

Tourism Development for Community Capacity Building and Community Development

Fariborz Aref* and Ma'rof B Redzuan

Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, MALAYSIA.

Community capacity building is widely acknowledged as an important community development strategy. Its strength lies in its ability to empower community members as citizens to self-manage their lives and environment through facilitating leadership and participation in the building and enactment of shared community vision. In this way tourism has become increasingly important as a contributor for community capacity building in local communities. Many communities also recognize that tourism can stimulate change in social, cultural and environmental dimensions as well. The purpose of this paper is to explore the concept of community capacity building and community development with respect to tourism development.

Key Words: tourism development, community capacity building, community development, community empowerment

Introduction

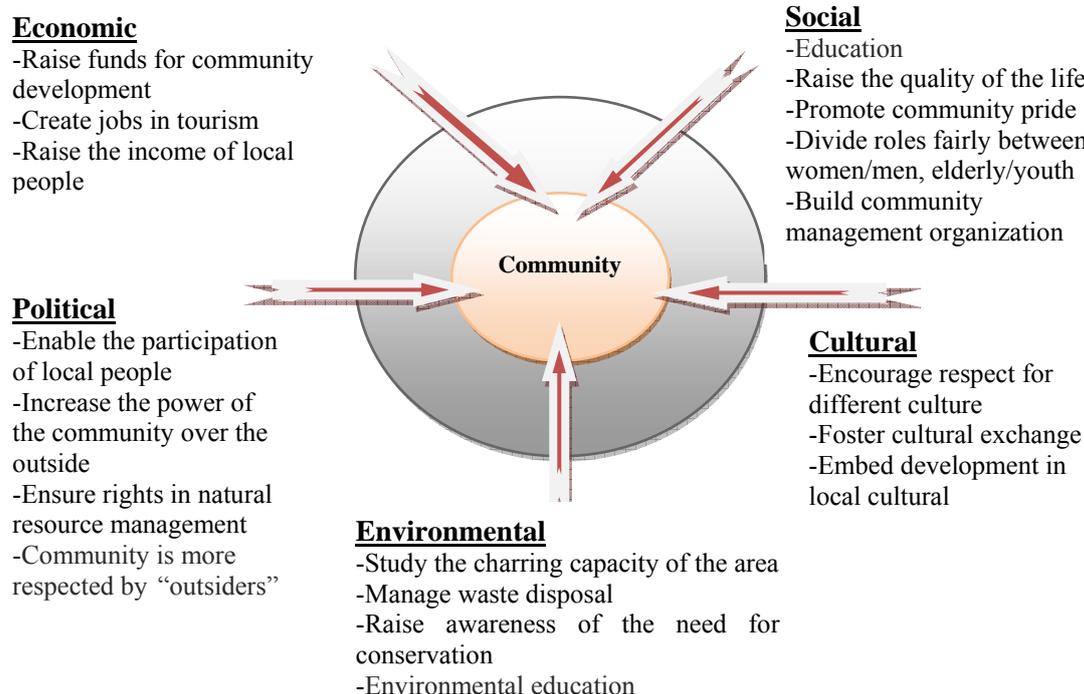
Tourism development becomes increasingly important to communities around the world. It is a major agent of change and while it is often promoted by those with a positivist perspective as an investment for contribution to community development. Tourism has had a close connection with the local communities, particularly as hosts and guides (Richards & Hall, 2000; Beeton, 2006). Many view tourism development as a viable way to protect the environment and create social and economic benefits for local communities. Tourism is generally considered as a panacea for community development. It seems that tourism development plays a key role in community capacity building. Hence, tourism is often seen as a means of escaping poverty and helping local community development from the profits earned (Huang, 2003). Tourism development has been closely linked with community capacity building and community development (Fariborz & Ma'rof, 2008). Thus, the purpose of this paper is to discuss how the processes of tourism development contribute to community capacities and community development.

Tourism and Community Development

Evaluating tourism as a form of community development can sometimes be difficult because neither of the two concepts is universally defined (Roberts & Thanos, 2003). For the purposes of this review, community development is defined as a process that ensures that local people are included in defining and acting on issues that tourism has impacted on their

* Email: fariborzaref@yahoo.com

lives. Many local communities have turned to tourism development to provide economic, social and overall development of the community. "Tourism is an increasingly popular elixir to local community and urban underdevelopment. Its current prominence in the array of local economic development strategies can be traced to several features of the tourism industry" (Frederick, 1993: 215). Allen, Hafer, Long, & Perdue (1993) suggested that tourism is increasingly being viewed as an important element of community development. Among many researchers there is an agreement that tourism is a viable tool for use in community development. Tourism development should be able to enhance the long-term prospects of a community and give them opportunities to increase their overall well-being. Additional revenues should be channeled into programmes that will directly benefit the local people such as health and education. According to Ryan (2002), tourism development should be able to add value to environments, communities, entrepreneurs and tourists within ethical objectives.



Source: (Strasdas, 2005; Suansri, 2004)

Figure 1: Contribution of Tourism in Community Development

The Concept of Community Capacity Building

Community capacity building as an approach to development brings about a few general considerations that arise from debate around the tourism concept. Community capacity building is a comprehensive process that involves all dimensions of community life. Community capacity building is identified as one of the ways that community development can occur and that tourism determinants can be addressed. It empowers communities to gain a sense of community. Smith, Baugh-Littlejohns, & Thompson (2001) describe community capacity building as the "essence of community development". The words 'community capacity building' are increasingly part of policy in social welfare, education, environment, local government, social and urban planning and health (Hounslow, 2002; Fiona 2007).

Tourism Development for Community Capacity Building

The international examples illustrate four broad types of investment; in staff training; in training for local entrepreneurs and tourism businesses; support for local schools and education; and awareness-raising among the local community for shared planning and consultation. Investing in local education, training and capacity building can be an effective, visible and highly valued way for a tourism operation to contribute to local development (PPT in practice). Many discussions of community capacity building lack specific definition of the term, and literature exhibits no convention in definitions between the various disciplines, or even within them (Newland, 1981; Johnson, 1993; Lauber & Knuth, 2000). Nevertheless, the importance of community capacity building in some fields such as tourism is evident (Ohiorhenuan & Wunker, 1995). For this perspective, community capacity building is used in three major contexts and can be categorized thus: (a) organizational: referring to local organizations; (b) community: referring to informal groups bounded geographically; and (c) individual: referring to people (Raik, 2002). The three types of community capacities may overlap.

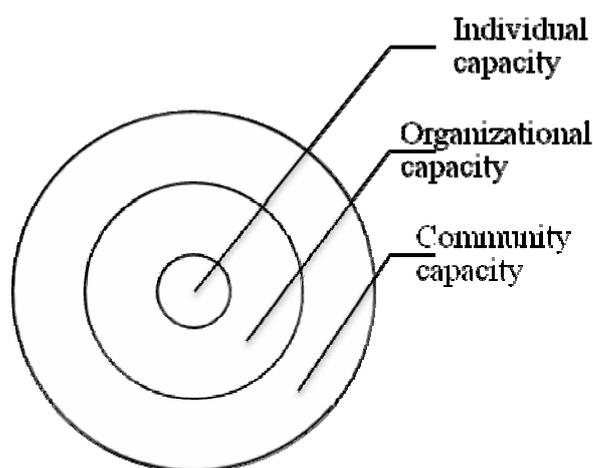


Figure 2: Community Capacity Levels

To illustrate how concepts of community capacity and community development apply to tourism development, visual conceptualizations are relied upon by the author. The depictions that follow are simple models that illustrate the relationships of tourism development, community capacity building, and to help consider their application in community development.

In considering the application of tourism development in community capacity building and community development, the role of the community leaders deserve consideration (Rogers, 1990). Figures 4 and 5 illustrate a conceptual model for how the three cycles of community capacity building relate to tourism development.

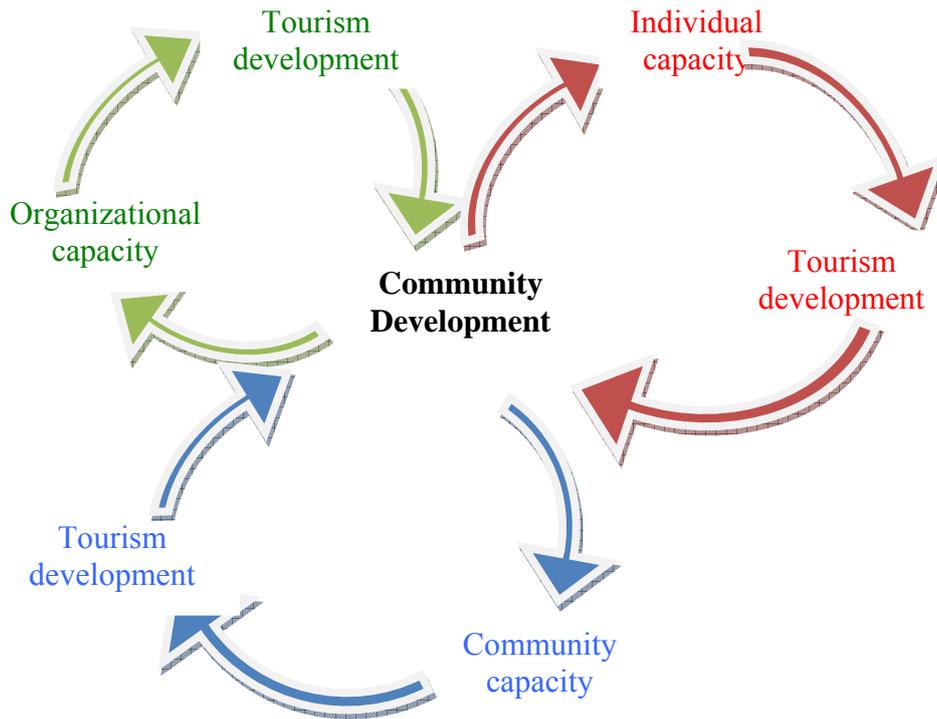


Figure 3: Three Cycles of Community Capacities through Tourism Development [Adapted from (Raik, 2002)]

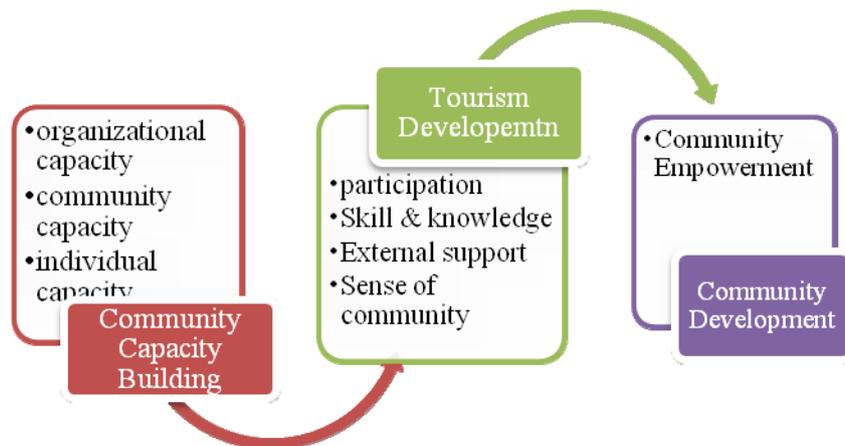


Figure 4: Interaction between Tourism Development and Community Development

Conclusion

This paper introduced and discussed various aspects of community capacity building and was organized around a number of themes. Firstly, the concept of tourism and its contribution in community development were considered. This review then discussed community capacity building. It was demonstrated that there are different definitions of community capacity building and that they can be understood in relation to tourism development. Researchers have argued that communities have become a site for tourism development. Thus, we expect that tourism development will become a central component of community development. The success of community development requires that all stakeholders understand that investments in tourism development is necessary for building community capacity.

References

- Allen, L.A., Hafer, H.A., Long, P.T., and Perdue, A.A. 1993. Rural residents attitudes toward recreation and tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research* 31:27-35.
- Beeton, S. 2006. *Community development through tourism*. Australia: Landlink Press.
- Fariborz, A. and Ma'rof, B.R. 2008. Tourism and Community Capacity Building: A Literature Review. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 5(8): 806-812.
- Fiona, V. 2007. Community Capacity Building – A review of the literature. Retrieved on 25 July 2008 from <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/PEHS/branches/health-promotion/0711-capacity-building-review-lit.pdf>.
- Frederick, M. 1993. Rural tourism and economic development. *Economic Development Quarterly* 7: 215-224..
- Hounslow, B. 2002. Community capacity building explained. *Stronger Families Learning Exchange Bulletin*, 1(Autumn): 20-22.
- Huang, G. 2003. Tribal tourism and community autonomy: A study of developing ecotourism at Cinsibu Atayal tribe. *Aboriginal Education Quarterly* 31: 27-44.
- Johnson, S.P. 1993. The Earth Summit. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 2-14.
- Lauber, T.B., and Knuth, B.A. 2000. Citizen Participation in Natural Resource Management: A Synthesis of HDRU Research. Unpublished manuscript.
- Newland, C.A. 1981. Local government capacity building. *Urban Affairs Papers* 3(0): 4-5.
- Ohiorhenuan, J.F.E., and Wunker, S.M. 1995. *Capacity building requirements for global environmental protection* (Vol. 1). Washington DC: Global Environment Facility.
- PPT in practice. Business Implementation of Pro Poor Tourism: Case Study Briefs. *Tourism investment in local capacity building and training*. Retrieved 14 February 2008 from http://www.odi.org.uk/tourism/resources/briefings/0501_pptpilots_casestudies_6.pdf.
- Raik, D.B. 2002. Capacity Building for Co-management of Wildlife in North America. Retrieved 23 September 2008 from <http://www.dnr.cornell.edu/hdru/PUBS/HDRUReport02-2.pdf>.
- Richards, G., and Hall, D. (Eds.). 2000. *Tourism and sustainable community development*. London: Routledge.
- Roberts, T. and Thanos, N.D. 2003. *Trouble in Paradise: Globalization and Environmental Crises in Latin America*. New York: Routledge.
- Rogers, M.B. 1990. *Cold Anger: A Story of Faith and Power Politics*. Denton, Texas, USA: University of North Texas Press.
- Ryan, C. 2002. Equity, management, power sharing and sustainability – issues of the “new tourism”. *Tourism Management* 23(1): 17-26.
- Smith, N., Baugh-Littlejohns, L. and Thompson, D. 2001. Shaking out the cobwebs: insights into community capacity and its relation to health outcomes. *Community Development Journal* 36(1): 30-40.
- Strasdas, W. 2005. Community-based Tourism: Between self-determination and market realities. Paper presented at the Tourism Forum International at the Reisepavillon 2005.
- Suansri, P. 2004. CBT, Community Based Tourism. Retrieved 10 February 2008 from <http://www.rest.or.th/studytour/medias/chapter1eng.pdf>.