

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND PARKS

The Surin Islands Project





MAYANMAR

LAOS

THAILAND

VIET NAM

CAMBODIA

Bangkok

Phuket

MALAYSIA

INDONESIA

For insets only:

-  Mooring area
-  Mountain
-  Coral
-  Road
-  International border
-  Ferry route

Surin Islands National Park



Ko Stork

Ko Surin Nua

Fisheries station

Ko Pajumba

Park Headquarters

Ko Surin Tai

Ko Torinla

0 1 2 3km



INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND PARKS

The Surin Islands Project

in collaboration with

Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute

UNESCO Office of the Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific

Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO

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UNESCO, 2001. *Indigenous people and parks. The Surin Islands Project.*
Coastal region and small island papers 8, UNESCO, Paris, 63 pp.

Within the limits of stocks available, extra copies of this document can be obtained, free of charge, from:

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The 'Coastal region and small island papers' series was launched by the Organization in 1997. Information on CSI activities can be obtained at the following address:

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Photo credits: Narumon Hinshiranan, Maarten Kuijper and Paladej Na Pombejr

Layout and cover design: Eric Loddé

Published in 2001 by the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP

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Printed in France

F O R E W O R D

Today there is wide recognition of the need for local-community involvement in the conservation of cultural landscapes and natural heritage. With their unique knowledge, skills and traditions, local communities have much to contribute to the management of these areas. Their involvement ensures 'wise use', while supporting the continued vitality of indigenous cultures. This is especially important when such sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and are subsequently included on global tourist itineraries.

One case in point concerns the Moken communities that occupy the Surin Islands, located in the Andaman Sea, off the southwestern coast of Thailand. The Moken, popularly referred to as 'sea-gypsies', are traditionally a nomadic sea-faring people who have frequented these coastal waters for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. In 1981, the Surin Islands were designated a marine national park, and have more recently been included on a tentative list of World Heritage sites in Thailand. Concerns have been raised that the traditional hunting, gathering and trading practices of the Moken may disturb the ecological balance of the national park. At the same time, the Moken are an integral part of this cultural landscape and the need to preserve their way of life and fulfil their aspirations is also fully recognized.

To address these issues, a field project was initiated in 1997 to explore sustainable development options with the Moken community in the

Surin Islands. The project seeks to strengthen dialogue between park officials and the Moken to enable them to become active partners in managing the area and safeguarding its heritage value through the sharing of knowledge, skills and tools. This publication presents the results of a series of stakeholder workshops, conducted to design the project activities, and discusses various challenges facing the Moken and the national park authorities.

Key players in this initiative are the Chulalongkorn University, the UNESCO Bangkok Office, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the interdisciplinary and intersectoral platform for 'Environment and development in coastal regions and in small islands' (CSI). This field project represents one of 23 CSI projects, distributed around the globe, which provide for collaborative on-the-ground action. They are supported by training and capacity building through university chairs/twinning arrangements, and reinforced by a multi-lingual, internet-based forum on 'Wise Coastal Practices for Sustainable Human Development'.

Acknowledgements are due to all the participants who, in concert and through their active involvement, created the conditions for a dialogue which is anticipated to continue well into the future. Particular thanks are due to Salama Klathalay, Tone Klathalay and Dake Klathalay of the Moken communities in the Surin Islands; Mr Sompong Jeeraruensak, Superintendent of the Ko Surin National Park, and his staff, for

their active support and input to this project; to Ms Sumalee Kositnitikul of the Bangkok Arts and Crafts College, for contributing handicraft samples and reading materials on ecology and substance addiction; to Mr Maarten Kuijper of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, for his overall assistance with the project; and to Mr Geoffrey Keele for the initial compilation and editing of this publication. Finally, particular acknowledgement is due to the project coordinator, Dr Narumon Hinshiranan, without whose commitment the project would never have been possible.

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L I S T O F A C R O N Y M S

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|--------|--|
| BIOTEC | National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology |
| CSI | Environment and development in coastal regions and in small islands (UNESCO intersectoral platform) |
| CUSRI | Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute |
| IOC | Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| SWOT | Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats |
| TAT | Tourism Authority of Thailand |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WFT | Wildlife Fund Thailand |
| WiCoP | Wise coastal practices for sustainable human development forum |

E X E C U T I V E S U M M A R Y

The islands and coastal regions along the eastern shores of the Andaman Sea are home to a distinctive people, the ‘Chao Lay’ or ‘sea nomads’, whose lifestyles, languages and cultures differ from the rest of Thai society. One group of Chao Lay, the Moken, maintain a semi-nomadic way of life.

Having frequented the Surin Islands, about 60 km from Thailand’s mainland coast, for at least several centuries, a group of Moken decided to establish themselves on a more permanent basis several decades ago. The Moken live as hunters and gatherers of the resources found on the land and in the sea, and they trade marine products such as sea cucumbers and shells for rice and other necessities. The 150 Moken people in the Surin Islands build their houses on stilts above the sea, and occasionally the village sites are moved in order to alleviate disputes and escape illness.

In 1981 the Thai Government declared the Surin Islands a protected area and established a national park. Under park regulations, the Moken no longer have the right to continue traditional resource harvesting, nor even to live within the park. This raises serious concern about the effects that the regulations may have on the Moken’s ability to maintain their traditional culture and lifestyle.

To address these concerns, a field project was initiated in 1997 entitled ‘A place for indigenous people in protected areas, Surin Islands, Andaman Sea, Thailand’. This project is implemented by the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute and supported by UNESCO through its Bangkok Office, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission

(IOC) and the intersectoral and interdisciplinary platform for ‘Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and in Small Islands’ (CSI).

Following a rapid appraisal of the issues affecting the Surin Islands’ Moken community in December 1997, a series of workshops were held during which concerned stakeholders joined efforts to sustain a dialogue which would begin to provide for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Moken and the Surin Islands.

The first workshop, held in Bangkok in November 1998, brought together government officials, academics and non-governmental organizations to identify the crucial issues to be addressed in order to determine sustainable development options for the Moken. A few weeks later, a second workshop was held in the Surin Islands during which the same group of stakeholders participated with the Moken in a series of activities designed to share ideas and identify the aspirations and needs of the indigenous population. A third meeting was held in March 1999 when stakeholders met to reaffirm their commitments to the project.

Following the workshops, a number of project activities were designed and are outlined in this publication. Each activity represents a step along the road to exploring sustainable development options with the Moken that allow them to maintain and enhance their lifestyle while conserving the biodiversity of the Surin Islands. The project activities include resource assessments based upon scientific and Moken ecological knowledge, preparation of reading material for Moken children, handicraft learn-

ing, basic health and welfare training, turtle conservation and giant clam mariculture. Work has already started on some of these activities and an update is included in the final chapter.

Across the region, and in many other parts of the world, finding sustainable solutions that benefit indigenous communities and the environment, while meeting national tourism and development objectives, has become a priority. The outcome of this project may serve as a model for the region and beyond.

1

indigenous people and parks



Introduction





THE CHALLENGE TO COMPLEX CONSERVATION PROBLEMS LIES IN SEEKING SOLUTIONS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE, MUTUALLY AGREED UPON AND EQUITABLE TO ALL OF THE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED.

Such solutions require an approach which integrates cultural, social and natural resource concerns. The need for an integrated approach is aptly demonstrated by the negative impact of tourism on the environment of many coastal regions and small islands throughout the world, and by the replacement of many traditional and environmentally-sound occupations by unsustainable tourism-related activities. Oftentimes migrants attracted to new jobs in tourism have displaced entire indigenous populations. This highlights the dilemma that faces this type of tourism development in environmentally fragile areas. How can we reconcile the intertwined yet conflicting interests of tourism development, cultural heritage preservation and environmental conservation?

Thailand offers a case in point. The environmental resources of Thailand, like that of the rest of Southeast Asia, are being rapidly degraded under severe pressure from expanding popula-

tions and economic development strategies, which often consider natural and cultural landscapes only as commodities to be exploited in the pursuit of tourism dollars.

Action for the conservation of natural areas, where it does exist, is often justified by the tourist revenues it generates through the promotion of exotic and spectacular landscapes as fashionable ecotourism destinations. The west coast of Southern Thailand is one area where the conservation of the marine environment is part of the national tourism development plan.

Despite this awareness of the role of conservation, there is reason for concern. Attracted by pristine landscapes, tourists arrive in large numbers in the town and island of Phuket where the local tourism industry is based. While tourism brings prosperity to the island, its ecological and social impacts are vividly demonstrated in and around Phuket, home to a number of Chao Lay (or 'sea

Tourism can provide an alternative source of income for the Moken. Yet unrestricted tourism in such small islands may cause degradation to the fragile environment.



gypsy’) communities. The demand for seafood to cater for the tourism industry causes the seas to become rapidly depleted of once-plentiful fish and shellfish. Tourist numbers also exceed the carrying capacity of many of the marine protected areas. Moreover, the ecology and spectacular beauty of many of the unprotected coastal beaches has been disrupted by large-scale hotel construction and the indigenous population of Chao Lay have been pushed farther and farther into the unproductive margins of the most remote islands.

Clearly tourism development is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it is based on the promotion of the unique natural and cultural resources of a destination. On the other hand, overexploitation of these resources has the potential to destroy the very things on which tourism development is based. Worse yet, a degraded environment can no longer sustain the unique human societies that have developed in close association with these ecological systems.

Of increasing concern is the negative impact of the regulations for environmental conservation

on the people living in or near protected areas. Often they suffer from both the tourism development as well as from the enforcement of conservation regulations. This problem is particularly acute for indigenous communities in unique and often remote cultural landscapes.

For two decades, rapid tourism development has impacted significantly on the nomadic lifestyles of the indigenous Chao Lay who inhabit the islands and coastal sites of Surin, Rawai,

Tukay, Lanta, and Adang. Their subsistence lifestyle, based on the careful exploitation of marine resources, is

now rapidly changing and in grave danger of disappearing altogether because of externally imposed pressures on their traditional environment. The continued survival of the Chao Lay cultures is further exacerbated by the fact that, as minorities, their official status – and thus their right to own land or other property – is ambiguous under Thai law. This places the Chao Lay at an even greater risk of unscrupulous exploitation by external competitors.

For two decades, rapid tourism development has impacted significantly on the nomadic lifestyles of the indigenous Chao Lay ...

Volunteer health practitioners examine the physical health of the Moken and provide urgent medical services.



Yet this situation need not lead to the disappearance of the Chao Lay from the world's cultures. The Thai Government has placed large areas of the Andaman Sea coast and territorial waters under the environmental protection of the Royal Thai Forest Department (Marine Parks Division). There are plans to create a marine biosphere reserve, supported by UNESCO, stretching along the entire length of the coast from the border with Myanmar in the north to Malaysia in the south. Within this large protected reserve, there are further plans to nominate one or more areas as UNESCO World Heritage sites.

One of the areas designated to become a World Heritage site is a group of islands called the Surin Islands. The islands are already classified as a marine national park under Thai law. The islands are home to the indigenous Moken people, one of the three distinct groups of the Chao Lay, who form an integral part of the island's ecosystem. But their continued survival is at odds with the demands set by environmental conservation and increasing tourism.

With the support of UNESCO, the Marine Parks Division of the Royal Thai Forest Department is teaming up with anthropologists from Chulalongkorn University to explore ways in which the Moken, with their indigenous knowledge, can become partners in the conservation of



Diving for fish, shellfish and other marine animals is an important source of livelihood for the Moken.

the coastal marine environment of Southern Thailand. This project will help provide livelihood opportunities for the Moken, based on traditional practices and values, which will allow them to remain in their home territories while contributing to their increased social and economic well-being as part of Thai society.

During the initial stages of this project, various concerned stakeholders came together for a series of on-site workshops to negotiate an 'in principle' cooperation agreement designed to articulate indigenous practitioners and their traditional practices with mainstream marine conservation regimes.

Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, it has been recognized that local people must be involved in the development of conservation regulations and be party to their implementation if the regulations are to be successfully enforced. This also implies that there must be recognizable benefits for the local population that offset the constraints imposed by regulations. For the Moken of the Surin Islands, their continued presence and use of natural resources within the park area will be facilitated by receiving and accepting their shared responsibility for safeguarding heritage values, so that together with local authorities and government departments, they can explore sustainable development opportunities.

Moken woman gathering sand worms on a beach at low tide.



This project began in the Surin Islands, home of one group of Moken people. It will in the future be adapted to the needs and conditions of other Chao Lay communities throughout the Andaman Sea region. The strategy to be employed is to build upon regional models and impart to the indigenous Chao Lay populations the economic means and the political skills necessary for their continued presence in protected landscapes. Moreover, the project aims to provide other stakeholders with the ethno-environmental understanding and the motivation to cooperate in creating a management regime that will both protect the natural environment and ensure the cultural survival of Thailand's Chao Lay.

Entitled 'A place for indigenous people in protected areas, Surin Islands, Andaman Sea, Thailand', the project is implemented by the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, and supported by the UNESCO Bangkok Office, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and the interdisciplinary and intersectoral platform for 'Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and in Small Islands' (CSI). It is one of 23 CSI projects, distributed round the globe, which seek to provide collaborative on-the-ground action and showcase the positive impacts of wise practices in sustainable coastal management. Linking these projects with each other and with the complementary modalities of university chair/twinning activities in sustainable coastal development, and the internet-based discussion forum on 'Wise Coastal Practices for Sustainable Human Development' (WiCoP forum), the CSI platform seeks to reduce conflicts over resources and values in small islands and coastal regions. It is planned to achieve this through the elaboration of wise practices, guidelines and principles, and ethical codes of practice for specific domains, thereby promoting the equitable sharing of coastal resources.

Project objective

Overall objective and strategic approach

The overall objective of this project is to ensure the continued well-being of the indigenous Moken culture, in conjunction with the conservation of the marine coastal environment that is the traditional home of the Moken.

The project aims to conserve this unique ecological milieu and ensure that the Moken continue to have access to, and the right to use their traditional homeland. This will be accomplished by empowering the Moken to play a principal role in the future conservation and management of the coastal area, through the recognition of Moken traditional knowledge and practices and its articulation with science-based conservation concepts.

Specific goals and project outputs

- Identification and systematic documentation of the traditional knowledge and practices of the Moken in such a way as to ensure their continued transmission as well as their articulation with the existing official management regime of the marine national park.
- Strengthen the dialogue between members of the Moken community and park biologists and officials in order to develop mutual respect and appreciation for each other's set of knowledge, practices and representations of the natural environment.
- Empowerment of the indigenous population by imparting the knowledge and providing training in the skills and tools necessary to negotiate an integrated traditional/scientific management strategy for the area, and to take on the role of primary caretakers responsible for the management of this area in conjunction with the Royal Forest Department.
- Development of sustainable livelihood opportunities for the Moken that ensure the conservation of the area's environment and the safeguarding of cultural values and ways of life of the indigenous inhabitants.

2



indigenous people and parks

Environmental, social and cultural settings of the Surin Islands





THE SURIN ISLANDS, A BEAUTIFUL, UNSPOILT PARADISE FAR FROM THE MAINLAND, ARE AN ATTRACTION TO THAI AND OVERSEAS VISITORS.

Environmental setting

Hundreds of islands stretch along the Southeast Asia peninsular from Langkawi in Malaysia in the south to the Mergui Archipelago in Myanmar in the north. Thailand's Andaman Sea coast, renowned for the splendour of its underwater world, the spectacular landscape of limestone outcrops towering above the water's surface and the lush forests and white sandy beaches, has long attracted tourists. As a result, southern Thailand has seen the development of a booming tourism industry centered on the popular resort island of Phuket.

Close to the border of Myanmar lie the Surin Islands, an unspoiled group of islands

that acts as a refuge for fishing boats during storms and host to two small communities of Chao Lay. The Surin Islands are situated some 60 km from the coast of Phang-nga Province. The islands have largely retained their beauty and pristine condition. The rainforest is abundant with wildlife, and small patches of mangrove forests and seagrass beds are present. This biodiversity makes the Surin Islands an important ecological site. Recognizing the unique tourism and research potential of these islands, as well as their natural beauty, the Royal Forest Department designated the Surin Islands a national park in 1981.

The park covers an area of about 135 km², of which 76 per cent is sea, and comprises five

A Moken village on South Surin Island.





The Moken spend almost half of their life in a 'Kabang', the traditional boat of the Moken. Wooden planks have replaced the Zalacca wood as the preferred material of the gunwale. A bifurcated bow and stern is a distinctive characteristic of the Moken boat.

islands (see map on inside front cover). A few kilometres to the north of the park is the border with Myanmar, and about 100 km to the south are the Similan Islands, another marine national park.

The coastline of the Surin Islands is very indented with wide sandy bays protected by rocky headlands. Due to the islands' distance from the mainland and the presence of adjacent deep waters and strong ocean currents, the waters of the Surin Islands are very clear, fostering healthy coral growth. Marine life is bountiful with numerous types of coral and fish species present on the reef. Occasional visitors include whales and whale sharks. Three species of sea turtle use the islands' beaches as nesting sites.

The islands provide a unique habitat, both on land as well as in the surrounding water, for a variety of species. The two larger islands with their summits extending several hundred metres above the sea are covered in thick forests, ranging from tropical evergreen forests along their flanks, to beach forest and several patches of mangrove forest along the bays. Dipterocarp trees rise above the dense forests often interspersed with Pandanus palms. No less than 80 species of animals inhabit these islands, including egrets, terns, Brahminy kite, the rare Nicobar pigeon, the lesser mousedeer, monitor lizards, reticulated pythons,

crab-eating macaques, lemurs, flying foxes and a number of bats and squirrels. Wild yams and other edible plant species are also found on the islands.

The monsoons exert considerable influence over the islands. The southwest monsoon, or rainy season, prevails from May until November. During these months the winds are strong and the seas rough, often rendering the Surin Islands inaccessible by boat. No tourists can visit the island during this time. The northeast monsoon or dry season begins in November and lasts until May. This season corresponds to the tourism season. Although freshwater sources are in ample supply on Ko Surin Tai, there is not enough to sustain large numbers of visitors to the islands.

The Surin Islands' principal attraction for tourists is the fact that it is an unspoiled paradise far from the mainland, with healthy forested islands and diverse coral reefs accessible to snorkellers and divers. An increasing number of tourists, the majority of which are Thai, arrive each year, many on pleasure cruises. Tourists are accommodated in a number of bungalows run by the Royal Forest Department. Other tourists who visit the islands stay in tents on the beach. During the dry season (November to April), a ferry service operates from Khuraburi. It takes approximately four hours for the ferry to reach the islands.

Social and cultural settings

The islands and coastal regions along the Andaman Sea are home to a distinctive group of people, known as the Chao Lay, whose lifestyles, languages and cultures differ from the rest of Thai society. In the English language they are known as sea nomads or sea gypsies due to their maritime nomadic way of life. The total population of sea nomads is estimated at around 9,500, i.e. 7,000 in Thailand and 2,500 in Myanmar.

There are three groups of sea nomads (now based in semi-permanent settlements along the Andaman Sea

coast), namely the Moken, the Moklen and the Uruk Lawoi. It is still inconclusive whether these three groups have distinct lines of ancestry or whether they might have shared common ancestry but developed distinct languages and cultural traditions because of their dispersion throughout South-east Asia.

The Moklen (around 2,500 people) are former sea nomads who have settled along the coast and inland areas of Phang-nga and Phuket Provinces. Their language is very similar to that of the Moken. Because of their permanent residential status, most of them have been integrated into Thai culture. The adults hold Thai citizenship and the children go to Thai schools. Although many of them adopted Buddhism, they still maintain their belief in ancestor spirits and organize big celebrations in Bangsak (Phang-nga) every year.

The Uruk Lawoi (around 4,000 people) are the most populous of the Chao Lay groups. Their villages are found in Phuket, Krabi and Satun Provinces. Although gradually integrating into Thai culture, they still hold their biannual boat-floating ceremony.

The three groups of Chao Lay are animists and they organize spirit-offering ceremonies through-

out the year. The Moken have their biggest festival of the year during the fifth lunar month, when they carve wooden ancestor poles and make grand offerings. During this time of year, the Moken and other Chao Lay from different islands gather around their settlements and do not return to the sea for three days and three nights.

The Moken (around 3,000 people) maintain a somewhat semi-nomadic lifestyle. National boundaries are an unfamiliar concept to them and they travel extensively across the waters of Thailand and

Myanmar. Several decades ago a group of about 150 Moken people chose to base themselves in the Surin Islands.

While other islands and coastal areas have suffered gravely from the impact of human settlement, the Surin Islands have remained relatively unaffected due to the unique lifestyle of the Moken. Their presence has not left a lasting scar on the surrounding landscape.

An old woman strips and dries long pandanus leaves before weaving them into mats and boxes.



The islands and coastal regions along the Andaman Sea are home to a distinctive group of people whose lifestyles, languages and cultures differ from the rest of Thai society.



Moken woman cleaning seashells for sale to tourists. This picture was taken in 1994 before the park authorities enforced a ban on the collection and sale of shells on the islands in 1997.

With the declaration of the Surin Islands as a national park in 1981, restrictions on the fishing and foraging activities of the Moken were imposed. Despite national park status, the Moken continue to live off the resources found on the land and in the sea. The extraction of natural resources by the Moken is not without environmental impact. Their gathering patches are somewhat over-exploited since they have adopted a more sedentary lifestyle. Due to the

high price of certain seashells and other marine life, the Moken gather and hunt these products for the local market to exchange for rice and other necessities. Some species such as green snails and top shells have become sparse in the sea around the islands. The Moken, however, are traders and the gathering of marine resources has been a means of subsistence for them for centuries. Therefore, it is crucial that the management of protected sites like the Surin Islands take into consideration not only the conservation of the area, but also the basic cultural needs of the indigenous people.

Despite the Moken's use of the islands' natural resources, there are no obvious signs of severe over-exploitation. Damage to the ecosystems around the Surin Islands is mainly the result of illegal fishing activities by the semi-industrial Thai fishing fleets and reef damage resulting from the anchoring of pleasure boats. No dynamite fishing or cyanide fishing is evident in the waters around the Surin Islands. In fact, the Moken are not considered true fishers, since they mainly extract resources from the reef and mud-flats by gathering, rather than fishing.

Moken woman gathering sea urchins on the reef flats.





Moken children, some in school uniforms, take a boat shuttle to the small school on North Surin Island.

Administration of the Surin Islands

Before the islands were declared a national park, the only inhabitants were the Moken who frequented the islands and sometimes made temporary shelters there. A few Thai went to the islands in search of fragrant wood and other wild products, but their visits were short and their settlements temporary. The Department of Local Administration found no reason to exert their authority over this wild and largely 'uninhabited' territory.

However, once the islands were declared a national park, they fell under the jurisdiction of the Marine Parks Division of the Royal Thai Forest Department. The superintendent is in charge of the islands and the surrounding waters, and together with his assistants and a number of other staff, is stationed on the islands or at the National Park Office in Khuraburi. They all report to the Director of the Marine Parks Division, at the office of the Royal Forest Department in Bangkok.

There is a small Marine Fisheries Conservation Unit also located in the Surin Islands. The

fisheries officers report to the Director of the Andaman Sea Fisheries Conservation Unit in Krabi Province. The main concern of the fisheries officers is to prevent illegal fishing and trawling in the northern Andaman Sea. The emphasis on conservation prompted the officers to establish 'Suraswadee' in 1994, a one-classroom school that provides Moken children with a basic education and teaches them about the importance of marine conservation. Transportation and lunch are also arranged for the children in order to facilitate learning. Their efforts have received support from Thailand's Non-Formal Education Department and additional volunteer teachers are sent to the school during the dry season.

Health officers from the Malaria Control Unit visit the islands at least once a year to conduct blood testing and to spray insecticide around inhabited areas. The inadequate number of health officers does not permit any outreach health programmes. When the Moken are sick, however, they can seek free medical treatment from any state hospital on the mainland.

| Size of the Moken population in the Surin Islands | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Year | 1993 | 1994 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
| Number of households | 35 | 45 | 34 | 37 | 36 | 42 |
| Number of males | 65 | 92 | 57 | 58 | 56 | 66 |
| Number of females | 71 | 109 | 77 | 86 | 85 | 96 |
| Total population | 136 | 201 | 134 | 144 | 141 | 162 |

Representatives from the Department of Local Administration (the Governor of Phang-nga Province and the Khuraburi District Chief)

visit the islands occasionally, but there is no cooperative effort or formal discussion between them regarding policies affecting the Moken. The Department of Social Welfare wanted to involve the Moken, but was discouraged by the small size of the Moken population which, in the Surin Islands, averages around 150 persons. However, it varies from year to year, as can be seen in the adjacent table.

The Moken tend to escape the attention of both the Local Administration and the central government since their population size is considered negligible and their situation too complicated.

3



indigenous people and parks

Conflicts, stakeholders and challenges





THERE ARE MANY STAKEHOLDERS ASIDE FROM THE MOKEN WHO HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE FUTURE OF THE SURIN ISLANDS. HOWEVER, PAST EFFORTS BY SEVERAL AGENCIES IN SUPPORT OF THE MOKEN HAVE BEEN UNDERMINED BY INADEQUATE COORDINATION.

This chapter looks at these stakeholders and discusses the efforts that were made to bring them together through constructive dialogue. It also reports on the stakeholder workshops held to further this dialogue.

The Marine Parks Division of the Royal Thai Forest Department is currently in charge of managing the islands. Other groups also play a role; the Department of Fisheries, for instance, is in charge of the seas in and around the Surin Islands and therefore has a major voice in conservation decisions.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is an important player in determining the type of development undertaken in the area. Along with the TAT, it is essential that local tour operators are co-opted into the decision-making process for the project to succeed.

Other concerned stakeholders include the Office of Environmental Policy and Planning and the Department of Local Administration. The Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI) administers this project and the Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University, has also taken an interest.

Currently, there is a European Union funded project in Satun, Thailand's southernmost province near the Malaysian border, which is working towards the sustainable development of the Tarutao National Marine Park. The islands in this park are the home of the Uruk Lawoi, one of the many Chao Lay communities of the Andaman Sea coast. Other NGOs that have taken an active interest in the Surin Islands project are the Wildlife Fund Thailand and the Hill Areas Development Foundation. Both organizations have expressed support for the project's objectives and intend to contribute to its development and success.

Despite such widespread interest from the various stakeholders, there has been a real lack of constructive communication between them, until now.

In November 1998, with financial support from UNESCO, the Surin Islands Project held two workshops that brought together the various stakeholders who were interested in coordinating their efforts to ensure the future of the Moken and their traditional environment. These are described in the following pages.

W O R K S H O P

Identifying participatory development options for the Moken of the Surin Islands

6 November 1998

National Research Council of Thailand, Bangkok

The first workshop, entitled ‘Identifying Participatory Development Options for the Moken of the Surin Islands’, was held in Bangkok on 6 November 1998. It was a brainstorming session for government officials, academics and NGO workers to identify the crucial issues to be addressed to determine sustainable development options for the Moken. (For the workshop agenda and list of participants, see Annex 1).

No Moken were present in this workshop which aimed to open up lines of communication between the non-indigenous stakeholders and to develop an initial framework for future cooperation.

Four principles were discussed that would help determine the best possible options for Moken sustainable development.

Principles of Moken sustainable development

Capacity building and empowerment

The appropriate form of development will enable the Moken to rely on themselves and their own community for physical and moral support. Moreover, any developmental plans should involve as much local participation as possible in order to provide the chance for future joint management.

Human dignity and cultural pride

Development should strengthen the Moken’s ethnic identity and promote pride in their cultural heritage.

Sustainable use of natural resources

Development should encourage the Moken to maintain the sustainability of their resource use practices, especially as they become more sedentary and are subject to increased socio-economic influences from outside.

Quality of life

Development should ensure that basic needs are being met and the quality of life upheld.

Recognizing the importance of these general principles, the participants subsequently set out to identify the numerous problems and development issues facing the Moken.

Underlying issues of Moken sustainable development

Conservation or development?

Cultural conservation and development should go hand in hand. The Moken should be able to take part in determining the kind of ‘development’ that is appropriate for them.

Research needed regarding the Moken and the use of natural resources

Further research is needed that can be applied practically to Moken resource use and advances the possibility of joint management of natural resources between government authorities and indigenous communities. Concepts of human-nature interactions differ great-

ly between government managers and resource users. For this reason, correspondence between management priorities and mechanisms might be difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, further research may help uncover options and choices that will be useful in determining appropriate forms of joint Moken-government management in the Surin Islands.

Moken's quality of life

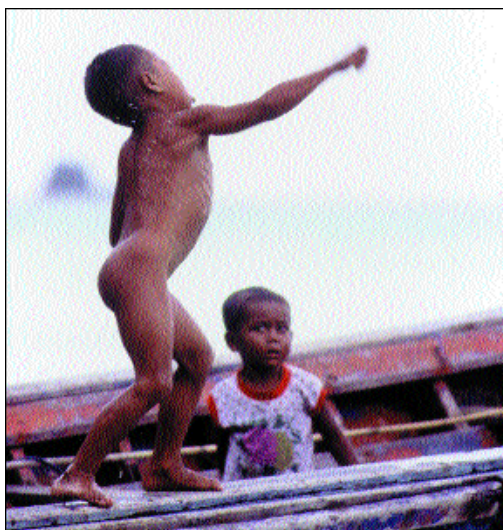
From the Moken's point of view, what do they feel is an appropriate standard of living and what do they need in order to achieve this?

Moken's impact on marine and territorial resources

What is the impact of the Moken's daily activities on the Surin Islands' natural resources?

Park regulations and enforcement on the Moken

The problem of the Moken violating national park regulations is a difficult one to resolve. When should park regulations be strictly enforced and in what cases may certain levels of tolerance be appropriate? To what extent should the Park Authority apply disciplinary measures on a non-literate indigenous population? Moreover, what measures can be adopted to prevent the reoccurrence of these problems?



Moken boys spend much of their time playing, swimming and diving. This is a way of learning about the marine environment and building skills crucial to their daily subsistence.

Middlemen and entrepreneurs

What will be the most effective way of preventing the exploitation of the Moken and the marine environment by middlemen?

Alternative occupations

Effort should be made by relevant agencies to find alternative occupations for the Moken, such as selling fresh fish to the park kitchen, being hired as park labourers, tending turtle nests, mariculture and organizing eco-tourism activities. Alternative occupations should build on traditional skills and encourage cultural pride.

Impact of tourism on the Moken

There should be research on the impact of tourist activities on the Moken's way of life and on the possibility of their participation in these activities, such as guiding visitors on snorkelling or hiking trips.

Zoning

A zoning system should be used in the management of the national park, and the Moken should be able to subsist in 'special use zones', with due consideration of the Moken habit of occasional resettlement.

Moken arts and crafts promotion

The Moken should be encouraged to earn extra income by producing traditional crafts such as mat and box weaving. The major concern is the supply of raw material such as pandanus leaves, the harvesting of which is currently not tolerated by the Park Authority. Craft skill development training may be provided for the Moken, but a further point to consider is whether this will undermine the traditional style, color, patterns and technologies of Moken crafts. Would the harvesting of Pandanus leaves be acceptable to the authorities if it can be demonstrated that it is sustainable? Another solution could include the use of alternative materials, although this may create dependence on an outside source.

Indigenous museum

The suggested establishment of an indigenous museum will promote a sense of cultural pride and build community strength.

Population control

The migration of Moken groups from Myanmar and the subsequent increase in the Moken population living on the islands, are problems that are difficult to resolve.

Nationality and identity card

The Moken do not have nationality or identity cards, so their citizenship status is ambiguous. Moreover, there is no census record of the Moken in the Surin Islands.

Community strength

The Moken could be organized to establish a cooperative or form a savings group, and participate in national park management planning.

Health services

The Moken are in need of better health services. They should be instructed in appropri-

ate health care, especially maternal and infant care. Campaigns should be mounted to raise Moken awareness of the damages wrought by substance abuse.

Education

Will non-formal education provided by the Thai authorities have a negative impact on the Moken's traditions and cultural identity? The courses offered should be directly relevant to their way of life. The children should be encouraged to learn from Moken elders so that traditional wisdom and practices are passed on, and not disrupted or discontinued by the introduction of other forms of education.

Using the first workshop as a springboard, more concrete strategies were developed during the second workshop, held in the Surin Islands from 21–26 November 1998.

The project coordinator buys pandanus mats and other crafts from the Moken. Craft-making may be an alternative source of income for the Moken as marine resource exploitation has become more restricted in the protected area.



W O R K S H O P

Towards the strategic goal of sustainable development for the Moken: Commitment and support

21–26 November 1998

Surin Islands National Park, Phang-nga

The purpose of this workshop was to bring the various stakeholders together, to meet with the Moken, to share ideas and identify the aspirations and needs of the indigenous population. (For the workshop agenda and list of participants, see Annex 2).

Twenty-five participants attended the workshop and various activities were organized to familiarize participants with the Moken way of life, such as village and school tours, snorkelling and hiking expeditions led by Moken guides and a cultural show by Moken children. A ‘Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats’ (SWOT) analysis in which the Moken people actively participated, was also conducted (see Annex 3).

Setting the scene

A major concern facing the Moken is that, like so many indigenous groups, they are not recognized as Thai citizens and therefore are not allowed to own land or attend public schools. This is a very complex issue that will not be resolved in the immediate future. However, to help alleviate some of the problems that arise from the Moken’s ambiguous status, both the Local Administration and the National Park Authority should try to develop and draft policies on tribal minorities to raise awareness among their local staff about the Moken and their needs.

It was also decided that the Park Authority, which is in much closer proximity to the Moken than the Local Administration, would be in a better position to begin keeping and maintaining records on population growth, migration, health and other issues affecting the Moken.

The Moken hunt and gather for subsistence as well as for trade. The Park Authority worries about these practices, which are against the national park decree. As far as the park authorities are concerned, the resources that are being extracted by the Moken should be for their use only. They actively discourage the purchase of marine products from the Moken – by middlemen as well as by tourists. This rigid stance of the authorities motivated by the existing park decree, is not necessarily justified from a viewpoint of ecological sustainability. Even though they live within a protected area, the local population could be given the right to harvest natural resources for subsistence and trade, so long as this is done in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, it should be noted that as middlemen are a crucial factor in the Moken’s exploitation of valuable shells and sea cucumbers, they too are ‘stakeholders’ and should be involved in this project.

While participants felt that the Park Authority may have valid environmental reasons for restricting Moken settlements, they nonetheless insisted that several sites should be allowed. This is because the Moken still move their settlements to escape



The Moken village does not represent a permanent settlement, since the Moken tend to move whenever serious illness and death strike. Mobility is also a social mechanism in coping with conflicts. This pattern of semi-permanent settlement should therefore be encouraged instead of suppressed.

epidemics, alleviate disputes or in response to a bad omen. Periodic movement is significant for former nomadic groups like the Moken and it facilitates local ecological recovery as foraging patches are allowed to revive. Over the past ten years, the Moken have shifted their settlements to five different beaches on Ko Surin Nua and Ko Surin Tai.

Any attempt to consolidate the Moken villages into one settlement will definitely have a profound and negative impact on both the Moken and the local environment. Consequently, the government agencies involved in this project should investigate multiple areas in the islands where the Moken can establish settlements.

Occupational development for the Moken

The Park Authority hopes that the Moken will remain a significant part of the Surin Islands and eventually become partners in national park protection. At present, however, the Park Authority still carries the burden of providing the Moken with alternatives to their hunting and gathering activities in order to prevent environmental damage. The Park Authority usually hires some

Moken as manual labourers during the peak season. However, since the tourist season lasts for only six months (November to April), the income from these activities is limited. The daily wage paid to the Moken is about the equivalent of US \$1–2 in addition to free meals from the park kitchen. This wage comes from voluntary contributions to a special fund established by the Park Authority. Formally, the Royal Forest Department cannot hire any Moken if they lack Thai identification cards or other important legal documents.

Other relevant agencies and organizations should provide support for the Moken by offering arts and crafts skills development training and providing market outlets for the craftwork. The Park Authority already allocates space in the convenience shop for the display and sale of Moken crafts. To gain exposure in external markets, the Office of Rural Development could coordinate with the Provincial Office to set up a Moken craft booth at various festivals and annual fairs.

Based on activities in this workshop, it was found that the Moken had limited experience in guiding and presenting information to tourists. When the Moken led a snorkelling excursion for the workshop participants, they swam far ahead

of the rest of the group. On the forest trail, the Moken tended to walk very fast as well, and they did not have the language skills to present information about the geographical significance of the islands and the uses of forest plants in their culture. The Moken will need further language training before they can manage tourist activities on their own. In the meantime, the Park Authority can help organize tourist activities (eco-tourism, cultural tourism) with the Moken, using park rangers as guides and presenters.

The Moken could also generate income during the turtle-nesting season by maintaining turtle nests. This would provide an income for the Moken, as well as assist with the environmental management of the islands. The park can coordinate with the Wildlife Fund Thailand (WFT) to provide funding for Moken turtle conservation activities.

The Park Authority should also coordinate with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Association of Hotels and Tourism to draft guidelines for tourism management in 'special areas' such as national parks. In addition, tourism in national parks should offer basic services and simple facilities in order to avoid exploitation by developers. There should also be a serious campaign to discourage tourists buying products



Moken men thatching their roof with palm leaves.

made from wildlife or plants found in protected areas. If, however, it can be demonstrated that specific resources (e.g. Pandanus leaves) can be harvested sustainably without detriment to the environment, then the park's stance against sale could perhaps be reconsidered.

An assessment of the problems facing the Moken was needed before a framework for the project could be drawn up. During the five-day visit to the islands, participants conducted many interviews with the Moken, park staff, local authorities and individuals from both the Department of Fisheries and the Royal Forest Department.

The Moken make use of renewable resources, such as bamboo which grows very fast during the rainy season.



Education, learning and social values

At present, Suraswadee School in Ko Surin Nua offers courses that aim to enable Moken children to speak, read and write the Thai language. The children are also taught introductory mathematics and about the local environment and basic health care.

The biggest challenge for the educators is how to provide education to Moken children without disrupting the transmission of traditional wisdom and knowledge within the community. Moken elders should be encouraged to take an active role in the school, so that children will be proud of their cultural heritage.

Dr Narumon Hinshiranan of CUSRI has developed a reading guide for Moken children, which will work as both an educational tool and a means of reinforcing Moken culture. The book contains short stories, myths, poems and illustrations depicting the history of the Moken. Moreover, these tales are written not only in Moken, but also in Uruk Lawoi and Thai as a means of strengthening ties between the Chao Lay and wider Thai society.

Sanitation and health

Officers from the Khuraburi Malaria Control Unit visit the island every year and conduct a blood check of all the inhabitants. At the time of the workshop, medical examinations revealed that a malaria epidemic had recently affected a quarter of the islands' inhabitants. Occasionally, the Moken receive physical examinations from naval medical units and voluntary doctors. Health problems persist, especially among adult males, due to physical hardship and substance abuse. Excessive drugs caused the death of one Moken man while he was visiting the mainland. The training of Moken health volunteers to provide emergency aid and other health advice may also help alleviate some of these problems.

Infant and maternal care is another serious problem. Moken mothers lack knowledge about proper infant care; most of them nurse their babies with sweetened condensed milk mixed with water. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) may be able to suggest suitable infant and maternal health care programmes. In addition, Suraswadee School may be able to provide milk and other nutritional food items to supplement the children's diet.

Other problems to be addressed

A major problem among the Moken is substance abuse. Suraswadee School has started a campaign against drug addiction involving the youths, but adult education is important as well. The Park Authority should have access to educational videos and posters explaining the deadly effect of substance abuse. NGOs may be able to provide assistance. The Park Authority should seek help from the Narcotics Control Unit and exert restrictions over fishing vessels, as they are blamed for trafficking drugs in the area.

A Moken family in front of their hut.





Using intimate knowledge of both marine and forest resources, the Moken have the potential to take tourists out on ecological hiking trails.

There are other problems affecting the community which cannot easily be solved, for example, population pressures stemming from the migration of Moken groups from Myanmar. Because the Moken are a semi-nomadic people, they often travel across national boundaries and occasionally settle down in another country's territory. However, if too many groups settle in the Surin Islands, this may seriously disrupt the islands' delicate ecological balance.

Educating the public about Moken ways

It is also very important that the wider Thai community, as well as tourists visiting the area, are educated about the Moken way of life and develop an understanding of the balance between cultural and environmental needs. Surin Island stakeholders, namely park officers, tourists, tour service providers, TAT, middlemen, and the Moken themselves, should join together to support the development of a sustainable lifestyle for the Moken. The mass media should be encouraged to offer a genuine portrayal, thus providing a positive image of the Moken, and not depict them as an exotic backward race far removed from the Thai majority.

The Park Authority has suggested the creation of a Nature Interpretation Programme which is culturally sensitive towards the Moken. The myths, names and traditional tales of the Moken

will be used in these programmes. Furthermore, a park exhibition will include the unique cultural aspects of the Moken who have long been a significant part of the Surin Islands.

Recommendations on commitment and support

In the final session of the workshop, the participants gave the following recommendations on the type of commitment and support needed to facilitate the environmental and cultural sustainable development in the Surin Islands.

The Surin Islands Marine National Park

Authority was recommended to:

- find supporting funds to hire the Moken for turtle conservation activities;
- continue to support the Moken through tourist activities;
- conduct cleaning and garbage collection;
- organize Moken village tours;
- organize boat holidays as a form of eco-cultural tourism;

Moken totem poles at park headquarters.





Selling model boat and mats at Moken village.

- promote the sale of Moken handicrafts to tourists;
- develop a national park nature interpretation programme to recognize the significance of the Moken's myths, language, etc.;
- keep and update records on the Moken;
- cooperate with the police force in a drug prevention and intervention programme.

The Surin Islands Project Coordinator was recommended to:

- present the outcome of the workshops to relevant agencies and organizations in order to recruit their help and support;
- determine the feasibility of conducting interdisciplinary research to identify zoning areas for Moken settlements;
- draft an overall plan for Moken sustainable development;
- encourage more publications on Moken life and traditional wisdom.

Universities and research institutes (Andaman Institute, Kasetsart University and the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute) was recommended to:

- promote interdisciplinary research in order to establish a zoning system;
- promote research on tourism and its impact on the environment;
- support studies on the potential of mariculture as an occupational option for the Moken;

- seek funding from the National Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC) and the Thailand Research Fund to conduct research on the Moken and an assessment of their resource use;
- contact UNICEF for support on maternal and infant care training.

The Office of Environmental Planning and Policy was recommended to:

- provide data on World Heritage Sites.

The Department of Fisheries was recommended to:

- coordinate with the Phuket Marine Biological Centre to use existing data to help formulate development options for the Moken.

The National Elementary Education Office was recommended to:

- adjust the Moken Studies Course to incorporate additional forms of active learning;
- provide arts and crafts training for Moken women; the Vocational Department should also help provide the raw materials necessary for any arts and crafts training;
- pass on traditional tales and myths to the Moken children through school lessons;
- teach with the aid of multimedia resources (TV, video, etc.);
- implement a drug prevention programme in the school;
- provide courses on maternal and infant care;
- publish an information booklet on Moken culture.



Fisheries building at Sai Ane Bay used as the school for the Moken children.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand was recommended to:

- promote forms of tourism which enhance environmental protection; and environmental awareness in a serious and continual manner;
- publicise information on the Moken lifestyle;
- campaign against the buying and collecting of marine products;
- promote the appreciation of natural and cultural sites.

The Department of Health was recommended to:

- send in volunteers to provide basic health care knowledge, especially maternal and infant care, to the Moken;
- support a plan on the prevention of substance abuse.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were recommended to:

- initiate a savings group amongst the Moken;
- help build community strength;
- seek funding and support for occupational development for the Moken.

The Sub-district Office was recommended to:

- coordinate and exchange information with other sub-districts that have Chao Lay communities;
- draft appropriate policies regarding the Moken;
- coordinate with the Rural Community Development Office to find markets for Moken arts and crafts.

B R I E F I N G S E S S I O N

Commitment and support towards Moken sustainable development

11 March 1999

Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University

In March 1999, stakeholders met at Kasetsart University for a briefing session to update each other on the activities undertaken thus far and to reaffirm their commitment and responsibilities to the Surin Islands Project.

In order to ensure that these problems are addressed, the participants committed themselves and their organizations to the future of this project. Each stakeholder took on a number of important tasks to help alleviate some of these urgent problems. (For a list of the participants, see Annex 4).

Dr Richard Engelhardt reiterated the importance of this project as a flagship that could be considered a 'wise practice' for protected areas inhabited by indigenous people. The 'International Decade of the World's Indigenous People' is another valid reason for encouraging the participatory effort in the project.

The project co-ordinator summarized the past activities and reflected on certain points. For example, the 'eco-tourism' attempts (trail and snorkelling activities led by the Moken) have fallen short of success because of their inexperience in displaying their culture and traditional knowledge to strangers. Yet the SWOT analysis reflected that the Moken's 'strengths' lay in their being friendly, gentle and honest, and in their maritime skills. The Surin Islands Project could thus consider focusing on this point and begin by developing the Moken's potential based on their

strengths instead of trying to correct their weaknesses. The Moken should be recognized as a significant asset to the management of the Surin Islands. Their traditional knowledge of the marine and territorial environment should be explored and incorporated into the management of the national park.

All over the world, there have been many successful examples of how indigenous people maintain their sustainable livelihood in protected areas. Surely some of the 'lessons learnt' can be adapted for Thailand. Examples are:

- Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territories, Australia. This park has a large human population of mostly Aboriginal people who have a traditional association with the area and are allowed to settle and establish new living areas at appropriate locations.
- The Great Barrier Reef is an area where Aboriginal people have lived for several thousands of years and where they continue to have access to marine and near-shore resources.
- Uluru or Ayers Rock where approximately 150 Aboriginal people still live in the rock's vicinity and engage in hunting and gathering activities. Commercial activities such as Aboriginal arts and crafts shops are allowed. Some Aborigines are employed as park staff.
- Several national parks in Malaysia (Non-World Heritage Sites). The Malaysia Government has set aside Mulu National Park, Sungai

Magoh, Ulu Sungai Tutoh and Sungai Adang for the 400 nomadic Penan to pursue their way of life. Likewise, the Melana Protected Forest and Ulu Seridan offer Penans the right to practise their traditional lifestyle.

After various examples were presented of indigenous people living in protected areas, the Surin Islands Park Superintendent made a short report on the park's commitment and support to the Surin Islands Project.

Job/income support

- The park kitchen usually buys surplus fish from the Moken to help them earn a little income.
- The park hired some Moken as boatmen to take tourists to different snorkelling spots.
- Moken widows who have little means of making a living were hired as unskilled labour – collecting garbage, cabin cleaning and for kitchen help.
- The Park Superintendent used to ask Moken children to sing their traditional songs for some tourist money. Recently, this type of entertainment for tourists has been discontinued as Moken children, after having been educated in Thai, resort to singing for tourists in Thai. As a result, this activity has become unpopular among tourists.

The park is now shouldering a heavy responsibility of locating the money to hire the Moken. The money cannot come from the government budget because the Moken do not have Thai citizenship; it is thus illegal to hire them.

The biggest problem for the Moken is not so much earning an income to sustain a living, but saving what they have already earned. As hunter-gatherers who have been used to daily subsistence living, they are not familiar with the concept or practice of saving. The money is rapidly spent on packaged food, tobacco and liquor.

Emergency medical assistance

Emergency assistance for the Moken also comes at a cost. In one case, a Moken man was bitten by a

snake and the Park Authority took him to the Khuraburi state hospital by boat. That one-way trip cost 5,000 baht worth of diesel. The superintendent suggested that an 'emergency fund' be established, perhaps from island boat and tourist taxes.

The Surin Islands Project, Phase II

The first phase of the Surin Islands Project has been a success due to the strong commitment and support of several parties, including the Royal Forest Department, the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Health, the Department of Local Administration, the Office of Environmental Policy and Planning, as well as the involvement of NGOs such as Wildlife Fund Thailand and the Hill Areas Development Foundation, and of academicians, including art professors from the Bangkok Arts and Crafts College who produced samples of possible crafts to be made by the Moken.

The second phase of the Surin Islands Project should soon be launched to keep up the momentum of the first one. Some possible small projects are as follows:

- Resource Assessment Studies
- Handicraft Learning Project
- Mariculture Pilot Project
- Basic Health and Welfare Project
- Turtle Conservation Project
- Moken Primers Project
- Eco-tourism Project
- Stakeholder Workshop for Lanta/Adang National Parks
- Illustrative Moken/Moklen/Thai/Malay/English Dictionary Project



Towards sustainable development options for the Moken





WHILE THE GROUNDWORK FOR EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE LIFE WAYS WITH THE MOKEN HAS BEEN LAID AND COMMUNICATION LINES ESTABLISHED AMONG STAKEHOLDERS, IT IS NOW TIME TO START WORK ON SPECIFIC PROJECT ACTIVITIES.

The future success of the project depends largely on the willingness of the various stakeholders to continue to cooperate on difficult issues. Indeed, the cooperation that has been displayed so far bodes well for sustainable development involving the Moken and the conservation of the Surin Islands.

Project activities will be implemented over the years depending on the needs of the Moken community. Each activity will be a crucial step towards the sustainable development of the Surin Islands and the active involvement of its indigenous inhabitants. The proposed activities are described in this chapter.

Interdisciplinary resource assessment studies

This activity is designed to create a model for participatory resource assessment involving indigenous communities and their knowledge. It will consist of interdisciplinary research con-

ducted on the islands with the objective of determining sustainable resource use by the Moken. The active participation of the Moken in these studies is crucial, since they have an intimate knowledge of their island environment. The studies will also create partnerships between the Moken and the park authorities. The traditional environmental management practices of the Moken will be documented using written, photographic and video techniques. Consequently, this activity will be vital in the incorporation of indigenous management practices into modern conservation efforts. This research and documentation will take place over 18 months from November 1999 to April 2001.

Handicraft learning

This activity is designed to increase the Moken's ability to generate income for themselves; to strengthen cultural pride; to preserve traditional

Model Moken boat on display at park headquarters



Some of the arts and crafts samples produced by staff of the Bangkok Arts and Crafts College. These crafts could be introduced to the Moken so they can earn extra income from craft sales.



craft skills; and to promote Moken cultural heritage. In order to achieve this, however, the problem of a regular supply of raw materials has to be resolved. One alternative is to develop with the park authorities a mechanism by which the required materials can be harvested in a sustainable manner. Failing this, an outside source of raw materials (pandanus leaves) will have to be found. Moreover, a regular market for Moken crafts must be identified and a campaign to promote Moken traditional crafts will have to be undertaken. Handicraft training is a long-term project, which will be implemented slowly over a two-year period so as not to undermine Moken cultural values.

Giant clam mariculture

The mariculture project has numerous potential benefits for both the Moken and the ecology of the Surin Islands. If mariculture can be established successfully in the islands, restocking of the natural habitat by the Moken could breed

giant clams. In exchange, the Moken would receive some form of remuneration. Much research will need to be done first to make sure that mariculture is a viable option for the Moken and the islands' ecosystem. This project would be implemented over a two-year period.

Basic health and welfare

The aim of this activity is to take care of the basic health needs of the Moken. This will be accomplished by training Moken health volunteers to provide basic care for the Moken community. Health experts will also visit the islands to provide regular examinations, infant vaccinations and to keep and maintain health records for the Moken. Sessions on maternal and infant health care, and the prevention and control of substance abuse will be provided.

Turtle conservation

Sea turtles nest on the beaches of the Surin Islands. The Moken could be trained in turtle conservation methods and hired to build hatcheries, maintain records, assist in rearing young turtles and, if necessary, relocate nests in order to help conserve the dwindling sea turtle population. An eight-month training course would provide the Moken with all of the skills needed to run a successful turtle conservation programme in the islands. Such a project could also raise the awareness of tourists and the Moken about the plight of marine turtles.

Reading material for Moken children

This activity aims to develop Moken children's ability to read in their own language, while also strengthening cultural pride. It will also encourage Thai people to learn about the Moken language

and culture. Illustrated reading material for Moken children in both the Moken and Thai languages will be produced. The material will be tested with the children at Suraswadee School. There is also the possibility of producing similar reading material for adult education as well.

Eco-tourism

The eco-tourism activities must be carefully planned and executed. However, they have great potential for furthering the development of the Moken and the islands, while at the same time raising awareness and appreciation amongst

Ferrying visitors ashore to park headquarters.



Styrofoam lunch boxes from tourists create waste problems on the islands.



tourists of the importance of the region's natural and cultural resources. Data will be gathered for use in a Moken Cultural Interpretation Programme and in informative brochures for visitors. Interested Moken will undergo training as tour guides and will help with trail preparation.

Stakeholder workshop for Lanta and Adang National Parks

The Surin Islands project will be used to determine the needs of other Chao Lay communities living in the Lanta and Adang National Parks through workshops with key stakeholders. The objective is to create a dialogue and form partnerships between the Chao Lay and other stakeholders, especially the national park authorities, in order to understand 'sustainable development' and raise awareness about the negative impacts of tourism.

Illustrative Moken/Moklen/Thai/Malay/English dictionary

The proposed dictionary project will consist of gathering linguistic data on the Moken and Moklen, designing the illustrations, preparing the layout and publishing and disseminating the final product. The entire project will take one to two years to complete. The objective is to preserve the Moken/Moklen language and to strengthen cultural pride.

Environmental and socio-cultural awareness-building campaigns

Mutual understanding between Chao Lay and the national park authorities, as well as other stakeholders, can be greatly enhanced by awareness-building activities using videos, slide shows and poster materials. In this way, the Chao Lay people will learn about the need for the environmental

conservation of the Surin Islands, while other stakeholders can learn about the unique culture of the Chao Lay. The main topics of these video/slide series will be the Surin Islands marine and terrestrial environments and their species, resource conservation efforts, sea nomads in Thailand, Moken life and traditions, and indigenous people living in protected areas.

Moken identity cards

The purpose of this activity is to conduct a census of the Moken and to collect household data. Photos of adult Moken will also be taken in order to issue them with identification cards. These will guarantee the Moken's special privilege as native residents of the Surin Islands, prevent them from being arrested as illegal migrants, and ensure their basic rights (to receive healthcare and other government welfare).

Trail guidebook production

The objectives are to provide information to trail walkers about geographical and culturally significant features of the islands, to increase cultural sensitivity towards the Moken, and to provide indigenous knowledge about plants for daily and medicinal uses. Data will be collected on the geographical and culturally significant features found in the islands. A trail guide will be drafted in both English and Thai. Tourist pamphlets will also be published.

Slide series on Moken life and culture

This activity will produce slides and scripts on Moken life and culture, which will be given to the national park to show to visitors and park staff, to inform them and develop cultural sensitivity about Moken life.



Concluding remarks





INITIAL SUCCESSES WITH THE MOKEN HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGING AND AS FURTHER INITIATIVES BEGIN TO BEAR FRUIT, THE POTENTIAL FOR THE MOKEN PROJECT TO BENEFIT OTHER COMMUNITIES, THEMSELVES FACED WITH SIMILAR ISSUES OF SUSTAINABLE SMALL-ISLAND LIVING, WILL BE FAR REACHING.

Since the workshops in 1998/1999, work has proceeded on several of the project activities. Additional reading material for elementary school children has been prepared in four languages for the Moken, Urak Lawoi and Thai children, with short texts and illustrations depicting various aspects of the Chao Lay's lifestyles, including boat travel, the marine environment, important rituals and legends. These have been tested in some of the local schools, and the feedback from the teachers and students has been incorporated into the final publication. The booklets will be distributed to ten local schools attended by sea-nomad children. There have already been several requests for additions to this series.

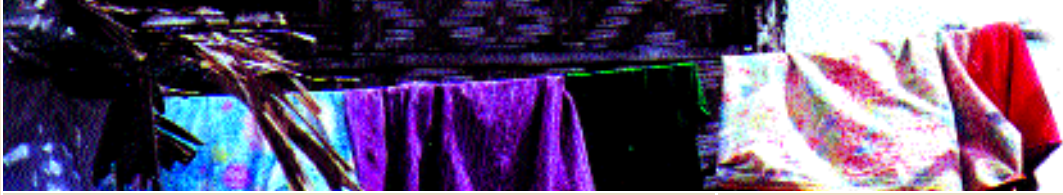
Interdisciplinary resource assessment studies were conducted in 1999/2000 by graduate students working in the fields of marine science, forestry and anthropology. These studies covered the biological aspects of the Moken's resource use as well as their traditional conservation practices. They also documented the Moken's indigenous knowledge of terrestrial and marine resources. The students presented their findings to the Park Superintendent and some of the park staff in a seminar. Further resource assessments will be conducted in 2001 using carefully designed methodology to supplement the earlier studies.

Further activities scheduled for 2001 include a social survey to understand the population size and dynamics of the Moken community in the Surin Islands; an assessment of the health situation and needs of the Moken; a vocational train-

ing workshop to enhance the Moken's ability to produce good quality handicrafts based on their traditional skills, patterns and techniques; and inter-school exchanges between children from the adjacent mainland province and the Moken children. A summary of the project's activities is included in Annex 5, together with a list of relevant articles from the 'Wise Coastal Practices for Sustainable Human Development' forum.

This project, dealing as it does with sustainable small-island living, complements several other CSI field projects. For instance it is envisaged that the series of school primers produced for the children in the region will engender a sense of pride in their culture and heritage. Activities of this kind have a potential application to a project focusing on the traditional landowners of the National Capital District of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, the Motu Koitabu, who are facing marginalization as a result of the city's growth. Linkages with other CSI projects, such as the sustainable use of mangrove resources in Samoa, and the documentation of indigenous fishers' knowledge in Haiti are avenues yet to be fully explored.

Furthermore, finding sustainable solutions that benefit indigenous communities, the environment, as well as national tourism and development objectives, has become a priority in the region and many other parts of the world as well. It is envisaged that this project will not only help elaborate sustainable development options for the Moken and contribute to the conservation of the Surin Islands, but will also serve as a model for the region and beyond.



Annexes



W O R K S H O P A G E N D A

Identifying participatory development options for the Moken of the Surin Islands

6 November 1998

National Research Council of Thailand, Bangkok

SCHEDULE

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 8:45 – 9:00 | Registration |
| 9:00 – 9:10 | Opening remarks <i>by Wanasri Samonsen, Deputy Secretary General, National Research Council of Thailand</i> |
| 9:10 – 9:20 | Introductory statement <i>by Richard Engelhardt, Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific</i> |
| 9:20 – 9:45 | Background of the Surin Islands and the Moken, vision and strategic goals for Moken's sustainable living <i>by Narumon Hinshiranan, Chulalongkorn University</i> |
| 9:45 – 10:30 | Summary reports on past/present/future projects involving the Moken <i>by Sompong Jeeraruensak, Surin Islands National Park Superintendent; Somkiat Sajjaraks, Non-Formal Education Project Advisor; and Chet Sa-nguanwaew, Chief of Surin Islands Fisheries Conservation Unit</i> |
| 10:30 – 12:00 | Brainstorming session: Identifying crucial issues leading to strategic goals of Moken's sustainable living |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch break |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Brainstorming session: Identifying crucial issues leading to strategic goals of health, sanitation and appropriate education for the Moken |
| 14:30 – 15:30 | Brainstorming session: Identifying other important issues concerning the Moken |
| 15:30 – 16:00 | Wrap up |

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|--------------------------------|---|
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| Korn Manasrisuksai | Researcher, Land and Forest Resource Division |
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W O R K S H O P A G E N D A

Towards the strategic goal of sustainable development for the Moken: Commitment and support

21–26 November 1998

Surin Islands National Park, Phang-nga

SCHEDULE

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Saturday 21 November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip to the Surin Islands |
| Sunday 22 November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Introduction to the Surin Islands’ – slide presentation on the geographical and biological composition of the islands and the conservation efforts of the park authorities <i>by Surin Islands National Park staff</i> |
| Monday 23 November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening speech and introductory remarks <i>by Sompong Jeeraruensak, Superintendent of the Surin Islands National Park, and Amara Pongsapich, Director of Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute</i> • Briefing of first workshop results on ‘Identifying Participatory Development Options for the Moken of the Surin Islands’ • Visit to Moken villages • Visit to Fisheries Unit and Suraswadee School • Discussion on educational options for Moken children • Snorkelling trip led by the Moken • Singing show by Moken children • Assessment and recommendations on snorkelling activities and singing show |
| Tuesday 24 November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail walking led by the Moken • Assessment and recommendations on trail walking activity • SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis on Moken sustainable development • Wrap-up on the result of SWOT analysis • Discussion on commitment and support for Moken sustainable development |
| Wednesday 25 November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap-up and conclusion on commitment and support for Moken sustainable development • Prepare to leave the Surin Islands |

PARTICIPANTS

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|--|--|
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| Chavalit Kositnitikul | Administration Officer, Marine National Parks Division |
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| Thanaphong Aphaiso | Assistant Superintendent, Surin Islands National Park |
| Sompong Jeeraruensak | Superintendent, Surin Islands National Park |
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| Chet Sa-nguanwaew | Marine Fisheries Resource Conservation Unit |
| Office of Environmental Policy and Planning | |
| Dararat Kaewkwandee | Environmental Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage Division |
| Siriporn Nanta | Environmental Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage Division |
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| Pipat Tienthong | District Chief, Khuraburi |
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| Aphorn Ukrit | Krabi Physical Education College |
| Kitichai Anawatprayoon | Researcher, Andaman Institute |
| Sudjai Boonrit | Researcher, Andaman Institute |
| Somkiat Sajjaraks | Ban Hin Lad School, Khuraburi |
| Sumalee Kositnitikul | Lecturer, Bangkok Arts and Crafts College |
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| Maarten Kuijper | Associate Expert, IOC/WESTPAC |
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S W O T A N A L Y S I S*

Towards the strategic goal of sustainable development for the Moken: Commitment and support

November 21–26, 1998

Surin Islands National Park, Phang-nga

Moken's strengths

1. Cultural identity.
2. Maritime skills (navigation, swimming, diving) and intimate knowledge of marine and territorial environment.
3. Traditional arts and crafts.
4. Simple and non-destructive technology.
5. Friendliness and modesty.
6. Some individuals have medicinal plant knowledge.
7. Reside in the area year round.
8. Children are eager to learn.
9. Some individuals are multilingual.
10. Adaptability, not afraid of tourists.

Moken's weaknesses

1. Widows have little means of making a living or supporting themselves.
2. When a Moken is ill and needs to be hospitalized, she/he and the relatives cannot afford the expense of being in hospital, staying in town, etc.
3. Illiteracy.
4. Being harassed, threatened or teased by park staff.
5. Park's prohibition on hunting and gathering certain species.
6. Substance addiction.
7. Very low or uncertain source of income/lack of ability to save.
8. Lack of job security.
9. Lack of land ownership rights.
10. Lack of family planning/population control.
11. Health problems/lack of health services.
12. Influenced by consumerism.
13. No identification card/nationality/citizenship.

** The SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was carried out by the participants of the workshop. Although some Moken were present at the time, the analysis provides in essence the perceptions of Moken strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats held by a non-Moken group. These judgements may very well differ from those shared by the Moken themselves.*

14. Lack of educational opportunities.
15. Socially and economically disadvantaged.
16. Communication barriers – many Moken do not speak fluent Thai.
17. Lack of communication and understanding between the Park Authority and the Moken.
18. Lack of cultural continuity – younger generations tend to neglect values of cultural heritage.
19. Lack of cultural awareness and pride.
20. Dependency on park and outside sources.
21. Lack of community strength.
22. Lack of spiritual bond.
23. Lack of skill training in traditional arts, crafts, music, etc.
24. Lack of skill training/experience in service activities.
25. The young are losing respect for the adults and elderly.
26. Violation of some rules and regulations.
27. Unable to control or limit Moken immigration from other regions.
28. Lack of attention/interest in the roles of park staff.
29. Littering.
30. Lack of cooperation and coordination from other agencies.
31. Moken are an additional burden for the Park Authority.

Opportunities for the Moken and national park

1. Development of the Surin Islands as an ecotourism destination.
2. Additional income through: boat services, village tours, cultural performances, tours for special interest groups.
3. Nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
4. Important (biological and cultural) research site in the Andaman Sea.
5. Educational and vocational training opportunities.
6. Increase of health services.
7. Building of consensus among relevant stakeholders regarding a common vision.

Threats for the Moken and national park

1. Overexploitation/unsustainable use of natural resources.
2. Number of tourists exceeding the island's carrying capacity.
3. Immigration of Moken from Myanmar.
4. Increase of waste.
5. Drug abuse.
6. Illegal fishing.
7. Spread of epidemics.
8. Extra pressure as a World Heritage Site.
9. Smuggling of natural resources from Thailand.
10. Negative cultural influences from the outside.
11. Natural disasters.
12. Security in life and personal belongings.
13. Restriction on making a living (hunting and gathering).
14. Outdated laws and regulations.

Surin Islands National Park strengths

1. Great potential to achieve international recognition and a higher management standard.
2. Park's potential in regard to:
 - Research site
 - Tourist site
 - Marine and territorial biodiversity
 - Beautiful corals
3. Nomination for the World Heritage List.
4. Source of income for the government.
5. Job opportunities for local people.
6. Gain of an international reputation for the country.
7. Historical significance.
8. Dedication of some park officers to their work.
9. Well-equipped to provide for tourists.
10. Cooperation and sharing of responsibilities with Fisheries Conservation Unit.
11. Ability to extend assistance (such as emergency aid) to the Moken.

ANNEX 4**B R I E F I N G S E S S I O N****Commitment and support towards Moken sustainable development**

11 March 1999

Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 09:00 – 09:15 | Opening remarks <i>by Dr Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific</i> |
| 9:15 – 10:00 | Summary of the Brainstorming Workshop and the Surin Islands Workshop <i>by Dr Narumon Hinshiranan</i> |
| 10:00 – 11:30 | Progress report and reiteration of commitment and support from the stakeholders <i>by Representatives from the relevant offices</i> |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | Recommendation for Surin Islands Project, Phase II |

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| Name | Title/Office |
|--|--|
| Royal Forest Department | |
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| Kwanchai Yudee | Andaman Sea Fisheries Development Centre |
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| Office of Environmental Policy and Planning | |
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| Co-ordinators | |
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| Jirawan Tangjitmethee | Assistant Researcher, Chulalongkorn University |

P R O J E C T S U M M A R Y

A place for indigenous people in protected areas, Surin Islands, Andaman Sea, Thailand

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>Revision date</i> | 1 March 2001 |
| <i>Title</i> | A place for indigenous people in protected areas, Surin Islands, Andaman Sea, Thailand |
| <i>Goals</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a dialogue among the Surin Islands' stakeholders; • To encourage the maintenance of appropriate technology and 'wise practice' through the understanding and appreciation of indigenous knowledge; • To ensure the continuity of indigenous cultural pride and identity; • To provide a model of cultural and natural environmental conservation to be adapted to other islands with a similar context. |
| <i>Location</i> | Surin Islands National Park in Phang-nga Province, Thailand |
| <i>Starting date</i> | 1997 – The project has been divided into several phases. |
| <i>Partners</i> | Surin Islands National Park Administration; Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute; various other governmental and non-governmental organizations; UNESCO: Culture Sector (Bangkok Office), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Western Pacific Office (Bangkok), Coastal Regions and Small Islands platform. |
| <i>Pilot project leader</i> | Dr Narumon Hinshiranan Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute (CUSRI) Chulalongkorn University Phyathai Road, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330, Thailand tel: +66 2 218 7375, fax: +66 2 255 2353 e-mail: hnarumon@chula.ac.th |

Description

There have been three major activities:

1. Stakeholder workshops (November 1998), to discuss the aspirations and needs of the indigenous Moken and their socio-economic options which require commitment and support from relevant parties. Several issues were brought up during the first workshop including Moken-defined quality of life, park regulations and enforcement on the Moken, and building community strength. More concrete strategies were developed during the second workshop and each stakeholder took on a number of tasks to help with some of the urgent issues. Future project activities were drafted after the workshops.
2. Production of reading material for Moken elementary school children (March 1999 – present), to produce illustrated booklets in 4 languages for Moken, Urak Lawoi and Thai children. There are 20 short texts portraying Moken's and Urak Lawoi's marine livelihood, boat travel, important rituals, curing practices, legends, etc. The final booklets (1,000 copies) will be printed and distributed to 10 local schools attended by sea-nomad children. Not only will they enable the children to learn through their own language, they will also encourage cultural enthusiasm and pride.
3. Interdisciplinary resource assessment studies (December 1999 – May 2000), to survey the biological aspects of Moken resource use and its impact on the natural ecosystem, and to examine indigenous knowledge of terrestrial and marine resources and traditional conservation practices. The active participation of the Moken in these studies was crucial. The 8 graduate students (from marine science, forestry and anthropology), who conducted the assessment, presented their findings in a seminar and the recommendations were presented to the Park Superintendent in an attempt to incorporate the indigenous resource management practices into modern conservation efforts.

Achievements and assessment

1. Dialogue between stakeholders. The workshops have encouraged a continued dialogue between the parties involved in the Surin Islands natural and cultural environment conservation. Assistance and cooperation have been recruited from several sources, such as a craft training offer from the Bangkok Art College and a turtle conservation fund from the Wildlife Fund Thailand.
2. Draft school reading material for Moken children tested and prepared for final production. The booklets (200 copies) were tested in 5 local schools, and feedback from teachers and children will be used in the final production. A few copies were also distributed to local residents and tour operators and received positive responses for creating more cultural understanding and appreciation. There have been several requests to continue the series of booklets. The material is expected to be published by early 2001.

3. Resource assessment studies. Recommendations from the resource assessment studies were presented in the seminar attended by the Marine Parks Division Deputy Director and the Park Superintendent. A report on the resource assessment will be prepared by the end of 2000. There is also an initiative to set up a research information centre on the islands.

Future directions

1. Assess Moken's health situation and needs, and increase their awareness of the importance of health and dental care. A biodata survey to better understand the population size and dynamics will be conducted.
2. Enhance the Moken's ability to produce good quality handicrafts, based on their traditional skills, patterns and techniques.
3. Facilitate inter-school exchange between children from the adjacent mainland province and the Moken children. This may generate a spin-off effect such that the relationships between the fisheries officers, the park rangers and the Moken are improved.
4. Conduct additional resource assessment surveys of certain over-exploited shellfish species and sea cucumbers and design appropriate measures for replenishment.
5. Reinvigorate the oral tradition of the Andaman Sea tribes, including the Moken and the Uruk Lawoi, through the analysis of old legends and animated discussions. Particular attention will be paid to the environmental conservation message contained in these legends.
6. Design and establish a dedicated website for the project.

Related WiCoP forum Articles

- The WiCoP forum may be accessed at:
<http://www.csiwisepractices.org> (username= csi, password= wise)
- Improving communication and preserving cultural heritage – Surin Islands, Thailand
by *Narumon Hinshiranan*
<http://www.csiwisepractices.org/?read=70>
- The future of the wise practices forum – an Asia-Pacific regional perspective
by *Maarten Kuijper*
<http://www.csiwisepractices.org/?read=285>

Other titles in the CSI series***Coastal region and small island papers:***

- 1 *Managing beach resources in the smaller Caribbean islands.* Workshop Papers. Edited by Gillian Cambers. 1997. 269 pp. (English only)
- 2 *Coasts of Haiti. Resource assessment and management needs.* 1998. 39 pp. (English and French)
- 3 *CARICOMP – Caribbean Coral Reef, Seagrass and Mangrove Sites.* Edited by Björn Kjerfve. 1999. 185 pp. (English only)
- 4 *Applications of Satellite and Airborne Image Data to Coastal Management.* Seventh computer-based learning module. Edited by A. J. Edwards. 1999. 185 pp. (English only)
- 5 *Glimpses of the Blue Caribbean. Oceans, coasts and seas and how they shape us.* By Joy Rudder. 2000. 69 pp. (English only)
- 6 *Reducing megacity impacts on the coastal environment. Alternative livelihoods and waste management in Jakarta and the Seribu Islands.* 2000. 64 pp. (English only)
- 7 *Yoff, le territoire assiégé. Un village lébou dans la banlieue de Dakar.* 2000. 90 pp. (French only)

Titles in the CSI info series:

- 1 *Integrated framework for the management of beach resources within the smaller caribbean islands.* Workshop results. 1997. 31 pp. (English only)
- 2 *UNESCO on coastal regions and small islands.* Titles for management, research and capacity-building (1980-1995). 1997. 21 pp. (English only)
- 3 *Qualité de l'eau de la nappe phréatique à Yeumbeul, Sénégal.* Étude sur le terrain. 1997. 27 pp. (French only)
- 4 *Planning for coastline change. Guidelines for construction setbacks in the Eastern Caribbean Islands.* 1997. 14 pp. (English only)
- 5 *Urban development and freshwater resources: small coastal cities.* Proceedings and recommendations. 1998. 109 pp. (English and French)
- 6 *Coast and beach stability in the Caribbean Islands.* COSALC Project Activities 1996-97. 1998. 57 pp. (English only)
- 7 *Role of Communication and Education.* Workshop Proceedings (PACSICOM). 1999. 88 pp. (English and French)
- 8 *Développement urbain durable en zone côtière.* Actes du Séminaire international (Mahdia, Tunisie, juin 1999). 2000. 225 pp. (French only)
- 9 *D'une bonne idée à un projet réussi.* Manuel pour le développement et la gestion de projets à l'échelle locale. 2000. 158 pp. (French) (Original English version published by SEACAM)
- 10 *Wise coastal practices for sustainable human development.* Results of an intersectoral workshop and preliminary findings of a follow-up virtual forum. 2000. 126 pp. (English and French)