

Community Capacity Building for Tourism Development

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ABSTRACT Community capacity building is widely acknowledged as an important tourism development strategy. Building capacity of communities to effectively address our problematic issues and planning of community development is often required to analyze current status of community development with respect to tourism development. Community capacity building is a necessary ingredient for success of community development. Tourism development and building the capacity for local communities need to progress hand in hand. Community capacity building programs help underdeveloped communities to improve their ability to participate in the tourism decision-making processes. They encourage community involvement, and provide the tools that enable them to do so. The purpose of this paper is to explore the contributions of community capacity building to achieving tourism development. In this study, community capacity building represents the potential of a community to act in tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

Community Capacity building is identified as one of the ways that community development can occur and that tourism development can be addressed. Smith et al. (2001: 31) describe community capacity building as the “essence of community development” It helps communities to improve their ability to participate in the tourism decision-making. Community capacity building is a process aimed at strengthening the capacity of individuals and organizations to develop and sustain conditions that support all aspects of community life (Blackwell and Colmenar 2000). It is a necessary condition for the development of tourism industry. These scholars have made substantial contributions to studies of community capacity building in tourism development (Kingdom of Cambodia Nation 2001; Laverack and Thangphet 2007; Moscardo 2008). Collectively they suggest community capacity building emphasizes a collaborative, ongoing, influential process based on the relationships between people for development processes. According to Littlejohns and Thompson (2001: 33), community capacity building is “the degree to which a community can develop, implement and sustain actions which allow it to exert greater control over its physical, social, economic, and cultural environments”. It has also been described as the combined influence of a community’s commitment, resource mobilization, and skills which can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community

problems (Mattessich and Monsey 1997). The purpose of this paper is to articulate the relationship between building community capacity and tourism development and advocates the application of community capacities for tourism development. In this paper, I have had to rely on secondary sources without being able to evaluate the validity of claims made.

THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

There is a large body of literature suggesting that community capacity building is a core process in the development and strengthening of local communities (Kwan et al. 2003). The concept of community capacity building is regarded as the ability of people and communities to do works associated with the determinant factors and indicators of the circumstances of socio-economic and environmental contexts. This review showed that there are many different definitions of community capacity building. Frank, Smith (1999) suggests that community capacity building pays particular attention to the current and potential assets that a community has access to. All parts of the community are engaged in community capacity building. The Ontario Prevention Clearing House (2002), in an article on capacity building and health promotion, advise that community capacity building occurs at multiple levels including: individual, organizational and community. It is sometimes described as ‘the glue

that binds' between all of the levels. Community capacity building is an important principle of the Stronger Communities Strategy for tourism development programs. It is about increasing the personal and collective resources of individuals and communities, to help them develop the skills and capacities they need to respond to challenges and to seize opportunities that come their way (Funnell and Scougall 2004). Community capacity building is defined by Howe and Cleary (2001) as the ability of individuals, organizations, and communities to manage their own affairs and to work collectively to foster and sustain positive changes. A comprehensive definition of community capacity building is that articulated by Goodman et al. (1998) who write: "It is a process as well as an outcome; it includes supportive organizational structures and processes; it is multi-dimensional and ecological in operating at the individual, group, organizational, community and policy levels; and it is context specific" (Goodman et al. 1998: 260).

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The importance of community capacity building in tourism development is evident, (Ohiorhenuan and Wunker 1995). Community capacity building in tourism development can be seen as the capacity of the people in communities to participate in tourism activities (Cupples 2005). Tourism operators often like to invest in local training and community capacity building as a way of contributing to community development. Community capacity building in three majors can be use in tourism context: Organizational, community and individual (Kieffer and Reischmann 2004; Raik 2002). At the individual level implies the development of skills and knowledge that allow individuals to increase the degree of control and influence they have over relevant aspects of their lives. This level refers to people as such community citizens. Community Capacity building at the community level reflects the needs to improve power for advocacy and decision making in tourism activities. The process may imply training at the community level. This level refers to informal groups bounded geographically. At the organizational level, community capacity building requires significant changes in the way many helping professionals deliver their services. Organizational capacity

referring to a community organization or set of local organizations (Raik 2002). These capacities, after being gained by the institution, community, or individual, may remain dormant unless there is some impetus to action, or empowerment (Rappaport 1987). Thus, community capacity building plays a central role in tourism development. The three types of community capacities in tourism development programs may overlap. To illustrate how concepts of community capacity apply to tourism development; I rely on visual conceptualizations. The depictions that follow are simple model to illustrate the relationships of the community capacity building and tourism development, and to help consider their application in community development.

Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual model for how the three cycles of community capacity building relate to a tourism development process. In this model, there are vectors between community capacity building and increased tourism. Figure 2 illustrates three components of community capacity building which have impact in tourism development and community development. This necessitates improving three community capacities to achieving tourism development (Raik 2002).

BARREIS OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

However community capacity building is an important principle for tourism development but it has some limitation. There is a literature that directly attends to the barriers to community capacity building. Hunt (2005) reviews an uptake of the notion 'community capacity building' in local communities. Her paper is strong in expressing how any capacity building activity or initiative in local communities must acknowledge and address the many barriers to that capacity building. She outlines in broad terms such constraints to include:

- A lack of community participation in tourism development policies
- Power imbalances between governments and local communities
- lack of tourism knowledge
- Short term funding programmes (Hunt 2005)

The results of a survey of Not for Profit services, undertaken in (2004) by the Social Policy Unit of the Western Australian Government, reports barriers to building community capacity. These include time availability, skills, funding

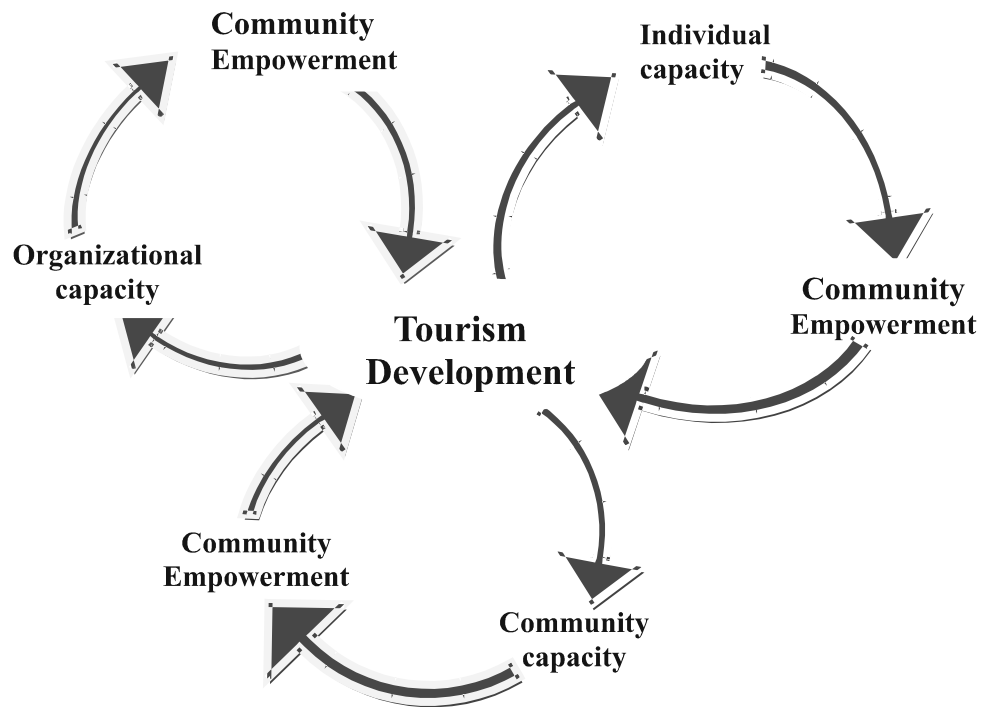


Fig. 1. Cycle community capacities and tourism development
Adapted from: Raik 2002

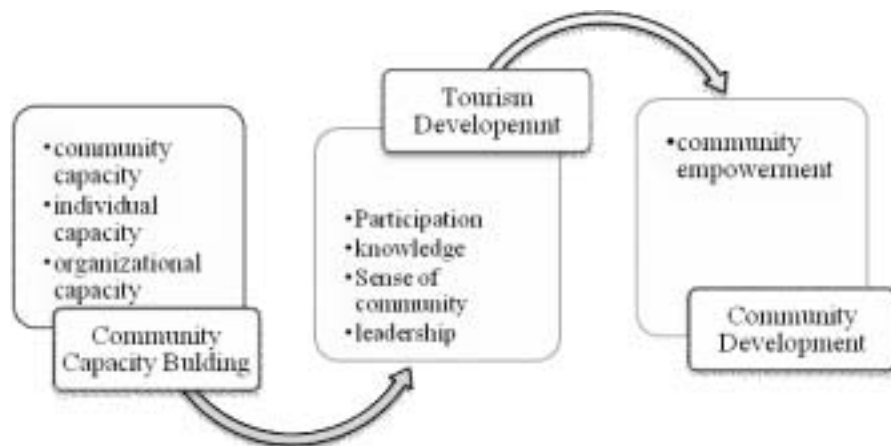


Fig. 2. Contribution of community capacity building in tourism development
Source: Own compilation

limits, abilities of individuals and groups to collaborate, lack of skilled community development practitioners (Social Policy Unit 2004). In a nutshell barriers to building capacity in tourism development point to issues of power, contested values and mixed expectations. These can be hidden by a belief that shared language spoken conveys shared values, understandings of 'community' and open agendas. It can often be quite the opposite (Fiona 2007). For resolve these limitation improving community knowledge and enhancing community participation in tourism development is fundamental for enhanced community capacity in tourism development.

CONCLUSION

Community capacity building is about community empowerment. It helps individuals, organizations, and communities to find unused and undeveloped their skills, resources and geographic advantages that enable to reconsider strengths and opportunities of the abilities of community capacity in tourism development. I have discovered that community capacity building enhances strengths and increases the confidence needed to tourism development. The success of tourism development requires that all stakeholders understand that investments in community capacities are necessary for development. Without community capacity building, tourism development processes could not operate. Where there is sufficient community capacity to support tourism development processes, these processes will also generate community development. Without community development, capacity to undertake tourism programs is limited. So building capacity runs parallel with community development and is a common feature, although not always explicitly stated, of many community development pro-grams. Tourism development practitioners should be aware of the need to understand the interrelatedness of the community capacity building (Hawe 1994).

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