

REVITALIZING BAN KASET PUTTANA VILLAGE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM

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There has been a boom in health tourism. A growing number of tourists travel to other countries for preventive and rehabilitative care and seek detoxifying, de-stressing and healthy activities. Based on a community-based tourism project, this study aimed to explore the possibilities of developing health tourism in Ban Kaset Puttana, a village located in the suburban area of Ubon Ratchathani in Thailand. The one-year project based on participatory action research covered the entire process of forming thematic alternative health tourist products by employing the concept of natural-based health care. The project was then followed by 10 semi-structured interviews with local villagers to investigate their perceptions about community-based tourism development. This research project resulted in the development of community-created sustainable rural tourism. After the research project, villagers indicated that while health tourism development has both positive and negative impacts on their village, the positive impacts far outweighs the negative ones.

Keywords: *Health tourism, community-based tourism development, responsible tourism, participatory action research, Thailand*



INTRODUCTION

Rural areas in many countries including Thailand have often relied on agriculture as the main source of economic welfare. However, over-reliance on one source of income could have detrimental effects on the viability of these local communities. One of the useful diversification tools for rural economies is rural tourism. It refers to tourism activities and development in non-urban settings involving close interaction between local residents and visitors ([Lane, 1994](#)). Rural tourism is a prevalent development approach for both developed and developing countries to create sustainable and resilient communities and economies. It is a trend toward local empowerment and an engine of economic growth in rural areas ([Sharpley, 2002](#)). It can create the opportunity for growth to isolated rural areas, diversify their economies, and enhance the quality of life for the locals. Rural tourism has been shown to benefit local residents as well as outsiders ([Ryan, Chaozhi, & Zeng, 2011](#)).

Despite the many advantages of tourism development, the plethora of tourism research has also addressed some adverse impacts of tourism such as noise pollution, environmental pollution, and biodiversity loss ([Chaowu & Xianmin, 2001](#); [Zhang & Gao, 2016](#)). As such, in developing rural tourism plans, emphasis should be put on low-carbon and sustainable tourism alternatives. Sustainable tourism is a normative approach and is defined as “Tourism that meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems” ([World Tourism Organization, 1998](#)). For tourism to be truly sustainable, it should meet four criteria outlined by [Beioley \(1995\)](#) as the following: 1) respecting the economic well-being and social and cultural concerns of host communities through involving local consultation,

participation, and control, 2) preserving the local environment and operating within its capability to regenerate itself, 3) reducing adverse impact on the wider global environment resulting from depletion of natural resources and pollution, and 4) providing a meaningful and satisfying experience for visitors and tourists.

Rural tourism must be a part of the rural fabric, echo the unique patterns of the rural environment, economy, history and location, and employ local resources ([Tchetchik, Fleischer, & Finkelshtain, 2006](#)). Due to lack of prior local experience with tourism planning, outsiders might take advantage of local communities in tourism development ([De Kadt, 1992](#)). Therefore, community involvement in rural tourism development is pivotal for ensuring sustainability ([Bramwell, 2011](#); [Sakata & Prideaux, 2013](#); [Salazar, 2012](#)). Community-based tourism planning and development which stems from the locals can encourage more local participation in rural tourism development, and ensure its sustainability. Such local-level democracy is widely associated with sustainable tourism ([Bramwell, 2010](#)) and can contribute to sustainable ecosystem management ([Wallander, 2007](#)). Nonetheless, active participation of local community has received little attention in the tourism development literature ([Sofield, 2003](#)).

In the lack of prior research on responsible tourism in Ubon Ratchathani in Thailand, this study attempted to examine the potential of developing community-based health tourism in this region through a one-year participatory action research, and follow-up interviews with villagers. This study reports the development of a community-based health tourism in Ban Kaset Puttana Village, Thailand. The following section first provides an overview of the village. Then, the method applied in this one-year participatory action research is explained. The paper then offers key results of the project, summarizes the interview findings, and presents some directions for future research.

CASE STUDY SITE: BAN KASET PUTTANA VILLAGE, THAILAND

Ban Kaset Puttana is a village in the urban area of Ubon Ratchathani Province, the northeastern part of Thailand. The term “Ban” in Thai is equivalent to “village” in English. Ban Kaset Puttana is advanced in its cultural and agricultural resources. The village is easily accessible by car and is only a 30-minute drive away from Ubon Ratchathani Airport. The trip would cost approximately 200 baht by taxi. Due to strong influence by Buddhism, the village is rich in its cultural resources. The village hosts two interesting “Wats” (Temple) in itself. The main one is Wat Pha Kaset Photisajjatam, the 46th branch of Wat Nong Pah Pong; the Buddhist forest monastery located in the province of Ubon Ratchathani, which was established by [Venerable Ajahn Chah Subhaddo](#); the master of the impeccable approach to meditation or Dharma practice and the simple direct style of teaching. The approach emphasizes on practical application and a balanced attitude, which began to attract numerous followers among foreign monks and laypeople. As such, the teaching has a special appeal to westerners, and many have come to study and practice with him since 1966. The number of foreigners who come to Ajahn Chah has been steadily increasing. This temple is, therefore, a habitat for monks, nuns, and laypeople who want to study and practice the Teachings of the Buddha under Ajahn Chah’s guidance.

Physically, the temple is very sylvan and peaceful with a large number of trees which makes visitors calm when they step into the temple’s compound. Besides, there is a big pavilion containing Buddha and the Venerable Ajahn Chah Subhaddo statues. This pavilion is designed for Buddhists or laymen to pay respect, pray, or do meditation. Inside the pavilion, there are some interpretation boards telling visitors about the history of the temple. There is also a small concrete road through a tranquil atmosphere for visitors to walk or bike along. The second Wat or temple is around a kilometer away from the main one. The landmark of this temple is Luang Por

Tho Ko Ta Maa; a big Buddha statue with a Buddhism story behind it. The statue is placed right at front of the temple, which is a common photo shooting place for visitors prior to getting inside to the ordination hall to see some nice pictures of Buddhism story.

This village is also an organic agricultural-based site that has been a source of organic food for Ubon Ratchathani. There is a big organic farming of Mae (mother) Ket Keaw; the 64-year-old lady, who has been following the King philosophy of the sufficiency economy for years. The 50 rais of her farm (1 rai is equivalent to 1,600 square meters) contains various kind of vegetables and fruits that are organically grown. These organic plants are therefore a great source of healthy food. In addition, the farm is a learning center open for those who are interested in organic agricultural-based in the King Philosophy initiative. Tourists can try fresh fruits such as banana, coconut, Thai blueberry, nut, star fruit, monkey apple, star gooseberry and others while walking along the farm. Mother Ket Keaw plays the role of a tour guide, telling visitors about the concept of doing organic farming. In addition, there is a nearby village located about a kilometer from Ban Kaset Pattana where farmers grow colorful Mum flowers throughout the year. The village is, therefore, one of the destinations for the biking tour. At this point, tourists can take photos of beautiful flowers and buy some at a very reasonable price directly from the farm owner.

The advantage of its location an urban area helps the village in term of accessibility. As mentioned earlier, it takes tourists around 30 minutes by taxi from the airport or 20 minutes from Ubon Ratchathani downtown through the main road number 24, followed by only 5 minutes from the main road to easily reach the village. Besides, there is a health promotion center nearby which is around 10 minutes by car from the village. Currently, there is a high potential to connect the village with the center for the use of medical technology as well as human resources.

The information above tells us the high possibility of health tourism development in this village. To ensure sustainability of

community-based tourism, researchers have taken local participation into account. With high confidence that the impacts of such health tourism would not only generate income for the villagers but also help the mother province in term of increasing the length of stay for tourists.

METHOD

This research was initiated by finding a topic of interest from a key informant in the village. The informant was selected on the basis of occupation and relation to health tourism. Developing thematic villages stimulates proactive involvement among local residents which can lead to community-created sustainable rural tourism development ([Idziak, Majewski, & Zmyślony, 2015](#)).

The theme selected for the village was health tourism. Then, 245 questionnaires were used to survey the demand for the health tourism in Ubon, followed by participatory action research (PAR). A group of 15 citizen villagers voluntarily worked with the author for a year in the field. Participatory action research is a very common method for studies on community-based tourism planning ([Idziak et al., 2015](#); [Ormsby & Mannle, 2006](#)). It involved a key role played by the main researcher, who is local to the region, as both an observer and participant in the research ([Cole, 2005](#)). Through observation techniques, informal interviews and participation in the villagers' everyday lives, the researcher could get closer to villagers' life experiences and learn from them. Learning in action and participatory techniques put great emphasis on stories shared among the people ([Elliott, 1999](#)), enabling the rural community to create a new image of itself ([Barrett, Thomas, & Hocevar, 1995](#)).

PAR began with the site survey for gathering data. Then, SWOT analysis was performed as part of the diagnostic phase to examine the potential of the site. This was followed by initiating the tourism map and setting up health tourism activities employing the concept of natural-based health care. The concept consists of eight natural bases of being healthy, namely 1) following the four bases of

success by Dharma; aspiration, exertion, thoughtfulness, and investigation, 2) being in a good mood, 3) having healthy food, 4) doing exercise, 5) living in and breathing fresh air, 6) relaxation, 7) detoxification, and 8) having an honest job. These eight bases are available in the natural and rural community of the village under study. The researcher helped local villagers with the development of health tourism products such as healthy food and drink catering from the organic farm of Mother Ket Keaw, Thai massage, the easy hydrotherapy for relief pain, chanting out loud for the mind detoxification, morning meditation, yoga, and biking tour along the route. To ensure a sustainable community-created tourism, a group of villagers was trained for the hospitality work on how to welcome and greet tourists, cater food and drink. Besides, as well as a young local tour guide training for three days before inviting a group of pilot tourists. In addition, two different groups, each including representatives from the press and ten pilot tourists, were invited to try the route and activities developed for the site and provide feedback. Photographs of health tourism development in Ban Kaset Puttana Village can be seen in the supplementary data section available on the web-based version of this paper. Finally, this research employed 10 follow-up interviews with local residents to obtain their feedback and feeling regarding the community-based health tourism in their village. These semi-structured interviews with the local villagers were conducted six months after the project by one of the researchers. Semi-structured interviews provide a more open-ended feedback from respondents ([DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006](#); [Sekaran & Bougie, 2011](#)) and offer flexibility to both interviewer and interviewee to engage in sharing of views, opinions, and experiences in a less restrictive manner ([Turner III, 2010](#)). Interview sessions were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The interview entailed the following main questions:

- How did you feel about the plans for health tourism development in your village after hearing them for the first time?

- How do you feel about the plans for health tourism development in your village now?
- What do you think would be the impact of health tourism development on your village?
- What do you think would be the impact of health tourism development on villagers?
- Why do you think tourists should come and visit your village?

What do you see as challenges of running health tourism in your village?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research reports the sustainable community-based health tourism solution developed for Ban Kaset Puttana Village along with the local residents. Consistent with Beioley's ([1995](#)) four criteria for sustainable tourism, the community-based tourism in the case study is sustainable as it meets all these criteria outlined below. The following section explains how this community-based tourism project addressed each of these criteria and a summary of key project achievements and observations are outlined.

RESPECTING THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONCERNS OF HOST COMMUNITIES THROUGH INVOLVING LOCAL CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION, AND CONTROL

The designed tourist activities were based on economic well-being as well as the social and cultural concerns of the host community shared by a local consultant, as the following. At some point, community-based tourism was expected to create extra jobs for local villagers to earn an extra income. Meanwhile, tourism activities should not cause any social and cultural distortion in the

village, rather respect and maintain those values. In addition, environment resources should not be degraded.

In order to ensure the economic well-being of the host community, income leakage is taken into account. Local villagers' participation is the main concern of this research. Resulting from this community-based tourism, local labor is employed in the food and beverage catering activities. Local transportation such as bicycles and cars are also utilized. For those villagers who participated in tourism-related activities, they could earn their share after the end of the program. Moreover, tourism activities are based upon the available resources in the village, which were found in the data collection stage. Tourist spots were also selected from the existing attractions in the village including temples, organic vegetable and fruits farm, Mum flower farm, and massage shop, and were promoted by local villagers as tour guides.

Meanwhile, local traditions such as offering food to monks early in the morning are also respected. Tourists will have a first-hand experience doing this as part of the overnight stay program. Local socio-cultural life of the host community is still going in the traditional way; villagers still live their life as usual. By visiting local tourist sites such the farms, tourists will be asked not to disturb the farmers but observe their way of doing farming and purchase farm products if interested. Besides, tourists will be requested to dress and behave properly for the temples visiting. This tourism initiative, therefore, respects the local economic well-being, as well as the social and cultural norms of host communities through involving local consultation, participation, and control.

PRESERVING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND OPERATING WITHIN ITS CAPABILITY TO REGENERATE ITSELF

To ensure the local environment is presented, all activities were designed within the capacity and resources available in the

village. To this end, the day trip program starts by greeting and welcoming tourists with a corsage or a small bouquet of flowers made by villagers, followed by a welcome drink made from herbs such as butterfly pea flowers and passion fruit juice, which are very tasty and healthy. Then, tourists will be offered the easy hydrotherapy session for pain relief instructed by a local villager who was a nurse. This session takes about two hours to finish and is followed by a very enjoyable lunch with a set of healthy food from organic sources obtained from Mother Ket Keaw's farm. The lunch is arranged by villagers who are trained for cooking. The portion of lunch is provided in proper scale and tourists will be discouraged from over consuming, which could result in obesity. After lunch, tourists will have two free hours, which can be spent by reading one's favorite books, laying down, or taking a walk before moving on to the massage session. The massage could be arranged either at the house that is used for welcoming tourist or at a nearby massage shop owned by a villager. The massage session will take two hours or more if requested by tourists. After the massage therapy, tourists will have the chance to buy local souvenirs and products of local villagers such as banana products, organic vegetable, and fruits juice before heading back home. This day trip costs 1,500 baht per person.

Besides, an overnight stay trip program (2 days 1 night), which costs 4,500 baht per person, is also designed to be provided by local villagers. This is because the village has some nice houses that can accommodate tourists and enables local house owners to earn some extra income from accommodation service. The program starts at a nearby health promotion center used for checking the body composition analysis. The checkup can inform tourists about their physical condition such as their obesity level, the strengths, and weaknesses of their heart and body. This activity is instructed by nurses who work at the center. After the checkup, tourists will obtain advice on well-being and nutrition, and will then be transferred to the village by car to continue with the designed health activities, which are quite similar to the single day trip outlined

above. In the evening time, tourists will be assigned to their room for staying with a local host. Then, they will come back to a house which is used for some activities such as chanting out loud led by a villager before going to bed. On the second day, tourists will be alarmed at 5:30 am for taking a fresh air followed by offering food to monks, feeding birds and having breakfast, bike tours, visiting the organic farm of Mother Ket Keaw, having lunch, enjoying free time, and having massage therapy before being sent off.

All of the tourist activities designed for the community-based tourism in the Ban Kaset Puttana Village, except for the check-up at the health promotion center, are based on the available resources in the village. The sustainability of this tourism initiative is ensured through obtaining full support from the villagers who have agreed on the price of services and their share in arranging the activities.

REDUCING ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE WIDER GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT RESULTING FROM DEPLETION OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND POLLUTION

To ensure minimizing adverse impact on the environment, the community-based tourism in Ban Kaset Puttana emphasized on using environmentally-friendly devices such as bikes and organic sources, as much as possible. Using bicycles for local transportation benefits environment and the health of tourists. Tourists will have the opportunity to do outdoor activities and exercise pleasantly along the bike route. This also allows tourism to observe the simple way of living of the local villagers along the route while enabling tourists to relax their mind and strengthen their mental health. In addition, this practice will minimize the environmental footprint resulting from the tourism activities in Ban Kaset Puttana. Meanwhile, in line with utilizing organic sources of fresh fruits and vegetable, local people have been encouraged to avoid using chemicals insecticides which cause environmental degradation and long-term health problems. The use of food containers such as foam

boxes and plastic bags in food and beverage catering is also prohibited instead, the use of banana leaves is encouraged. In addition, buckets are provided for tourists for waste separation. Waste such as discarded crumb or food scraps are used as a source of organic fertilizer. All these initiatives and plans enable the community-based tourism in Ban Kaset Puttana Village to have a minimal adverse environmental impact both regionally and on the wider global environment.

PROVIDING A MEANINGFUL AND SATISFYING EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS AND TOURISTS

To create a meaningful experience for visitors, they are encouraged to obtain firsthand experience through activities designed as part of the natural bases of being a healthy concept. For instance, tourists can participate in picking fresh fruits and vegetables from the organic farm of Mother Ket Keaw when preferred. As for the activity of mixing healthy drinks, tourists are encouraged to make fresh drinks by themselves with the help of recipe provided. Moreover, tourists are pleasantly trained in some activities such as exercising, yoga and qigong, detoxification, chanting, meditation, and the hydrotherapy, which can also be practiced by tourists at home upon their return. In addition, the religious activities such as offering food to monks in early mornings can also enhance the experience of those none Buddhist tourists as they can observe and try them if preferred.

Since of this community-based health tourism research is at the stage of finding a potential for Ubon Ratchathani to become one of the popular health tourism destinations, researchers measured tourists' satisfaction and obtained their feedbacks. This was collected from the two different groups that were invited to try the route and its activities. The first group of the pilot tourists consisted of ten people with diverse careers such as nurses, university lecturers, and business women. As for the number of pilot tourists, ten was deemed to be the appropriate number due to the current

capacity of the host community to handle and serve tourists in one simultaneous visit. The pilot visit aimed to evaluate the program and seek feedback while giving the chance to local guide and local tourism staff to practice their role for the first time onsite. As for the result of the try, the first group of pilot tourists was happy with the health-related activities initiated. However, there were some empirical comments provided, as the following. Checkup activity at the health promotion center was not so smooth and it took a long time for tourists to find the checking room, indicating that a small sign board or flag should be provided for tourists to easily direct them to the tour guide. Besides, local tourism staff should be well-trained. Meanwhile, meals should be catered in smaller portions and the taste of the food should not be too strong to fit a wider taste preference. Another concern raised by pilot visitors was that the healthy talk session in the evening was very long. It was also suggested that some activities such as the offering of food to monks in the early morning, morning meditation, and biking tour should be optional choices for those none Buddhist tourists and tourist who are unable to bike or wake up early. In order to prevent the unexpected bike-related incidents such as accident and getting lost, a first-aid kit should be provided together with tour guides closely looking after tourists all along the biking route. In addition, cleanliness in both food production and homestay should be more focused on. These comments and feedbacks were taken into consideration by the local community in improving the quality of their community-based health tourism.

As a follow-up, one month later, the second group of ten pilot tourists was invited. This group consisted of tourists, tourism lecturers, and members of media. The result showed that the group was satisfied by all activities available. The only empirical comment from this group was how to promote such tourism initiative. The press media basically helped the community to promote through cable television channel, while others shared their experiences through social media such as Facebook. Overall, reactions and

feedbacks of the two groups of pilot tourists showed that this community-based health tourism provided a meaningful and satisfying experience for visitors and tourists.

RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH TOURISM IN THE VILLAGE

This section provides a summary of the local villagers' views and perceptions about the health tourism developed in their village in response to several major questions asked by researchers as the following:

- *How did you feel about the plans for health tourism development in your village after hearing them for the first time?*

Almost all interviewed villagers reflected that they felt excited at first when they heard about such health tourism development plan. Some of them revealed that the idea for community-based tourism was initially brought up into the meeting of villagers ten years ago when there was a government agent from the agriculture department of Ubon Ratchathani Province came to the village with the policy of organic farming. At that time, Mother Ket Keaw's farm was selected as the demonstration site. There was later a group of villagers including Mother Ket Keaw who continue the organic farming activities. Years after that there were some talks about agriculture tourism in the region, however, it never materialized and nothing happened. They were hesitant because they felt unconfident and did not know how to develop tourism products and services. Besides, they were not sure if their village was interesting enough to attract tourists.

- *How do you feel about the plans for health tourism development in your village now?*

After the research project, villagers almost unanimously felt more confident about conducting tourism plans in their village. They

had a clear picture of what to be presented. Being part of the research team encouraged them to explore more about their own village. At this point, they have become more aware of the significant history of their village they had never known before as well as the many nice places their village had to offer to tourists. Most of them revealed that they felt proud of themselves in this community-based tourism project. Even if it was just a pilot project, in their opinion, at least it helped them a lot in terms of learning and gaining more confidence in the process.

- *What do you think would be the impact of health tourism development on your village?*

Villagers believed health tourism development has both positive and negative impacts on their village. On the positive side, the village would attract tourists which will make it become well-known and gain good image. However, pollution arising from tourism activities could be a negative side if not managed properly. Nonetheless, villagers were not worried about such negative impacts as they had not observed any of them yet.

- *What do you think would be the impact of health tourism development on villagers?*

Most of the villagers revealed that villagers could get positive impacts from health tourism development in terms of additional job creation for villagers and generation of extra income. Moreover, they felt that they would be proud of themselves to conduct such tourism initiative. At present, villagers especially those who got involved in tourism have seen it as an opportunity for both local economic growth and a means for building unity among villagers. A villager revealed that there is a neighbor running a pool as a family business in a nearby village and has shown interest to join hands in this project since she has seen an opportunity to gain more clients. In contrast, one negative drawback for the village could be the over

crowdedness resulting from tourism activities. As such, according to villagers, it should be well-managed and the number of tourists number be maintained within an acceptable limited.

- *Why do you think tourists should come and visit your village?*

Villagers revealed that the research project they had been working with for a year expanded their understanding of how nice the available tourist attractions in their village are and they were excited to share the beauty of those sites with visitors. Especially after observing the interest, satisfaction and excitement in pilot tourists, villagers felt more confident that their village has nice and valuable tourist attractions. Villagers proudly stated that the organic farm of Mother Ket Keaw is not only a source of healthy food but also a learning center for those who would like to employ sufficiency economy. As stated by some villagers, several people visited the farm because they wanted to gain farming knowledge for a better life, especially the knowledge of growing bananas since there are various species of bananas organically grown on the farm. Moreover, the organic fertilizer made of chicken dung is also one thing that attracts some people interested in learning about agriculture. This fertilizer helps a lot to reduce cost of doing farm. In addition, villagers felt that Ban Suan Tip - the house that has been used as a tourist welcoming center and one of the homestay accommodations service - is very attractive in its natural beauties. Lastly, the elder care initiative that the owner of the house has practiced daily impressed the two groups of pilot tourists. As highlighted by villagers, some pilot tourists stated that such care could be developed also in the future for the elder-friendly tourism development.

- *What do you see as challenges of running health tourism in your village?*

Almost all villagers stated that time managing, business sustainability, and marketing are the top challenges of running tourism in the village. Regarding time management, tourism group

members especially the head of the group are quite busy with their regular jobs. As such, they sometimes found it difficult to manage their time. This, in turn, could affect the continuity and sustainability of the business if they are unable to manage it. Meanwhile, marketing is also one of the key challenges in the beginning stage. However, pilot tourists invited were happy to share their experience which is helpful in term of marketing the tourism destination through word of mouth.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the possibilities of developing community-based health tourism in Ban Kaset Puttana Village for revitalizing the region and generating new revenue streams for local residents. The project entailed a one-year participatory action research project which aimed to create a health tourism destination in the village and create thematic health tourist products with the help of villagers. The community-developed health tourism was then piloted by two groups of visitors and demonstrated the huge potential of the region in offering health tourism services. To further investigate the impact of this responsible tourism on local residents, ten follow-up interviews were conducted with villagers and results were reported in this research.

For ensuring a successful and sustainable change process toward community-based tourism in Ban Kaset Puttana Village, the project followed the recommendations by [Heath and Heath \(2010\)](#). First, villagers were pointed to the ultimate destination of having their village as a tourist destination soon. After consulting with locals and identifying the strengths of the village and what it has to offer in terms of health tourism, critical moves were scripted. Local villagers were provided with specific training related to hospitality and tourism. The project also strived to shrink the change process by simplifying the tasks and breaking them into manageable activities. The research project also emphasized on cultivating an identity of

serenity and tranquillity in locals to encourage them toward developing local health tourism solutions and services. Finally, by inviting two groups of visitors and allowing locals to see visitors' positive feedback and delight, we tried to rally the herd and encourage more participation and support from the locals.

Several directions for future research emerge from the current understanding of the potential of the Ban Kaset Puttana Village and Ubon Ratchathani for health tourism. First, it would be worthwhile for future studies to explore the barriers and challenges to the continuity of a sustainable health tourism. Second, future research can deepen the understanding of the success factors of community-based tourism by investigating the role of place image and visitors' positive word of mouth in attracting new visitors. Since one in every three visitors choose community-based tourism in order to support such initiatives ([Sánchez-Cañizares & Castillo-Canalejo, 2014](#)), it is crucial to better promote such destinations using various media.

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