

# PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT OF A CREATIVE LIVING SPACE IN LAMPANG, NORTHERN THAILAND

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## Abstract

This is a qualitative investigation to develop a prototype and guidelines for a creative liveable space according to the management plan and development mechanism in Lampang, a city in Northern Thailand. The researchers collected data from academic documents and field studies through observation, brainstorming meetings, interviews with key informants and transect surveys. Data were analysed by analytic induction and typological analysis. The results revealed a high degree of participation among stakeholders in Lampang communities, who initiated and developed a pilot scheme to promote the local area's cultural heritage. From experiences in the field, the researcher developed a five-step process for developing creative, liveable cities through community participation. The approach uses a hybrid model for development, combining academic principles and community involvement.

*Keywords: community development, creative, liveable city, participation, Lampang*

## Background

Liveable city guidelines are intended for developing urban spaces and solving community problems based on the philosophy, concepts and principles of cooperative development (Wagner & Caves, 2019). They integrate the mission of all parties in a participatory process that encourages a mutually beneficial partnership (Respati, Tonny, Galih, & Prakasa, 2020). When all parties learn and

work together, a good relationship arises, and, as a result, urban development activities can be carried out effectively and sustainably. The liveable city, therefore, varies according to the basic conditions and needs of the people in that city or community. It also depends on the input and cooperation of people and city officials at all levels, especially the top executives of the community (Charoenporn, 2017).

Lampang is a province in Northern Thailand with a distinctive identity. It has a unique slogan: "Widely known coal, renowned horse-drawn carriages, famous ceramics, the distinguished Pra That and the well-known Elephant Conservation Centre" (Lampang Provincial Government, 2006). These outstanding features should make Lampang Province popular with investors and tourists alike. Yet from an economic perspective, investment and tourism in Lampang Province are not as high as it should be (Lertpatcharapong & Sukorn, 2021). According to statistics, Lampang has the third largest provincial gross domestic product in Northern Thailand, after Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017). Originally, Lampang Province was planned as an industrial city, a source of energy production, and coal and kaolin mining. However, the economy, society and technology changed, causing obstacles and recession until business operators were forced to close down. Only large businesses and coalmines remained. These will be closed as governments opt for more sustainable alternatives to traditional fuels (Yiamjanya, 2020). The various sectors of Lampang Province have begun to see the impact of these socio-economic and industrial changes.

Consequently, a plan has been formulated to deal with the situation to enable people in Lampang to construct a stable economy based on provincial strengths and driven by tourism (Netpradit, 2021). An analysis of the economic potential of Lampang Province found that the strength of the internal environment lies in its prominent history, local cultural traditions and an urban identity that reflects cultural diversity (Lertpatcharapong & Sukorn, 2021). There are also problem-solving networks across the province that demonstrate the readiness and strengths of people in the area. The main weakness is the lack of any consistent and current social database at the provincial level. This has negatively affected the establishment of a clear development framework for society and the public sector, making it impossible to achieve concrete results according to the set goals. Given the state mentioned above of Lampang Province, many factors may be addressed in order to develop Lampang as a creative liveable city through collaboration between local people and partners.

For this investigation, the researchers focused on two main objectives: to analyse the potential of the prototype area according to the indicators for Lampang

as a creative liveable city and to develop a prototype for a creative liveable space according to the city management plan and development mechanism for Lampang. Fulfilment of these objectives will transform Lampang into a happy society with a strong community, good quality of life and high liveability index in all dimensions.

## **Literature Review**

Urbanisation never stops, but its nature has changed over time according to the advancement of technology and social trends (Hugo, 2017). Consequently, the role of the city is multi-dimensional. If governments and development agencies fail to identify and clearly define the type and role of the city, its development will be inefficient (Wataya & Shaw, 2019). Each type of city has different characteristics, development issues and spatial needs. Whether for tourism, recreation and entertainment, or an elegant government centre, the city is a symbol reflecting the identity of the area and its people (Bogdanović, 1975). Given this strong link to society, city development is becoming an increasingly recognised method of strengthening local communities.

The EQO City concept combines economic, social and environmental balance. Conceived by Panit Phucharoen and Yosaphol Boonsom (2016), the EQO City is a highly flexible urban area, able to cope with changes caused by the integration of the natural regions within urban areas. The idea is to create a good environment that promotes the well-being and potential of the people in the city. It demands the creation of an urban environment that promotes the development of the city's potential in various fields by maximising the use of limited resources (Prawanne, 2020). The concept merges five different ideas to create balance within the city: resilient city, eco-city, healthy city, creative city and smart city (Phucharoen & Boonsom, 2016). This focus on the beneficial impact of a positive surrounding environment is consistent with urban development research across Southeast Asia (Maroofee et al., 2018).

The World Health Organization (2010) adopted the concept of improving people's quality of life through 'healthy cities' or 'liveable cities'. The concept encompasses a physically, mentally, socially and spiritually healthy city with a health-conscious mind. There is a push towards developing public sanitation, operational structures, social environments and communal resources in such places. Kanittha Nitasattana (1997) concluded that such locations should be developed in four dimensions: physical, mental, environmental and social. A successful outcome is only achieved through the cooperation of all parties, including the public sector, the private sector and the community to whom the city belongs (Duhl & Sanchez, 1999). Furthermore, social, economic and

environmental changes will only be effective through appropriate, cost-effective use of existing resources for the maximum benefit of the community (Green & Haines, 2015).

The Centre for Urban Design and Development insists that well-developed cities must be multi-purpose, shared spaces with significant pedestrian infrastructure (Khamwachirapitak & Weerarak, 2019). This idea was primarily influenced by Jane Jacobs' (1961) *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which proposed that quality urban areas must have a mix of applications. 'Walkability' also allows people to live healthy lifestyles and implies wide pavements, large trees and high-quality paths (Lo, 2009). Therefore, the concept of a walkable city is one of the key elements in assessing the quality of a city (Frank et al., 2010). A related concept is that of the Slow City, where the city population's quality of life and diversity is increased (Zadęcka, 2018). The emphasis is on non-standardisation, multiculturalism and small size (less than 50,000 residents) (Farelnik & Stanowicka, 2016). This concept has been applied to sections of many large cities, including Budapest, St. Louis, New Orleans, Detroit and London.

The other element of this investigation is the creative city, defined by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as an 'urban complex where cultural activities of various sorts are an integral component of the city's economic and social functioning. Such cities tend to be built upon a strong social and cultural infrastructure, to have relatively high concentrations of creative employment, and to be attractive to inward investment because of their well-established cultural facilities.' (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2008, p. 16). The creative city must be built upon a foundation of social and cultural stability, with a high concentration of creative workers and an environment that attracts investment because of the sustainability of the cultural venue. Charles Landry (2000) said that local people and culture play an important role in making a city a space for creativity and dynamism in urban society. Cultural activities are considered creative resources and the key ingredient that makes creative cities in each locality unique and different. Richard Florida (2002) further defined the creative class as a group of people who act as the main engine of the creative economy. Therefore, it is vitally important that cities compete with each other to attract, maintain and build creative masses by improving urban environments. This includes developing infrastructure and business mechanisms that facilitate investment and creative business development. The preservation of local culture and establishment of sustainable development guidelines are particularly important to uniquely equip the community with a diverse cultural atmosphere and progressive physical urban development.

Creative cities are not, therefore, only about landscape improvement or tourism development. They are cities with space and an environment that fosters creative economic activity and are home to creative thinkers and entrepreneurs from inside and outside the country. These individuals create employment, generate income and increase the economy's competitiveness. They are a key asset of a globally mobile city that provides a suitable place for living and doing creative business (Thailand Creative Design Centre, 2011). Consequently, community participation is an essential component of successful development projects.

Research has identified positive correlations between local willingness to participate in community-based management and the extent of their local knowledge (Ruddle, 1994) and government decentralisation (McCay & Jentoft, 1996). Trust in the process and ownership are also crucial (Newton, 2001; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Lachapelle (2008, p. 53) best summarised the idea of ownership in community development, writing: "if individuals are intimately and authentically engaged, dedication to the process and outcome will be created, leading to greater chances of political support and implementation". Chavis and Wandersman (1990) suggested that ownership was one of three components that informed community participation in urban development projects: perception of the community environment, social relations and perceived control. Of these components, Chavis and Wandersman identify a sense of community as the most integral: "When people share a strong sense of community, they are motivated and empowered to change problems they face, and are better able to mediate the negative effects of things over which they have no control. A sense of community is the glue that can hold together a community development effort," and it also ensures that locals make deep emotional connections to the place in which they live (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990, pp. 73-74; Abas et al., 2020). This provides the conceptual framework upon which the current study is based.

## **Methodology**

The research questions for this investigation were: 1) What is the potential for developing Lampang as a prototype creative liveable city? and 2) How can a prototype creative liveable space be developed according to the city management plan and development mechanism for Lampang as a creative liveable city? Whether achieved through public relations, exhibitions or building a network of cooperation, this will develop Lampang into a happy society with a strong community, good quality of life, regular environmental and cultural conservation and highly liveable in physical, mental, environmental and social dimensions.

This is a qualitative investigation. The researchers collected data from academic documents and field surveys to gather information on the situation of Lampang Province and its potential as a creative liveable city in physical, economic, social and environmental terms. Field data was further gathered through observation, brainstorming meetings, interviews with key informants and transect surveys to find ways to create a process for developing a prototype for a creative liveable space with people and local partners. In order to answer the preliminary research questions, the concepts of model city development, creative liveable cities and participation were used. The researchers also examined case studies of other prototype areas to inform the main conceptual framework used in analysing the investigation results.

### ***Population and Research Sample***

The research population was composed of all parties involved in developing a prototype for a creative liveable space from the public, private and community sectors. The research sample was subsequently identified using a purposive sampling method. In addition, selected individuals joined a brainstorming meeting, interviews and transect surveys were held with key informants, and a stakeholder analysis group was formed to develop prototypes for a creative liveable space.

### ***Data Collection Tools***

The researchers used a variety of tools to collect data. These included forms for recording informal interviews, survey records, forms used to collect minutes from brainstorming meetings, and forms for recording field data. These led to the development of a prototype for a creative liveable area in Lampang.

### ***Data Collection***

Two types of data were collected and analysed during this investigation:

The first type of data was the primary data. This was information collected from the brainstorming sessions, interviews with key informants, observations, and surveys from all parties involved in developing creative liveable space prototypes. Data was gathered from government officials in Lampang Province, representatives from the private sector, local business networks, representatives from local government organisations and community leaders. Data were validated to ensure accuracy and subsequently used for activities aimed at developing a prototype for a creative liveable space. The second type of data was secondary data. This was the collection of information from academic documents, research reports and academic articles, including resources from various websites

of relevant agencies. The secondary data was used to inform the research and as a point of comparison for field study results.

### ***Data Analysis and Validation***

The researcher categorised the information collected from documents and field data according to the research objectives. A methodological triangulation process validated the data's accuracy to determine whether brainstorming, interviews, observation and transect surveys yielded similar results. The validated data was then used for content analysis in the following ways in order to draw suitable conclusions analytic induction and typological analysis (Chantavanich, 2011). Analytic induction is the interpretation by building conclusions from concrete data or phenomena with common characteristics. In contrast, typological analysis means classifying data into categories or continuous typologies by applying knowledge and concepts related to the analysis. The data were grouped according to the study objectives.

The researchers presented the results of the data analysis according to the research objectives by compiling conclusions and constructing a descriptive analysis with illustrations related to the research. The analysis results led to the development of a model for creative liveable areas in Lampang.

### ***Research Process***

The research process was comprised of the following steps:

First, survey and analyse the potential of the model area according to the indicators of Lampang as a creative liveable city. Information for this step was based on documents and indicators generated by Poonsukcharoen, Attarat, and Krajangchom (2022). Second, organise brainstorming meetings with those involved in the operation of developing a prototype for creative liveable areas of Lampang, together with members of the public and local partners through a process of participation from all sectors. Third, select an area to use for the development of a creative liveable area prototype in Lampang. Fourth, publicise the prototype development implementation for Lampang's creative liveable areas. Fifth, carry out activities with members of the public and local partners that help develop a prototype of a creative liveable area according to the city management plan and the mechanism for the development of Lampang as a creative liveable city. Sixth, synthesise data on developing a creative liveable space prototype according to the city management plan and the mechanism for developing Lampang as a creative liveable city. Collaborate with partners and localities through a process of participation from all sectors. Seventh, prepare an infographic for the prototype of a creative liveable area in Lampang. Eighth,

prepare a manual entitled “Development of a Prototype of a Liveable Area in the City of Lampang” and ninth, summarise results and prepare a complete final research report.

## **Results**

### **Part 1**

#### ***Analysis of the Potential of Prototype Areas Based on Indicators for Lampang as a Creative Liveable City***

Analysis of the potential of areas within Lampang for creating a prototype creative liveable city was based on a prior project entitled ‘Developing Indicators for a Creative, Liveable City in Lampang, Northern Thailand’ (Poonsukcharoen et al., 2022). According to the attitudes of people in Lampang, they think that the areas most suitable for development as a creative liveable city are Kong Ta (40.5%), Tha Ma-O (19.0%), Kao Chao (11.3%), Prabaht (10.8%), and Sop Tui (5.5%). As for the factors that represent the creative liveable city of Lampang, the sample group of Lampang people considered access to basic government services at all levels (education, public health or safety) to be the factor most indicative of a creative, liveable city in Lampang. In addition, other important factors were the conservation and restoration of ancient sites and old architectural buildings, encouragement of the preservation of cultural diversity, inheritance and development of historical value, the importance attached to the organisation of creative activities, and the management of environmental problems.

From further analysis of each identified community, it was found that Lampang residents focused on accessing basic services at all levels (education, public health and safety). Lampang residents felt that initiatives should build on the city’s creative capital to develop the city into a creative, liveable space. In terms of culture, the architecture, the old town, the history, the horse-drawn carriages, and the ceramics were the factors deemed to represent a creative liveable city in Lampang. For the objectives to be realised, residents felt that developers must foster an environment that promotes creativity and liveability by conserving green areas, supporting the new generation, and opening spaces for cultural expression. The assessment of Lampang’s potential and role as a creative liveable city found that Lampang is a city ready to be developed as a liveable space with a high level of creativity. An existing infrastructure, cultural capital, resources, strong civil society and support from local authorities are conducive to such development.

In order to develop a prototype for a creative liveable space, data were analysed for the potential and role of the creative liveable city in Lampang according to the identified indicators. The analysis found that cultural capital must be inherited. Lampang is a city with a thousand-year history of city building



and settlement. It has been a centre of travel in every major Thai era. Therefore, it is a diverse city with a huge cultural capital, such as handicrafts, carvings and local recipes. This complements the natural capital, such as kaolin, the main raw material of ceramics, and includes knowledge of local learning and processes. There are also many museums and learning resources. However, despite the availability of existing cultural learning areas, Lampang lacks systematic knowledge management. This makes it impossible to communicate and disseminate the local culture and add economic value. Existing capital can only be preserved in those groups with a vested interest. In an area where people are becoming less and less interested in preserving culture, that culture must be communicated to the people and made relevant to their everyday lives. This will make them interested in its inheritance, create benefits and generate income for the community.

The following results were garnered from field surveys and analysis of the potential of prototype areas according to the indicators of the creative, liveable city in Lampang using observation, transect surveys and interviews. Lampang has outstanding potential given its history, cultural diversity, local products, abundant resources, complete infrastructure, high-quality population and stable economy. It is a living, old city and an economic district. Its culture and community attract tourism. There are historic districts, old buildings, walking streets, creative markets, city tours by horse-drawn carriage, ceramic products and creative businesses. From these strengths, five creative activities were identified as holding the potential for participation in developing a prototype creative liveable area with the members of the public and local partners. These activities were selected after consideration of various dimensions, such as the physical, economic, social and environmental aspects of development. The five activities or locations were: 1) Kad Kong Ta Night Market; 2) Creative businesses; 3) Lampang horse-drawn carriages; 4) Lampang old town; and 5) the creative liveable city of Lampang (vision and plan for the development of Lampang City).

## ***Part 2***

### ***Developing a Prototype of a Creative Liveable Space According to the City Management Plan and the Mechanism for the Development of Lampang as a Creative Liveable City***

Creative living space is an area with four main components: 1) outstanding cultural capital that is unique, diverse and can add value to the economy, society, culture and environment; 2) people or groups of people considered thinkers or creative entrepreneurs. This is an important mechanism for driving creative liveable areas; 3) Activities that are economically, socially and culturally

diversified; and 4) an environment that encourages creativity and promotes economic, social and cultural activities. The development of prototype areas is at the heart of the discovery of participatory development approaches. This is achieved through concrete collaboration between the people of Lampang and research teams, from designing and planning pilot activities based on the project results to developing a plan for managing a creative liveable city in Lampang. Such management should be consistent in the context of spatial development, with concepts, goals and frameworks for creating creative and liveable spaces. Importance is to be given to the value of natural resources and the environment, urban development that is consistent with the identity and historical value of the city, and the development of creative spaces. The five key activities or locations were refined into three pilot schemes within Lampang. These are detailed below.

### ***Creation of Old Tales of the Kong Ta People***

Conversations were held with small groups of local residents to gather information about the local community's history. Local residents participated in three groups based on age (70 years and over, 50-70 years and all generations). Participants were invited to share past photographs and were also presented with images of former Lampang by the researcher. Younger people in the community were invited to listen, take notes and compile the information from the discussions in a database entitled 'Memories and Impressions'. This data set will move towards a permanent exhibition encouraging people in the area to incorporate the history and personality of the old city into its building, shop and public space designs. The activity was designed to restore the relationship and identity of the Kong Ta people and was derived from the origin story of Kad Kong Ta. It is aimed to drive, innovate and restore the 'vital power and memory' of the community based on those original members who initiated the successful creation of Kad Kong Ta and nurtured the economy, happiness and lifestyle.

Results from the brainstorming session show that Kad Kong Ta has been liveable and creative for over 100 years. This meeting summarised the story of Kad Kong Ta and created a community history data group and a pilot exhibition for the old tales of the Kong Ta people. It was presented as "The Identity of the Kong Ta People", through photographs and old stories from the memories of local people. The collection of antique photographs and seven pilot houses is a collaboration between local community representatives to awaken creative energy in the Kad Kong Ta area. The activity encouraged discussion on the topic "Past, Present and Future of Kad Kong Ta", which invited representatives of the community, creative entrepreneurs and members of the original Kong Ta families to share the story of Kong Ta in memory.



**Figure 1: Exploration of the history of Lampang with Kad Kong Ta residents**  
(Source: Karapan et al., 2022)

The intended outcome was to refresh the impression of the community, exchange suggestions for the future development of Kong Ta, spark interest and encourage community members to realise that they can work together to create a liveable and creative space. This was the start of a project geared towards using community capital successfully.

### ***Lampang Old Town and Creative Entrepreneurs***

This activity was designed to connect hundreds of entrepreneurs in the old town. The researchers visited the area on October 3, 2020, to explore the communities in the old city, which covered the Tha Ma-O, Pong Sanuk, Cao Chao, and Sop Tui Communities. Here, the researchers discussed and introduced the “Mechanism for Lampang Development, a Creative Living City” project with local people. The “Lampang Creative Lab” initiative was then inspired by representatives of Tha Ma-O Community who sought to find ways to combine the strengths of creative entrepreneurs and community capital to enhance the cooperation of people in the old city. It was the first step in finding new directions and methods. Brainstorming meetings were arranged and held on October 15, 2020, with accommodation operators, coffee shops, cultural and art representatives, horse-drawn carriage associations and young people. This connected creative businesses and fostered discussions on the direction of development in the old district of Lampang. These discussions included reflections on other community experiences in Lampang and were attended by community representatives and

experts who organised exhibitions, presentations and seminars. This is an example of the presentation of results in developing creative prototype areas through communication, raising awareness and understanding, telling stories about liveable areas, and promoting cultural resources, delicious food, quality products and services. Representatives of the people in the old city of Lampang and creative business representatives were used to ignite enthusiasm and inspire others. The first step involved gathering data with the participation of the people of Lampang and taking useful suggestions from activities and discussions. Participants were encouraged to talk, create, cooperate and develop guidelines for upgrading creative business and tourism for 'Lampang Old Town'.



**Figure 2: Discussions with local entrepreneurs in Lampang old town**  
(Source: Karapan et al., 2022)

From November 15-17, 2020, key entrepreneurs were appointed to design activities, horse-drawn carriage routes and a selection of trade volunteers to set up promotions and link the old districts of Kad Kong Ta and Tha Ma-O. Twenty local businesses were identified to highlight the places, foodstuffs and impressive things of Lampang old district (13 from Tha Ma-O community and 7 from Kad Kong Ta. These entrepreneurs then prepared content for exhibitions within their businesses that could tell the story of entrepreneurs in the old city. Profiles of each business were also created for the project website and handbook.

After a month, the researchers set up 'activities around the backyard' as a forum to meet, discuss, build cooperation and develop a creative business and tourism approach for 'Lampang Old Town'. To evaluate the impact of the cultural exhibitions in the local businesses, participants were asked their opinion and desires for the project. A selection of responses is included below:

What is your opinion of the process, and what more would you like to see?

"I want to increase the number of places and shops. The initiators of this project should be the ones who recommend, evaluate and help select suitable businesses." (Informant A, interview).

"It is something that gives tourists detailed information about important places and shops. They are also easy to travel between because they are not very far from each other." (Informant B, interview).

"It would be good to suggest additional locations. Local people will have more experience than outsiders so they should be the ones to choose. There should be a process for us to get to know local businesses and make an informed choice." (Informant C, interview).

"I'd like to see an option for online participation for those who do not come to these discussion groups. At the very least, reasons for the selection of different businesses should be posted online." (Informant D, interview).

"Walking tour activities would be a great idea for pilot operators. The general public could be invited to explore and get to know the community." (Informant E, interview).

"Each household should register its skills. Villagers could be registered so that their information can be used and so that they can participate in the story-telling." (Informant F, interview).

How would you like to see the town promoted?

"Present historical stories and roots by creating short booklets to communicate to people because there is power in the written word. It can communicate to everyone. Put this in noodle shops, souvenir shops, everywhere." (Informant A, interview).

"As a walking-friendly city. There should be a promotion for people to walk easily and safely - maybe using a stamp book for tourists to collect locations. This will be an incentive for travellers and can become a souvenir." (Informant B, interview).

"With links between entrepreneurs in the area." (Informant C, interview).

"Government agencies must help us manage problems and install signs."

“By connecting people from many small points together to see a clearer picture of the specialties of Lampang.” (Informant D, interview).

“I’d love to see people returning from big cities. To encourage young people to return home there should be a central point for discussion and communication, a space to inspire young people because they are the people who will continue to drive Lampang in the future.” (Informant E, interview).

“I’d like more activities to connect people, such as craft festivals, handmade festivals, homemade festivals and presentation of Lampang houses.” (Informant F, interview).

### *Lampang Horse-Drawn Carriages - The Spirit of Lampang*

This activity was designed to realise the potential of local cultural capital and identify a development direction. This activity, based on the horse-drawn carriages of Lampang is an example of the presentation of results in developing a creative prototype area. The intention was to communicate, create awareness, understand, ride a horse-drawn carriage, and relate interesting stories about the carriages of Lampang, including their history, value and identity. Discussions focused on “Mechanisms Driving the Development of Lampang Carriages”. This was an opportunity for participants to exchange thoughts on the potential direction for developing Lampang horse-drawn carriages to develop a liveable, creative city. The researchers visited the area to survey the preliminary information of Lampang carriages, prepared the stories and routes of the horse-drawn carriages in Lampang by listening to representatives of Lampang's horse-carriage community and the new generation, and gathered information from interviews and photographs. These were summarised to tell the story of the Lampang carriages. Unfortunately, due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the research team could not travel to the area to gather interview data. Therefore, the research plan was adjusted. The research team synthesised the summary data into documents and sent them to the stakeholders, including government agencies, members of the private sector and the community, to share their opinions and suggestions on the activities for developing creative liveable space prototypes. The researchers then returned to the field to check the accuracy of the created stories and organise an exhibition entitled “Lampang Horse-Drawn Carriages: The Spirit of Lampang”. It was hoped that this exhibition would relay the potential of local cultural capital and encourage stakeholders to find ways to develop Lampang carriage businesses. The initiative represented the identity and spirit of Lampang and encouraged stakeholders to consider ways to raise pride in the culture and foster its continuation. This included meetings to discuss and

draw on the future of Lampang horse-drawn carriages and exchange suggestions for future development according to the concept of promoting a creative liveable city in Lampang.

## **Discussion**

The key theme from field research in Lampang was the willingness of local people to participate in the development of their own town. A core group of like-minded entrepreneurs wanted to build the community to make it more liveable and creative. Drijver (1991, p.131) observed that “it is important to know why people participate and why they support, adjust or resist the project. Only if this is known can one come to a better understanding of how and under what conditions their participation might be intensified upon.” Community-based management depends on the willingness of local stakeholders to participate consistently, which in turn depends on their appreciation of the benefit of such an initiative (Zanetell & Knuth, 2004).

The basis of this investigation was Chavis and Wandersman’s (1990) three components of community participation: perception of the community environment, social relations and perceived control. The research process was designed on the principle that people are more likely to work together in their community when they feel part of that community (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986; Unger & Wandersman, 1982). For this reason, the researchers organised initial explorations of local stories and memories and opportunities for local people to meet and discuss their community. Corroborating the work of McMillan and Chavis (1986), this face-to-face contact inspired the creation of a network of like-minded entrepreneurs to drive the development project.

There are multiple examples of popular participation throughout this investigation, “the collective effort by the people concerned to pool their efforts and whatever other resources they decide to pool together, to attain objectives they set for themselves” (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009, p.172). Whilst this project had a ‘top-down’ beginning, being conceived and driven by an academic project, there were considerable elements of ‘bottom-up’ development, such as the Lampang Creative Lab proposed and inspired by members of the Tha Ma-O community (Conyers, 1986). The researchers feel strongly that this high degree of the agency will result in a continuous, sustainable initiative to make Lampang a creative, liveable city. Such a hybrid approach is encouraged for future development projects. With this in mind, the researchers would like to propose a five-step process for the development of a creative liveable space:

First, the first step is to search for the local identity, analyse its potential and understand cultural values. This is the starting point in developing a

prototype for a creative liveable space. Then, cultural identity (way of life, art, tradition, wisdom and environment) is identified and analysed to assess the potential of the prototype area according to the indicators set and to understand the cultural significance.

The second step is identifying issues, designing methods, and creating a development process. This is done through participatory research methods, which allow the developers to get to know the area and understand the context, and allow local stakeholders to participate in presenting problems and suggestions, participate in decision-making, participate in the development and organise activities to stimulate people's consciousness.

The third step is to implement a creative lab. This is a meeting point and central area for sharing creativity, knowledge, networking and experimenting with creative activities. It can be a workshop to upgrade and increase skills (upskill and reskill) for creative entrepreneurs, community members, youth, and staff from agencies and organisations, including those interested in developing skills and creativity. It is also a point of coordination and dissemination of information on creative activities and knowledge information.

The fourth step is to develop a prototype of a creative liveable space. At this stage, it is an experimental practice activity through concrete collaboration from the first three steps.

The fifth and final step is communication, creating awareness, publicising activities and generating understanding. This can be done through many channels, both online through social media, such as Facebook, websites, and online manuals, and through offline systems, such as exhibitions and publications.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The results of this investigation revealed a high degree of participation among stakeholders in Lampang communities, who initiated and developed a pilot scheme to promote the local area's cultural heritage. From experiences in the field, the researcher developed a five-step process for developing creative, liveable cities through community participation. The approach uses a hybrid model for development, combining academic principles and community involvement. Nonetheless, this investigation was limited by its nature as a qualitative study. The further quantitative analysis would help provide statistical data regarding the degree of Lampang community members' participation. Similarly, the investigation is limited by its timeframe. Only after several years can the actual impact of this development project be assessed, as well as the sustainability of community-based management. The investigation was carried out during severe disruption for the domestic and international tourism industries. This has



potentially limited the initial impact of the project and could cause the local stakeholders to lose interest in the project due to a lack of immediate tangible benefit. It is hoped that community involvement is maintained long enough to outlast the effects of the pandemic and experience the benefits of a revived global tourism industry.

One interesting point picked out of comments by the creative entrepreneurs was the low level of youth participation. Residents indicated that young people often head for the bigger cities of Chiang Mai or Bangkok to work and live. The researcher recommends future investigation into the veracity of this claim and, if accurate, ways to either correct or mitigate this phenomenon. Future investigation should be conducted into the potential methods for the dissemination of community history. Research respondents suggested strategically-placed leaflets, although the researchers doubt the potential impact of this medium. A comparison of the impact of print and online media would be useful for the further development of Lampang.

In developing a prototype for a creative liveable space, there should be ongoing support for activities that emphasise the participation of local people. This should be achieved by enabling locals to offer suggestions and share opinions through various channels, such as forums, shared documents and online channels, to design an action plan that can be tested in a concrete way. A creative liveable city requires a central space for collecting creativity or a centre for exchanging discussions and hosting activities connecting the city's people. These will eventually evolve into city festivals, such as crafts, handmade, or homemade festivals. Local agencies must be the main driving force for the government, the private sector, the community and the educational institutes. This institutional support will help facilitate the connection of hundreds of people, link areas and develop activities that expand the results of the prototype area and allow its influence to spread to other parts of Lampang. Opportunities must also be provided for new generations to join in. The development of communication channels can achieve this by creating awareness and using public relations networks to enable everyone to access the activities.

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