

Community-based tourism in rich and poor countries: Towards a framework for comparison

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Abstract

This article is conceptual based on a perusal of academic journal articles and books on matters related to Community-based Tourism (CBT). It contends that CBT is a very important tool for local economic development, community development, empowerment and the attainment of social justice. It observes disparities between rich and poor countries in terms of endowments and how the multiple dimensions of poverty can confound how tourism can be experienced in different contexts. It posits an eight Es model which represents the fundamental pillars upon which to judge a CBT for purposes of support, monitoring and evaluation. The eight E are **Endogenous** (emphasising a reliance on local resources); **Environment** – (reflecting the importance of caring for the environment, and broader environmental conditions and infrastructure); **Education** – (to advance skills and education); **Empowerment** – (which embraces economic, psychological, social and political empowerment); **Equity** – (for equitable distribution and re-distribution of both benefits and resources); **Evolving** – (always improving and changing to take advantage of dynamic opportunities); **Enduring** – (for long term sustainability) and supporting **Entrepreneurship** – (for innovation, creativity and viability). The framework/model is also significant as it provides a common ground upon which the understanding of CBT could be carried at international and national level. The model can be customised to take into account local conditions; it is flexible and all-encompassing with potential to be used for rating facilities.

Keywords: Tourism, community-based tourism, community development, developing countries, developed countries.

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Introduction

Inequality is a current relevant matter (Pickett, 2014) and it is present in both rich and poor countries (UNDP, 2013; OECD, n.d:3; Immervoll & Richardson, 2011). A UNDP (2013:7) document observes that “In many developed and developing countries, the distribution of income between households is more unequal now than it was two decades ago. In developing countries, three of every four households are in societies where incomes are more unequally distributed

now than in the early 1990s. Population-weighted averages of within-country income inequality show that income inequality has risen by 9 percent in developed countries and by 11 percent in developing countries” (UNDP, 2013:7). Poverty is also a central theme and can be linked to inequality, as such “Poverty reduction, and hence development, is compromised by income inequality” (Pickett, 2014:5), or differently stated “Poverty is rapidly becoming a matter of within-country inequality” (OECD, n.d:3). For middle income countries poverty and inequality are “urgent issues” (OECD, n.d:3). However, it can be argued that this general context should not lead us to assume that poor people in different countries have the same level of ‘disadvantage’. As such, while poverty and inequality are present in both rich and poor countries “A distinction is here made between under-privileged socio-economic contexts and privileged contexts. Usually this line of demarcation invokes the more historically conventional division between rich (Developed, North) countries and poor (Developing, South) countries [...] However, the under-privileged people in the developed contexts (rich countries) are usually better off in terms of resources and infrastructure compared to their counterparts in less developed countries” (Giampiccoli, Jugmohan & Mtapuri, 2015:451). The difference between rich and poor countries presents a background or reason that each location and community possesses its own characteristics, needs and challenges and a difference level of well-being and endowments.

Tourism has been presented as a tool for development in many countries. As such, in many industrialized countries, tourism has been promoted as a sector for purposes of “economic regeneration of both peripheral rural regions and declining, post-industrial urban areas...” (Sharpley, 2009:40). Many national governments such as Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa, in the Global South, have adopted poverty reduction strategies which are steeped in tourism-led growth (Saarinen & Rogerson, 2014).

In light of the presence of the challenges of inequality and poverty in both rich and poor countries, this article aims to contribute towards the proposition of the establishment of international common denominators or characteristics for CBT development while emphasising that such characteristics should remain flexible. In other words, use the same characteristics but in a variety of ways in how to approach them based on each specific socio-economic and cultural context. To achieve this end, this article also argues for the need to establish international collaborative efforts based on common understandings and support of CBT because international collaboration is important in the development and operationalisation of CBT guidelines which are capable of fitting into the different contexts through mutually shared experiences (Giampiccoli, Jugmohan & Mtapuri, 2015). This paper is partly built upon an abstract presented at the Third International Conference on Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan (see Giampiccoli, Jugmohan & Mtapuri,

2015). This paper takes justification from the issues presented in a Thailand case study which proposes that the CBT term in Thailand is “complex and confusing, and that CBT in Thailand is lacking a standardized terminology. Redressing this situation therefore warrants the development of an operational definition” (Boonratana, 2010:282). Thus, as proposed as justification of proper operational definition of CBT in Thailand case study.

Having an appropriate terminology is considered important in terms of assisting local communities and their partners or other stakeholders keen on developing CBT towards fulfilling the objectives of, and complying with the principles of CBT. In addition, it allows those communities offering authentic CBT to distinguish themselves from other destinations with similar products and services, possibly through an accreditation system. Furthermore, it allows visitors with interest in authentic CBT or supporting the objectives of CBT to distinguish it from similar forms, again possibly through an accreditation system. Inability to obtain an authentic CBT might deter both domestic and international visitors (through word-of-mouth or other means) from partaking in such tourism in Thailand. Moreover, it allows corporations, nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, and other interested parties to make better decisions should there be a desire in supporting or developing CBT (Boonratana, 2010).

In addition, extant literature shows that a lot of progress has been recorded in terms of the planning framework, tourism-impact research as well as policy but very little progress has been posted with regard to “monitoring and measuring sustainable Community Tourism Development (CTD) due to a lack of mutually accepted measurement and monitoring systems” (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006:1277).

Based on this premise, one of the ambitions of this article is to present a case for the need to have a set of common denominators/characteristics of CBT at international level with room to accommodate local conditions (to ensure flexibility) informed by specific socio-economic and cultural contexts. Thus, the article has two interrelated aims, firstly, to underline the need for common understandings of CBT at international level and, secondly, to unpack the basic fundamental premises which are at the core of these CBT understandings. As such, the article will present at the outset an outline of how these fundamental dimensions could serve as a starting point – or form the basis – for the development of CBT indicators. The article does not pretend to be fully comprehensive in providing all the CBT characteristics and challenges, as such it does not aim to give a final resolution or model but aims at initiating a conversation on the matter by providing some initial indications on possible

approaches or trajectories on how to internationalize common understandings of CBT given the differences in local contexts.

Literature review

Consistent with their differences in terms of resources and cultures, disadvantaged groups exist in society in both rich and poor countries. While some dimensions of poverty and how they manifest can be comparable between countries, every country has its own unique manifestations of these dimensions. For examples, access to clean and safe water is an essential element in life and is also important in tourism, as tourists need to have proper water facilities during their holiday. However, the difference in water access between countries shows huge divergences and differences. As such, data from the World Bank (WB, online) for 2012 range from 100% access to safe water^a in countries such as Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Cyprus Spain and Hungary while for other countries the percentage of population with access to water presents as a huge challenge (for example: Madagascar 49.6%; Mauritania 49.6%; Mozambique 49.2%; Democratic Republic of Congo 46.5%; Papua New Guinea 39.7%) (WB, online). This implies that each element/dimension of disadvantage should be placed in a specific (local/national/regional) context and related to CBT characteristics in order to be able to enhance CBT potential and counteract CBT challenges and limitations. As a matter of fact, early models of CBT were firstly developed in Canada (King & Pearlman, 2009:420; Giampiccoli, 2015) but thereafter, the CBT models then spread to many other countries and example are present in both developed and developing countries (see Asker, Boronyak, Carrard, & Paddon, 2010 for various examples). In this context, the introductory section provided the background and the next section unveils the various characteristics of CBT and reflects on some more general common traits which CBT should have.

Tourism has been used as a tool for community development as early as in the 1970s with a focus on alleviating poverty and economic development such that many developing countries have supported and promoted tourism projects into their national development plans (Yoopetch, 2015). The origins of CBT have been associated to the reaction to mass tourism, such that it emerged as a possible and plausible panacea to the adverse effects of mass tourism in developing countries, and was also used as a strategy for community re-configuration for purposes of attaining a better standard of living (López

^a “Access to an improved water source refers to the percentage of the population using an improved drinking water source. The improved drinking water source includes piped water on premises (piped household water connection located inside the user’s dwelling, plot or yard), and other improved drinking water sources (public taps or standpipes, tube wells or boreholes, protected dug wells, protected springs, and rainwater collection)” (WB, online).

Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares & Pavón, 2011). Lately, CBT is considered as a viable strategy of tourism development given its fast growth in tourism development particularly in developing countries (Yoopetch, 2015). As a result, CBT has been used towards a number of objectives by international organizations, and as such CBT has the support of many international organizations including the World Tourism Organization because it can be used for conservation of both natural and cultural resources, the socio-economic development of communities including addressing aspects of empowerment and ownership at the community level (Amir, Ghapar, Jamal & Ahmad, 2015).

Disadvantaged groups should be the protagonists of CBT development from a social justice perspective (Jealous, 1998). CBT development is present in poor and rich countries (Giampiccoli, Jugmohan & Mtapuri, 2015). While CBT insinuates participation (or better control of) the (tourism) development process, it has been noted, however, that “Previous research suggests that in countries, states or neighbourhoods where inequality is high, trust and civic participation are low” (Lancee & van de Werfhorst, 2011:9). Thus, it is key to develop common understandings of CBT and relate it to the various specific contexts to be able to foster CBT globally with consistency in its attribution and characteristics while ensuring ‘context-fit’.

CBT development should be controlled and managed by the community (Leksakundilok & Hirsch, 2008) as it represents a form of tourism with a focus on local empowerment (Prachvuthy, 2006). In addition, some of the “key activities of community-based tourism include power redistribution, collaboration processes and social capital creation” (Yoopetch, 2015:573). Based on previous research Yoopetch (2015) proposes four main components in CBT in relation to sustainable development: economic viability; ecological sustainability; equitable distribution of costs and benefits; and good governance. Education which is a means to empower people is often a barrier in community participation (Okazaki, 2008). In addition education and capacity in CBT has its own approach, as such,

One of the key differences between community-based tourism and other forms of tourism is the focus on empowering the local community to run their own tourism businesses. The development of local capacity through the raising of awareness, the running of tourism education and training programmes, and the provision of business advisory support, can help build the confidence, knowledge and ability of the local community to control and manage their own development. This in turn is likely to increase residents’ self-esteem, strengthen the cooperation between community members, and improve local governance (SNV, 2007:14).

Capacity building should be done prior to establishing the CBT venture itself as Moscardo observes that “health, education and agriculture highlight the importance of key elements of community capacity building occurring before specific development programmes are chosen or pursued” (Moscardo, 2008:10). As such capacity building in CBT should be seen as a platform upon which to build capacity which goes beyond the tourism (CBT) milieu to deliberately enhance capacity in all spheres of life (Giampiccoli, Jugmohan & Mtapuri, 2014).

Yoopetch (2015) observes that it is imperative for communities to play a huge role in tourism development at the project level to ensure they control it because there is evidence to show that community members tend to blindly rely on others such as investors and outsiders in formulating the tourism plans. As such government and its agencies should play a critical role in nurturing the projects and backstopping them (Yoopetch, 2015). CBT poses a number of challenges – such as ensuring effective participation – it can vary in degree in various contexts, as suggested in the following excerpt:

The idea of community-based sustainable tourism collectively postulates that local residents must maintain control of tourism development by being involved in setting a tourism vision and developing goals and strategies. They also need to participate in implementing strategies as well as operating tourism infrastructures, services and facilities for effective management of local resource and better distribution of the benefits of tourism development. Despite this notion, local communities rarely take part in tourism development activities and often experience a very limited participation in or a complete exclusion from decision-making process. This situation is particularly characterised in developing countries. This is because of structural, operational and cultural limitations. Especially, the highly centralised governmental systems of developing countries as a limitation at the operational level make the participation of local communities rarely go beyond mere consultation and information exchange (Kim, Park & Phandanouvong, 2014:2).

CBT should not be viewed as geared solely towards the provision of accommodation services but it must be understood as possibly comprising various activities and may include “home-stay families, community tour guides, craftsmen, performers, community leaders, local restaurants, farmers, and other interesting roles. Guests may stay with a local family in a home-stay, in a community-owned lodge, or even a community campsite. Local transport is used when traveling during the program” (Hasan & Islam, 2015:290).

Various characteristics, pre-conditions and challenges have been extrapolated in the extant literature (Jugmohan & Steyn, 2015), such as: CBT should be an endogenous effort but external facilitation is possible (and often needed); CBT should be based on local culture; CBT should be established, especially in its initial stages, as a complementary activity within the context of the diversification of livelihood strategies (but with the possibility to grow in relevance); CBT should enhance individual and community-wide well-being of direct and indirect beneficiaries; CBT should be understood as a long-term approach to community development; CBT should emphasise training in a way that promotes skill/education in tourism that also contributes to other community development matters. At the same time, CBT presents challenges and limitations such as: often difficult/weak marketing and market access; scarce community financial resources; low community capacity (thus, needs capacity development); lack of infrastructure (especially in some remote areas); problems in defining the term 'community'; economic viability; as well as a possible increase in social differentiation. Some preconditions have been categorised and articulated in specific themes by previous researchers (Jugmohan & Steyn, 2015). Some of these themes include: Infrastructure; Physical/natural and cultural tourism assets; Market access and marketing; Product development; Profitability individual/communal; Decision-making structures; Community capabilities; Financial resources; Community leader/initiator; Community interest in tourism; Local leadership/ government; and threats to physical environment and culture. There are two matters worth noting; first specific issues of preconditions, challenges and characteristics can, and certainly overlap (therefore the development of a specific grouping could be needed); secondly, the above list of preconditions, challenges and characteristics is just a indicative list (it is not a comprehensive list) and certainly further research could expand and refine this. As such the list should be seen as always evolving in its specific items (issues) but being operationalized within a framework and within a specific basic background understanding of CBT (see below the Es model about the basic background understandings).

The development and use of related indicators could be of assistance in that respect. Indicators have been researched within the sustainable tourism milieu, in fact many studies employ indicators to ascertain the extent of sustainable tourism in target destinations but many of these studies "remain primarily theoretical, due to the incomplete quantification of indicators" (Lozano-Oyola, Blancas, González & Caballero, 2012:660). Studies and documents of indicators related to CBT are generally scarce but those available are attributable to SNV, Mearns and others (see for example: SNV, 2007; SNV, 2005; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Garcia Lucchetti & Font, 2013; Mearns, 2011; Mearns, 2012). In the case of sustainable tourism indicators, the indicators "should serve to provide essential information, they must also serve to manage the development of a particular activity and guide it towards sustainability. In this way, they provide an

operative framework with policy relevance for tourism managers to incorporate sustainability within their planning and decision processes” (Torres-Delgado & Saarinen, 2014:32). Indicators have been posited in CBT and it has been suggested that “Indicators are a way of measuring change and in the case of community-based tourism can demonstrate in what manner and how quickly communities are achieving their overall objectives or unintended change is occurring” (SNV, 2005:16). Also within the context of sustainable tourism (but arguably applicable also to CBT), it has been observed that the most important indicators “are those that can cover more than one dimension at a time” (Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011:3).

Towards a common (but flexible) framework for CBT development

CBT is based or has its roots in the community-based development approach (see Giampiccoli, 2015). This article acknowledges that a single model of CBT development seems unrealistic. Following what has already been suggested by others, “a community-based approach refers to a process of development with some common characteristics but, given the diversity of circumstances in which that process might be employed, the form that it takes is likely to vary from place to place” (Iorio & Wall, 2012:1441).

In the same way as proposed in a research on sustainable tourism indicators where “four criteria are intended to reduce the initial 507 indicators to a more concise list, which covers the sustainable development dimensions and issues as well as the initial list does” (Tanguay, Rajaonson & Therrien, 2011:7), a framework/model is proposed here which seeks to embrace the fundamental issues related to CBT and reduce the list of indicators (understood as the list of CBT characteristics, challenges and preconditions above outlined). Thus all the various characteristics, challenges and preconditions should be summarised in specific groups or macro-indicators that cluster the various indicators. It should be noted that in this article indicators pertain to CBT venture/projects and crafted from the perspective of the disadvantaged community members and primarily related to the venture project itself, its origins, and management and so on.

Based on the above literature, it is possible to propose an ‘E’ model in CBT as a model which groups together by unifies specific underlying theme related to CBT. In this context, the different options should in principle remain within the specific main aim of CBT – to facilitate holistic individual/community development including empowerment, social justice, and skills/education and so on – while adjusting to each local context of development and resources. In this line, Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2014) can be closely associated with this article as it proposes a general model of CBT development which can include various trajectories based, for example, on the origins of the CBT project/venture, the type of facilitators involved, type of approach, type of partnership and type of

CBT venture. At the same time Garcia Lucchetti and Font (2013) touched on similar issues such as ‘partnership’ proposed in Mtapuri and Giampiccoli (2014) based on their case study who also proposed a number of key indicators which has been regrouped at three levels. Level 1 is concerned with Implementation; level 2 (in this case) is divided into four elements, namely, planning, partnership, community assists and funding; and level 3 is concerned with the various issues within level 2 categories. It can be argued that Level 1 focuses on macro indicators; Level 2 – meso indicators and levels 3 indicators are sub-indicators of Level 2 (Table 1 shows the example under implementation).

Table 1: Key performance indicators (Implementation group)

Implementation (Level 1)	
Level 2	Level 3
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan, including sound business plan • Monitoring and evaluation
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs • Private Sectors • Government
Community assists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism assets • The will to engage in tourism • Available skills
Funding, microcredit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding invested to date • Microcredits for the weavers

Source: Adapted from Garcia Lucchetti and Font (2013:7).

SNV (2007), after explaining the process of developing indicators and reviewing a number of case studies, proposes an indicator list that is seen as initial, and thus possibly flexible and evolving, by stating: “a long list of 302 indicators is provided to assist the generation of an initial indicator list. The long list should be compared against a community’s identified key issues in order to assess if these are applicable to the particular project” (SNV, 2007:67). This, again emphasises that each specific local context needs a specific proposition within a set of general guidelines. Thus, the SNV (2007) list is categorised under a few main specific groups/themes and going down to indicators. For example, from the general to the particular, the list can be as follows (from SNV, 2007 – see Table 2).

As such SNV (2007) presents eight main groups: Environmental Indicators; Economic Indicators; Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Indicators; Poverty Indicators; Social and Cultural Indicators; Tourism Management Indicators; Tourism Business Indicators; and Monitoring Scheme Performance Indicators. Choi and Sirakaya (2006:1276) propose the development of “indicators to measure community tourism development (CTD) within a sustainable framework using a modified Delphi technique.”

Table 2: Environmental Indicators

Environmental Indicators		
Issue	No	Potential Indicator
Forest Conservation	1	Percentage of forest under sustainable use programme
	2	Extent of protected areas in square km
	3	Degree of degradation in areas designated as critical for biodiversity
	4	Change in state of forest resources in sample areas
	5	Percentage change in primary forest cover
	6	Presence of key species
	7	Number of species known to be in decline
	8	Number of threatened or extinct species as percentage of all known species

Source: SNV (2007:67). This table represents an extrapolation; environmental indicators have various sub-groups such as forest conservation and numerous issues and potential indicators in each subgroup.

The Choi and Sirakaya (2006:1285) study goes beyond previous approaches by proposing that “While most available monitoring indices focus on dominant economic, physical and ecological dimensions, this study extends the spectrum by including the social, cultural, technological and political dimensions. In short, a holistic approach to sustainable tourism development should be ecologically responsible, socially compatible, culturally appropriate, politically equitable, technologically supportive and, finally, economically viable for the host community.” Within these economic, physical, ecological, social, cultural, technological and political dimensions were each divided in a numbers of themes and each theme proposing various indicators, totalling 125 indicators.

In his article, Mearns (2012) elaborates a specific framework for community-based ecotourism (CBET), thus starting from considering a baseline indicators for monitoring the sustainable development of tourism, he articulates specific issues and indicators for CBET. These issues and indicators (Table 3) have been justified, thus as baseline indicators for monitoring the sustainable development of tourism “left some gaps with respect to the CBE nature of this investigation, it was deemed important to include additional issues and indicators which relate more specifically to the characteristics of community-based ecotourism. Additional issues and indicators relating to education, community decision making, community benefits, culture, biodiversity and conservation as well as networking and collaboration were included” (Mearns, 2012:7856).

It is important to note that the same author observes that each CBE venture may inherently have its own unique characteristics which affect its sustainability such that the framework is rendered generic framework for application across various types of CBE ventures – such that “specific adaptations and additions to specific sites may be necessary” (Mearns, 2012:7857). This article observed earlier that different levels of inequality and deprivation within and between countries require specific attention but some common denominators and issues are

apparent and necessary to have a common and uniform understanding of fundamental issues in CBT. This, in turn, will serve to have a common and uniform direction in CBT development across localities.

Table 3: Community-based ecotourism specific issues and indicators

Issue	Indicator
Education [social]	Education of tourists
	Education of community
	Training and skills development of staff members
Community decision making [social]	Community decision-making structures
Community benefits [social]	Community benefits from tourism
Culture [social]	Cultural appreciation and conservation
Biodiversity and conservation [environmental]	Local community involvement in conservation projects in area
Networking and collaboration [crosscutting]	Partnerships and collaborations

Source: Meanrs (2012:7857).

Thus, a eight Es model (Figure 1) is proposed where the eight Es represent the macro indicators within which various indicators and possibly sub-indicators can be formulated. Contrary to some previous studies (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Mearns, 2012) that start from sustainable tourism perspective to develop more CBT related issues and indicators, this article starts from the CBT characteristics, challenges and preconditions as, it is suggested, that sustainability is only one, although a relevant, dimension of CBT. Other dimensions such as type of ownership and type of ventures (formal or informal) are not necessarily related or depending (although interaction can occur) with sustainability issues.



Figure 1: CBT E model showing the main macro-indicators/groups of reference for the various indicators/sub-indicators

Thus, the starting point should be CBT itself and from there to include sustainable (or other relevant) issues – not vice versa. The eight Es model attempts to posit the basic and fundamental reasoning and pillars which CBT should be monitor and evaluated against. The reasoning of this article, is to provide a common ground related to matters upon which the understanding and support of CBT should (could) be proposed at international and national level.

Endogenous – CBT should be an indigenous local efforts, should rely on local resources and cultures and so on;

Environment – especially when reference is made to community-based ecotourism (CBET). This group, should also include issues regarding health and sanitation in the sense of environmental conditions and also include available infrastructures;

Education – increase in skills and education related to CBT (tourism) and generally;

Empowerment – entails holistic empowerment which embraces economic, psychological, social and political empowerment;

Equity – equal distribution (and working towards re-distribution) of benefits and resources amongst the people involved and in the wider society;

Evolving – always improving and changing bases based on the need and the specific changing conditions and opportunities, for example, from informal to formal sector;

Enduring – long term sustainability in all various aspects (cultural, economic, environmental and social);

Entrepreneurship – keep in consideration all the entrepreneurial characteristics. The CBT ventures is, like any other business, has to be economically viable, with proper accountability, a management system, appropriate decision making processes, networking and so on

These background attributes of CBT (the Es) should be the ones giving the general direction and the delimitation of CBT development. The various characteristics, challenges and preconditions should be understood and working within the Es attributes as a guideline. At the same time, the local specific context should be considered where each specific characteristic, challenges and precondition must be understood and managed within each specific context. Even if it is not the aim of this article to start to outline a possible working system of these indicators, further research should be done to complete this indicator system.

The difference in level of poverty/disadvantage between each local context and countries, such as the level of education can provide clues to a trajectory (or rating) trend that at each level of deprivation is associated with a specific strategy of CBT development for that specific indicator. The level of deprivation/disadvantage of each specific indicator could be rated, for example,

with stars from one to five stars (where One star is most deprived and five stars is least deprived). If, for example a case is proposed looking at local capacity, the follow framework could be worthy of consideration.

Endogenous

Local capacities

Education level



Literacy



Local ownership and management

Local culture

Local resources

Local origin of the projects

Local staff/workforce

Local food

In the above example, local capacity with Four stars in literacy is negatively counterbalanced by One star in education level meaning that even when literacy is high, the education level is low, such people are literate but with only one or two years of school. However, each indicator should not be considered in isolation but in conjunction (working within) with the network of all various indicators such as that high deprivation in one indicator could be counterbalanced (or accentuated) by the level of deprivation in another indicator (or a group of them). At the same time, this will be locally contextualized, for example, considering the interaction of other factors such as the possible local and specific cultural context. For example, deprivation of capacity – level of education and literacy level. A high deprivation in capacity (low education and low literacy) could be compensated by dedication and commitment such that a number of people could attend relevant workshops and courses to improve their capacity needed for the CBT project/venture. As already been observed, about the interaction between various issues and indicators in CBET “The overall sustainability of any CBE [community-based ecotourism] venture is dependent on progress being made simultaneously in terms of the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability. Progress in only one or two categories is insufficient” (Mearns, 2012:7857).

It could be argued that as CBT is practiced in disadvantaged communities, all the dimensions in the Human Development Index (HDI) could be used as a comprehensive set of common indicators for reaching into each specific context of human condition and can hence be similarly proposed in all countries. This (should) cannot be done as a basic requirement for CBT because people (usually those who are disadvantaged in society) should be in control and own the CBT development process – therefore the need is to develop a system of indicators that are easy to understand and work with by the protagonist/promoters of the

CBT development process. In this context, the grouping within the Es models of a the basic fundamental issues of CBT provide the freedom and flexibility to insert additional indicators under each E. Indicators should be developed and elaborated by CBT project members (possibly – if necessary – with a properly skilled facilitators).

Conclusion

This discourse has been directed towards the need of recognition, and thereafter establishment, acceptance and officialisation, of specific common denominators characteristic of CBT at international and national levels. Acceptance and officialisation of such a framework/model by international organization such as UNWTO and WTTC and so on and tourism organizations at the national level can be considered as a possible and necessary step for CBT to move forward in a comprehensive and uniform (accepted guidelines) strategy around the globe through common guidelines. Although this framework/model can be improved and refined through further CBT research and projects a starting common ground has been proposed. Importantly, this will also serve to avoid the possible misuses of the CBT term. While the article did not aim to finalize the working system of such common denominators or characteristics of CBT through its indicators, it has given an initial glimpse into its possible use as a working/operational system which can be improved upon through further research for completeness.

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