



# Studying and Strengthening the Potential of Hmong Batik Community Enterprise Group at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province

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## Abstract

This study aims to 1) examine the administrative potential of Hmong Batik Community Enterprise Group at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province, and 2) strengthen the group's potential. The research methodology includes interview, participation, and small-group meeting in order to analyze the potential and to encourage the digital technology potential to create product-selling channel. The results of the study reveal that the community enterprise's potential is dressmaking; the quality of the product is ranked 4-star OTOP level; the enterprise is supported by both government and private sections. However, the disadvantages of the group include the inconstant production because of the customers' demands, less public relations, and discontinuous product presentation. Personnel Facebook accounts are used to sell products which results in product reliability. The product-selling skills through digital technology encouragement are classified into 2 parts: photoshooting and product presentation skills, and technology application to produce marketing channels.

The results of the evaluation show that the participants of the training gain benefit and knowledge based on their demand in the 'very good' level, for 50 percentage and 'good' level, for 50 percentage. The overall satisfaction on the training in the 'good' level is 60 percent, while 'very good' level is 40 percent. The Group creates Facebook Fan Page name in Thai “ผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าปักเขาและผ้าเทียน” or embroidered fabric and batik in English. The buying processes are to ask and answer about the product, and buy through the middlemen. The research proposal for the community enterprise group is to create activities so that the Page has movements, to have continuous public relations, and to encourage the development of an economic website, in order to improve the marketing and public relations.

**Keywords:** Hmong Batik, Online Market, Community Enterprise Group, Hmong, Digital Technology, Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao, Hill Tribe Products

## Introduction

The National Strategy according to The Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017–2036) is emphasized to promote and develop the culture dimension by increasing the value of culture resources. Thailand has a very high cultural capital, compared to the properties that have been accumulated and become valuable. The application and integration of the cultural capital to improve the future Thai economy. Application of cultural capital to be more valuable and to connect with other kinds of capital is considered the key factor to improve the economy (Noraratputhi, 2019).

Small and Micro Community Enterprise (SMCE) is the community business about products or services by the persons related to legal and non-legal persons in order to increase income and improve self-independence. It also includes trading for community cost management which consists of resources, agricultural products, knowledge, wisdom, cultures, and local traditions (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, 2013, p. 2). Hmong Batik Community Enterprise Group at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai

Province, is the group of village women producing cultural products from “batik”. Around 2015, by the promotion of the Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education (NFE) in which encourages productions of bags sawing and feature products. Candle fabric is the art of creating patterns on fabrics, which is an outstanding identity of Hmong tribe. It is the wisdom and primitive art inherited from generations to generations until now. It is about writing patterns with boiled beeswax on a piece of bamboo stuck with a metal. The patterns are based on imaginations which reflect lifestyles, social contexts, and natural environment. The patterns are geomatry patterns written repeatedly, e.g. cross, square, spiral, circle, etc. They are generally found in Hmong’s skirt patterns made from cotton fabric, dyed with blue or Hom color throughout the piece. This it the ability of Hmong women inherited from their ancestors. Hmong Batik, therefore, is well-known and widely used (The Support Arts and Crafts International Centre of Thailand, n.d., p. 2). Hmong batik is the cultural capital that manifests local arts made from local wisdoms, including skills, tools, and knowledge gained from ancestors and experiences about making clothes, bags, and other products. Hmong Batik Community Enterprise Group applies the traditional knowledge with creative thinkings to become the beautiful products in which is modern and international. The products are sold as the souvenirs, appliances, and gifts; and known as the famous souvenirs from Payamengrai District. This can be part-time self-employment for family income.



**Figure 1** Elderlies Drawing Batik, Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province.

**Source:** Researcher

According to the analysis process for the demand of Hmong batik enterprise at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province, it reveals that the group is in need of product-selling encouragement. The development selling channel through electronic system is the marketing encouragement for Hmong Batik Enterprise Group at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province. The public relations patterns nowadays, communication and information transfer, as well as online selling through internet system and E-commerce are one of the selling and public relations channels (Soonsuwon, Chanakul, Tungyen, Meechoke, & Amleng, 2017). In addition, information technology is the tool for public relations.

Therefore, the study of Hmong Batik Enterprise Group and the potential encouragement of the Hmong batik enterprise at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province



by using technology for business operating in both communication and public relations helps improving the potential of Hmong Batik Enterprise Group. It also increases the online marketing channels appropriately which is applicable for making the community income. The products can be moved forward to the electronic commercial market. This can also be the tools for knowledge presentation and wisdom of the group's batik transfer.

### Purposes

1. To study the potential of Hmong Batik Enterprise Group, at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province.
2. To encourage the potential of Hmong Batik Enterprise Group, at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province.

### Research Methodology

This qualitative study is conducted with the target group consisting of the chair and the members of the community enterprise group, 10 in total. The research methodology consists of documents and related studies investigation, purposive sample, in-depth interview, participant observation with the key informants, including researchers and Hmong Batik Enterprise Group members by giving opinions, presenting information, focus group, and observation and data analysis. It results in the potential encouragement for the community enterprise group on online marketing. During the research conduction, the researcher emphasizes the right of privacy and physical and mental beneficence.



**Figure 2** Process of Data Collection about the Enterprise Group.

Source: Researcher

### Results

According to the study, it can be summarized into 2 sections based on the purposes of the study.

#### 1. The Potential of Hmong Batik Enterprise Group, at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village

Hmong Batik Enterprise Group, at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province, is founded from a group of women and elderlies at Huay Mae Pao Village in 2015. The group is taught by the Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education (NFE) about sewing bags and developing the product to be more modern. Moreover, both government and private organizations also support the group to

manage the Project on Local Economy Strengthening based on Public-Private Collaborative Projects (B.E. 2559). According to the SWOT Analysis on the community enterprise group, it can be concluded as follows.

### **Strong Points**

#### **1.1 Internal Administration**

The administration is clear and systematic with clear tasks such as manager and product stock and order receiver from the customers. The members are responsible for sewing and helping each other according to the group agreements. Tools and materials that are used to produce the batik products and classified income from sewing. One group product is allocated for the cost including raw materials, product manufacturer hiring, and sellers hiring.

#### **1.2 Product Quality**

“Batik” is the unique and beautiful product in which is the product of Hmong Tribe. The product is designed to have patterns and appropriate usage. Its price is from hundreds to thousands. The buyers are those who are fond of cultural products. Therefore, the community enterprise group improves the batik’s patterns such as the bag style with quality materials, which are accepted as 4-star OTOP products.

#### **1.3 Marketing and Selling Channels**

The Hmong batik community enterprise group sells candle written fabric at the tribe selling point, Singha Park Chiang Rai, on weekends and annual festivals. The sellers dress the tribal clothes and sell tribal products with 6 tribal groups, e.g. Hmong, Mien, Akah, Karen, Lishu, and Lahu. This place is the first location for selling the products of Hmong batik community enterprise group. The place is used for product presentations for telling the tourists both Thai and foreigners.

#### **1.4 Networks and Business Group**

The products Hmong Batik Enterprise Group for selling include bags, shirts, skirts, Hmong fabric bags, tribal-dress dolls, key rings, and other souvenirs. Those products are both bought and sold from the networks or Hmong fabric wholesaler, i.e. Hmong fabric and bags group from Nan Province, Hmong fabric group from Thai and Laos temporarily permitted area, Chiang Kham District, Phayao Province, Hmong Tribal Network (Socialist Republic of Vietnam), and Chinese middleman group who buys the bags and products and sell them in China.

### **Weaknesses and Threats**

#### **1.1 The Group Management**

- The members of the community enterprise group have their own careers so that they do not have time to sew the bags. So, the number of the product is not certain.
- The problems of stocking: it cannot be stored in a large number of the products because the products are made from the orders.

#### **1.2 Marketing and Selling Channels**

The public relations and online selling channels employ Line Application to receive the orders and personnel Facebook account to sell the products. This kind of selling is not continuing which means the time period of posting the product is rather long. It manifests that there are insufficient and unreliable selling channels because the products are mostly sold at exhibitions without public relations.





## Opportunities

### 1.1 Government and Private Organizations' Support

There have been government and private organizations both within and outside the community in the forms of budget, training courses, and materials. For example, Office of Non-Formal and Informal Education (NFE), by teaching fabric bags sewing from batik in the community as more international patterns; Project of the Local Economy Encourage Civil State B.E. 2559; and OTOP inno-life. Moreover, the product trademark "TaPaYa" is designed by the students from Chiang Rai Rajabhat University which has been the product trademark.

According to the data analysis, the Hmong Batik Community Enterprise Group's potential can be summarized as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** The Analysis Data of the Hmong Batik Community Enterprise Group's Potential

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group's management is appropriate.</li> <li>- The leader and members are acknowledged and skilled.</li> <li>- The products are ranked at 4-star OTOP.</li> <li>- The products present the Hmong tribal identity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is insufficient public relations.</li> <li>- There are less selling channels.</li> <li>- There is no standard Facebook Fan Page (only personnel Facebook accounts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The group is supported by the government and private organizations in the forms of budget, materials, tools, and the group members' potential development.</li> <li>- There are both national and international Hmong networks.</li> <li>- The group members are regular trained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The members have their own careers so that they have less time to attend the activities and the time for sewing is not certain. So, the amount of production is not certain.</li> <li>- The products cannot be stored for a large number of because the products selling is based on the customers' demand (orders).</li> </ul>

## 2. The Development of Hmong Batik Community Enterprise Group's Potential for Selling Channels through Electronic System

The community enterprise group's potential is strong and appropriately managed. The leader and members are acknowledged and improved their potential continuously. There are both government and private organizations' support, as well as educational organizations. Moreover, the products present the identity of Hmong tribe. However, the marketing channels and public relations are still insufficient.

Therefore, the potential improvement of the community enterprise group on increasing the selling channels through electronic system. The training participants are 10 members of the community enterprise group voluntarily, who are interested in using the internet. The training is divided into two phrases: 1) photography skills encouragement, and 2) technology usage skill encouragement for creating marketing channels, as described below.

### 2.1 Product Presentation Skill Encouragement

The activities include commercial photography training to make the products interesting by composition or using other props to make the product more interesting and attracting the customers. Furthermore, the usage of smart-phone applications to retouch the photos of the products to be more interesting.



**Figure 3** The Activities of Products Presentation Skills Encouragement.

Source: Researcher

## 2.2 Technology Usage Skills Development for Creating Marketing Channels

Before the development of technology usage skills to create marketing channels, the community enterprise group are acknowledged the basic usage of smartphones, such as Googling, going on YouTube, and posting on personal Facebook accounts. The principles to make the Facebook Fan Page active include presenting the products and introducing products, which become reliable.

For skills of using online marketing channels development, the researcher and the members of the community enterprise group choose Facebook and Shopee systems due to the fact that their platforms are accented and easy to access for both buyers and sellers with the simple system.

The programs usage training proceeds gradually based on the participants' potential. The training employs the target group's smartphones and a manual of using Facebook Fan page and Shopee program. The training aims to acknowledge and make understanding of applying the program to sell products or public relations. Moreover, they can improve their knowledge of other online media usage by themselves.



**Figure 4** The Activities of Technology Usage Skills Development to Create Marketing Channels.

Source: Researcher

The community enterprise group are workshop trained and improved 5 skills: 1) using Facebook accurately and safely, 2) appropriate public relations based on the target group with reliability and trustworthy for the products transporters as well as the contacts of the group, 3) Page promotion (buying the advertisement of the platforms) and the automatic replying system of the Page, 4) posting for products introduction in public groups, and 5) manners of selling products online.



According to the technology usage skills development to create marketing channels, it reveals that the overall satisfactions on the workshop on marketing channels through digital technology is in the Very Good level for 40 percent and Good level for 60 percent. The satisfactions on the training, the target group gains knowledge as their demand in the Very Good level and Good level for 50 percent equally. According to the follow-up of Facebook Fan Page and Shopee application admin's management, under the name “ผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าปักชาวเขาและผ้าเขียนเทียน (The Product of Hill Tribes and Batik in English)”, the manifests that the admin is skilled for public relations, product selling, and answering the customers through Facebook. The famous searched keyword is related to “hill tribe products”. Furthermore, the result of the study shows that there is a lot of contact for more information from Central and Southern Parts of the country, so this becomes the other contact channel between the middlemen and the Hmong batik community enterprise group. The needs for the future development of the Hmong batik community enterprise group are to be encouraged the skills of Page improvement to show beautiful products, to be improved the skills of website development to manage banking system and money systematically, and to have the staff to monitor and receive the orders and to activate the Page activities.

The products from the beautiful-pattern batik adaptation are the skills and professions from traditional Hmong tribal wisdom is only clothes. The products are adapted to be beautiful appliances which preserve the identity of the tribe; for example, bags, key chains and tribal dressed dolls. Therefore, those who are interested in hill tribe products have more choices to shop. In addition, the skill encouragement for creating marketing channels can be the method to improve the entrepreneurs or cultural product makers so that the cultural products are more valuable and expensive by using digital technology.

### Discussions

At the present, digital technology has a major role for managing a business. This study encourages the Hmong batik community enterprise group's potential with the applications for business. These become the other channels for public relations and making extra income for the community enterprise group. It is in agreement with the study of Saleewong & Iam-khong (2017) titled “An Apply of Information Technology with The Management of Product Community for Sustainable Economic”, which the result of the study shows that product community for economic sustainability consists of five components: 1) OTOP Community, 2) Participation, 3) Learn & Share, 4) Integration, and 5) Technology. The groups of production and selling community products that apply information technology to manage community product for more convenience in management purpose. Moreover, the study of Jentsantikul (2019) titled “The Development of Community Enterprise in Lower Central Provinces Region 1 to Enhance its Competitiveness in the ASEAN Community” reveals that the guidelines for the development of community enterprises are 1) develop human resource, 2) develop account management system and methods to access the capital, 3) develop electronic marketing, 4) develop product quality and product certification, and 5) develop enterprise network. According to the marketing development method, the study reveals that most of the community enterprise groups focus on internal marketing and producing to orders, and most of the customers do not recognise the products. In conclusion, in order to reach the customers, the community enterprise group should add more accessible channels through electronic media for continuous public relations and customer contacting. Digital marketing is currently widely used because of its easy and timeless access. It also connects with internet connection for online marketing channels, i.e. Line, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Website, E-mail, etc.



The study procedure is to encourage the community enterprise group's potential by coaching, giving advice, and encouraging how to use digital technology as the online marketing channel. Fongissara & Mekara (2020) investigate creative economy management and cultural surveillance for sustainable tourism in Chiang Rai province and suggest that to promote the valuable product for tourism, increase the value of the product, and trade is in need of support the entrepreneur to use an innovation, increase online marketing channels to sell the products, and provide advice on how to bring the potential and distinction of the community in community-based tourism. This skills encouragement for the community enterprise group operates workshops on products photoshooting and retouching photos for product public relations by smartphones for the benefit of product selling and appropriate and reliable product public relation. It is in accordance with the study of Suadate (2016) on sales promotion process for community products through e-commerce channel: a case study on Siabua community enterprise. The study reveals that the factor that enables consumers to purchase the Saibua products is the content, follows by the photoshooting from the actual products edited to look more attractive, third-party credibility such as the top product awards, and stock availability. Furthermore, Chamnanpon & Lowanichchai (2019) study on a development model of digital technology for supporting entrepreneur. The study investigates the community enterprise group, academicians, and representatives of the community in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. The results of the study show that the entrepreneurs mostly use smartphones as a communication tool. They are knowledgeable about information technology and the online business at a Low level. They use the internet only to search for business information via and Line. They want to bring digital technology and innovation into their business, especially, the product promotion increase customers and sales. Most of the entrepreneurs are in need of digital technology and innovation for holding business, especially, the product public relations to increase customers and sales. The preferred format is to use social media such as Facebook, Line and e-marketplace that can be used on smartphones, which will make it easier to communicate with customers at any time. In addition, Somprasong & Thongmak's study (2015) on social media use in Thai SMEs: a focus on enhancing customer relations reveals that the experience of using social media is the influential factor for the adoption of using social media the most while the perceive of the simple use and benefits of social media is to increase sales and to expand customers for small and medium enterprises the most. The study on development of information technology potential to enhance marketing opportunities of OTOP entrepreneurs in Nakhon Ratchasima Province. JabJone & Lowanitchai (2019) suggests that the important factors that support the entrepreneurs to be successful in using social media marketing are the reduction of communication problem, more communication channels and advertising, expansion of the business to customers and reduction of the operating cost. However, the problems found are the lack updating new information, the lack technical expertise, respondents and information check, and the false information. Therefore, social media marketing leads to learning society which creates the entrepreneurs network, enhances the quality of commercial competition in terms of marketing and public relations, and increases the value and price of the OTOP products. In case of this research study, the researcher investigates the continuity in products promotion and information presentation. These factors are the weaknesses of the community enterprise group due to the fact that the members have their own careers, for example agriculture, gardening, and working as employees. The members emphasize their major careers and use social media only in their free time. Moreover, the threats of production capacity and product making are based on the orders so that the product presentation and public relation is irregular.

The study of potential of Hmong batik community enterprise group at Ban Khun Huay Mae Pao Village, Mae Pao Sub-district, Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai Province, is a part of income making for the community





enterprise group from the adaptation of technology and information science system based on their potential and contexts appropriately, without the conflict with the contexts of society and culture. The study also coaches and gives advice on other aspects after the study ends.

### Conclusions and Suggestions

The potential of Hmong batik community enterprise group, Mar Pao Sub-district, is the enterprise group that has strengths and appropriate group management. The leader and members are acknowledged and skilled in both management and handcraft. The batik product is the product presenting the identity of Hmong tribe which is ranked as 4-star OTOP product; supported for budget, materials, tools, and potential encouragement by both government and private sections; as well as networked with national and international the Hmong tribe group. On the other hand, the members have their own careers so there is less time to attend the activities and inconstant fabric sewing. Therefore, the production capacity is unstable and there are few stocks, which affects sewing and selling. In addition, the product selling channels and promotion are insufficient.

The encourage of marketing through digital technology for Hmong batik community enterprise group consists of 1) photography skills and product presentation encourage, and 2) using technology skills to create marketing channels, such as Facebook and Shopee Application, because of their acceptable potential and easy to access by both buyers and sellers with simple usage. The level of overall satisfactions on the workshop of marketing channels encouragement through digital technology is Good, 60 percent, followed by Very Good, 40 percent. The satisfactions level on the training as demand are in Very Good and Good levels, 50 percent equally. The follow up of product public relations and selling is found that the Facebook Fan Page administrator is skilled at using Facebook to present that products and well reply the customers' questions. The Facebook Fan Page is titled “ผลิตภัณฑ์ผ้าปักชาวเขาและผ้าเขียนเทียน (The Product of Hill Tribes and Batik in English)”. In the groups of selling and buying, customers can search for the keyword “สินค้าชาวเขา or hill tribe products in English”. The methods to encourage skills and future demand of the community enterprise group require the encouragement of website development, banking system usage, standard financial management, order receiving and Page administration, and activating the Page activities.

The potencial encouragement of the community enterprise group that reflects the tribal wisdom value is in accordance with the concept of UNESCO, which emphasizes on cultural heritage about knowledge and wisdom. UNESCO held a project called “Woman E-nspire Culture” in 2019 to support the tribal women to be skilled in being an entrepreneur, digital technology usage, and have opportunities to develop their marketing skills to increase income and economic values. This project not only operates with Hmong, it also includes Karen and Akah tribes so that those tribes can present the cultural heritages and are proud of their inherited wisdom.

### Suggestions

The Hmong batik community enterprise group should operate their selling channel and be active about product promotion, for example, the activities of the group, new products, and marketing encouragement activities.



### Suggestions for the Future Studies

1. The study and development of business potential for the community enterprise group, such as commercial website development, marketing strategies, and public relations encouragement.
2. The study of promoting the products about the identity of Hmong tribe through the tribal storytelling study.

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