

Chapter 4:

Skandis Community and Intrepid Travel.

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A note on exchange rates:

The following currencies are referred to in this report. Their approximate exchange rate to the Australian dollar (AUD) as of January, 2002, are shown below:

Malaysian Ringgit (MYR) AUD\$1 = 1.97

Vietnamese Dong (VND) AUD\$1 = 8,182.50

Thai Baht (THB) AUD\$1 = 22.80

4. Skandis Longhouse Community and Intrepid Travel.

4.1 Background to the Research Setting.

4.1.1 The Skandis community.

Skandis is a small isolated Iban longhouse that Intrepid visits as part of its adventure trips, ‘Borneo Adventure’ and ‘Sarawak’. The longhouse is the focus of a three-day trip where travellers spend two nights living in the longhouse and are involved in various activities such as jungle walks, longhouse parties and farm visits.

Skandis is now well entrenched within the Malaysian political and administrative system. . Within this system it is located within the second of Sarawak’s seven divisions. In this division it is part of the Lubok Antu district or the Engkililli sub district. Members of the longhouse vote in both the state and national elections and are aware- through both TV and radio of national and state issues. Skandis is located on the Kesit River, which is one of the major river systems within the Lubok Antu District.

Skandis is a collection of fourteen families all of whom live in one long communal building called a longhouse. Each family has its own room (Bilek) which is essentially its family apartment. Approximately 70 people live in the longhouse.

The major political organisation within the community is the longhouse development and security committee, the J.K.K.K. Most of the male household heads are members of the committee. A women’s committee also exists and all female household heads are members.

The longhouse headman, Unsa is the most powerful member of the longhouse. Unsa through his understanding of English, dominant role with Intrepid, and awareness of the political system, has been a central figure in the development of the Skandis longhouse.

The families in Skandis belong to two different age groupings. Essentially these include, those whose male household heads are under forty (5) and those who are forty and above (9). The

economic livelihoods of families whose male household heads are under forty rely to a greater degree on work outside of the longhouse. In comparison the older male household heads are no longer physically capable or interested in living away from the security of the longhouse. Households in this older grouping are more reliant on Intrepid visits and pepper farming than those in the younger grouping, who have chosen to focus their income generating activities outside of the longhouse.

The social structure of the longhouse is very interesting, particularly given the communal design of the longhouse. While the structure of the longhouse has encouraged a communal form of living it is the individual family that is the fundamental unit of the Iban society. The importance of the family unit is reflected in the structure of the longhouse where every family has its own apartment or Bilek.

Each family is very much an autonomous unit, although at different times they rely on the whole longhouse to help at different stages of the rice farming cycle and on their own kin to help out with different activities such as hunting or the gathering of foodstuffs from the surrounding rainforest.

The next most important social grouping within the longhouse is the kin groupings. Within Skandis there are two major families (Samat and Jagup), with the most dominant being the Samat family. Unsa, the headman of the longhouse comes from the Samat family. Activities for Intrepid groups such as cooking, jungle walks and boat transports are organised by sharing the responsibility between related households.

Distinctive elements of material culture obvious to Intrepid travellers include the daily lifestyles of community members, the architectural structure of the longhouse and the many examples of traditional goods such as baskets, mats and knives which are used by people in the longhouse during their daily lives. The use of drums and gongs and the wonderfully rhythmic forms of dance known as the Najart are other elements of traditional culture exposed to Intrepid visitors.

4.1.2 Livelihoods of longhouse households.

The livelihoods of families in the longhouse are dominated by growing dry rice (for subsistence purposes), harvesting established pepper fields, hosting Intrepid groups, and for a minority working in other areas such as Kuching.

Pepper is the only cash crop grown by households in the longhouse. Over the last ten years prices for pepper have dropped from about 16 MYR/ kilogram to their present price of just 5 MYR/ kilogram. Nevertheless all households still consider the economic returns from pepper big enough to warrant the investment in time and labour to harvest the crop. The amount of pepper produced by households in the longhouse varies from between 2 and 8 bags per year, each weighing approximately 40 kilograms. Pepper is harvested annually in April.

Rice is still the basic subsistence crop grown by all households in the longhouse. Like the other hill rice producing tribes in South East Asia, the people of Skandis practice a rotating or shifting form of agriculture where a different plot of land is sown each year. For most in the longhouse the size of their farmlands dictates a return to the same plot of land every three to five years. Inevitably this short rotating cycle and the slash and burn method used to clear the land has led to a declining harvest each year. All households now commonly use fertilisers.

Besides pepper farming and hosting Intrepid groups some families obtain monetary benefits from members –almost exclusively male household heads- who work away from the longhouse in Kuching (Capital of Sarawak), Brunei or Singapore. Most of the work is seasonal and occurs between the planting and harvesting times for rice and pepper. Five male household heads participate in this migratory search for wage labour.

4.1.3 Changes in the community.

The longhouse that is currently the basis for Skandis longhouse is only six years old. Prior to this it was located about twenty minutes walk further down the Kesit River towards the Nanga Kesit longhouse. The longhouse was located there for about eighteen years and before this was located in the present position. The longhouse site was changed due to sickness afflicting many in the longhouse and a failure of successive crops.

Major changes of note identified by several leaders in the longhouse over the past thirty years were the building of the all weather road to the nearby settlement of Nanga Kesit in 1999; the introduction of power in 1994; the arrival of Intrepid travellers in 1992; the establishment of pepper gardens in 1984; the return of many of the men from work in Brunei in the mid-eighties; the involvement of the longhouse administratively and politically in the Malaysian Government system; and the introduction of schooling for all of its children.

The gradual integration of the longhouse into the Malaysian political system has been used astutely by the longhouse and its headman, to obtain large grants from different levels of government. As part of the federal government's rural development scheme the longhouse has received a generator and a rice-husking machine. Both purchases have made a dramatic difference to the lives of those in the longhouse.

According to Unsa it was the arrival of power and the establishment of pepper gardens that fully established the community, and raised the living standards of all in the longhouse. The introduction of electricity to the longhouse- and consequently television and radio- through the purchase of a generator with a government grant has further increased the integration of Skandis into mainstream Malaysian society. Seven families in the longhouse now own televisions while all own radios.

The other major factor of social change in the longhouse throughout the 1990's has been the participation of its children in the Malaysian education system. All primary school-aged children in the longhouse attend the primary school in a nearby settlement called Nanga Kesit (an hour walk away) while its teenage members attend high school in Engkillili or Lubok Antu. All of these children board at their schools during the week and return to the longhouse on weekends.

This has led to a polarisation of ages in the longhouse with the very young, their parents and grandparents making up the longhouse population. Of more consequence for the longhouse and its future is the fact that most of the young people who attend high school, now have their sites set beyond returning to Skandis and prefer to live their adult lives in Kuching or other urban areas where work opportunities exist.

Another recent change that has effected the longhouse is the building of the all weather road linking the major highway in the region to the nearby settlement of Nanga Kesit. This has lessened the isolation of Skandis and drawn it into the influence of regional towns such as Engkillili and Lubok Antu. Plans to extend the road further along from Nanga Kesit linking up with the other longhouses on the Kesit River including Skandis will lessen the sense of isolation that still exists in Skandis.

4.1.4 Intrepid travellers.

Ninety-four travellers visited Skandis longhouse on Intrepid trips between 1/1/2001 and 1/8/2001. The majority of these (61%) were female, while (79%) were between the ages of twenty and forty. Just over half of these travellers were from Australia and Great Britain with the remainder from Europe, North America and New Zealand. Almost all were professionally employed in areas such as Education, Finance, Health, Government Services, Engineering and Science or were University Students.

Travellers' motivations for participating in the Borneo trips were varied. The majority wanted to experience the cultural and environmental attractions of Borneo, such as living in a traditional Iban longhouse, or exploring the tropical rainforest of Borneo and its unique wildlife, especially Orangutans. Many travellers also stated that doing something physical or challenging like trekking or living in rough conditions as a reason for choosing a trip to Borneo.

4.2 Tourism in Skandis.

4.2.1 History of tourism in Skandis.

The history of tourism in Skandis is dominated by Intrepid Travel as they have been the only tour company to regularly visit the longhouse. Perhaps the most influential figures in Intrepid's relationship with Skandis have been Thomas Ng(a Chinese Malay tour operator based in Kuching), Sally Goldstraw (the original Intrepid leader to Borneo), Cath Lancaster and Jacquie Crossland (a long serving leader in Borneo). In fact the history of Intrepid's operations in Skandis involves two distinct phases, one with Thomas and the other– post 1997- without him.

Intrepid began operations to Skandis Longhouse in December 1993. Before operations started Sally Goldstraw and Thomas visited the longhouse after a recommendation made by a friend of Thomas' from Nanga Kesit, a nearby longhouse.

Originally, the longhouse received few economic benefits from Intrepid visits as the payments for boat transport, cooking and food requirements flowed out of the longhouse to Thomas or others in Nanga Kesit, who assumed control of the boat transport. Gradually however the longhouse community and Unsa- who is particularly astute- became more pro-active in the running of the Intrepid visits to their longhouse and assumed control of aspects of the trips such as the boat transport and cooking.

By 1996 the relationship between Thomas and Skandis had deteriorated. Perhaps the main cause of this was Thomas' involvement in organising Intrepid trips to another longhouse- Puloh- and his involvement in internal longhouse activities. The trips to Puloh however were an initiative of Intrepid however not Thomas. A further problem with Thomas was the lack of respect that local women had for his wife Nancy. Many in the longhouse found her bossy and rude, as did many of the Intrepid leaders.

In 1995/96 Thomas' relationship with Intrepid also began to deteriorate, particularly his relationship with the Intrepid leaders at the time -Jacquie Crossland, Daniel Mandell and Jane Crouch. These leaders complained about his lack of service and questioned his commitment to the longhouse. His role as an intermediary between Intrepid and the longhouse, had almost become superfluous as the people of Skandis could manage and control Intrepid visits without his assistance.

In 1997 Thomas was informed that his services were no longer required as the breakdown in his relationship with Skandis Longhouse and with Intrepid leaders had made his position untenable.

The decision coincided with Intrepid's decision to reduce its product into Borneo in early 1998 by no longer selling its Best of Borneo trip. This led to the cancellation of trips to Puloh longhouse, which Intrepid had been visiting for a year, and a return to Skandis for all scheduled Sarawak trips.

The termination of Thomas' services gave Skandis complete control of Intrepid's visits and empowered them to make their own decisions. This also allowed them to obtain the full economic benefits from Intrepid's visits rather than a portion of it being paid to intermediaries.

Since 1998 the frequency and style of trip to Skandis has remained the same, although there has been a small turnover in Intrepid leaders. Trips are scheduled for once a month for the majority of the year and twice monthly during the middle and end of the year to coincide with peak holiday periods in Europe and Australia.

The empowerment of the longhouse in relation to Intrepid's visits has also given the longhouse community confidence to be able to handle visits from other tourism companies. These visits however occur infrequently, perhaps twice a year, and only take place when Nanga Kesit, a large longhouse further downstream of Skandis cannot host all of the tourists who request accommodation there. The visits only involve a stay of one night in the longhouse.

The people in the longhouse are not particularly enthusiastic about these visits as the economic benefits are negligible and flow to Nanga Kesit Longhouse (for boat transport) and the local operator based in Kuching. According to local people the travellers on these trips also behave and dress inappropriately which causes offence to members of the community.

4.2.2 A description of an Intrepid trip to Skandis.

Before departing Kuching the Intrepid group receives a briefing from the leader, which contains information on the social and physical structure of the community, and the etiquette, dress standards and behaviour expected from trip travellers.

The trip to the longhouse takes almost a full day, involving a five-hour bus journey from Kuching and a one to three hour boat trip along the beautiful Lemanak and Kesit Rivers.

A gift giving ceremony and welcoming party dominate the Intrepid group's first night in the longhouse. The gift giving ceremony is an extraordinary event not so much for the event itself but for the process that follows.

Gift giving is a traditional part of any visit to an Iban Longhouse. As such, all Intrepid groups who visit the longhouse bring presents such as biscuits, packets of fish, clothing, tobacco

and other household goods. The goods are presented to Unsa –the headman of the longhouse- and the rest of the community in a rather formal ceremony. Every family in the longhouse attends.

The next part, which takes over an hour, involves the division of each of the gifts into fourteen exact sections, one for each family. The meticulous division of goods demonstrates that while the longhouse is a communal form of living, it is the individual household that is the most important social grouping.

An informal welcoming party follows the gift giving ceremony. Everyone in the longhouse attends the party, men, women and children. This factor along with the serving of locally made rice wine, makes for an atmosphere that promotes interaction between Intrepid travellers and local people. The indigenous music and dance provided by people in the longhouse are key features of this party.

The activities planned on the second day include a jungle walk to a series of waterfalls and the longhouse's pepper farms. The walk is led by two people from the longhouse and normally takes about three hours. Afternoon activities are less strenuous with most travellers choosing to spend the rest of the day swimming in the Kesit River, while others learn to make handicrafts with ladies from the longhouse.

The market, held in the covered verandah area (Ruai) of the longhouse, dominates the second night's activities. All fourteen families display their crafts. Again it is household based with a member of each household sitting behind their own goods. These goods include drums, baskets, carvings, knives, floor mats and bracelets, as well as thin, elongated plastic bags of pepper. Prices for the goods range from 5 Ringgit to up to 70 Ringgit for some of the carvings. There is very little bargaining and prices are generally the same irrespective of which house you buy from.

The Intrepid group leaves the longhouse early on the morning of the third day. Before leaving, the group walk up and down the longhouse saying goodbye to those about. Local people come out of their Bileks to shake hands with travellers and say goodbye. As the groups depart those who have gathered to watch slowly go back to their homes and morning chores.

4.3 Economic Outcomes for Skandis.

The economic outcomes for the longhouse community were determined by identifying:

- Services provided by individual households and the community.
- Total economic benefits to the community.
- Distribution of economic outcomes within the community.
- Intrepid trips and household incomes.
- Effects on families of income obtained from Intrepid trips.

4.3.1 Services provided by individual households and the community.

The economic outcomes that accrue to the longhouse benefit both individual households and the broader community. These benefits are for the following services:

- Cooks (2 persons required),
- Boat transport,
- Guided walk,
- Gas for cooking,
- Headman's salary,
- Rice wine,
- Musical instrument hire,
- Lights,
- Food, and
- Accommodation (head tax).

The economic outcomes from the services provided are consistent for all trips and only vary to a slight degree depending on the number of travellers. This list does not include the economic benefits that accrue to the longhouse from the craft market. Payments are made to individual households for boat transport, cooking, guided walks and the headman's salary, and to the community for accommodation, gas for cooking, lighting, hire of musical instruments and rice wine.

4.3.2 Total economic benefits to the community.

The following table highlights the total economic benefit to the longhouse community from two Intrepid's visits. The table also includes the rough estimation of direct tangible costs incurred by the longhouse community in the provision of particular services, as estimated by longhouse members and Intrepid leaders.

Table 4.3.2 Economic benefits and costs to the households of Skandis.

Services Provided	Beneficiary	Trip 1 (n=11)		Trip 2 (n=11)	
		Direct costs	Payment	Direct cost	Payment
Accom @ 10MYR/ pax	Longhouse	0	110	0	110
Cooks @ 24MYR/ cook	Individual household	0	48	0	48
Headman's salary	Individual household	0	25	0	25
Lights	Longhouse	20	40	20	40
Jungle walk @ 10MYR/ guide	Individual household	0	20	0	20
Hire of musical instruments	Longhouse	0	16	0	16
Food	Longhouse	0	380	0	380
Rice wine @ 5MYR/ bottle	Longhouse	25	200	20	150
Gas @ 13MYR/ visit	Longhouse	13	26	13	26
Market	Individual household	0	944	0	1062
Donations & gifts	Individual household	0	275	0	165
Boat transport @ 180MYR/ boat	Individual household	150	540	150	540
Total payment (less costs)			2416MYR		2379MYR

A key feature of both tables is the income obtained by the community from the market held for Intrepid groups. These figures show that the income obtained by the longhouse from the market was over 40% of the total income earned from each Intrepid trip. However these figures were for

two trips with groups sizes of eleven travellers. Not all trips have this many travellers. The average group size for trips to Skandis during 2000 / 2001 was seven.

4.3.3 Distribution of economic outcomes within the community.

While the economic outcomes for the longhouse are substantial this does not necessarily mean that all households obtain the same economic benefits from Intrepid trips. The longhouse distributes the outcomes from tourism at both the household and broader longhouse level.

The community's decision to rotate the responsibility for boat transport, jungle walks, cooking and rice wine production diversifies the income obtained from Intrepid trips. Boat transport provides the largest economic outcome of the services supplied by individual households. Individual households are only involved with jungle walks and cooking about twice per year.

Benefits that accrue to the whole community from Intrepid payments for accommodation and rice wine were not obvious. Some communal benefits identified by respondents included payment for medical and food emergencies and for longhouse celebrations.

4.3.4 Intrepid trips and household incomes.

Results from ranking exercises held with all households showed that:

- Six households-nearly half of the longhouse- estimated that two-thirds of their yearly income was derived from Intrepid trips.
- Two households estimated that half of their yearly income was derived from Intrepid trips.
- Four households estimated that one-third of their yearly income was derived from Intrepid trips.
- Two households estimated that just one-sixth of their yearly outcome was derived from Intrepid trips.

An analysis of these results reveals that older families rely to a greater extent on the economic benefits of Intrepid trips than younger families. As mentioned the major reason for this is that younger male household heads are able to work in cash producing jobs outside of the longhouse while older members are restricted to the longhouse.

One male household member (Sadau) mentioned that if it were not for Intrepid trips he would no longer be living in the longhouse on a permanent basis and would most probably be working in Kuching or Singapore.

The other determinant, which appears to be relevant in this case, is the level of pepper produced by individual households. Those households which harvest more than five bags of pepper per year estimated that less than half of their yearly income was derived from tourism while one household that produces over eight bags per year estimated that only one sixth of their income came from money earned from Intrepid trips.

4.3.5 Effects on households of income obtained from Intrepid trips.

The money earned from tourism is spent predominantly on schooling, food and other household goods. Table 4.3.5 gives an overview of how households spend the income obtained from Intrepid's visits.

Table 4.3.5 Household spending of money obtained from Intrepid trips.

Household spending of money obtained from Intrepid trips.	Number of households. (n=14)
Schooling, including fees and accommodation.	12
Clothing.	2
Rice.	3
Other household goods, such as sugar, coffee, baby's milk, salt, biscuits and dried fish.	9

Table 4.3.5 shows that almost all of the households in the longhouse spend their money on school fees and accommodation for their children. For those families whose children are still in primary school this is not a great expense, as just 4 MYR is needed for two weeks of schooling. Those families who have children at high school however have much higher school fees, which are as high as 25 MYR for two weeks of schooling and accommodation.

4.4 Socio-cultural Outcomes for Skandis.

The socio-cultural outcomes for the longhouse were assessed according to:

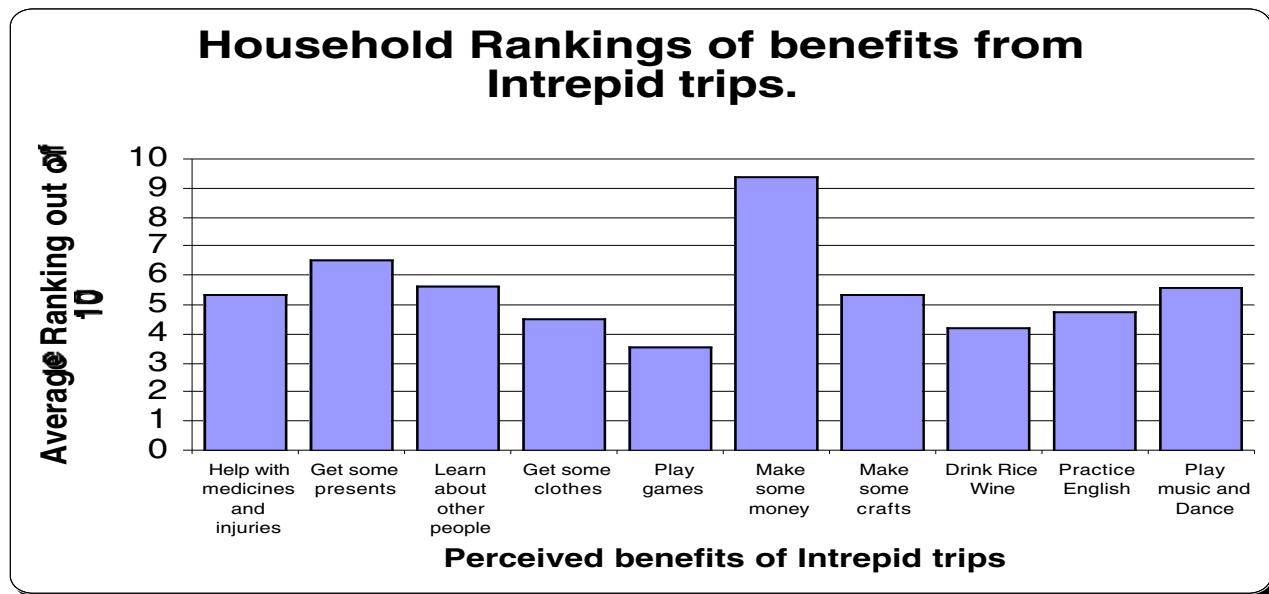
- Local perceptions of Intrepid trips.
- Effect on Intrepid trips on daily lifestyles of people within the community.
- Arts and crafts practiced within the community.
- Intra longhouse relationships.
- Effect of Intrepid trips on longhouse political or management structures.
- Role of women in Intrepid trips.
- Role of youth in Intrepid trips.

It was beyond the scope of this study to discuss the effects of Intrepid trips on the complex pantheon, mythologies, cults and rituals that characterise spiritual life in the longhouse, particularly given that none of these features are part of Intrepid trips.

4.4.1 Local perceptions of Intrepid trips.

All of the households in the longhouse were very positive about having Intrepid groups visit the longhouse. Only two households identified any negative thoughts regarding Intrepid trips, although these were directed towards a specific incident relating to an aggressive passenger. To understand households' perceptions of Intrepid trips I asked household respondents to rank in order of importance a list of ten possible benefits, which their household obtained from Intrepid trips. The list of benefits were developed after general discussions with people in the longhouse about what were the things they liked and disliked about Intrepid trips. Figure 4.4.1 highlights the results.

Figure 4.4.1 Household rankings of benefits from Intrepid trips.



The results demonstrate that the overwhelming benefit that local people receive from Intrepid trips is the opportunity to make some money. Only two households didn't choose making money as the thing they most liked about hosting Intrepid groups. Given this response it is perhaps not surprising that obtaining presents was the next most important feature of Intrepid visits to the longhouse-particularly given that the presents that Intrepid bring to the longhouse are basically foodstuffs that support a household's livelihood strategies. Making some crafts and help with medicines are other features of Intrepid trips that provide direct tangible outcomes for local people which not surprisingly are ranked well by the longhouse community.

Interestingly the opportunity to learn about other people and their culture figures prominently as a benefit of Intrepid trips amongst households. My observations did highlight that household members appeared genuinely interested in interacting with travellers to the longhouse- especially during the party held on the first night. The average ranking of importance of playing music and dancing among households was a reflection of this genuine interest in interacting with Intrepid travellers.

Nevertheless while these figures highlight some interesting results for the longhouse as a whole it should be remembered that they are averages based on the fourteen households and don't

necessarily reflect the opinions of an individual household whose opinions are very much based on the particular circumstances prevailing within that household.

For example, while it may appear as if practising English is only a minor priority for those in the longhouse it is in fact one of the most important benefits of Intrepid trips for the Romley and Unsa households- particularly the Romley household as it increases his opportunity to get work in other areas. The case of the Jagup household is also revealing in that his very high ranking of making crafts reflects his reliance on craft making to support his family.

4.4.2 Effect of Intrepid trips on daily lifestyles of people within the community.

Intrepid trips do disrupt the lifestyle of those in the longhouse, however this disruption is only temporary and limited to those directly involved in each trip. Intrepid trips have now become a normal part of the lifestyle for the community, albeit an infrequent one.

Intrepid trips have not replaced the subsistence base of the community. Quite fortuitously the busiest times for Intrepid trips coincide with quieter times in the agricultural cycles of the longhouse.

4.4.3 Arts and crafts practiced within the community.

Intrepid trips have commercialised the production of handicrafts within the community. However, this commercialisation has been driven by the longhouse and does not appear to have diminished the importance of handicrafts, particularly those that are used in daily lifestyles. Visits from Intrepid groups have encouraged the development of new styles and designs of handicrafts.

Men in the longhouse who are responsible for making drums and carvings would no longer make these handicrafts if Intrepid groups did not visit the longhouse. Although not in the same quantity, women would continue to make handicrafts that were directly related to their daily lifestyles, such as mats and baskets.

Unlike craft production, the display of dance and music in the longhouse does not produce an economic outcome for the longhouse excluding the very small payment that is made for the hire of the musical instruments that are used for the party. There is not a staged display of traditional

dance (Najart) for Intrepid travellers, although someone from the longhouse normally dances during the welcoming party.

Interestingly when asked what other activities they (the longhouse) would like to offer for travellers, households responded in the following way:

- Ten would like to see people from the longhouse offered the opportunity to do the traditional dance (Najart) for travellers;
- Five would like to sing traditional songs such as the Pantun and Ramban for groups;
- Two would like to do blowpipe demonstrations;
- Two would like to demonstrate cockfighting for groups; and
- One would like to show trip travellers how to throw fishing nets.

4.4.4 Intra-longhouse relationships.

Some tension exists in the longhouse over the spending of money allocated to buy food for the Intrepid groups. One household has accused the household responsible for the buying of food of misappropriating this money. However my time in the longhouse did not allow me to confirm whether the claim had substance or was merely a part of intra longhouse rivalries. The response of the longhouse was to seek the involvement of an Intrepid leader, as this would lessen the possibility of direct conflict between longhouse members.

Fortunately, the Intrepid leaders who come to the longhouse do so on a regular basis and are therefore aware of the problem and can immediately seek solutions.

4.4.5 Effect of Intrepid trips on longhouse political or management structures.

The effect of Intrepid's trips on the political and management structures of the longhouse appear limited although they have reinforced the authority of the headman Unsa. There has not been an external management structure implemented to cope with tourism's introduction to the community.

4.4.6 Role of women in Intrepid trips.

Women are prominent members of the Skandis Longhouse and are directly involved in all

aspects of Intrepid trips.

The most prominent roles played by women in Intrepid trips are as cooks and in making crafts for the markets, some also lead jungle treks. As a result of Intrepid trips women in the longhouse have had the opportunity to generate direct monetary benefits for their families independently of their husbands. Goods made by women were responsible for over 55% of the total income made from the market.

The structure and organisation of Intrepid trips within the longhouse has ensured that the increasing workload that befalls women when groups visit is only temporary. Furthermore, the rotation of responsibilities has meant that they only need to perform the more time consuming roles (such as cooking) every three months or so.

4.4.7 Role of youth in Intrepid trips.

Intrepid's trips have very little impact on the youth as very few actually reside in the longhouse, as they are away studying at schools. The children that do live in the longhouse are very young, generally under the age of five and the interaction they have with travellers is limited.

4.5 Physical Outcomes for Skandis.

The physical outcomes for the community were assessed according to:

- Waste and pollution related to visitation from Intrepid groups.
- Local resource use related to visitation from Intrepid groups.

The physical effects of Intrepid's visits to the longhouse are negligible and not readily apparent. The major reason for this is that Intrepid groups are totally reliant on existing facilities and generally only consume local products. The only facilities that have been specifically developed to cater for Intrepid groups are the building of two pit toilets. The presence of these toilets ensures that any waste created by Intrepid trips is confined to a very small area. Other than the toilets the facilities used by travellers are exactly the same as those used by people from the longhouse.

There is little doubt that aspects of Intrepid trips associated with the river system- boat transport and bathing- would create environmental consequences, however they would most likely be insignificant and were not directly measured.

Visits from Intrepid trips have the potential to exacerbate water shortage problems during the dry season however this is only of minor consequence to those in the longhouse as they are able to obtain water from the Kesit River.

4.6 Outcomes for travellers.

4.6.1 Travellers' expectations.

The reaction of travellers to their Skandis experience was overwhelmingly positive. Only one passenger out of the twenty who completed a questionnaire on their expectations and experiences in Skandis, felt that the experience had not met their expectations. Ten travellers felt that their expectations had been exceeded and another nine had their expectations met. The following comments highlight travellers' perception of their time in Skandis.

“The food was amazing. The warmth of the people was more than expected. I was expecting a more cynical attitude to tourists on the part of the longhouses.”

(Digby)

“Got the experience of how the longhouse life is, but the “spiritual” experience was not there.”

(Thomas)

“The people seemed genuinely interested in getting to know us and include us in their lifestyle. It was also a more interesting / unique culture than I had expected.”

(Liz)

“In some respects expectations met because they have a very simple, peaceful and happy lifestyle on the land. Did not expect TV and radio though.”

(Anissa)

“The people here were not as warm as ex Dusan, felt a but uptight, it felt like we were a circus when everyone stood around the Iban after presents were outhanded.”

(Johanna)

4.6.2 Factors that determined travellers’ expectations.

As part of the questionnaire travellers were asked to rank in order of importance the factors that they considered significant in determining their Skandis longhouse experience. Travellers were asked to rank the following factors in order of importance. These factors were developed after discussions with travellers, Intrepid leaders, local operators, local people, and other Intrepid staff.

Table 4.6.2 highlights the results.

Table 4.6.2 Factors that travellers considered important in determining their Skandis longhouse experience (N = 20).

Factors.	Average Ranking	
	Most important 1	Least important 7
Role of local leaders	3.15	
Role of Intrepid leader	2.95	
Interaction with local longhouse people	2.40	
Activities conducted in the longhouse	3.65	
Interaction with other travellers	4.95	
Weather	5.95	
Trip organisation	4.92	

The results show that travellers consider their interaction with local people and the activities they completed within the longhouse as the most important factors that determined the experience they had during their Skandis longhouse stay.

4.7 Causal Factors that Determine the Outcomes

Obtained by Skandis.

Causal factors that determine the outcomes obtained by the community appear to be determined by factors directly related to the political and socio-cultural structure of the community and Intrepid Travel. However it should be noted (as discussed in chapter 2- Research Design and Methods) that the causal statements and inferences made below are drawn from the researchers intimate knowledge of the data collected. Nevertheless it should be remembered that the statements are data based speculation and conjecture.

4.7.1 Factors determined by Intrepid Travel.

- Consistency of leaders.

Regular visitation from the same three Intrepid leaders appears to have had a major influence on the outcomes obtained by all involved in Intrepid trips to Skandis. As a result, the leaders get to know community members personally and are able to monitor any problems that arise on a regular basis. Intrepid leaders have developed a sense of responsibility for the longhouse. Jacquie Crossland's role here has been pivotal in ensuring that problems that arise in Skandis are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

- Leaders understanding of the longhouse.

The consistency of Intrepid leaders to the longhouse has allowed these leaders to develop a thorough understanding of the longhouse community. This knowledge base has allowed leaders to provide their travellers with specific information on Responsible Travel issues directly relevant to Skandis.

- Pre Skandis Visit Information.

The detailed passenger briefings provided by leaders prior to Skandis visits and the general literature given to travellers prior to leaving their home countries was instrumental in ensuring that the behaviour, etiquette and dress of travellers was not in any way offensive to the people of Skandis. Of the two groups surveyed nineteen out of the twenty two travellers said they had

made modifications to their dress or behaviour due to the pre trip information provided by

Intrepid leaders.

- Use of local facilities.

Very little infrastructure has been built to accommodate Intrepid groups, placing little strain on local resources.

- Consumption of local products.

Most of the products consumed by Intrepid groups are supplied locally from nearby markets so the longhouse does not need to expend a great deal of energy or cost obtaining them.

- Frequency and consistency of trips.

At present only 1-2 trips visit the longhouse every six weeks. The consistency of groups is particularly important, as local people will only maintain their enthusiasm if they feel they are receiving regular outcomes.

- Size of groups.

Given that the average size of groups is only seven this does not place a great deal of pressure on local infrastructure or lifestyles within the longhouse.

- Development of trips to Skandis.

An important factor that has determined the outcomes obtained by all from Intrepid trips has been the initial involvement of Sally Goldstraw and Thomas Ng in developing the first trips to Skandis. Sally's background in community and social welfare set the framework from which trips have been developed. This framework has been reinforced by several leaders over the past nine years, particularly Cath Lancaster, Jane Crouch and Jacquie Crossland.

- Types of travellers.

Travellers who attend Intrepid trips to Skandis are predominantly young female professionals from Europe, Australia, United Kingdom and North America. All are looking for opportunities to experience living in a longhouse and interacting with people within that community. Given this motivating force it is not surprising that all of the travellers were keen to modify their behaviour and dress to ensure they did not offend or upset their hosts.

4.7.2 Factors determined by Skandis.

- Empowerment of local people.

The empowerment of local people to run the program in their own community has led to the direct involvement of local people in all aspects of Intrepid's trips.

- Rotation of responsibilities within the community.

The rotation of responsibilities for services provided to Intrepid groups amongst households has spread the benefits of Intrepid trips and has also reduced the disruptions to lifestyles within the community.

- Consistent and substantial outcomes to the longhouse community.

The consistent visitation of Intrepid groups has allowed the longhouse to obtain direct and substantial outcomes from Intrepid groups. This has been an essential factor in the longhouse maintaining an enthusiastic and committed approach to visits from Intrepid groups.

- Intrepid trips have not replaced the subsistence base of the Skandis community.

All of the households remain committed to maintaining their present subsistence lifestyles. Peak periods for Intrepid trips quite fortuitously do not interrupt the busiest periods of the agricultural seasons.

- Temporary disruptions to lifestyles.

The disruption to lifestyles within the community is only temporary and is limited to those who are directly involved in each trip.

- Benefits for individuals and the wider community.

The community has structured tourism development so that benefits flow to individual members as well as the general community.

- Role of Unsa, headman of Skandis.

Unsa has been instrumental to the development of Intrepid trips in Skandis. His position within the community, ability to speak English and role during Intrepid trips has allowed him to act as an intermediary between the longhouse and Intrepid groups.

- Specific Household Factors.

Four factors appeared to determine the level of outcomes obtained by households in the longhouse. These included: the age of the household (households with older male members were more reliant on Intrepid trips); ownership of resources (those who owned boats could obtain a larger share of the income bought into the community); younger male households working in other areas (households with male household heads who could work in other areas were less reliant on Intrepid trips); amount of pepper produced (households who harvested a greater number of bags than their neighbours were less reliant on the income obtained from Intrepid trips).

- Size and communal nature of the community.

The relatively small size and communal living arrangements of the community have facilitated the type of organisational structure that has evolved to cope with tourism in their community.

4.8 Impacts matrix.

Table 4.8 highlights the relationship between causal factors, outcomes and impacts identified in sections 4.3- 4.7. The table shows that the outcomes and impacts of Intrepid trips for local people are a result of a combination of factors. Some of these are determined by the community themselves while others are directly related to how Intrepid practically implements its trips.

The table also highlights the relationship between outcomes and impacts. In particular it demonstrates that the impacts of Intrepid trips flow directly from the outcomes obtained by local people.

4.9 Recommendations.

The following recommendations focus on ensuring that Intrepid's trips to Skandis continue to provide positive outcomes for all members of the community.

- Monitoring of trips.

This already occurs on a regular basis as the same set of leaders visit the longhouse consistently. However, leaders have not really been able to deal with major issues that may require more time sitting down with the whole community to resolve.

One of the leaders in Borneo should assume the responsibility for monitoring the community and Intrepid's impact on the community. Other leaders would then pass on information about the community to them.

The leader should be given time- perhaps a week every six months, or whenever issues need to be resolved- to address the impacts of Intrepid's trips within the community. Jacquie Crossland already spends a considerable amount of her own time working on issues related to Intrepid's visits in Skandis.

A more formal assessment would be conducted every year using some of the Rapid Rural Appraisal techniques used during this research. Experienced leaders if given a report format and some basic training would be responsible for collecting this information. This would allow the Responsible Tourism department to develop a cumulative picture of the impact of Intrepid's trips over a period of time.

- Community-based Fund.

A community-based fund should be developed for Skandis. Money for the community fund could either come from 10% of the after tax profits, passenger donations or by increasing the price of the trip by two dollars. These funds would only be given for specific projects with set deadlines. Intrepid would not be involved in the running of the project, as this would be the responsibility of the community.

Trips that visit communities supported by community based funds could be tagged in the Intrepid brochure as an “Intrepid Community Based Trip”. This could be a major selling point for particular trips, especially if information is included that explains the fund and the project it supports. All travellers surveyed said they would be prepared to make a small donation to a community fund for Skandis.

- Passenger feedback forms.

The feedback form completed at present is limited in its ability to elicit specific information about passenger’s impressions of particular parts of trips. More trip-specific questions should be included to direct passenger responses. For example, the feedback form given to travellers after the ‘Sarawak’ trip should have questions directly related to their experience in Mulu National Park and in Skandis. This would allow a more sophisticated monitoring of trip itineraries and passenger enjoyment.