



Good Practice Story Title:

Co-Creating Mao'ao: Transformative Dialogue Among Stakeholders

Destination: NEYC - Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area

Country: Taiwan(Republic of China)

Submitting Organization: Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area Headquarters, Tourism Administration, M.T.C

Category *(check only one box):*

- ☒ Destination Management
- ☐ Nature & Scenery
- ☐ Environment & Climate
- ☐ Culture & Tradition
- ☐ Thriving Communities
- ☐ Business & Marketing

Destination description (150-200 words)

Mao'ao is a small fishing village on Taiwan's northeastern coast, near the island's easternmost point, San Diego, located in front of Mao'ao bay and is part of North East and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area(NEYC). With a resident population density of about 95 people per square kilometer, the village is known for its stone houses, traditional fishing culture, intertidal ecology, coastal waters, and fresh seafood.

In 2012, the Old Caoling Circle-Lined Bikeway began passing through Mao'ao bay and the nearby Old Caoling Tunnel attracts around 240,000 visitors annually, bringing in some tourism to the area.

In 2019, government-led regional tourism policies raised concerns among residents. In response, the community organized efforts to preserve the village's cultural and natural landscape. This action brought greater public attention to Mao'ao Bay and encouraged local tourism growth.

Today, there are 11 local businesses along the Mao'ao bay, including restaurants, B&B, shops, and activities offered include diving, ecological and cultural tours, and traditional fishing practices experience.

Summary of Good Practice Story (150-200 words)

In 2019, the residents of the Mao'ao area united in opposition to government-led regional tourism policies, such as road construction and the establishment of a yacht harbor. This movement fostered a strong local awareness around protecting the fishing village. As a result, they formed an association dedicated to preserving the landscape of Mao'ao Fishing Village. In response to tourism-related disruptions, lack of facilities, and the need for sustainable development, NEYC began involving its staff in local volunteer efforts for regular environmental maintenance. This hands-on engagement helped reopen dialogue between residents and authorities, aiming to build a collaborative model where government and community members jointly identify needs and co-manage public services.

From 2021 to 2024, NEYC and local stakeholders worked together through continued dialogue to shape Ma'ao's development. This process led to the creation of the "Ma'ao Story Experience Park" — a community co-created space that integrates local culture, ecology, and tourism. Now managed by local groups, the park features guided tours and interactive experiences designed to encourage resident participation and foster a tourism model rooted in community identity.

Issues faced (150-200 words)

NEYC faced the following challenges in promoting tourism development in the Ma'ao area:

1. Government-led policy triggered local resistance: Since 1991, plans to build a yacht harbor in Ma'ao Bay aimed to boost tourism, but residents opposed the project due to environmental concerns and potential disruption to fishing routes. Miscommunication during the planning adjustments eventually led to a protest by residents in 2019.
2. Tourist Activities Impact on resident daily life: Increased attention and cycling events drew more visitors than the area's limited infrastructure could support. Public restrooms, pavilions, and even local schools became overcrowded, placing stress on public facilities. With insufficient parking near the main road, many tourists drove into the village seeking spaces, intruding on residential areas and affecting daily routines. The rise in tourism also spurred more restaurants, which contributed to increased waste and oil-contaminated water, impacting the local environment.

In conclusion, the key challenge was finding a balance between developing tourism and minimizing its impact on the local community's daily life.

Solution (100-150 words)

1. Changing the Traditional Communication Model: NEYC shifted away from top-down dialogue by having its staff join local volunteer groups in regular community environmental maintenance. This hands-on approach fostered direct communication and encouraged broader stakeholder participation. Through these volunteer activities, the community and stakeholders could better understand each other's needs, build consensus, and establish shared goals.
2. Creating a Community-Based Proposal Mechanism: A participatory proposal system was developed to engage residents in shaping regional tourism plans.
3. Promoting Community-Led Management: The ultimate goal is for the community to take the lead in managing public service facilities. By integrating local ecological and cultural characteristics, a collaborative development space can be created. Guided tours are used as an entry point to encourage resident participation and to develop tourism business models that reflect the unique identity of the Mao'ao Fishing Village.

Methods, Steps, and Tools applied (500-600 words)

1. Transforming Traditional Dialogue through Weekly Joint Volunteer Activities: Since July 2021, NEYC personnel have participated in weekly volunteer work alongside local residents, laying the groundwork for long-term communication, collaboration, and community-led operations. Every Wednesday, about nine volunteers from both the government and the community jointly clean and maintain unused spaces, abandoned terraced fields, and trails. These regular efforts created a platform for ongoing interaction. As of August 2022, local volunteers began independently

continuing these maintenance activities, demonstrating a growing sense of community ownership and initiative.

2. **Building Local Consensus-Workshops and Community Input:** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ma'ao Fishing Village had already developed a variety of tourism activities, including experiences of traditional fishing practices, dining, and water-based recreation such as snorkeling. With changes in travel behavior due to the pandemic, NEYC conducted a comprehensive resource inventory between March 2022 and June 2023. Through workshops and discussion sessions with local authorities, schools, associations, and tourism businesses, NEYC gathered feedback to craft post-pandemic tourism development strategies. These discussions led to the proposal of a new cultural and ecological experience zone in Ma'ao Bay—the “Ma'ao Story Experience Park.” Meetings held on August 10 and 18, 2022, and December 14, 2023, focused on repurposing idle public land, including plans for a new parking facility. The proposed " Ma'ao Story Experience Park " will feature restored terraced fields, stone houses, and exhibits highlighting traditional lifestyles. The construction process included co-creation by residents. In 2023, NEYC collaborated with local community volunteers on landscape art projects, painting and placing abandoned small fishing boats from Mao'ao Bay in an empty lot next to an existing parking area, creating a distinctive photo spot reflecting the local character.
3. **Participatory Proposal Mechanism to Support Regional Tourism:** Since 2021, NEYC has encouraged tourism stakeholders to submit proposals for facility improvements, itinerary development, or tourism product upgrades. Selected proposals receive partial funding to enhance visitor services across the region. Between 2021 and 2024, NEYC supported four local projects, including upgrading Gelidium jelly products, which also supported a communal meal program for the elderly. Developing seasonal tour packages linking the fishing village located in Ma'ao bay, Ma'ao and Magang, with bilingual guided tours. And create hands-on experiences using marine debris.
4. **With community-led operations and management:** NEYC and the local community engaged in extensive dialogue to reach a shared vision. Through this collaborative process, they decided to establish a tourism experience park and a parking lot to address the area's growing tourism and transportation needs. Once construction was completed, local organizations or businesses took over the operations and management of these facilities. The “Ma'ao Story Experience Park” was developed under community leadership, with a planned visitor route that integrates ecological and cultural guided activities, forming a platform that reflects the rhythms of local life and the principles of sustainable tourism. To deepen community engagement, NEYC launched a local guide training program between 2022 and 2023, offering 40 hours of training to tour guides, cultural historians, and local shop owners. The program aimed to enhance their understanding and communication of the area's landscape, ecology, and culture. Additionally, a trial community tour linking Ma'ao and neighboring Magang Fishing Village was organized, inviting

18 travel industry professionals to participate—serving as an experiment in developing a future model for community-led tourism.

Achievements and Results (250-300 words)

1. The “Ma'ao Story Experience Park”, established by NEYC in collaboration with the local community, was awarded Honorable Mention in the “Park/Green Space & Public Open Space” category at the 2024 12th Taiwan Landscape Awards. Between 2022 and 2024, NEYC held two workshops, one briefing session, and three engineering design discussion meetings, with a total of 94 stakeholder attendances. Based on extensive discussions with residents, the park integrates traditional water terraces, an ecological zone, and stone houses. By repurposing underused land with minimal impact on the landscape, NEYC designed a tourism route that connects key local attractions. The park includes new visitor facilities and offers eco-education and cultural tours, promoting local participation in tourism services.
2. As of 2025, the local association in Ma’ao Bay operates a series of paid, reservation-based guided experiences. These include three intertidal and traditional fishing practices tours, and six walking tours, priced from NT\$250 to NT\$850 per person for groups of 10. Four travel agencies, including two with sustainability certifications, have incorporated these experiences into five commercial tour packages.
3. The “Ma'ao Story Experience Park” has drawn external support for conservation and cultural efforts of Ma'ao bay. On April 12, 2025, the Taiwan Forestry Research Institute hosted a local market in Ma’ao, partnering with the Forestry Bureau, Fisheries Research Institute, and community groups such as the San Diego Cape Cultural Association and Magang Intertidal Survey Team. The event featured native seedling giveaways and plant tours.
4. Since its opening in September 2024, the “Ma'ao Story Experience Park” has welcomed 13,105 visitors by March 2025.

Lessons Learned and Advice (150-200 words)

1. In areas where residents have strong awareness and community cohesion, the government promotes tourism by positioning local residents as the primary operators of public service facilities. Meaningful dialogue, communication, and collaboration with the community are essential to ensuring the sustainable development of tourism.
2. By developing local tourism activities that offer paid experiences for visitors, communities can establish self-managed operational models. This not only strengthens residents’ cultural identity but also helps preserve fishing village traditions in diverse ways. Over time, such efforts can attract young people to return and encourage newcomers to engage in local life.
3. The newly established paid parking lot has a low usage rate and has not alleviated the parking issues for visitors as expected. How to guide visitor traffic flow and encourage use of designated

parking areas, along with whether to restrict vehicles from entering the village for parking, requires further dialogue and communication with stakeholders.

Recognitions and Additional References

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1c2qk0Ddb77ZcV5mO8f4fuTDx6i8o38vz?usp=drive_link

Submission Report “Ma'ao Story Experience Park” for the 2024 12th Taiwan Landscape Awards(In Chinese).

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdIRnvLuvordxLrB7uqBKKJOSfPRHDwrAGV_ZmPEMTkenYDYA/viewform

Introduction to the Ma'ao Bay Community Tour Program and Online Reservation Form (Form in Chinese).

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1weFA2uitwG-Sc7Qw6c3YiN5CgssAczEj?usp=drive_link

Package tours from travel agencies in Taiwan.

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/579771547770509>

The reel of the local market hold in Ma'ao Story Experience Park on April 12, 2025.