

Chapter 1

Principles, Benefits, and Barriers to Community- Based Tourism: Implications for Management

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ABSTRACT

Though CBT is an attractive model for the attainment of both community development and environmental conservation, its implementation is fraught with challenges. This chapter examines the principles, forms, barriers, and challenges to CBT. The chapter further proposes a model for the achievement of sustainable CBT and draws implications from the barriers and benefits for the management of CBT. The chapter begins with an explanation of the community concept which is defined in the context of community-based tourism. It continues with a review of some models of community participation. The chapter further assesses the rationale for community participation and examines the forms of CBT. Though community participation remains a good model for tourism development at the community level, there are several limitations that make the benefits unachievable, especially in developing countries. The chapter ends by proposing a model of sustainable CBT by drawing implications for the management of CBT projects.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7335-8.ch001

INTRODUCTION

The Community-based approach to tourism development has gained currency, especially in the developing world. This is because it is considered a viable tourism development option for the attainment of both socio-economic development and environmental conservation (Lee & Jan 2019). Unlike other conventional models of tourism development, it places the power of control over tourism development in the hands of local people thereby ensuring that the level of tourism development reflects the aspirations of local people (Murphy, 1985). However, it is important to note that the level of community involvement in tourism development tends to vary from non-involvement to citizen control. Despite the attractiveness of community-based tourism (CBT) as a viable model for tourism development at the community level, its practical implementation is often fraught with challenges which Tosun (2000) broadly classifies into operational barriers, structural barriers and cultural barriers. Generally, the inadequate capacity of local people in terms of knowledge, skills, funding and other resources to undertake tourism development is seen as the major barrier to CBT development. In spite of these challenges, CBT has proven to be more beneficial to several communities in the developing world. However, for the CBT projects to be truly participatory and beneficial to local communities, policymakers and managers must institute appropriate mechanisms for ensuring fairness and transparency as well as building resilience to ensure sustainable tourism development. This chapter begins with a discussion on the community-based approach to tourism development, including the community concept, community-based tourism, community participation, the rationale for community participation and forms of community participation. This is followed by the barriers to community participation and the benefits of CBT. The chapter ends with some implications for the management of CBT projects.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Community Concept

The community concept has been defined, severally, usually in terms of space, social organization, as well as people and social interactions (Harwood, 2010). In terms of space, a community is defined as “a group of people, often living in the same geographical area, who identify themselves as belonging to the same group” (Sproule, 1996, p. 236). A community as a social organization comprises a social system made up of groups and institutions. When a community is defined in terms

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