based Approach to Amphawa's Sustainability**

In Amphawa, the leadership role of the government and non-government leaders is critical in advancing the community as a catalyst of tourism development. According to the study of Vajirakachorn and Nepal (2014), the mayor of the municipality of Amphawa, during the time their study was conducted, had been a strong advocate and promoter of the Amphawa Floating Market (AFM). Although it was the mayor's idea to reestablish the market, a consultation with the residents, community leaders, and local merchants was conducted to seek for their collaboration and support. As documented by Vajirakachorn and Nepal (2014), many of these stakeholders attended the meetings, provided their opinions, and agreed to contribute to tourism promotion by serving as canal vendors and hawkers. An organized system was established wherein somebody (i.e. stall sellers club) took responsibility of recruiting sellers and designating specific spots where each seller would situate their stalls.

Vajirakachorn and Nepal (2014) also narrated that during the initial years of the newly opened AFM, sellers on the boats received a THB 300.00 incentive

each day for selling in the canal, provided by the municipal budget. In the event that sellers could not sell all of their products by the end of the day (i.e. 9:00PM), the mayor's office and local business owners bought the unsold products to encourage the sellers to return to the market. This incentive system was stopped as soon as the AFM became a popular tourist attraction. Hence, many sellers became motivated to participate in the floating market because it has become lucrative for business. Eventually, the AFM grew rapidly with accompanying problems that were inexistent before: (1) sellers started to fight for rights over the selling space (in the canal and surrounding areas); (2) canal tour operators competed to get customers; and (3) the price of food and other products increased significantly. These problems led to arguments between sellers, municipal officials, and local residents. Ultimately, the tourist experience would be negatively affected by such issues.

Regrettably, some issues cannot be resolved easily because: (1) there is no related ordinance or regulation to deal with the problems; and (2) conflicts were related to personal benefits of some people involved in the market. Meetings and assemblies became more focused on solving individual problems rather than community wide concerns, which led to people being discouraged to attend meetings (Vajirakachorn & Nepal, 2014). Thus, fewer meetings were held in later years. The removal of the original tenants from the

canal area was stated as one of the reasons why fewer participants attend community meetings. Moreover, a number of landowners received higher rent offers from outside investors, who saw AFM as a profitable place to conduct business. Meanwhile, some landlords saw opportunities to renovate their heritage houses into homestays and/or shops.

As the rent seeking activities grew, the average rent increased from THB 700.00 (USD 24.00) to THB 3,000.00 (USD 100.00) per month, which the local residents (i.e. tenants who resided there for at least six decades) cannot anymore afford. As such, they were forced to leave Amphawa; and no residents were living in those houses during the weekdays. Thus, when there were meetings, people who rent those houses would never attend because they lived in other provinces and came to Amphawa only during the weekends. In sum, the level of community participation in Amphawa was high during the initial stage of tourism development, that is, when economic improvement was the main emphasis. As the floating market developed fully, local resident involvement in tourism was limited to selling at the market during the weekends. They did not frequently provide inputs about the development or maintenance of the floating market to the authorities.

Given the abovementioned scenario, we have developed a SWOT analysis (see Table 1) in order to analyze the situation in Amphawa Chaipattananurak Project with its accompanying issues.

**Table 1**  
*A SWOT Matrix Analysis*

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well established support from the Chaipattana Foundation</li> <li>• Active and strong community relationship</li> <li>• Presence of a capable and visionary leader (in the person of Krit Methawee)</li> <li>• One stop; multiple activities (AFM, Agricultural Demonstration Garden, Pat Pat Shop, Community Exhibition Room, Nakawarang Community Market Ground, and King Rama II Memorial Park)</li> <li>• Variety of food and local products at a relatively cheaper price than in urban areas</li> <li>• Open daily with no entrance fee</li> <li>• Preserving the local wisdom first then developing the wellbeing of the local community: “Anurak” (preservation) + “Pattana” (development) = “Pattananurak”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High turnover rate of business establishments due to strong competition.</li> <li>• Although the AFM is well-known among locals, the <i>Amphawa Chaipattananurak</i> (the project) is not yet well-known among local and foreign tourists</li> <li>• No budget for mass advertisement</li> <li>• Low engagement with the target market (i.e., agro, eco, cultural tourists)</li> <li>• Limited human resources. Most staff and personnel mostly work on a voluntary basis</li> <li>• Lack of hard and soft skills among staff and personnel (i.e., communication, management, service) and marketing related activities</li> </ul>

Table 1 continued...

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenient location (in close proximity from Bangkok)</li> <li>• Close to many tourist destinations (King Rama II Memorial Park, Wat Bang Khae Noi, Nativity of Our Lady Cathedral, night fireflies, local fruit orchards, Wat Bang Kung, Damnoen Saduak)</li> <li>• Emergence of a knowledge sharing center</li> <li>• Growing market in agro, eco, cultural tourism, both domestically and internationally</li> <li>• Partnership with university and non-government organizations</li> <li>• Young workforce with an immense passion and enthusiasm</li> <li>• Good model for sustainable tourism based on collaborative community participation approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Amphawa market is growing too fast making it difficult to control.</li> <li>• People tend to visit the place for the relatively cheaper goods rather than appreciating the traditional and historical value that the place offers. This defeats the purpose of the <i>Amphawa Chaipattananurak</i>. Amphawa will be branded as a pure market rather than a heritage site.</li> <li>• Rapid urban expansion resulting to a diminishing local identity</li> </ul>

As a matter of fact, in reference to Methawee (personal communication, June 7, 2015), it was emphasized that the Chaipattana Foundation “gives the development guidelines in keeping with the purpose of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.” Other than being just known for the AFM, they would also like to take advantage of the opportunity that there have been many people who visit not just to shop, but also to engage in learning activities. Thus, they would like to explore developing into a learning center offering capacity-building programs (short or long training programs). The idea of offering such program was inspired by their growing experiences and knowledge for the past seven years that they think are ready to be passed on. Such program can be offered to both local community and foreigners regardless of race and religion, who are interested in contributing to Amphawa’s preservation and sustainability.

For Methawee (personal communication, June 7, 2015), the main problem here is how to inform the public that Amphawa Chaipattananurak offers a variety of learning activities more than a floating market just for shopping. According to Methawee (personal communication, June 7, 2015), their general idea is to implement a “proactive strategy.” That is, they will personally approach individuals and organizations that can facilitate information dissemination on their behalf. They can join promotional events (i.e. travel expos), approach the Tourism Authority of Thailand to consult

about how to target the appropriate tourist group, or find an appropriate media platform that matches with their advocacy. Methawee (personal communication, June 7, 2015) believed that they can have a niche market here through the upper-middle to upper group and not the lower group as what other floating markets do promulgate.

Moreover, Methawee (personal communication, June 7, 2015) realized that as far as their project is concerned, printed media is vital because its circulation lasts longer. The advantage of print media is, they can have the luxury of time to design a good material, which they themselves can create. Only them can introduce Amphawa Chaipattananurak to its full essence.

Other than marketing and advertising, Methawee (personal communication, June 7, 2015) also acknowledged the fact that management also plays a crucial role—“it is [not] necessary to be popular [for a] short time; otherwise, [we] might lose the popularity in [a] short time too.” It also includes being abreast with effective and implementable strategies, realizing what the demands are; expanding sustainably. Such are necessary to enhance the tourists’ experience in Amphawa. As a consequence, there is a higher likelihood that they will come back. Return tourism also depends on the variety and diversity of activities being offered.

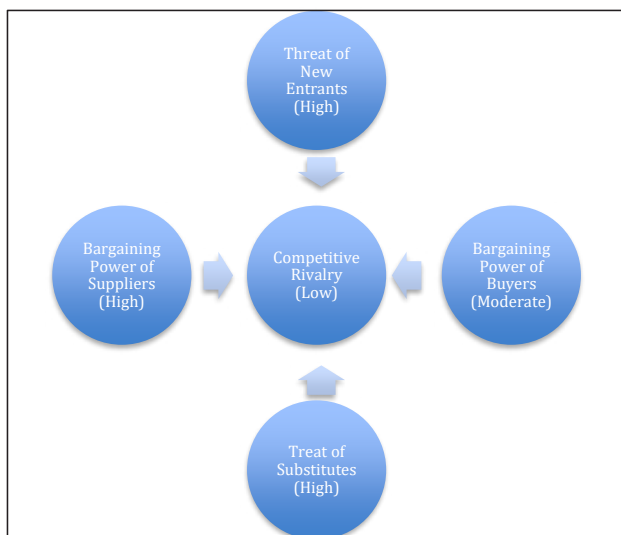
To supplement the SWOT analysis in Figure 3 and the insights of Methawee (personal communication,



June 7, 2015), we have also done a Porter's Five Forces analysis (see Figure 3). This would allow us to identify and analyze Amphawa Chaipattananurak's competitive advantage that it can leverage on to make its operations sustainable.

**Competitive rivalry (low).** Since Amphawa Chaipattananurak is serving as the reminiscence of the past, running by Chaipattana Foundation together with community participation, there is no direct competitor or low competition in this preservation and development project. However, in term of floating market, there are five floating markets nearby Bangkok, excluding Amphawa floating market. But none of these are run by local community and offer multiple side activities such as knowledge sharing center, community exhibition room, and community market ground like Amphawa Chaipattananurak. All of them are for commercial and business purpose.

**Threat of new entrants (high).** To join agro/eco/cultural tourism with preservation of local wisdom and development of local wellbeing driving as a purpose, there are high barriers to enter. These include high operating costs, particular knowledge and skill sets, high level of local community involvement and participation, and strong passion about the project. Yet, since the project aims to be self-sustaining, the cost of exiting is also relative low, which means it is relatively easy to leave rather than to stay and try to be self-sustaining.



**Figure 3.** Porter's five forces analysis.

**Bargaining power of buyers (moderate) and threats of substitutes (high).** At the moment, the target market for Amphawa Chaipattananurak is Thai tourist (due to constraints in human resources, soft skills, and marketing related issues), but not all Thai tourists are interested in the project and want to visit Amphawa. In fact, the current target market for Amphawa Chaipattananurak is the middle class and upper class income who live in Bangkok and the cities nearby since these people have more financial freedom, thus they are less price sensitive. They are willing to pay as long as the activities, products, services, and experiences that Amphawa Chaipattananurak offer match their needs and wants. But still, if the cost of visiting and participating is too high, or there are less attractive activities in the area, they may easily change the plan to visit the other tourist sites.

**Bargaining power of suppliers (high).** As the project requires high level of involvement and participation from local community on voluntary basis, the success and sustainability of the project depend largely on the willingness and collaborative efforts of the local community. Chaipattana Foundation can provide guidelines and support but the inputs should come from the local community.

## Conclusion

We have seen that just like any other heritage site in the world, Amphawa is also facing the threats of development, which makes heritage enthusiasts cringe. Development is indeed accompanied by loss of authenticity and loss of heritage. As the famous adage goes, "out with the old, in with the new." However, it does not have to be that way. There will always be room for heritage to be preserved for the next generation to appreciate—sustainability.

In the midst of globalization and modernization, the AFM through the Amphawa Chaipattananurak is doing everything it can to welcome development while preserving what they have, and restoring what they have lost (as borrowed from the slogan of Boracay Foundation, Inc. in the Philippines). We have seen that they are facing numerous challenges for them to be sustainable. They want to welcome tourists and local visitors to sustain business and encourage the locals

of Amphawa to continue doing business. As far as the supply-side is concerned, the rationale is simple—if the locals get their livelihood from the unique charms and heritage of Amphawa, then they will take care of it, preserve it, because whatever damages Amphawa will sustain, it will also damage their livelihoods.

For the demand side, the Amphawa Chaipattananurak should embark on an effective (not necessarily massive) form of marketing and advertising. This constitutes the identification of their suitable target market and appropriate media platform. We suggest that they not only embark on television exposure and print media; they can also harness the benefits of social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and the ever-reliable WOMM. Having a well-maintained official website is also necessary to be available in various languages (specifically English) other than Thai.

It has been acknowledged that competition is stiff. Hence, we suggest that Amphawa Chaipattannaurak explore the possibilities of *coopetition* (collaboration between business competitors, in the hope of mutually beneficial results) among relevant industries and be open to an expansion of their value chain. It is important to note that under coopetition, relationships in business do not need to be a zero-sum game because all parties can win. This can only take place if enterprises can collaborate in areas where they do not have competitive and comparative advantages (and where they can share common costs).

For Amphawa Chaipattannaurak to be effective in coopetition, they must first develop a cooperative attitude and be extra selective in choosing partners whom they will cooperate and share information. Note that coopetition requires transparency. Of equal importance, they must also learn to treat partners as customers and be ready to work with them in new ways that they might not have done before.

In this way, sustaining the unique charm and preserving the heritage of Amphawa, as well as other similar destinations, may be easier. This goes beyond implementing the right policies despite the non-cooperation of external factors and non-diversifiable risks—market and economic conditions. This is also about creating an environment that is simultaneously conducive for business and heritage preservation. Amphawa is unique; thus, strategic planning is best done at the micro-level.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Is a district (Amphoe) in the province of Ratchaburi. It is famous for its floating market held every day till noon on a canal (khlong). As it has become a prime tourist attraction on the vicinity of Bangkok, the market has lost its authenticity.
- <sup>2</sup> A Siamese kingdom that existed from 1351 to 1767 and was a former capital of the Kingdom of Thailand. It was described by foreign traders as one of the biggest and wealthiest cities in the East and was comparable to Paris in size and wealth.
- <sup>3</sup> Bang Chang means “elephant hamlet.”
- <sup>4</sup> The first king of the Prasat Thong dynasty, the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the Siamese Ayutthaya kingdom, who reigned from 1629 to 1656.
- <sup>5</sup> The orchards around Bang Chang were called “Suan Nawg,” which means the outer gardens, and they were often compared with “Suan Nai,” which means the inner gardens, situated in Bangkok, with the saying: “Bang Chang Nawg, Bangkok Suan Nai.” Bang Chang represented the countryside, or the rural areas, while orchards in Bangkok referred to those belonging to the royal court.
- <sup>6</sup> Is a town municipality (thesaban mueang) in western Thailand, and is the capital of the Ratchaburi Province covering the whole local governmental unit (tambon) of Nai Mueang of the Mueang Ratchaburi district. It is an important commercial center.
- <sup>7</sup> Is the second daughter of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (also known as King Rama IX).
- <sup>8</sup> These members of a sufficient community cooperate by sharing their efforts and exchanging their ideas, knowledge, skills, and experiences. They use community resources and develop community activities in ways that are appropriate to their geo-social circumstances in order to realize the utmost benefits and happiness of community members.
- <sup>9</sup> The chief proponent of localism in Thailand or “moso” (moderation society) is King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s philosophy of “sufficiency economy.” The foundations of King Bhumibol’s theory include sustainability, moderation, and broad-based development. The Learning Centre of King Bhumibol’s Philosophy of Economic Sufficiency claims that the concept is focused on living a moderate, self-dependent life without greed or overexploitation of natural resources. A “Sufficient Community” consists of individuals and families who have a degree of self-reliance that is based on their own knowledge and moral strength but strive for sustainable progress.

- <sup>10</sup> Is one of the central provinces (changwat) of the Kingdom of Thailand where Amphawa is located. It is situated the mouth of the Mae Klong river to the Gulf of Thailand. With several canals, the water from the river flows for irrigation. At the province's coast, there are many lakes for sea salt production.
- <sup>11</sup> Cost advantages that enterprises obtain due to size, output, or scale of operation, with cost per unit of output generally decreasing (Nicholson, 2005).
- <sup>12</sup> Proportionate cost savings gained by producing two or more distinct goods, when the cost of doing so is less than that of producing each separately (Nicholson, 2005).

## References

- ASEAN Cooperation on Environment. (2015, September 07). *Knowledge sharing on environmentally sustainable cities management regarding Thailand's philosophy of sufficiency economy*. Retrieved from <http://environment.asean.org/knowledge-sharing-on-environmentally-sustainable-cities-management-regarding-thailands-philosophy-of-sufficiency-economy/>
- Heaton, J. (n.d.). *The business of demand creation*. Retrieved from [http://www.tronvig\\_group.com/the-business-of-demand-creation/](http://www.tronvig_group.com/the-business-of-demand-creation/)
- Kay, J. (1995). *Foundations of corporate success: How business strategies add value*. UK: OUP Oxford.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong G. (2005). *Principles of marketing*. NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Nicholson, W. (2005). *Microeconomic theory: Basic principles and extensions* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.). USA: Thomson South – Western.
- Roxas, F. Y. (2015). *How sustainability works?* Makati: Asian Institute of Management.
- Sanders, M. Z. (2015, January 30). Mixing up hard and soft skills training is best for business. *Training Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.trainingjournal.com/articles/feature/mixing-hard-and-soft-skills-training-best-business>
- Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2008). *Economic development* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Singapore: Pearson South Asia Pte. Ltd.
- Vajirakachorn, T., & Nepal, S. (2014). Local perspectives of community-based tourism: Case study from Thailand's Amphawa Floating Market. *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, 3(4), 342-356.
- Whitler, K.A. (2014, July 18). Why word of mouth marketing is the most important social media. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kimberlywhitler/2014/07/17/why-word-of-mouth-marketing-is-the-most-important-social-media/>