

# **Awareness and Education Programs for Coral Reefs Conservation in Mu Koh Chang National Park, Thailand**

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Mu Koh Chang is located in the eastern part of the Gulf of Thailand. There are about 60 islands in the area which harbour approximately 16 km<sup>2</sup> of coral reefs. An estimated 30% of the coral reef areas are within the jurisdiction of Mu Koh Chang National Park which was established in 1982. Mu Koh Chang was selected as one of the demonstration sites for coral reef subcomponent under the UNEP/GEF Project on Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand. The degradation of coral reefs in Mu Koh Chang has been recognized. The causal chain analysis of Mu Koh Chang revealed that lacks of awareness and ecological knowledge are important root causes of coral reef degradation. Several activities have been implemented for raising public awareness and education programs; i) produce permanent notice boards, brochures and posters for raising awareness on coral reefs; ii) training courses of marine ecosystem and its sustainable utilization for local students, tour guides, tourism businessmen and local communities; iii) broadcast knowledge of coral reefs ecosystem on local radio, television and web site; iv) produce coral reef ecosystem conservation handbooks for schools, universities, local libraries, stakeholders and involved institutions; v) develop education media on biodiversity. Public participation and involvement are very significant factors for the success of project implementation in the national park.

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