



Community-Based Tourism For All

Co-creation Journey



Thailand

accelerator
labs





UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand

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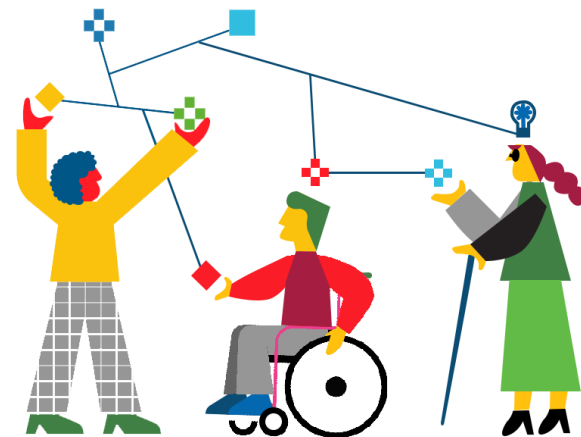


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Introduction

Tourism is one of the main drivers of Thailand's economic development and unsustainable management of tourism has led to several negative impacts in the past. As a result, there has been a growing momentum for sustainable tourism, encouraging the balance between economic, social, and environmental development. Community-based tourism (CBT) is one of the pathways to foster sustainable tourism as it is a tourism management model that applies a 'by the local people for the local people' principle. CBT has great potential to be a champion for sustainable tourism because local people are the bearers of tourism impacts, both positive and negative, so they have the incentive to manage it in a sustainable way. However, the tourism landscape has changed rapidly in the past few years, calling for adjustments in the sector. Inclusive tourism is one that can have a major effect on the industry as global demographic trends are shifting. Inclusive tourism refers to the capacity of tourism to integrate disadvantaged groups so that they can participate in, and benefit from, tourism activity (UNWTO, 2018). Thailand's tourism needs to foster this kind of tourism that allows everyone, regardless of their abilities, to enjoy the tourism experience – make it 'tourism for all'. This is not only to drive the Leave No One Behind agenda but also a market opportunity not to be missed.

DO YOU KNOW?

Tourism for all will benefit so many!

Our effort in improving accessibility will not only benefit persons with disabilities (PWDs) but will also accommodate a much wider population, especially in countries where aging is an acute phenomenon.



2.2

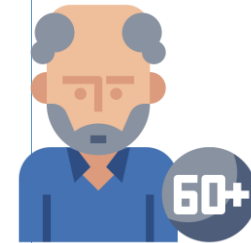
million people holding disability cards in Thailand

3%

of the total population

Roughly 50% have physical or mobility impairments, while persons with hearing and visual impairments make up the second and third largest groups, respectively (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, 2023).

It is crucial to note that this number does not encompass all individuals with disabilities. Referring to a joint report from the National Statistical Office and UNICEF (2023), Thailand is home to 4.1 million PWDs, constituting about 6% of the entire population.



In Thailand, the population aged over 60 years old is increasing rapidly

5%
in 1997

to

15%
in 2021



Globally, the population aged 65 and over is also growing fast with the projection to rise from

10%
in 2022

to

16%
in 2050

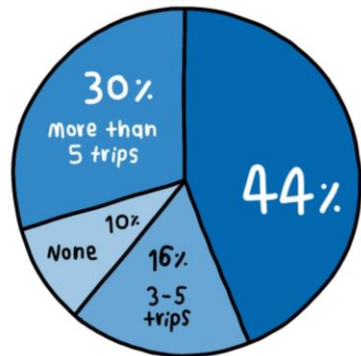
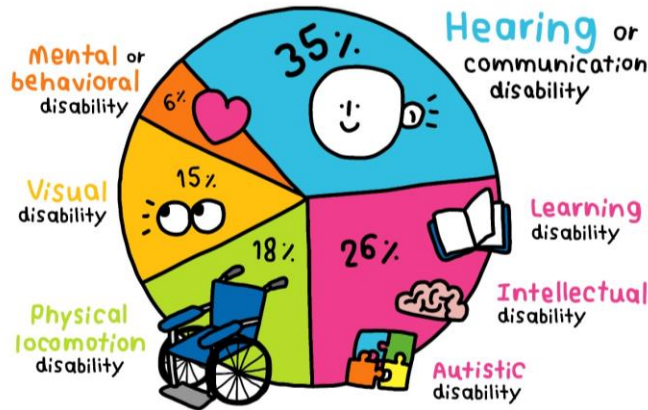


which will be more than twice the number of children under age 5 (United Nations Population Division, 2022).



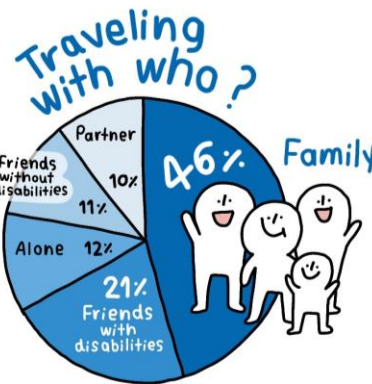
The survey on tourism experience of persons with disabilities (PWDs), conducted in February 2023, received a total of 133 responses from participants aged between 21-55 years old from Bangkok (32%), Nonthaburi (11%), and other provinces around the country.

Representing
7
types of disabilities



How many trips do PWD take per year?

1-2 trips



Traveling with who?

Family

Why do PWD like it?

31% Vibe/Atmosphere

17% Unique experience

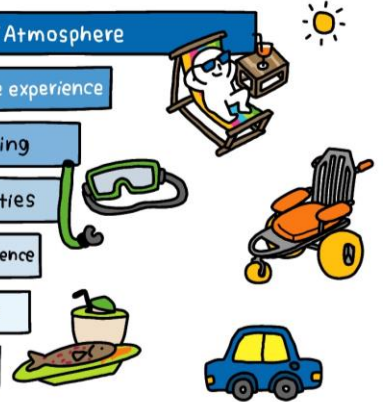
14% Relaxing

13% Activities

10% Convenience

9% Others

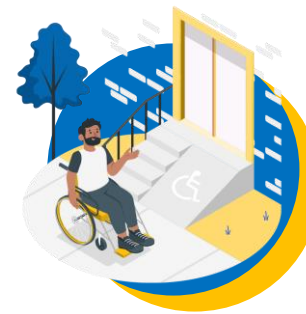
6% Food



When it comes to tourism for all, many people often think of large-scale investments in infrastructure, so the agenda is often left untouched because people believe that they do not have the resources to do anything. On the contrary, we also find cases where resources are poured into initiatives and facilities that cannot be used in reality. This is because the users i.e. persons with disabilities (PWDs) are not involved in the process to ensure that the solution designs are catered to their needs. The UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand embarked on a journey to develop 'CBT for all' by engaging PWDs every step of the way. Co-creation is the answer because by connecting the perspectives of PWDs, we are able to understand where the pain points are, co-design solutions that truly address their needs, and test the solutions to get feedback from the actual users.



Solutions are developed by non-users while the actual users never have the opportunity to design solutions for their own problems.



Problem identification

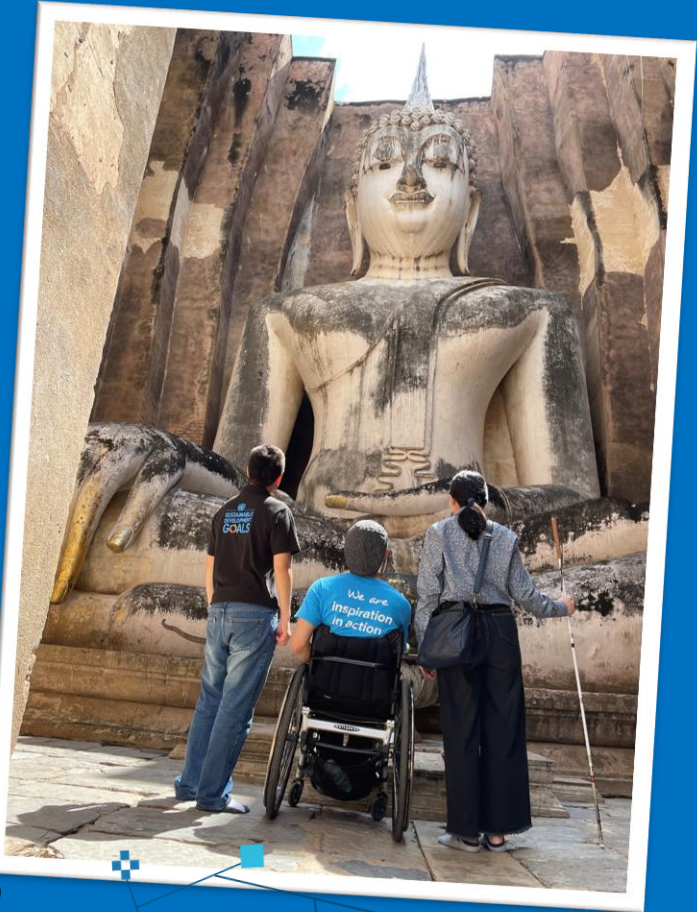


Solution design



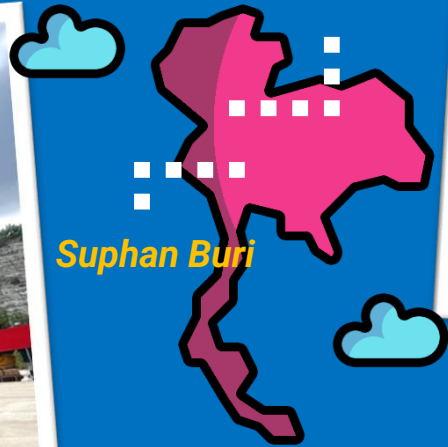
Solution development and testing

This publication aims to share the CBT for all co-creation journey and key principles that can be applied in other cases. To demonstrate our points, we include examples drawn from collaborative work between UNDP Accelerator Lab Thailand, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA), Nutty's Adventures, Siam Rise, and the pilot communities in Sukhothai and Suphan Buri provinces between June – October 2023. These prototypes and pilots are merely a starting point. It is important to translate the lessons learnt and findings into policy, creating a conducive environment for Thailand's tourism to move towards inclusive tourism and stay ahead of the curve in the global tourism landscape.



Sukhothai

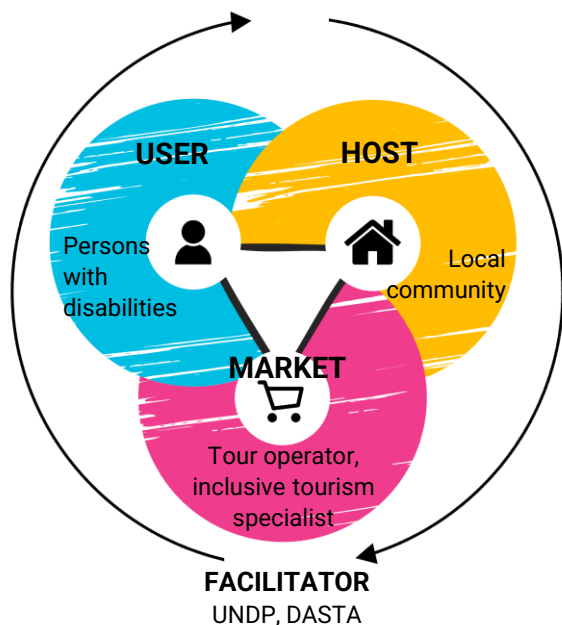
Suphan Buri





Co-creation, How?

Co-creation is essentially about bringing key stakeholders together and opening space for the exchange of perspectives and creativity. A few reminders for ourselves as we go through the co-creation process, it is important to...



Engage key stakeholders:

Any single issue always involves multiple stakeholders that must be identified and involved. This will ensure a multidimensional understanding of the issue. No solution can be effective if it fails to address the needs of key stakeholders e.g. if a solution is great for the travelers but is not feasible to sustain by the local community, it will be short-lived at best.

Have mutual respect for the different perspectives:

Each and every person has different knowledge and angles to contribute to the issue – be it the experience of the users, the view of the service providers, or the concern of the host community. All the perspectives are valid and should be taken into the solution design.

Avoid rushing to or fixating on a solution:

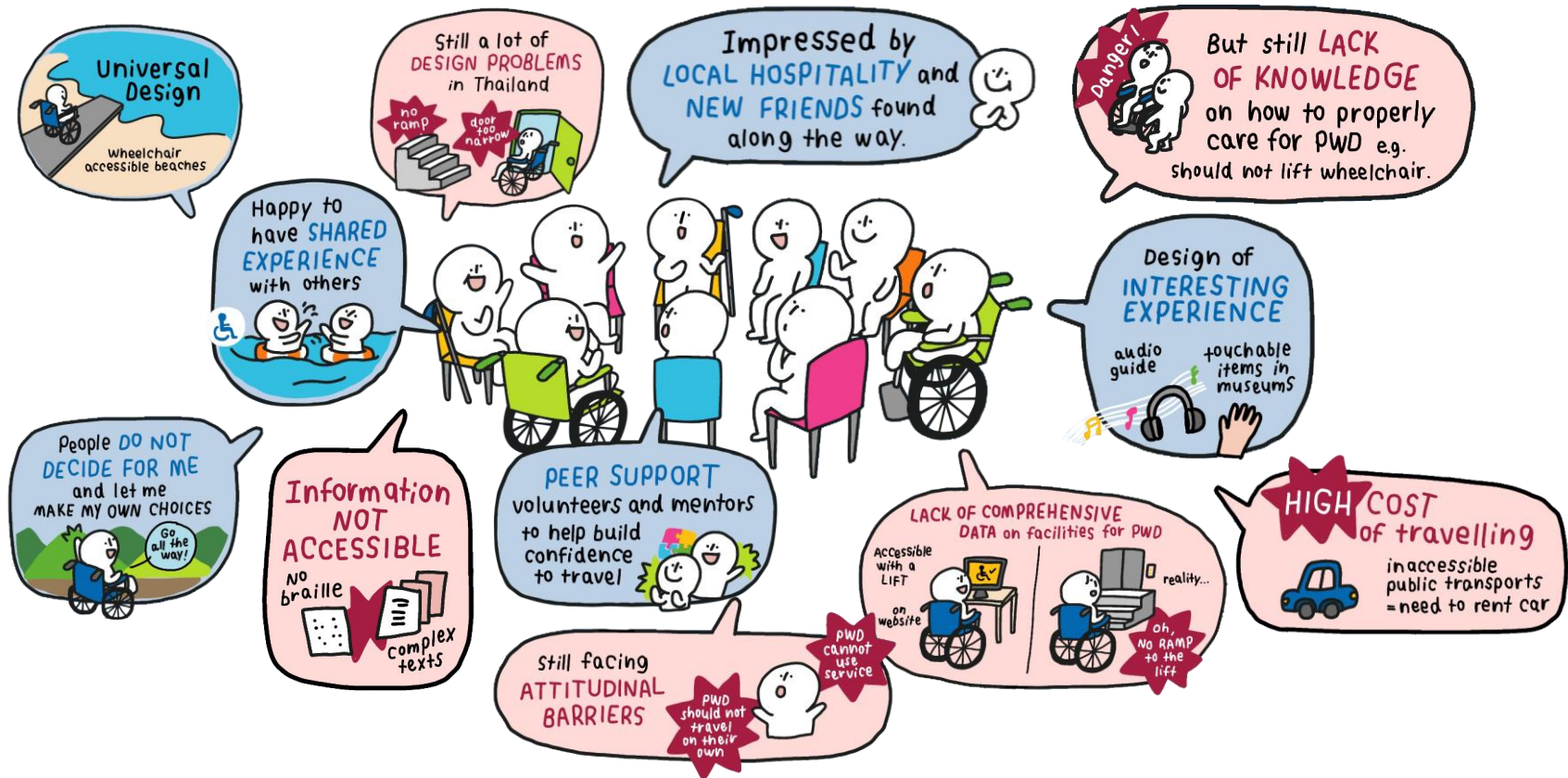
It is common to find ourselves jumping to solution ideas but that can be a dangerous trap. Without a thorough understanding of the problem, we can end up with a solution that does not address the user's need in some ways.

Cultivate attitude for learning: The solution development process should be treated as a learning process. Especially in the solution design and prototyping process, imperfection and failures are to be expected and welcomed, so directions for further development can be revealed. With limited investment, we need to maximize the learning from the prototypes and invite constructive feedback to ensure that the final solutions close all the gaps.

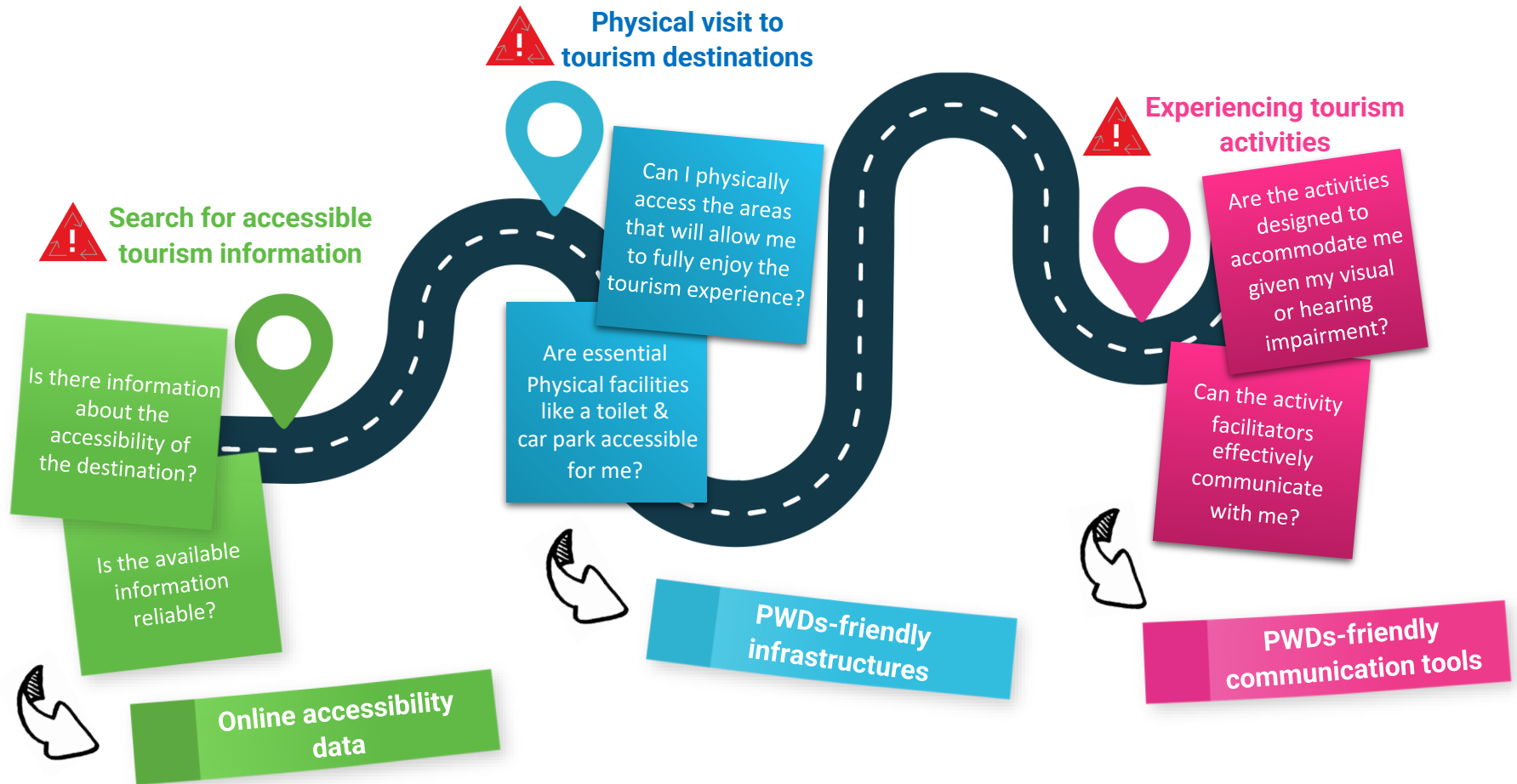


Portfolio of Prototypes and Their Journeys

Engaging PWDs in the co-creation process broadens our understanding of accessibility issues. Far from the limited view that accessibility is only about physical infrastructures, the issues encompass diverse aspects of what it means to make tourism accessible for all. Reviewing our PWDs' tourism journey can shine a light on the pain points and entry points for solution development.



As pain points were identified, we can start exploring solution ideas that together form a portfolio of solutions for CBT for all. However, co-creation process is never a linear process. It is full of debates and detours. So, let's have a look at each prototype's journey and the learning we gained along the way.



CBT For All Prototypes



Communication Tools



Physical Infrastructures

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Wooden Model

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Jigsaws for Drawing



Data

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Access Ramp

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Accessibility Data on Google Maps





Prototype 1: Accessibility Data



*CBT U Thong,
Suphan Buri*

Pain point

Accessibility starts even before we leave our homes. Access to information is the very first step of our tourism journey: where to go, how to get there, where to stay, what activity to do, etc. For non-PWDs travelers, such information is available and provides the basis for our tourism decisions. On the contrary, it is much more difficult for PWDs travelers to find information that is crucial for them. Currently, many platforms have started to include 'accessibility' marking but the information is not always reliable. For instance, a place may be marked accessible because it has elevators and a ramp at the main entrance; but the information provider ignores a set of stairs leading to the elevators.



Our solution idea

Tourism information platforms such as Google Maps need to include photos and videos to show what the whole journey is like at the venue. As a prototype, we trained the local community to take photos and videos of their own CBT venues and upload them onto Google Maps.

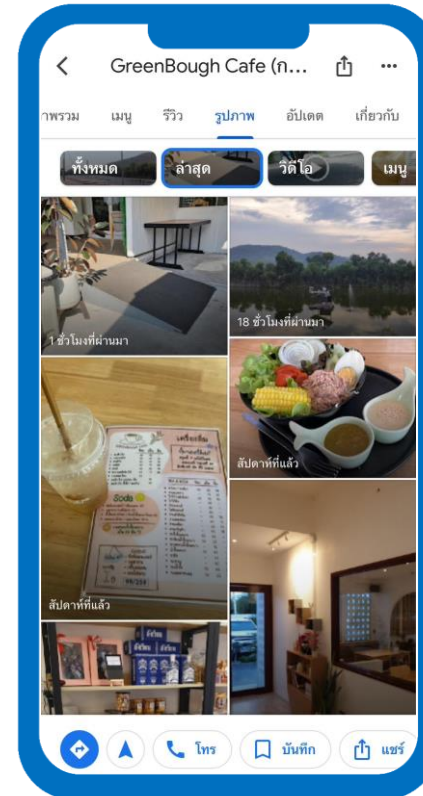
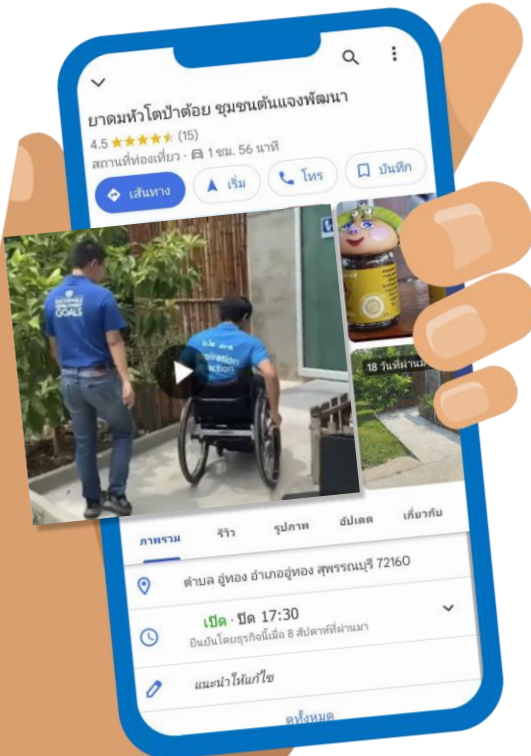


Prototype 1: Accessibility Data



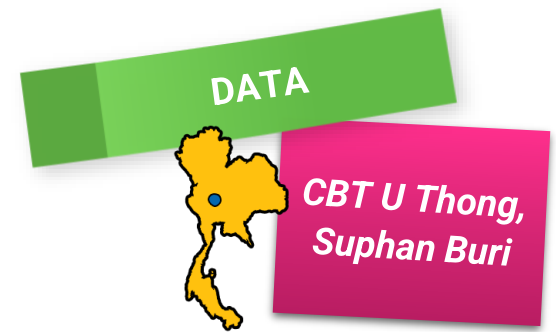
*CBT U Thong,
Suphan Buri*

Photos and videos of accessibility features
of CBT venues on Google Maps





Prototype 1: Accessibility Data



Our learning



- **Tapping into user's insight on the problem:** This is a prototype that truly comes out of user's insight. When we first learnt about the problem, we asked how PWDs travelers are dealing with this issue. Many shared that they have to go around searching user's review photos or Google Maps' street view to see actual conditions at the venues before making their decision. PWDs travelers need to see 'evidence' of what the venue is like. Both the problem and solution are already suggested by the user's behaviour.
- **Not fixating on a solution:** Producing the desirable information might be easy but the challenge is how to disseminate such information and ensure that it reaches the target users. One of the most common solutions nowadays is to create new applications or social media pages. However, as we considered user's perspective, we realized that a new application or social media page would not be the best solution as it requires the users to search for this new and specific platform. Why don't we integrate this information into an existing and widely adopted platform like Google Maps? That was how we arrived at our solution idea.
- **Letting the users decide for themselves:** In the current local context, it is rare to find a location that PWDs travelers can have a 100% smooth journey. Oftentimes, there are obstacles along the way e.g. small steps, ramps that are a bit too steep, etc. Engaging with PWDs travelers in our co-creation process, it was emphasized that the key is to disclose all these conditions – the supporting facilities as well as the obstacles. Because there are diverse types of PWDs, each person has different capabilities and needs to decide for themselves given their individual conditions. One PWDs might be able to handle a steep ramp on their own perfectly fine while another might need to consider traveling with a friend.

What's next



While trying to develop this prototype, we found that the uploads got pushed down as new posts came in, making it difficult for PWDs travelers to find the information right away. Gathering all accessibility photos and videos into a single album will make it much easier for PWDs users to find all information at once. This can be an area for collaboration with tourism information platform developers.





Prototype 2: Access Ramp


PHYSICAL
INSTRUCTURE



CBT Sukhothai,
Sukhothai

Pain point

Like many places, the amulet printing house of Sukhothai CBT includes a small house lifted from the ground. The room showcases traditional art pieces of Sukhothai and serves as a learning center on Sukhothai arts. Having a direct temporary experience using a wheelchair himself, the owner began to empathize with PWDs and created a ramp to enable access to the small house. Yet, the steel ramp painted in black neither complies with the standards nor blends in with the charming traditional architecture of the amulet printing house.

Our solution idea 

An access ramp needs to comply with national standards and is designed to blend in with the traditional architecture





Prototype 2: Access Ramp

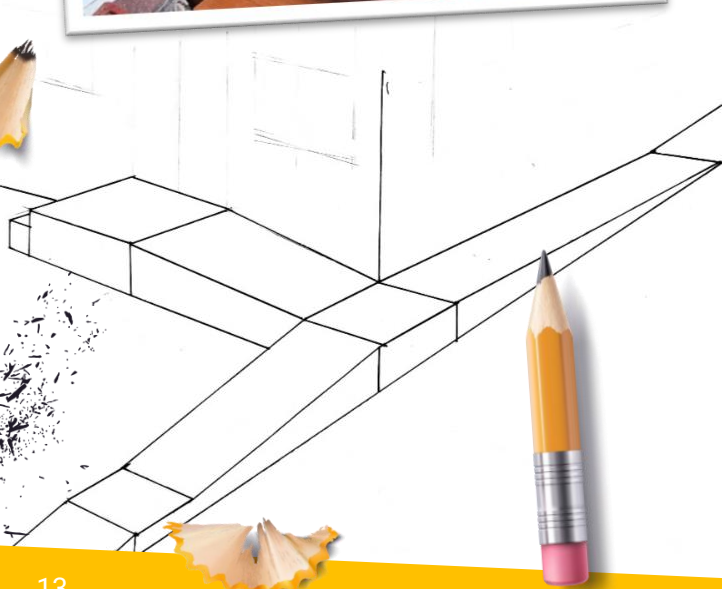
PHYSICAL
INSTRUCTURE



CBT Sukhothai,
Sukhothai

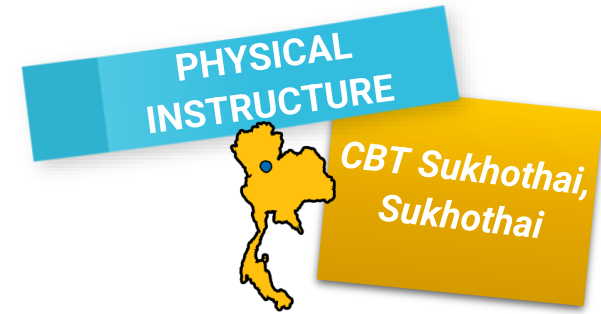


≤ 5° slope of the ramp





Prototype 2: Access Ramp



Our learning

- **Designing for inclusiveness:** To decrease the ramp's steepness, the first design idea was simply to extend the ramp's length by having it run from the front down to the right side of the house. However, our PWDs colleague pointed out that with this initial design, wheelchair users would have to go to the back to access the ramp while other people can enter from the front – making it rather divisive. The alternative user-led design is to re-construct the entire front entrance area as an 'inclusive pathway' that everyone, regardless of their different abilities, can use together.
- **Choosing harmonious design:** As much as we need to consider user's perspective, we also need to respect the opinion of the house's owner who wishes to maintain the traditional architecture. We needed to balance legal requirements and harmony with traditional architecture. This is crucial as CBT is built upon the expression of local identity. As part of this effort, we opted for wood-like flooring material and painted the handrail brown to ensure that the new accessibility addition blends in well with the traditional architecture.

What's next

Physical infrastructure improvement is an area that requires financial investments. Although the amount may not always be high, there needs to be a mechanism for local communities to mobilize support. Particularly in the CBT context, it is difficult to request government funding to invest in private property, so it is worth exploring collaboration with the private sector for more flexible funding.

- **Agreeing on the set of standards:** It is important to have all relevant stakeholders e.g. architect, construction contractor, house's owner, etc. agree on which set of standards to refer to. In Thailand's context, there are legal requirements and sets of guidelines by different institutes. Although they are mostly aligned, some details still vary. Agreeing on which sets of criteria to follow helps to minimize misalignments and adjustments along the way.





Prototype 3: PWDs-Friendly Toilet

PHYSICAL
INSTRUCTURE



CBT U Thong,
Suphan Buri

Pain point

Most toilets in CBT routes are not PWDs-friendly. The local people lack both the knowledge and financial resources to build PWDs-friendly toilets which are essential for the development of tourism for all. In the case of U Thong CBT, one of the stations recently renovated the toilet using a personal fund. A ramp and grip bars were put in place to make the toilet more PWDs friendly, but the installation of the equipment was incorrect and not in compliance with national standards.



Our solution idea

PWDs-friendly toilets must be made available in CBT routes. However, it is practically very difficult to make all community toilets accessible for PWDs, so CBT group needs to develop a route management model to accommodate PWDs travelers with a few PWDs-friendly toilets that they are able to make available.

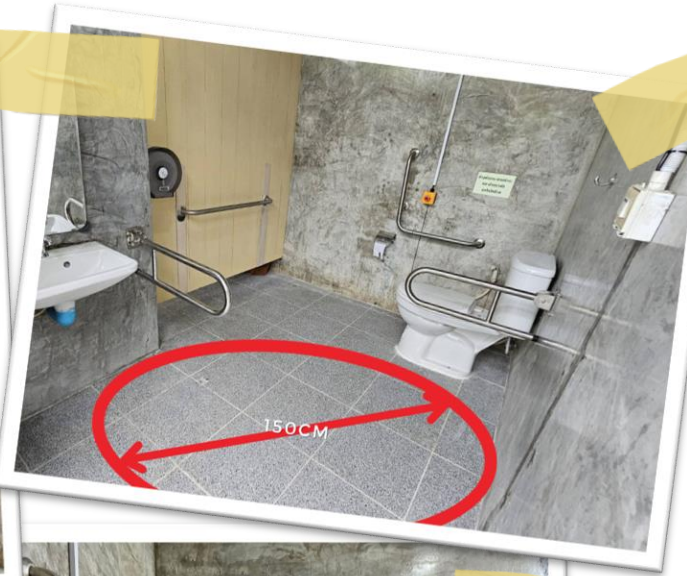


Prototype 3: PWDs-Friendly Toilet

PHYSICAL INSTRUCTURE



CBT U Thong, Suphan Buri





Prototype 3: PWDs-Friendly Toilet

PHYSICAL
INSTRUCTURE



CBT U Thong,
Suphan Buri



Connecting PWDs-friendly toilet with other CBT venues

Duration from



PWDs-Friendly Toilet at
Community Tourism Club Office

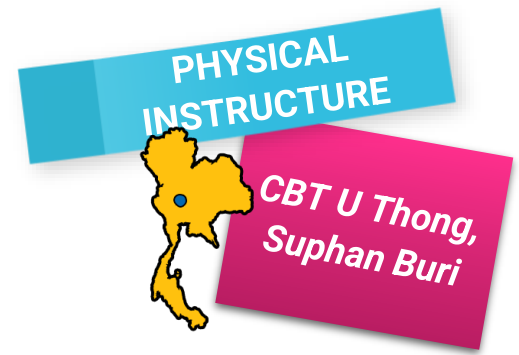
To

- 1 Luang Por U-Thong (9 minutes)
- 2 Baan Tumnan Din (4 minutes)
- 3 Buddha Image Making (15 minutes)
- 4 Baan Na Pha (7 minutes)
- 5 Green Bao Cafe (9 minutes)





Prototype 3: PWDs-Friendly Toilet



Our learning

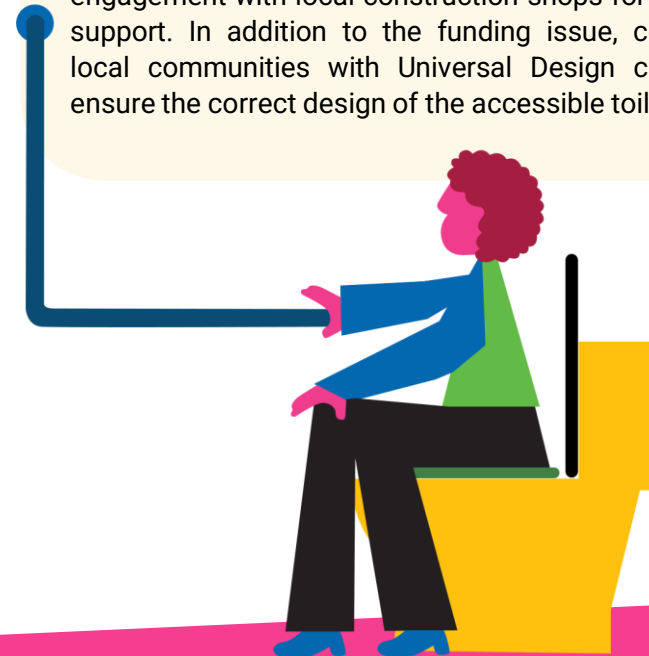


- **Building capacity of local construction team:** Despite the instruction given, many details of the construction and equipment installation did not comply with the standards; this reflects the limited understanding of the local construction team. Awareness raising and capacity building among construction teams will help advance the universal design agenda.
- **Finishing with user-led inspection:** Usually, accessibility facilities are constructed and inspected without the involvement of the users. Some details are overlooked as non-users do not realize their importance. In our case, we avoid this mistake by engaging PWDs representatives to inspect all the details and advise on what to improve with a clear explanation of their importance.
- **Combining infrastructure improvement and management:** Because CBT utilizes existing facilities in the local communities, there are limitations to the physical adjustments that can be made. In some cases, it is an issue of financial resources while in other cases, there is simply not enough physical space to make the facilities accessible. This is where we need to combine the management aspect e.g. CBT group needs to organize the route so that visitors can access the toilet upon arrival, after meals, or before departure, and communicate with them about toilet availability on the route.

What's next



Similar to the access ramp, PWDs-friendly toilets can benefit from the private sector support. Local communities can also explore crowdfunding and engagement with local construction shops for materials support. In addition to the funding issue, connecting local communities with Universal Design center will ensure the correct design of the accessible toilet.





Prototype 4: Wooden Model

COMMUNICATION
TOOL



CBT Sukhothai,
Sukhothai

Pain point



As a key historical and cultural tourism destination, the arts and architecture of Sukhothai are the main magnets that attract visitors here. There is a lot to share about this World Heritage Site. Currently, the most common communication method is verbal descriptions which make it very difficult for the blind to comprehend, or for children to remain interested - especially when describing the details of the unique architectural styles.

Our solution idea



Wooden bas-relief sculptures of Sukhothai iconic architecture, the three main styles of Sukhothai stupas, can be an effective communication tool for PWDs visitors. The models also create better engagement and serve as learning materials for children.



20 x 33 cm



Prototype 4: Wooden Model



Our learning



- **Building upon local craft:** With the idea of making bas-relief sculptures, we also thought of how to build upon local craft skills. Sukhothai is famous for delicate wooden sculptures, so we reached out to a local craftsman who does not only come with the carving skill but also a very thorough knowledge of traditional architecture. He is able to produce small-scale sculptures with highly accurate details and scaling. This way, the solution for PWDs also generates additional income for local community members and contributes to the conservation of local crafts.
- **Consider perspectives of all user groups:** From the PWDs visitor's perspective, bigger-sized sculptures might be preferable. However, PWDs are not the only users in this context. The sculptures are used by local guides to communicate with PWDs visitors, so their perspective also counts. Having the sculptures in medium size allows the guides to carry them to different locations e.g. they can explain the overall story of Sukhothai arts at the amulet printing house and carry the sculptures with them to the Historical Park for PWDs visitors to touch as they stand in front of the real stupas.

What's next



The prototype provides an example of inclusive communication. Although we developed the prototypes in the CBT context, it will be very beneficial to make such solutions available everywhere e.g. information stations at historical sites, museums, etc.





Prototype 5: Jigsaws for Drawing

COMMUNICATION
TOOL

CBT Sukhothai,
Sukhothai

Pain point

Another highlight of Sukhothai is the traditional drawing, the so-called Sangkhalok style. Sukhothai CBT curates an activity for visitors to try drawing Sangkhalok-style fish. Since drawing typically relies so much on the visual, it is challenging to adjust this activity for visitors with visual impairment.

Our solution idea

A combination of acrylic stencil and clay jigsaws can be used to assist the blind in the drawing activity. While the acrylic stencil frames the outline, the clay jigsaws show different parts inside the Sangkhalok-style fish. Together, they guide the blind to draw the fish with full details.





Prototype 5: Jigsaws for Drawing



Our learning



- **Believing in the creativity of the local community:** At first, we almost considered this activity unsuitable for visitors with visual impairment given its reliance on the ability to see and copy the template. The local facilitator did not give up and explored different techniques to make the drawing possible for the blind. Initially, she utilized her old tools such as fish-shaped cardboard paper and acrylic stencil to guide the drawing of the fish outline. However, it remained impossible to guide the drawing of the details inside the fish. Instead of settling on the outline drawing, she continued exploring and finally came up with clay jigsaws that could guide the blind to draw different sections inside the fish outline. Her technique allows people with visual impairment to draw Sangkhalok-style fish with full details.

What's next



The clay jigsaws have proven to successfully guide the drawing, but the material is easily breakable. The next step is to explore different locally available materials for the jigsaws. The technique can also be shared and applied in other contexts to enable the blind to enjoy drawing activities.



If you enjoy learning about our co-creation journey, give it a try!
You will be surprised how working with the users and key stakeholders can lead to innovative solutions that may have never crossed your mind before.
Small changes in understanding can create a lot of changes and impact many lives.

Inclusive tourism development needs our joint efforts.

We need these improvements and the change of mindsets upscaled and replicated in many other destinations.
We also need to translate our efforts on the ground into policies that foster inclusive tourism nationwide.

If you are someone who cherishes traveling experiences like we do,
let's transform our tourism landscape so that it can be enjoyed by everyone!



PRODUCED BY



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PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH

- Designed Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration
- Nutt's Adventures
- Siam Rise
- Sukhothai Community-Based Tourism
- U Thong Community-Based Tourism



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