

# **From the Silk Cloth Improvement in the Shared Culture of the Lower Area of the Northeastern Provincial Group to the Designing of Contemporary Souvenirs**

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## **Abstract**

This article is a part of the research project of designing and improving silk cloths in the shared culture to develop competencies of community and community members of the lower area of the northeastern provincial group: a case study of Buriram Province. 2 objectives are to study basic information regarding silk products in Buriram Province and then use the information as supplementary in designing and developing the souvenir products and develop, improve products and create the souvenir prototype according to the study of silk products made in Buriram Province, to create economic values for the community.

The Researcher has selected the product type for further development to be Contemporary Souvenirs by Silk. Moreover, to find out the dimensions of local wisdom and culture of Buriram Province in order to analyze the local identity and connect the creative products with the aspects of design, product development, and souvenir design.

**Keywords:** Silk, Contemporary souvenirs, Northeastern provincial group

## **Introduction**

According to the development plan for the lower area, 1 of the northeastern provincial group, the name of Nakhon-Chai-bu-rin concept means the area which covers the 4 provinces: Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Chaiyaphum Province, Buriram Province, and Surin Province. This northeastern provincial group has its civilization which has been thriving for more than 4,000 years, involving the era of the Dvaravati Kingdom, stone castle, and the Lan Xang Kingdom; their cultures, heritages, and wisdom are passed on to people nowadays. In addition, the Royal Thai Government has issued policies to promote and support the local group of Nakhon-Chai-Bu-Rin to become the center of sub-economy in the Mekong River Region, which emphasizes agricultural industry, silk cloth, cultural tourism, and border trades. Moreover, the Ministry of Culture supports cultural heritages and wisdom, so it has announced that Nakhon Ratchasima Province is the city of arts. Cultural streets are opened in the Nakhon-

Chai-Bu-Rin Provincial Group. As a result, 13,298,500 tourists visited the Nakhon Chai Bu Rin Provincial group district, bringing an economic value of 27,311 million baht to the district (Ministry of Culture, 2018).

Silk cloths made in the Nakhon-Chai-Bu-Rin Provincial Group of the lower part of northeastern provinces are well-crafted and delicate. Moreover, stories, ways of life, beliefs, and local wisdom are underlying in the silk cloths. Local wisdom, production processes, and silk cloth techniques have been passed on from generation to generation. Consequently, the patterns of silk cloths in different districts of the Nakhon-Chai-Bu-Rin Provincial Group have different designs due to different environments, raw materials, and beliefs.

The development guideline for promoting the competencies of communities and local areas in “the 21st century” should involve the support of participation and promotion of community competencies in terms of the development process and promotion of public participation in the region and suburb. In addition, opportunities are opened for people to develop competencies in problem solving and management by themselves for their benefit, family, and community benefits. Furthermore, the allocation of development can be fully and thoroughly met and responded to. The development in the future will focus on the strengthening of communities in the region and suburbs in order to create self-sustainability. The stable community economy is considered the leader and base for leveraging income level and quality of life in the future. The private business sector, private development organizations, and public organizations must step in to support the roles and responsibilities of the government sector, which is the previous developmental supporter. This combines competencies in the development and leads to the community and local strengths with stability, wealth, and sustainability (Anucha Muangyai, 2016).

According to the content above, the project of designing and improving silk cloths in the shared culture to develop competencies of community and community members of the lower area of the northeastern provincial group (Nakhon-Chai-Bu-Rin Provincial Group): a case study of Buriram Province is the project which helps to promote the silk products to be created with patterns that comply with the needs of the market by sticking to the concepts and local wisdom of the region. Moreover, the project is developed in collaboration with the villagers under the consideration of the productive competencies of the villager group in order to meet the goals of the development plan for the lower area of the northeastern provincial group 1, categorized by the Royal Thai Government which creates more distribution channels for products made with local wisdom that meet the needs of tourism, heading to the way of becoming Thailand 4.0.

### **Research objectives**

1. To study basic information regarding silk products in Buriram Province, and then use the information as supplementary in designing and developing the souvenir products.
2. To develop, improve products and create the souvenir prototype according to the study of silk products made in Buriram Province, to create economic values for the community.

### Scope of research

1. Scope of area: The area of study is the cotton and silk textile group at Baan Koon, Moo 7, Buriram Province.

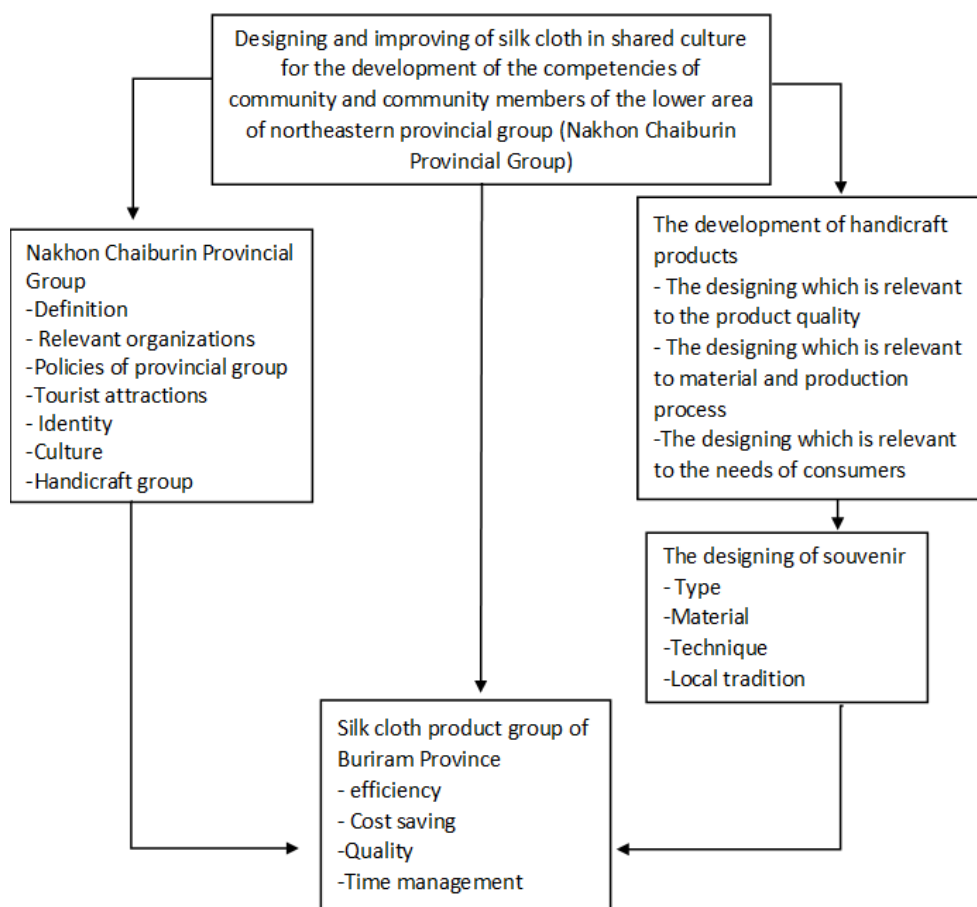
2. Scope of sampling population: People who provide information are comprised of local textile entrepreneurs in Buriram Province, experts in local wisdom and culture of Buriram Province, and the handicraft group.

3. Scope of content and steps of study plan

3.1 To study basic information of local textiles, traditions, arts, and cultures of Buriram Province, including the information on cultural tourism searched from documents, research, and information by local experts.

3.2 To study information from the field survey in order to gain information on silk cloths, the production process, traditions, arts, and cultures that are important and related to the living and socio-cultural conditions of Buriram Province.

3.3 To find out the dimensions of local wisdom and culture of Buriram Province in order to analyze the local identity and connect the creative products with the aspects of design, product development, and souvenir design.



**Figure 1** Research Conceptual Framework

### **Methodology of research implementation and research tools**

The research to study silk cloths of Buriram Province that create local identity toward the center of the lower area of northeastern cultural tourism is considered qualitative research, which applies experimental research methodology. Data and information are searched from the study of documents, textbooks, and relevant research, and expert interviews. The gained data and information are used, experimented with, and studied before conducting the designing process. The researcher conducts the study, details as below.

#### **Research methodology**

1. Study and collect data and information from documents, books, research, and academic articles related to silk and a cotton cloth weaving, traditions, and cultural arts of Buriram Province.

2. Study and collect data and information from the field study of cotton and silk weaving group of 10 people living at Baan Koon, Moo 7, Buriram Province. Experts of local wisdom and culture of Buriram Province are asked and interviewed to find out particular local identities of Buriram Province. The research methodology involves:

2.1 Interview Method: Applying in-depth interviews and group Interviews;

2.2 Observation Method: Covering the local cloth weaving, ways of life, and culture of people in the community, which blend with the contemporary souvenirs; and

2.3 Study and analysis of information on concepts and theories in local wisdom development by applying creativity and theories in cultural tourism development.

3. Quantitative research has steps as below.

3.1 Study relevant documents and research to create local identities and wisdoms of local woven cloths and promote cultural tourism.

3.2 Experiment and create concepts with creativity to search for and create particular local identities of local woven cloths of Buriram Province, toward the becoming of the center of cultural tourism in the lower area of the northeastern region.

3.3 Survey opinions of the sampling group of experts in cultural tourism.

4. Determine population and sampling group

The population in the research means the entrepreneurs who make local woven cloths in Buriram Province, experts in local wisdom and culture of Buriram Province, experts in local woven cloths and experts in cultural tourism.

#### **Data collection**

The researcher has to collect data and information in 2 parts.

**1. Data and information from the theoretical part:** Data and information are collected from relevant documents, textbooks, and research searched from libraries, electronic databases, and online databases that have information on the relevant area, **concepts relevant to product design, and concepts relevant to souvenir design.**

**2. Data and information from the field study:** The field study is conducted to ask questions to relevant people. Research tools include an information recording form, camera, and voice recorder. Data and information are collected in terms of highlights in tourism.

2.1 Interviews are conducted in various types, such as structural and non-structural interviews, in-depth interviews, and sub-group conversations to access the in-depth information.

2.2 Observations are made in terms of participant observation and non-participant observation.

2.3 Questionnaires are used with the silk cloth weaving group, and cultural tourism experts to gain information on Buriram Province, community products, and handicraft producer group in Buriram Province. Then, the data and information regarding the community products and the cotton and silk cloth weaving group living in Baan Koon, Moo 7, Buriram Province, are analyzed. The information on the product prototype making has been experimented with, and information recordings are made in the recording forms. Then, an analysis and summary are made on the right products for development.

### **Study results**

#### **1) Study the basic information of products made by the silk cloth product group of Buriram Province and use the information gained to design and develop souvenirs.**

According to the research objective item 1, which is to study the basic information of products made by the silk cloth product group of Buriram Province, the gained information is used as supplementary in designing and developing souvenirs. The researcher has conducted a field study in the study area of the silk cloth product group in Buriram Province. Data and information are analyzed with the SWOT analysis tool.

##### Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat Analysis (SWOT Analysis)

##### *1. (S) Strength of silk products of Buriram Province*

1.1 The silk cloth product group of Buriram Province joins the silk cloth weaving network (relative network), so the group can produce silk cloths to meet the market's needs.

1.2 Inside the group, apart from silk cloth weaving, skilled laborers can make processed silk cloth products to promote the distribution of silk cloth products in other forms.

1.3 The silk cloth products of the group are certified with the peacock symbol, which means the guarantee of the silk cloth quality, production process, raw material, natural color, and having the certificate of the community product standard compliance.

1.4 The decorative patterns of the silk cloths of the group are well-known in the aspect of identities of plain-woven cloth (Pa Tor Lai Kad) and red-footed Sin cloth (Pa Sin Teen Dang).

1.5 Apart from other silk cloth products, the group makes other textiles, such as hand-woven cotton cloth and mats.

1.6 People in the group have good attitudes, and are ready to learn how to extend silk cloth products to other products.

## 2. (W) Weakness of silk cloth products of Buriram Province

2.1 The processed silk cloth products have patterns, and lesser in amounts, so they do not meet the needs of the new market.

2.2 Some details of the silk cloth products are not well made and not finished.

2.3 There is no group branding.

## 3. (O) Opportunity of silk products of Buriram Province

3.1 Neighboring provinces still have demands in buying silk cloths of the group for distribution, transformation, and processing into other products.

3.2 Knowledge dissemination, promotion, and silk cloth quality inspection are made by the Queen Sirikit Department of Sericulture and the Buriram Provincial Industry Office.

3.3 The policies by the Royal Thai Government are issued regularly to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

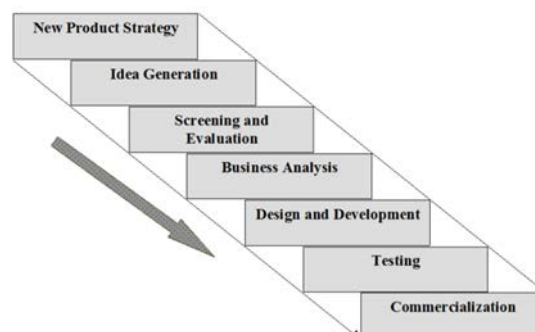
3.4 More online channels for product distribution are initiated in order to create more opportunities, more customers, and more sales.

## 4. (T) Threat of silk products of Buriram Province

The spreading of COVID-19 impacts the number of tourists and reduces the sales of products.

## 2) Develop, improve products and create the souvenir prototype according to the study of silk cloth products made in Buriram Province.

According to the research objective item 2, which is to develop, improve products and create the souvenir prototype according to the study of silk products made in Buriram Province, to create economic values for the community and develop the community competencies, the researcher uses SWOT Analysis from item 4.1 to analyze information for the development of silk cloth product. The most important thing is the strength of silk is its unique local patterns. Unique products from fabric patterns that reflect the local community. However, there is still a weakness of the original product, which is too little processing. Only clothes to wear, therefore, it is necessary to use silk to be processed into other products. which the author applies the concepts in new product development by Booz, Allen & Hamilton (1982) with the study, as shown below.



### *1. New Product Strategy*

Before the researcher studies, the basic information of the silk cloth product group of Buriram Province, the researcher has planned the product strategy as follows.

- 1.1 The product producer group has potential in production.
- 1.2 Products can be sold quickly and be accessible to customers of every gender.
- 1.3 Products must not be varied in size.
- 1.4 Each product must use less cloth.
- 1.5 Products can be sold in a set of collections.

### *2. Idea generation*

After the researcher has entered into the area of study to study the basic information of the silk cloth product group of Buriram Province, the researcher selects the products that match the new product strategy. The selected products are hats and bags because the producer can make these products that every gender can use. Hats and bags do not have many sizes, and they require less silk cloth compared to other products in terms of silk cloth ratio and profits.



**Figure 2** Products of cotton and silk cloths of Baan Koon





**Figure 3** Baan None Dang Silk Cloth Weaving Group

### *3. Screening*

After selecting the products, the researcher has planned the concepts of the 2 currently popular product types.

3.1 Urban contemporary type: This product type must match urban life. The urban bag must be made to carry items used in daily urban life. Such items are laptop computers and documents. In addition, the urban hat must look trendy and can be worn conveniently during rush hours.

3.2 Outdoor contemporary type: This product type has to be suitable for the weather and can create an adventurous feeling. Moreover, the outdoor stylish bag must be able to carry items for travel, such as clothes, and body cleaning and washing items. The stylish outdoor hat must prevent sunlight in all directions and has air ventilating properties.

### *4. Business Analysis*

After the researcher has planned the types of the products, the researcher uses the information from the field study and the sampling group interviews to analyze the business made between the producer group and the customer group, as below.

4.1 Producer group: The producer group owns the raw materials of silk and cotton weaved cloths, which have decorative patterns with identities. These clothes have properties of heat ventilation, and beautiful and bright colors. In addition, the producer group



lives in a province with tourist attractions and the potential to produce products according to given prototypes.

4.2 Customer group: Most customers are fond of silk and hand- woven products. Some customers in the neighboring provinces come to the area to take the processed silk cloth products for further distribution. No customer group is a group of tourists interested in the products and there is no online distribution channel.

The researcher selects contemporary outdoor products for the business analysis summary because the producer has good-quality raw materials, colorful decorative patterns, well- ventilating properties, and productive potential. However, the products do not meet the needs of customers who are tourists. The product producers live in a province that has natural tourist attractions. The products are suitable for traveling use.

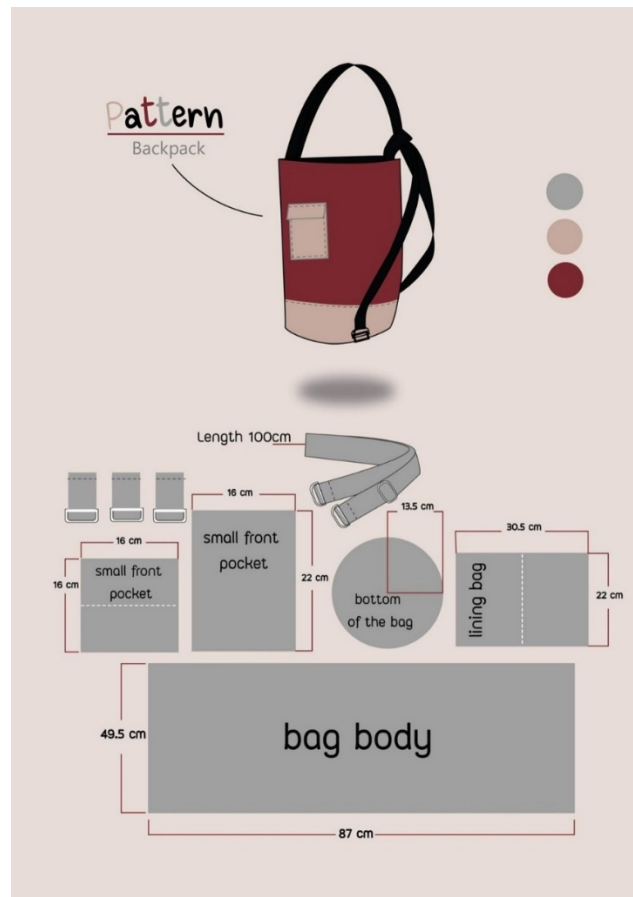
### *5. Development*

After selecting the product type for further development, the researcher makes product outlines using a computer program and then creates cutting patterns for distributing to the sampling group. Relevant Figures are shown below.

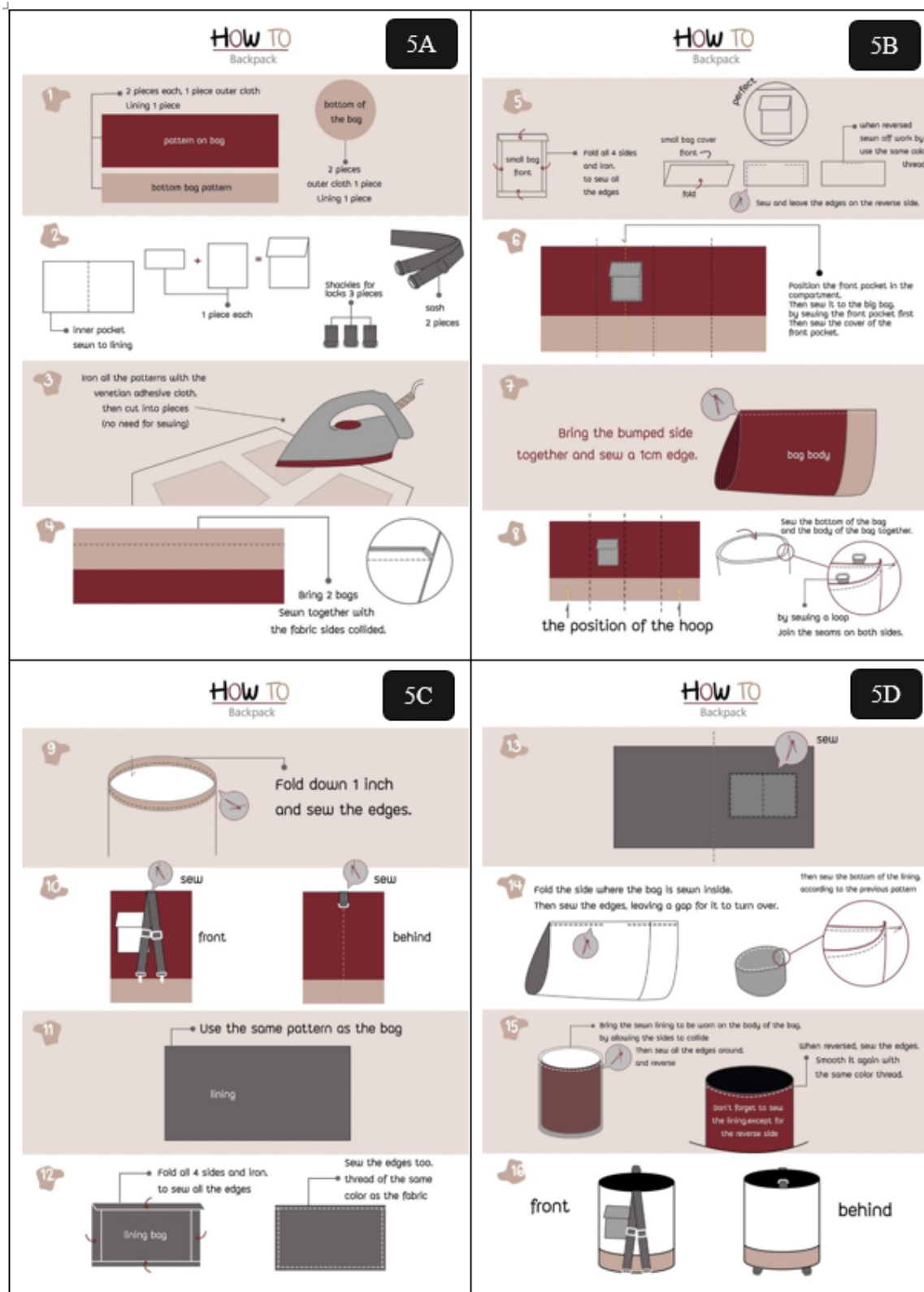
#### *5.1 Steps in bag making*

- 1) Prepare materials, the bag body, bag slip, bag bottom, and 2 bag straps.
  - 2) Prepare materials, small frontal bag, the lid of small frontal bag, internal bag sown with the slip, 3 layered locks.
  - 3) Iron all patterns with the taping cloth and cut them into pieces.
  - 4) Sew the 2 bag pieces together by their sides of the same decorative patterns.
  - 5) Fold the small bag on its 4 frontal sides and then iron it to be ready for the rim sewing. Fold the small frontal bags. Then, take the other side of the bag out and finish the bag by sewing with a thread the same color as the bag.
  - 6) Place the frontal bag in the correct area and sew it with the big bag. Sewing the frontal bag first and then sewing the lid of the frontal bag.
  - 7) Join the bag body and sew the rim for 1 cm.
  - 8) Sew the bag bottom with the bag body together. I was sewing the joining loops with the 2 sides of the thread stitches according to mark the position.
  - 9) Fold the bag for 1 inch and then sew the rim.
  - 10) Sew the strap with the bag in the frontal and back parts.
  - 11) Prepare the bag slip, using the same pattern as the bag.
  - 12) Fold the 4 sides of the bag and iron them for sewing all rims. Then, sew the rims on the side, which has the same color as the cloth.
  - 13) Sew the small bag with the big bag.
  - 14) Fold the side sown with the bag inside and then sew the rim. Leave space for bringing the other side of the bag out.
  - 15) Take the sown slip to put on the bag body by matching the right sides together. Then, sew all the rims around the bag and bring the other side out.
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16) When taking the other side out, sew the rims to finish the bag using the same-colored thread.



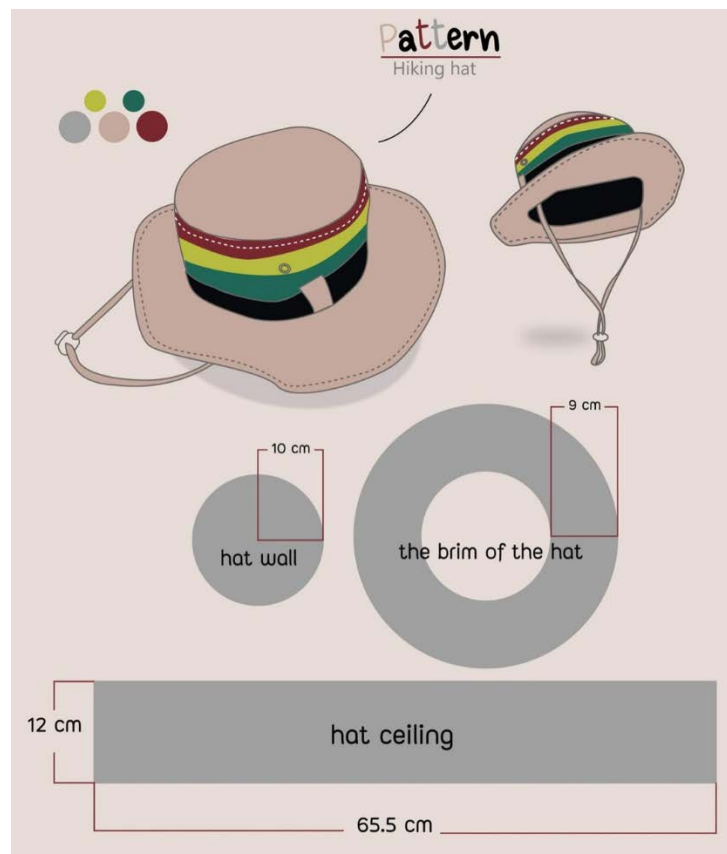
**Figure 4** Cutting patterns for a backpack



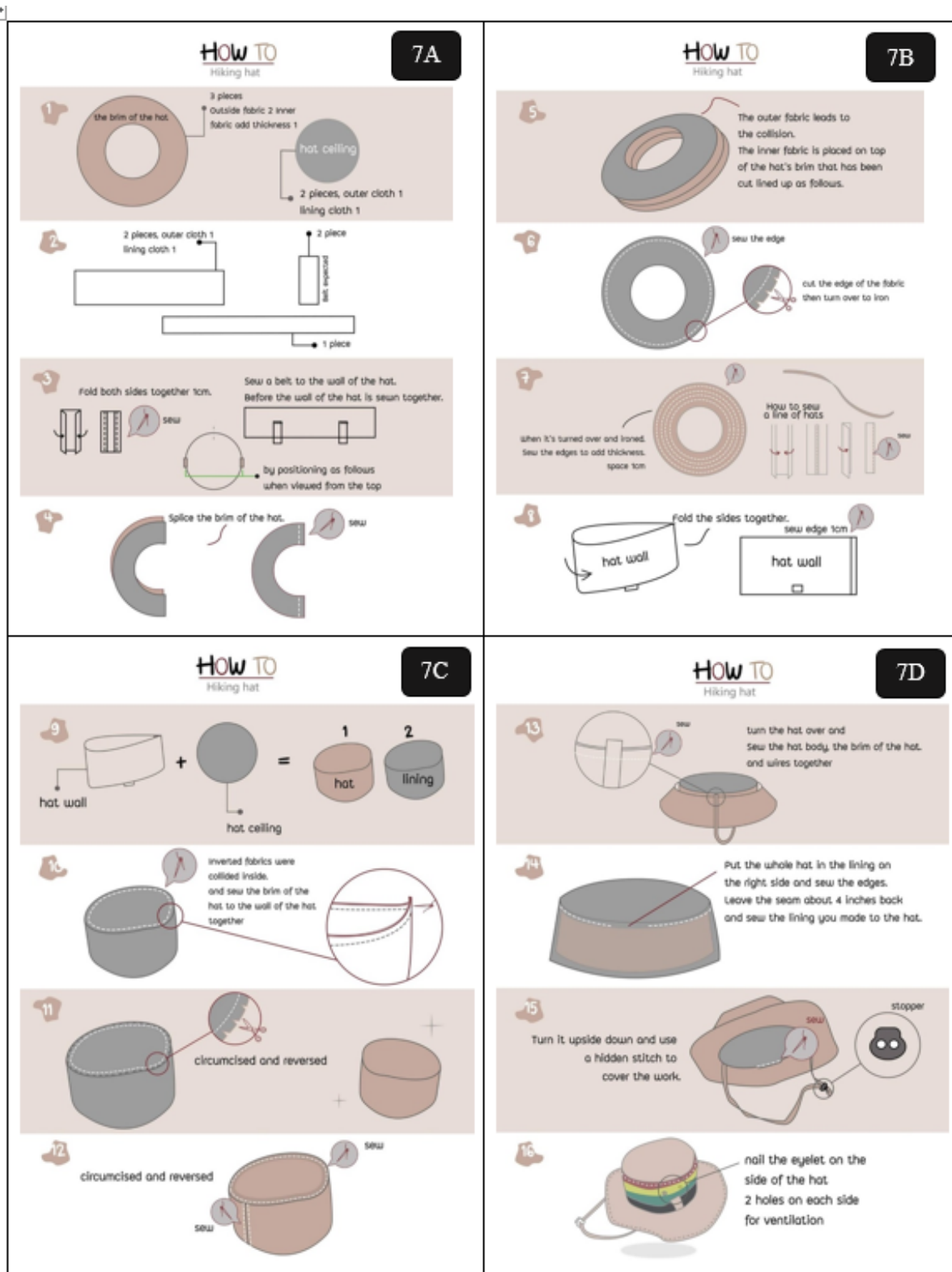
**Figure5** (5A) Steps in making a backpack 1-4 (5B) Steps in making a backpack 5-8 (5C) Steps in making a backpack 9-12 (D) Steps in making a backpack 13-16

### 5.2 Steps in hat making

- 1) Prepare the 3 pieces of the flat donut part for the hat's brim (2 pieces of outside cloth and 1 piece of inside cloth for increasing the thickness), and 2 pieces of elongated rectangular band part for the hat's sides (1 piece of outside cloth and 1 piece of slip)
- 2) Prepare the 2 pieces of flat oval top part for the hat's crown (1 piece of outer cloth and 1 slip) and 2 pieces of decorative cloth.
- 3) Sew the decorative cloth as the base for stitching with the flat oval top for the hat's crown. Sewing clothes together for 1 cm before sewing the flat oval top part. Place cloths in the same position when viewing from the top.
- 4) Sew the flat donut parts for the hat's brim together.
- 5) Place the flat donut parts for the hat's brim in order. Take the outer cloth to meet the inside, which is placed precisely.
- 6) Sew the rims, trim the edges of cloths and take the cloth side out for ironing.
- 7) After removing the cloth side and ironing it, trim the edges and leave a space of 1 cm. Sew the hat straps together by joining the 2 pieces of strap cloths together.
- 8) Fold the flat oval top part for the hat's crown and sew the rim for 1 cm.
- 9) Prepare the flat oval top of the hat's crown and the elongated rectangular part of the hat's sides, both natural hat cloth, and slip.
- 10) Take the side of the cloth out to meet with the other piece of cloth. Then, sew the flat donut part for the hat's brim with the flat oval top part for the hat's crown.
- 11) Trim and take the slip side out.
- 12) Sew the details in the flat donut part for the hat's brim.
- 13) Turn the hat over and sew the body, hat brim, and straps together.
- 14) Sew the hat slip. Put all the hat body into the slip and leave a space for the seam around 4 inches.
- 15) Take the right side out and then use a needle to sew the invisible thread to finish the work.
- 16) Punch the holes to insert the 2 eyelets on each side of the hat for air ventilation.



**Figure 6** Cutting patterns a hat, comprising of a flat oval top part for the hat's crown, a flat donut part for the hat's brim, and the elongated rectangular band part for the hat's sides.



**Figure7** (7A) Steps in making a hat 1-4 (7B) Steps in making a hat 5-8 (7C) Steps in making a hat 9-12 (7D) Steps in making a hat 13-16



### 6. Testing

The researcher produced product samples for trial use and to test the market by creating a prototype of silk products in the community by designing to show a clear pattern that stands out to be used as a sample in production and lead to improvements in market testing to become products used for processing for the market testing in the subsequent research.



**Figure 8** Creating a prototype (A) Hat prototype (B) Bag prototype (C) Hat and bag prototype

### Result and discussion

The research project of designing and improving silk cloths in the shared culture to develop competencies of community and community members of the lower area of the northeastern provincial group (Nakhon-Chai-Bu-Rin Provincial Group): a case study of Buriram Province follows the steps as stated in the objectives in the discussion of the research results. Suggestions are made on the topics below.

1. The development of products and the making of souvenir prototypes, according to the study of silk cloth products of Nakhon-Chai-Bu-Rin Provincial Group, Buriram Province, has a research methodology similar to the research of the development of souvenir textiles of Baan Had Saew Community of Sukhothai Province by Mr. Jaibhak Burapajettana (2012) in terms of the needs of producers and buyers. However, the product development guideline is different. The researcher focuses on the context of the marketing area and the set of product collections for selling.

2. For the knowledge dissemination for the community, this research involves knowledge dissemination for the producer group by emphasizing the competencies and potentials of the producer group, so the producer group will produce products that meet the people's needs and do not conflict with the previous production. Outcomes of the product will be seen fast. This research is different from the development of handicraft arts for creating jobs for local people: a case study of the development and distribution of products made by sugar palm leaves of Phetchaburi Province, by Assistant Professor Kleowpan Khachonpadungkitti

(2003). Relevant training is conducted for a group of people who are interested in making handicrafts. Trainings may take a long time to see satisfactory outcomes.

### Suggestions

1. The developed and improved textile products are considered part of marketing, and customer group extensions. Product development requires the study of the leading customer group of the product producer group to develop products that directly meet the needs of the target groups.

2. The development of textile products involves many aspects, such as the potentials of producers, product processors, customer needs, areas, and marketing. In order to develop each textile product in each area, the researcher has to conduct a study in every aspect and conduct a marketing experiment in the long term to develop processed products that are suitable for the community and target consumers.

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