



Community-based Tourism Development: A Possible Educational Gap

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ABSTRACT The demand for well-trained staff in tourism has increased in the last three decades. This is due to the economic contribution of tourism to national economies and its popularity in generating employment. Many developing countries depend on tourism for socio-economic development. Current literature reveals the existence of a gap in Community-based Tourism (CBT) curriculum and qualifications at degree level. This paper is a conceptual paper compiled using an internet search of keywords related to community-based tourism. It examines the gaps that exist in the CBT capacity building process. This is meant to encourage tourism educators and curriculum developers to seriously consider CBT education at degree level. This paper recommends the introduction of a new qualification in CBT at the degree level in South Africa and elsewhere to fill the gaps in CBT capacity principally because such an offering does not exist based on the literature perused.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a global phenomenon and continues to grow. Thus, "Recent years have seen Travel and Tourism growing at a faster rate than both the wider economy and other significant sectors such as automotive, financial services and health care" (Scowsill 2015). The importance of tourism is for many countries cannot be underestimated to the extent "that tourism is a global phenomenon is not debated" (Smith 2004: 23). While tourism can be an engine of economic and social development, there is the need for the production of relevant tourism knowledges, epistemologies, data and ontologies related to tourism. For example, authors have noted that to entirely understand the impacts of tourism, governments, policymakers and businesses around the world require accurate and reliable data on the impact of the sector. Data is needed to help assess policies that govern future industry development and to provide knowledge to help guide successful and sustainable travel and tourism investment decisions (Scowsill 2015).

The possible value of the tourism sector in socio-economic development has been reported in the literature and it has been and acknowledged by international organisations (Pulido-Fernández and López-Sánchez 2011: 267). Importantly, "Many developing countries use tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic development especially in the rural areas. Tourism is therefore viewed as a community and economic development tool that serves certain ends" (Abdul Razzaq et al. 2012: 10). Within the tourism context, community-based tourism (CBT) has been seen as an alternative way towards the achievement of community development. Thus, already in 2000, it was proposed that "Community-based tourism is also gaining popularity as part of strategies for conservation and development" (The Mountain Institute 2000: 3; on CBT popularity, see also Asker et al. 2010: 3). Thus, "Community-Based Tourism has been extensively promoted in literatures as essential from an ethical, equitable, and developmental perspective" (Briones et al. 2017: 52).

This paper is concerned with a CBT curriculum/qualification in higher education. However, it is important to note that tourism was introduced in secondary schools in 1996 (Dube 2014).

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This is relevant as tourism in secondary schools can serve to build up and introduce and provide the necessary tourism knowledge and awareness (and possibly passion) in students. It has also been noted that this introduction of tourism as a subject in schools reflects that “tourism is a subject with value ... based on the perception that it opens up career opportunities for learners which were not available to all in the past. It is also seen as a subject offering immediate benefits as the skills taught in tourism could enable learners to find employment even while still at school” (Dube 2014: 165). It can be argued that vocational and academic approaches should go together. As part of the debate on tourism education and school subjects, it has been noted that “An emerging voice views tourism as a ‘threshold’ subject, suggesting that it needs to integrate vocational and academic aspects ... to ensure career prospects and lifelong learning in the field of tourism” (Dube 2014: 155, see also Wattanacharoensil 2014: 9). The introduction of tourism at school level can also be linked in various ways to tourism curriculum at the university level. However, what remains strange is the value attributed to tourism as a subject as a requirement to enter into tertiary education institutions because tourism, as a subject, is “devalued at the university” (Dube 2014: 1644). Within this context, it has been proposed that “curriculum planners in the schools surveyed have fallen foul of the attribute of complexity inasmuch as they have given too much weight to tourism’s vocational orientation and too little to its academic component” (Dube 2014: 165).

At the same time, while ecotourism qualification and curriculum issues are present (see, for example, Ecotourism Degree at Durban University of Technology) and of interest to research students (Geldenuys 2003), qualifications and curriculum related to CBT seem to be absent. Interestingly, Geldenuys (2003: VI) states that “The aim of this study was to design an ecotourism curriculum for higher education institutions in South Africa, with special reference to technikons, which could also be used as a basis for developing programmes in other institutions and countries” Certainly, a specific curriculum for CBT qualification should also be seen to be an urgent and relevant proposal to advance if the intention is to make tourism more oriented towards community development from

an empowerment, social justice and redistributive perspective.

Within this context, this paper aims to unpack the importance of formal education related to CBT. Debate in tourism education is relatively new. Espasandín Bustelo et al. (2010: 1193) observe that “Although university studies on higher education in tourism are relatively new, much debate on this issue has been produced in the last decade.” Tourism capacity is seen as a challenge in tourism development. For example, in a document related to CBT of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), it has been mentioned that tourism potential cannot be fully realised because, of “low-capacity tourism administrations” among some countries (Tasci et al. 2013: 1).

As such, it is important to assess the current capacity in CBT in the various stakeholders and to identify possible gap(s). This paper is specifically related to CBT with a focus on Government institutions and South Africa in particular. The contribution of this paper relates to the identification of possible gaps in CBT capacity building processes. It argues that once these have been assessed, it is possible to devise strategies and means to better advance CBT development. A literature review is presented and ventilates various issues related to the relationship of CBT development and the capacities of various stakeholders juxtaposed with matters related to tourism curriculum in higher education. Thereafter, a case study, focusing on South Africa, is presented. The methodology is next and the last part concludes.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this paper is document analysis as well as searching the South African Qualifications Authority website as a source that carries all accredited qualifications and courses in South Africa. Following a similar approach adopted by Mtapuri et al. (2015: 693), the search was done using three ‘keywords’ specifically: ‘community-based tourism’; ‘community based tourism’; and ‘community tourism’ and yielded the results presented in this paper. These ‘keywords’ assisted in sifting the different terminologies applied to CBT. The search was performed on 3 January 2016 at the SAQA website (SAQA n.d. a).

Literature Review

CBT must be viewed through a community development lens or perspective. Nevertheless “CBT is far from a perfect, pre-packaged solution to community problems. CBT will not solve all the challenges that the community is facing. In fact, if carelessly applied, CBT can cause problems and bring disaster” (Suansri 2003: 11). For instance, elites or private individuals can take over the venture for private gain with dire consequences for the community if community members are exploited in the process. Thus, CBT should be controlled by the community and this sets it aside from top-down approaches associated with mass tourism development. Thus, “CBT highlights the importance of community empowerment and ‘ownership’ in tourism development as a means to sustain the community growth” (Abdul Razzaq et al. 2012: 10). Ideally, CBT should be a community or endogenous effort. However, often, external facilitators are required, since “It is rare for communities to initiate tourism developments on their own; they are normally spearheaded by a local non-governmental organization (NGO), or an international agency concerned with conservation, a donor, a park ranger, a tour operator or a small business officer from the government” as shown in South Africa (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2013: 4). At the same time, “if not properly facilitated, it can inflict profound damage on communities instead of serving as a development tool” (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2014: 1; see also Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2013, about CBT Facilitation). Nevertheless, the role of the government is seen as most important (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli 2013: 5).

The government plays a critical role in CBT and “Only governments can provide the strategic planning base for CBT which is so clearly needed” (George et al. 2007: 11). However, while government is seen as a principal protagonist in tourism/CBT development, NGOs and the private sector have a role to play. While the private sector and NGOs can also be present in CBT projects, it has been proposed that NGOs often only stay for the duration of the project (Giampiccoli et al. 2014: 1149). In this instance, universities can adopt a social responsible role by extending their presence and can act as a platform for long-term relationships with the community in CBT ventures and act as a catalyst between

government offices and the private sector (Giampiccoli et al. 2014: 1149). Unfortunately, often government lacks capacity in CBT also as a consequence of the novelty of the tourism sector (Timothy 2002:161). At government level, for example, a United Nations project in Turkey “aims at developing national and local capacities for planning and implementation of sustainable community based tourism” and a specific expected result is to develop “capacities of the MoCT [Ministry of Culture and Tourism] and other actors on legislative environment and provision of support for implementation of sustainable community-based tourism” (United Nations Development Programme n.d.).

This paper suggests that a tourism qualification in CBT at higher education level could contribute to decreasing the government’s (and arguably also NGOs, and private sector) lack of capacity, if the government hires the newly qualified graduates in CBT en masse. A CBT qualification needs to include community development matters, development theories and practices. It is not just about tourism, it is about community and community development before tourism, where CBT is a strategy for community development. Community development is the final goal. Thus, proper capacity building of facilitators of CBT is essential with specific requirements to meet the needs of the context.

Continuous education and training for capacity building is needed at both the individual and institutional level, within government, civil society and the private sector to enhance the necessary skills for management, marketing, strategic planning and organizational development. Effective education, training and information is needed to infuse a community spirit and volunteerism from the start to the end, as well as to provide with commercial orientation and business savvy skills while keeping the core values, norms and morals necessary to maintain an authentic character (Tasci et al. 2013: 32).

Studies related to tourism curriculum in higher education are present (Scotland 2006; Wang and Ryan 2007; Sangpikul 2009; Espasandin Bustelo et al. 2010; Jugmohan 2010; Belhassen and Caton 2011; Wattanacharoensil 2014; Shen et al. 2015). Tourism education in higher education is changing. As a consequence of the changes in the international tourism system, the subsystem of higher education, especially in Europe, “is undergoing a process of adaptation

and change to the new demands of a global stage characterized by important changes in the labour market, an increasing global competition, continuous technological advances, changes in demand patterns - students want a high probability of employability and employers want employees with a high level of training - and by the requirements of the European higher education area" (Espasandín Bustelo et al. 2010: 1192). Scotland (2006) also indicates that changes in the tourism and hospitality sector raise questions about the relevance of their curricula in Higher Education. In addition, "the current international education in tourism is influenced by Europeans and Americans" (Espasandín Bustelo et al. 2010: 1193).

Changes happen. As such, the growths of ecotourism and nature-based tourism have facilitated the birth and development of specific university courses starting from the period 1990-1995 (Robertson et al. 1996). By the same token, it could be said that courses on responsible and/or sustainable tourism are present (see, for example, courses at Leeds Beckett University n.d.; Monash University n.d.). No specific study related to a curriculum, degree or qualification on CBT seems to be present despite that "Education and capacity building in CBT is also seen as a key factor and should be considered as an important pre-condition in CBT development" (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri 2017: 4). Thus, it is proposed that a similar degree/qualification in CBT should also be offered because of the relevance and specificity of CBT which makes it essential to offer a specific CBT qualification. Ecotourism, responsible and other alternative tourism types, including pro-poor tourism, do not aim to restructure the tourism sector but aim to make it work better for the benefit of nature and poor people (they remain within the logic of mainstream tourism). Instead, CBT is alternative to mass/mainstream tourism and, therefore, aims to restructure the tourism sector (Giampiccoli and Saayman 2014, in relation to the difference between CBT and other forms of alternative tourism). Thus, a specific qualification in CBT is necessary because it will enable the formation of a link between tourism, community development, development theories and so on, thus moving beyond the mere tourism technical skills to directed knowledges aimed at understanding matters of community development, social justice, power relations, empowerment, and so on.

While differences between CBT and pro-poor tourism have been revealed (Saayman and Giampiccoli 2016), in the case of this paper, these differences are not necessarily relevant because its focus is on CBT capacity for all CBT stakeholders. Thus, with respect to capacity in the context of CBT development while community-based tourism as a form of pro-poor tourism has been promoted with some success in East Africa (for example SNV funded Tanzanian Community Tourism Program) and in select areas of Uganda (for example Buhoma community walks), expansion of these previous initiatives to other communities in Uganda has been limited by the inadequate development of a local knowledge base and expertise capable of preparing stakeholders at all levels of the tourism industry - government, private enterprises, NGOs, and communities - to support rural women and men in identifying and capitalizing upon their own unique potential. This situation is evident throughout Africa, where pro-poor tourism initiatives have yet to forge the important links between higher education, communities, NGOs, and the tourism industry" (Campbell et al. 2011: 9). As such, a study describes the curriculum development process for a master's degree in sustainable community tourism at Makerere University by proposing that the "project provides means to overcome these limitations by developing leadership and human resource capacity at the university level to provide sustained training and integration at all these levels of the tourism industry so that best practices are learned through the community tourism initiatives developed in this project can be integrated into the planning and management of subsequent tourism throughout Uganda" (Campbell et al. 2011: 9).

CBT should be understood within a social justice perspective (Giampiccoli 2015). As such, it is relevant to consider this perspective bearing in mind the need for a tourism curriculum in higher education capable of developing critical thinking as well as skilled workers (Jugmohan 2010: 4; Belhassen and Caton 2011). In this context, "rather than take the present state of modern global capitalism for granted, students could be encouraged to analyse how the current system enables or constrains particular outcomes, and they could also consider potential alternatives" (Belhassen and Caton 2011: 1392). Similarly consideration should also be given "against

special interest tourists (example, ecotourists, cultural tourists, adventure tourists, jetsetters, sports enthusiasts), who are often presented as representing a healthier expression of tourism in comparison with mass tourists, but whose activities are nevertheless motivated by western cultural forces such as consumerism, self-actualization, self-gratification, individualism, and so forth, just like their mass-tourist counterparts” (Belhassen and Caton 2011: 1392). Thus, the development of critical thinking among students can promote a better understanding of tourism alternatives to mass/mainstream tourism and the need to reconceptualise alternative tourism forms, such as CBT, so that they foster a more proper alternative tourism approach towards social justice, equity and so on. Thus, “Rather than leading students to believe that tourism education effectively places the tools of control in their waiting hands, academia would be better serving them with educational preparation that cultivates more critical understandings of social systems [...] Such a view restores human agency, including moral agency, to those who seek to work as coordinators and leaders in the tourism industry” (Belhassen and Caton 2011: 1395). This is the reason why CBT should be offered as a qualification at university level and go beyond only the vocational context by providing specific understandings related to tourism, and, essentially, to community development matters.

A South African Community-based Tourism Educational Gap

The important role of the government in CBT and in strategies to promote a redistributive way of tourism opportunities to South Africa has been recognised (Rogerson 2009; Acheampong 2010). However, the South Africa government lacks CBT (and tourism) capacity, especially at the local municipality level. As expressed by Giampiccoli et al. (2014: 1143), “In South Africa, a lack of capacity within government (especially at local government level) is also recognised, particularly with regard to CBT.” The National Tourism Sector Strategy Executive Summary (NDT 2011a) mentions problems at government level by suggesting that, amongst other, there are “[f]ew dedicated tourism staff members and limited tourism experience, knowledge and budgets in local governments” (NDT 2011b: 22). Local municipalities are relevant agents in CBT

development. It can, thus, be said that local government is a key entity in CBT development while appreciating the numerous challenges it faces.

The capacity of local government to lead the planning process is a form of community empowerment during which the planning is conducted from within the local community rather than for the local community by external factors such as regional or national planning processes. “The tokenistic relationship between citizens, local government, and the community tourism process is problematic when the process becomes corrupt or blatantly exploitive, contradicts the majority of local residents’ values, and is overly influenced by more powerful stakeholders with specific economic interests [...] ideally, plans are then based on the community-defined socioeconomic and environmental context of the community [...]. Community-based participatory planning is not always successful, however. It can only occur in communities that have the capacity for it to occur” (Paris et al. 2014: 270).

Thus, it is proposed that local municipalities are key players in CBT as they are in ‘direct contact’ with the communities that they serve. Thus, it is local municipalities that should be at the forefront in facilitating CBT development together with the community itself. The same National Tourism Sector Strategy Executive Summary document (NDT 2011a: 26) properly acknowledges that “As local governments are essentially the link with the people, their capacity for, and understanding of, tourism – particularly community-based tourism issues – need to be improved to enable them to provide realistic assistance to communities to maximise potential tourism opportunities.” The South African Ukhlebezwe Municipality (2011: 22), for example, within the CBT section indicated that, currently, there is no CBT within the municipality and, amongst other things, there is the need to “Improve local government’s capacity for, and understanding of, tourism, specifically community-based tourism issues and opportunities, to enable them to provide realistic assistance to communities to maximise potential tourism opportunities.”

Despite these difficulties, local government is important and of key relevance. For example, “Local governments influence tourism products in how they manage their socio-economic environment and how they provide services to their communities. Despite tourism’s significance,

though, local governments have few dedicated or part-time tourism personnel; experience and knowledge of tourism are extremely limited, and, with rare exceptions, no budget is allocated for tourism planning and development activities [...] Therefore, capacity building for tourism is critical to improve the overall planning for, and management of, South Africa's tourism industry" (NDT 2011b: 29). The same document mentions community beneficiation but indicates "a lack of progress in delivering tourism benefits to communities" (NDT 2011b: 42).

Thus, one of the actions to be taken should be to "Improve local government's capacity for, and understanding of, tourism, specifically community-based tourism issues and opportunities, to enable them to provide realistic assistance to communities to maximise potential tourism opportunities" (NDT 2011b: 42). It is also suggested that "Tourism awareness should be introduced at an early age, encouraging tourism at school level already. Local government also has a role to play in providing leadership and the necessary planning to ensure that their communities and local businesses get the most out of tourism, and to minimise any negative effects" (NDT 2011b: 42).

Thus, in South Africa, as earlier mentioned, there is a lack of capacity in the tourism sector at government level (see NDT 2011a, b). As recent as 2015, the Local Government Tourism Conference Report indicates various issues related to capacity at government levels, for example, it was indicated that "there is a need to develop capacity in order to address this challenge. Both National and Provincial governments should find effective ways of assisting in developing the capacity of municipalities to develop comprehensive tourism plans" (NDT 2015: 28). The same document also indicates that some action has been taken, for example, "The Tourism Capacity Building Programme for Local Government through which more than 200 Tourism Practitioners and Policy Makers have been trained across 61 Municipalities in the country. The next step is to provide training to more Municipalities and to decentralise training for easier reach" (NDT 2015: 11). However, more can be done in a long-term strategy where CBT is part of, or better still, is a university qualification which has, an annual pool of graduate specialists in the field that can be employed by government (and

also the private sector and NGOs) to improve their capacity in CBT.

RESULTS

A search at all qualifications and unit standards in the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) shows the absence of service providers of CBT qualifications or unit standards. Specifically, for CBT labelled, 'community-based tourism'; 'community based tourism' for search purposes, no result was found while searching *all qualifications and all unit standards*. At the same time, while no result was obtained for the keyword 'community tourism' for *all unit standards*, a result was instead obtained for the same keyword by searching *all qualifications*. Specifically, the result shows the presence of the National Certificate: Travel and Community Tourism for level 4 (note that level 4 is below a university Bachelor degree that corresponds to level 7). Table 1 shows the results from the SAQA website (SAQA n. d. b). Interestingly, it seems to be a new qualification as the registration date is 2015 (SAQA n.d. b). It is indicated that "The primary purpose of the qualification is to provide qualifying learners with the technical skills and knowledge to enter the general tourism field and with the skills to initiate tourism projects within the communities of South Africa" (SAQA n. d. b).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse the National Certificate: Travel and Community Tourism in detail (this analysis can certainly be a possibility in further research). The National Certificate: Travel and Community Tourism seems to be more inclined towards technical/vocation skills and does not respond to the need to link the tourism sector to matters related to community development, empowerment, capacity building, power relations, and development theories. It is relevant to note that, in the section related to *Providers currently accredited to offer this qualification*, it is indicated as *None*. Thus, the National Certificate: Travel and Community Tourism, while present on paper, is actually not practically implemented by any educational institution (based on the SAQA website – SAQA n. d. b).

This paper advocates a formal qualification in CBT at degree level. While a degree in CBT will not resolve all the capacity problems in the sub-sector, it could possibly contribute to ad-

Table 1: National certificate: Travel and community tourism

SAQA QUAL ID	Qualification Title			
14066	National Certificate: Travel and Community Tourism			
Originator Damelin				
Primary Or Delegated Qa Body	NQF Sub-Framework			
-	OQSF - Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework			
Qualification Type	Field	Subfield		
National Certificate	Field 11 - Services		Hospitality, Tourism, Travel, Gaming and Leisure	
Abet Band	Minimum Credits	Pre-2009 NQF Level	NQF Level	QUAL Class
Undefined	120	Level 4	Level TBA: Pre-2009 was L4	Regular-Provider-ELOAC
Registration Status	SAQA Decision Number	Registration Start Date	Registration End Date	
Reregistered	SAQA 10105/14		2015-07-01	2018-06-30
Last Date For Enrolment	Last Date For Achievement			
2019-06-30	2022-06-30			

Source: SAQA n. d. b

addressing the lack of capacity and improving the level of awareness of CBT when CBT graduates take on, for example, government positions. However, graduates with CBT credentials and working in NGOs or the private sector will also be better equipped through training and will also contribute to increased capacity and awareness about CBT in their respective sectors.

DISCUSSION

Tourism and CBT within the broader conception of tourism as a sector are growing in relevance. As such, specific capacities need to be present in various stakeholders and facilitators. CBT, specifically, often needs external facilitation to be developed. Therefore, government is seen as a fundamental actor in facilitating CBT. However, often government, such as in the South African case, lacks capacity at national, provincial and local levels (especially at the latter level) in matters related to CBT development. This paper proposes that a qualification at university degree level – thus going beyond vocational training – is seen as a possible contributor to decrease the lack of capacity in government (or any other organisation involved in CBT) for CBT development. The proposed

degree level qualification and curriculum (which could be a further research paper to explore) should include both vocational and more academic and critical thinking skills to be taught in order for the acquired skills to be holistic and valuable to CBT development. The university qualification is proposed with a long-term perspective of CBT development where graduates in CBT can be employed by government (and also private sector and NGOs) to improve institutional capacity and practice in CBT. With greater knowledge and understanding of the sector, communities are more likely to protect and value tourism products operating in their areas as well as embrace foreign tourists who visit their areas instead of being hostile towards them.

CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to the literature in CBT and tourism education by arguing for the need to introduce a higher education qualification in CBT. Following a purposive literature review, while the paper does not suggest that expertise in CBT is completely absent in South Africa and globally it suggests that there is a gap. Thus, it proposes that a formalisation of CBT expertise should be implemented through a

new qualification in CBT to fill the present gaps. At the same time, specificities and understandings of the new CBT qualification and its curriculum can be debated and further researched.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper advocates the need for a new qualification in CBT at degree level in South Africa (and arguably globally) to fill the gaps in CBT capacity. It also recommends further research to determine the content and detail of such a CBT curriculum and the level it should be pitched, for example, at undergraduate and/or post graduate levels and the qualification mix.

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