The role of community-based tourism initiatives in socio-economic development

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM INITIATIVES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Eva Maria Jernsand and Helena Kraff

16.1 Introduction

Community involvement in tourism development has gained attention in tourism literature since the 1980s (Kontogeorgopoulos, Churyen & Duangsaeng, 2014; Scheyvens, 1999; Stone & Stone, 2011). Scholars propose that just and holistic development can be sustained through community participation (Stone & Stone, 2011), since it enhances the resilience of economic, social and ecological systems (Dodds, Ali & Galaski, 2018). Community-based tourism (CBT) is often promoted as a mechanism to transform people’s lives and raise the general levels of employment, literacy and GDP, for instance, particularly in the Global South (Dodds et al., 2018; Tosun, 2000). As such, CBT is a model of alternative tourism and a community development strategy with an emphasis on socio-economic development. For instance, Salazar (2012a, p. 10) notes, “Nobody will dispute the fact that destination communities must benefit if tourism is to be viable and sustainable in the long term”. However, although CBT is popular in theory, in practice it is not easily achieved (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014; Tosun, 2000). Highlighted benefits, such as the empowerment and development of rural economies, do not arise as hoped (Dodds et al., 2018). Some of the concerns emphasized are structural hindrances and power imbalances between stakeholders (Gascón, 2013). For instance, internal struggles inherent in CBT organizations (Tucker, 2010) and their dependence on outside funding and support (Gascón, 2013; Scheyvens, 2002) mean that the development of the organization becomes arduous. Furthermore, the aim of CBT organizations to act for socio-economic development means that they need to manage a dual focus on social development and on running a business, which puts them in challenging situations. Being able to balance different and competing objectives is vital for CBT organizations (Armstrong, 2012). Examples from the Global South demonstrate a lack of knowledge of tourism management and marketing (Gascón, 2013) and that CBT may even increase social differentiation (Tucker, 2010). In the Global North, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (2018) states that a multitude of competencies are needed to successfully push the commercial side forward, whilst at the same time keeping in contact with the authorities, keeping track of regulations on, for example, labour market integration, as well as supporting community members involved in their initiatives and being knowledgeable about numerous cultures and languages. This makes it interesting to outline the
roles of CBT organizations in the larger system of actors where the tourism industry, public authorities, academia and civil society all have a part to play and to compare cases from these two parts of the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the roles of CBT initiatives in socio-economic development through the exploration of the opportunities and challenges in relation to other tourism stakeholders. As illustrations, the authors describe and analyze two longitudinal, transdisciplinary and action-oriented projects with CBT organizations in Sweden and Kenya. The methodology is qualitative, using participatory observations and interviews as methods, as well as being part of and analyzing the cycles of action, evaluation and critical reflection that an action-oriented research approach contains.

The following section consists of a literature review of concepts related to CBT, with an emphasis on small-scale, local management and the relationships between CBT organizations and other stakeholders. Pointing out opportunities and challenges, the two case studies illustrate the complexity of being part of a web of actors from a CBT management perspective. In the discussion section, we distinguish the six roles of CBT initiatives from which CBT organizations and other stakeholders in tourism can learn in order to foster socio-economic development. Finally, the conclusion relates these roles to the success factors of CBT management outlined in the literature review.

### 16.2 CBT in socio-economic development

Although case examples from the Global South dominate reports of CBT, the increased focus on sustainable and inclusive forms of tourism worldwide has led to a growing attention being given to CBT in the Global North. Examples from Sweden and the Netherlands highlight initiatives derived from social enterprises, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and public organizations, which create tourism products contributing to general development and alternatives to the creation of often negative images of the neighbourhoods exposed to tourism (cf. Lindström & Larson, 2016; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). As such, CBT challenges the conventional tourism industry through its aim to shift control, ownership and benefits from external actors towards communities (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014).

There are, however, concerns about CBT’s actual contribution to socio-economic development. Community participation creates expectations that are hard to fulfil (Tosun, 2000). CBT initiatives are seldom successful in the long run, which means that they become dependent on external support (Tolkach & King, 2015) and/or that people can only use their work in the tourism sector as supplemental income (Dodds et al., 2018). It is also clear that communities rarely entirely initiate and control CBT (Dodds et al., 2018; Scheyvens, 2002) and that disadvantaged minorities seldom have the same access to resources (Akunaay, Nelson & Singleton, 2003). The responsibility for changing these facts lies not only in the hands of communities and local organizations but on several other tourism stakeholders.

#### 16.2.1 CBT management

The quality of management in CBT is central to its success (Aref, 2011). Various scholars have identified success factors for CBT management and planning, some of which are summarized in Table 16.1. A common dimension for successful CBT is the economic/market-oriented aspect. Armstrong (2012), for instance, emphasizes commercial viability, transparent financial management and that the community’s assets form the base for developing good quality products that the market wants. Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) and Kibicho (2008) similarly...
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Table 16.1 CBT management success factors

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<tr>
<th>CBT management success factors</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic/market oriented</td>
<td>Commercial viability</td>
<td>Armstrong (2012)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transparent financials</td>
<td>Armstrong (2012)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community benefits, e.g., geographical conditions that the market wants</td>
<td>Armstrong (2012); Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014); Kibicho (2008)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Focus on generating supplemental income</td>
<td>Dodds et al. (2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency and leadership</td>
<td>Set objectives</td>
<td>Dodds et al. (2018); Kibicho (2008)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Be strong, controlled and cohesive</td>
<td>Armstrong (2012)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Legitimate leader, “transformational leadership”</td>
<td>Kibicho (2008); Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration and support</td>
<td>Including relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>Kibicho (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External/stakeholder support, engagement with private sector</td>
<td>Armstrong (2012); Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assistance from enablers, external facilitation and capacity building</td>
<td>Dodds et al. (2018); Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2012); Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014); Novelli and Gebhardt (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genuine community participation, participatory planning</td>
<td>Armstrong (2012); Dodds et al. (2018)</td>
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Source: Compiled by authors.

acknowledge the recognition of particular benefits, such as geographical conditions, while Dodds et al. (2018) state a need to generate supplemental income for people working in traditional sectors (e.g., coffee farmers entering into the coffee tourism business). A second dimension relates to efficiency and leadership: to set objectives (Dodds et al., 2018; Kibicho, 2008), be strong, controlled and cohesive (Armstrong, 2012) and have a legitimate leader who can implement decisions (Kibicho, 2008). Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014, p. 116) relate this to “transformational leadership”. A third dimension appears even more vital for success: collaboration and support. Kibicho (2008) holds a general faith in including relevant stakeholders, while Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) acknowledge external support. Armstrong (2012) favours engagement with the private sector, genuine community participation and stakeholder support. Dodds et al. (2018) similarly emphasize partnerships, assistance from enablers and participatory planning and capacity building. Novelli and Gebhardt (2007) add the importance of education and training, to establish entrepreneurial skills. Stakeholder support could be in the form of strategic input from actors with skills and experience, for example “tour operators, tourists, government, NGOs, external investors, tourism organisations and other public bodies” (Armstrong, 2012, pp. 10–11). Each of these sectors should emphasize their own competencies and strengths, to be efficient and avoid overlaps (Armstrong, 2012). CBT organizations are thus dependent on internal resources and competencies and are, possibly even more than other businesses, reliant on support from external actors.
16.2.2 CBT and external facilitation

Although contested by some (since management in CBT should ideally be local), external facilitation appears to be an essential element of success (Armstrong, 2012; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014). Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2012) claim that it is unrealistic to expect initiatives to start spontaneously and acquire long term sustainability, as there is often a lack of local knowledge, capacity and resources. For example, Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014) studied the Thai village Mae Kampong. The village received funding and support from governmental agencies, NGOs, academic researchers and private tour operators in the forms of training, education and workshops, as well as assistance with marketing and promotion. According to the study, support in the forms of consultation, collaboration and publicity has increased knowledge and awareness of what CBT is in the village and outside; it has also increased the number of visitors. A further interesting point from Mae Kampong is that the “sustained involvement of [an NGO and a tour operator] made education and learning, rather than leisure and recreation, the primary focal points of CBT” (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014, p. 116). In short, one could state that, based on the claims by Kontogeorgopoulos et al. (2014), socio-economic development took place through CBT, in terms of increased income and employment, at least among those who worked directly with tourists in the case.

16.2.3 CBT and inclusive place/destination branding

It is clear that community resources such as culture or natural environment are central to the success of CBT (Armstrong, 2012; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014; Kibicho, 2008). However, the example from Mae Kampong also highlights how CBT connects with place and destination branding. The village received communicative and educational support, both within the village through training and workshops and externally through promotion via different channels (websites, magazine articles, radio spots, TV programs, public meetings and conferences). This increased awareness of CBT in the community and beyond, and encouraged more people come to visit. However, if tourism initiatives lose resident support and destination marketing is done without reflection, it risks resulting in the communication of images and stories that are built on romantic fantasies or outdated stereotypes (Bruner, 2005; Salazar, 2012b). It is therefore important to reflect on what groups are represented in destination development and what types of narratives are told. The roles of CBT organizations are therefore vital with regard to the legitimization of tourism initiatives among residents, as well as with regard to external communication.

This picture of a CBT resonates with an inclusive view of place branding, where residents are central stakeholders, co-owners and co-creators (e.g., Jernsand, 2016; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). Such a view derives from the criticism of place branding as a political tool used by urban elites (Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015), where residents are seldom invited and, when they are, only in selected parts (Eshuis, Klijn, & Braun, 2014). Instead, if residents are seen as partners, they will support and maintain the brand (Hanna & Rowley, 2011; Jernsand & Kraff, 2017). Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013, p. 18) claimed three roles of residents in place branding:

As an integral part of the place brand through their characteristics and behaviour; as ambassadors for their place brand who grant credibility to any communicated message; and as citizens and voters who are vital for the political legitimization of place branding.
These relationships between CBT and inclusive place branding are rarely discussed, which is a reason for highlighting them in this chapter.

### 16.2.4 Community-based transdisciplinary research

In tourism, scholars mainly refer to networks, networking and clusters when describing linkages and collaborations between entities (Tolkach & King, 2015). However, networks are relational rather than participatory. Network theory emphasizes structures, functions, attributes and relationships between actors, rather than co-production in multiple-helix models as in transdisciplinary (TD) research. TD research recognizes that knowledge cannot be produced in isolation; different issues must be handled in collaboration between various actors (Gibbons et al., 1994; Polk & Kain, 2015). TD research addresses “the needs for democratic participation or more inclusive political processes called for within the sustainable development debate” (Polk & Kain, 2015, p. 33). It means that socio-economic sustainable development is inclusive and democratic and that it comes forth as a result of collaboration and co-production between the public sector, academia, the private sector and civil society. Civil society in tourism includes members of the local community, often through civil organizations such as NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). Civil society also includes the visitors to a place, who are important actors for product, business and place development (Jernsand, 2016; Jernsand, Kraff, & Mossberg, 2015). Through visitors’ knowledge, advice and economic contributions, innovation and socio-economic development are stimulated (Jernsand et al., 2015). Thus, tourists are both a target group, where the role of CBT is to “increase their awareness and learn about the community and local ways of life” (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014, p. 110) and part of a multiple-helix ecosystem as collaborators.

Tourism scholars propose that in a pluralistic approach, all parties in CBT planning should have equal opportunities to take part in political processes (Salazar, 2012a), which is seldom the case. CBOs are often the smallest entities in collaborations, which make them vulnerable in relation to power and decision-making whilst the national and global tourism industry remain the most powerful actors (Blackstock, 2005; Tolkach & King, 2015). “Real” local community participation in tourism development practices rarely takes place, particularly not in the Global South (Marzuki, Hay, & James, 2012; Timothy, 1999). Political processes are not constructed to sufficiently enable small tourism organizations to be involved in decision-making (Tosun, 2000), which further decreases their opportunities to develop. Later in this chapter, this is connected to how CBT organizations are often reduced only to acting as good examples.

### 16.2.5 Community-based action research

Action research refers to a participatory process where the researcher simultaneously conducts research and takes action for transformative change, and critically reflects on the process. Tourism researchers increasingly acknowledge that such embedded engagement in the context is necessary due to its benefits for research productivity and the capacity to co-produce knowledge between actors (Dredge, Hales, & Jamal, 2013; Ren, Pritchard & Morgan, 2010). The researcher needs to be able to build trust and credibility through engagement and clear results that affect things that matter to people and to maintain commitment throughout (Jernsand, 2017; Orr & Bennett, 2009). Action research also means questioning the researcher’s role as a claimant of truth, meaning construction takes place in interaction
with other people (Cunliffe, 2003). In their roles as interveners, researchers take part in a mutual learning process (Dredge et al., 2013; Jernsand, 2017). Furthermore, researchers’ networks and their communication of progress and results give community members and organizations the opportunity to make new contacts (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). As will be seen in the next section, action research may thus enhance the development of CBT.

16.3 Contextualizing CBT initiatives in socio-economic development

To understand the roles of CBT initiatives in socio-economic development, the cases of two CBT organizations are illustrated in this section: one located in the north-western part of Gothenburg, Sweden, and one in a fishing community in Kisumu, Kenya. The studies refer to the authors’ longitudinal, transdisciplinary and action-oriented research. Research developed in cycles of action, evaluation and critical reflection, with ethnographically influenced and participatory observations and interviews as methods. These cases from different geographical and cultural contexts are interesting to consider in relation to each other since CBT organizations face many similar challenges and opportunities, independent of context. However, there are also aspects found in one context that do not relate to others; this also contributes to our understanding of the CBT phenomenon.

16.4 Case study 1

16.4.1 Case 1: CBT organization in Gothenburg, Sweden

The authors began working as sustainable tourism consultants for a small CBT organization in Gothenburg in 2016, and the collaboration emerged and continued through different types of project funding. The organization offers interactive and multicultural food events and guided tours in the suburbs and natural environments around Gothenburg that are not part of the usual tourist routes. Inclusiveness, equality and sustainability are core values of the organization; they aim to create meeting places for all and to complement the image of Gothenburg. One overall objective, in all activities, is to educate, train and create job opportunities for young residents excluded from the labour market, thereby using CBT as a tool for labour market integration, while also providing these participants with knowledge about tourism, place and product development. In conjunction with the refugee crisis in 2015, the organization’s social engagement led them to take responsibility by creating opportunities for the large number of people arriving in Sweden, thereby giving up some of their core business. They provide workplace internships, which sometimes result in participants gaining part-time employment as guides and event organizers with the organization. At the food events, visitors cook food inspired by their various cultures, with interns, as a means to provide space for integration and learning across cultural boundaries. For instance, the interns may find income opportunities in things they already know, such as their baking and cooking skills, which they had not realized people appreciated. During the guided tours, guides tell stories about the place and the variety of cultures living there, with the aim of providing alternative and positive views of areas that are often highlighted as problematic.

These tourism activities are based on the knowledge and skills of the interns and the managers and employees of the CBT organization. Thus, the organization needs a variety of competencies, not only in regard to cooking, guiding and different languages and cultures but also in event management and marketing as well as pedagogical skills. The interns do not always have work experience, nor do they always know the Swedish language. Thus, the
design and execution of every event has its own challenges and the quality of the services offered may vary from time to time. In addition, being an entrepreneur in tourism entails seasonal changes and other aspects of temporal demand, which create uncertain situations not only for the CBT organization but also in their ability to offer jobs to interns. Furthermore, it is difficult to charge full coverage of costs, which relates to the many competencies needed and the extra time things take when you need to run complicated matters with only a few employees. Added to that, people sometimes expect that services provided by social enterprises should be less expensive or free of charge. In addition, the CBT organization needs negotiation skills, but they also constantly need to trace new external funding, for example from the Swedish welfare system, to be able to survive. The board and the employees are people with strong social engagement, and some of them participate with no remuneration. A lot of time is spent on applications and administration, time they wish could be spent on core operations.

To a large degree, the customers of the CBT organization consist of staff from public authorities and academia who are interested in and work for social change in their professional roles. Some, seeing the potential in the work, end up becoming partners. Through such partnerships, arenas open up for the CBT organization to highlight its activities and social agenda for a broader audience, such as at academic conferences and public authorities’ events, where they represent bottom-up social initiatives. This contributes to an expanded network, contacts, customers and opportunities for word-of-mouth marketing. There is, however, a risk that they are requested to play this role so often that it prevents them from spending time on their own development. Most other actors in these meetings are there during paid hours, whereas the organization needs to devote time that could otherwise have been spent on organizing events for paying visitors. They are the passionate “good example”, which gets stuck between the desire to spread their message and the need to survive. The challenges they face on a daily basis with regards to funding, the need for multiple competencies and marketing, for example, seldom come up in discussions.

Some of these challenges, and opportunities as well, were put forward in meetings with the authors through their action-oriented research, where they discussed business and product development in a collaborative manner. The authors were also involved as partners in a project that the organization arranged for and in collaboration with other social enterprises, where the participants co-produced a new marketing concept.

### 16.4.2 Case 2: CBT organization in Kisumu, Kenya

The authors conducted a four-year long transdisciplinary research project in Kisumu, Kenya, focussing on a small-scale and community-based ecotourism development. The main collaborating partners in the project were a group of local guides who formed a CBT organization in a fishing community by Lake Victoria. Other prominent actors were local researchers and public authorities. The geographical context, including the lake, the fish market, the wetlands with hippos, a large number of bird species and the cool breeze, make the site interesting for visitors from near and far. The guides take visitors on boat rides and village tours, showing them the flora and fauna and the activities in the fish market. The tours are intertwined with stories about the impediments that the community faces regarding sustainability: for instance, that the lake is polluted and risks being depleted of fish. The guides are residents from the community and as far as possible use local suppliers to provide food and other activities during the tours. The social agenda, focussing on the creation of local jobs, means that the guides seldom have access to formal education, regarding safety issues,
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for example. Nor does the group always have the financial means available to keep up with safety standards (e.g., purchasing life vests and other protective gear).

The guides are dependent on, but also work in close collaboration with, other organizations within and outside the community, such as the Beach Management Unit (controlling land issues), and a local NGO working on monitoring, landscape rehabilitation, capacity building and training. On a city and county level, however, it is hard for the small group of guides to have equal opportunities to take part in political processes, as compared to larger tour operators. Still, they often receive invitations to meetings and conferences to present their work, which positively inspires politicians and officials to continue working with small organizations and to give them new opportunities. For instance, they were once given the opportunity to upscale their premises in conjunction with a city-wide cultural festival, with funding from the county government; however, this was not accompanied by the guidance and support that the guides needed. Taking on such a big project seemed too big a challenge and risk for the small organization. This also relates to the administrative competence that small CBT organizations must have to be able to survive, and their need for external funding and advice. Their lack of skills may prevent them from taking advantage of grants and other opportunities. An opening lies in collaborations with students and researchers. For instance, a student in landscape architecture wrote a thesis including plans and architectural drawings of a boardwalk, which the group of guides elaborated on and succeeded in obtaining funding for. Similarly, the authors’ regular reports from their fieldwork were used to legitimize project funding.

The authors’ research areas in the project were place branding and participatory design, coming from the business administration and design departments respectively. Their work started as a participatory venture, with the researchers as facilitators and workshop leaders. An example is the refinement and development of the guided tours, which were performed by the guides and facilitated by the researchers. Two groups of visitors evaluated the new tours by writing diaries during the tour, which were then analyzed by the researchers and discussed with the group of guides. Other examples of the collaboration included the branding of the site and, in relation to that, work on waste management, a signage system and a cultural day. Visual and participatory tools were used throughout.

As time went on, the guides took on the roles of facilitators while the researchers worked more as partners. Guides at other sites asked the CBT organization for advice, since they had seen the development by the beach. The CBT organization proposed a partnership with the researchers to establish a countywide tour guide association. The aim was to share challenges and opportunities and work together for the improvement of tours, becoming a united voice in relation to external stakeholders such as the county government and larger tour operators. In the process of establishing this partnership, the guide organizations and the researchers worked on core values, codes of conduct and how the organizations could cope with common challenges together. They also conducted a study visit to a site that has larger numbers of visitors and professional female guides. Having started to work also with a female guide group, the authors were now asked to take on the roles of mediators between the original guide group, which consisted mainly of men, and the newly formed female guide group in the village. Guiding is a male-dominated profession in the area and the women experienced resistance from some of the male guides in that they did not allocate guests fairly between the groups. The women therefore asked the authors to call a meeting and raise the issue, which would otherwise have been neglected. Although the authors did not take active part in the negotiation, their initiation of and presence at the meeting legitimized the women’s request for a fairer allocation of guests.
16.5 Discussion

Based on the literature review and the challenges and opportunities reported in the case studies, it is possible to outline a number of roles that CBT organizations take on and/or are given within the area of socio-economic development. Some roles are more prominent in particular contexts, whilst others are prevalent regardless of their geographical position.

16.5.1 Co-producers of knowledge in multi-helix constellations

Local management is considered important in CBT; however, external facilitation and assistance have proven critical for its success, at least in the initial stages of a project. A reason for this is the multiple competencies needed for managing both a social agenda and commercial business, which can be particularly difficult in small organizations. Being part of networks and collaborations can thus be more rewarding than managing a complex web of actors. In the Gothenburg case, the CBT organization often took on significant responsibilities in managing projects. For instance, the workplace internship programme was found rewarding by both participants and authorities. However, from a management perspective, handling the complexity such endeavours entail requires a multitude of competencies and efforts. Other activities proved more rewarding, an example being a collaboratively produced marketing concept. Connecting different actors’ perspectives and working with a common objective, all participants felt they were part of the result. In the Kisumu case, gaining access to power on a city and county level proved difficult. However, there was close collaboration between the group of guides, NGOs, the Beach Management Unit (BMU) and the researchers throughout, partly since some people were members in many constellations from the start, having similar objectives. Although the researchers facilitated project activities in the initial stages, the operations were based on established networks and collaborations. Participating in the project provided members of the guide group with some training, as well as giving them knowledge of methods and tools for collaborative product development. As time went on, they found it possible to take leading roles in the project.

16.5.2 Co-producers of knowledge with visitors

The co-production of knowledge with tourists was important in both case studies. The types of tour guiding and food events that the studies refer to are not only about teaching, but about learning from each other and sometimes about establishing new contacts or finding colleagues. In the Gothenburg case, those who participated in activities were often employees of local or regional public and academic organizations who also have a social agenda, wanting to make a societal difference. Thus, through the contacts they make during events and tours, the CBT organization can find contacts for the future or maintain existing contacts. Furthermore, in both cases, but particularly in the Kisumu case, the guides learned through the visitors how to conduct the next tour, an interaction that then contributed to product development. The researchers systemized this process with the CBT organization through the prototyping of a new tour, testing it with two groups of tourists who evaluated the visit and giving advice for its improvement.

16.5.3 Facilitators of learning and empowerment in the community

The two case studies point to the impact of CBT organizations’ engagement in socio-economic development within the community. The activities arranged by the CBT organizations
brought individuals closer to finding jobs, whilst also acting for their overall integration in society. For instance, the program for workplace practice in the Gothenburg case illustrated how participants discovered talents they did not know that they possessed. Their participation in food events made them realize that people appreciate the quality of their cooking, revealing an unexplored talent. In Kisumu, the tour guide organization used local suppliers and employed people from the community as tour guides. Furthermore, a group of women started their own CBT organization, wanting to work as guides. Thus, the organization became a means of empowering them to take on a previously male-dominated profession. Here the authors’ presence in a meeting between the male and female groups pushed the development forward, which demonstrates that having several types of actors involved may break down barriers between groups and empower individuals or communities to take action.

16.5.4 Promoters/communicators of CBT

It is important for socio-economic development that the opportunities of CBT are spread to many contexts and made available to a wider audience. However, both organizations explored in this chapter were caught in the “best cases” trap, where it must be considered whether the requests placed on them have become too many to be legitimate. Attending events and presenting their work does provide the organizations with new contacts and opportunities to highlight their social agenda; however, these contacts are of little use if they too only start asking the organizations to act as representative “best cases”. The authors, having worked closely with both organizations for a long period, have witnessed an increased demand for their participation in various projects (including the authors’ own) to such an extent that it hinders them from focusing on their core operations and development. Furthermore, there seems to be a perception that such organizations should make themselves and their experiences available free of charge or in exchange for attending a conference or seminar for free. However, if the core operation is the only way to produce income, and an increasing amount of time is put into presentations, these small CBT organizations will not be able to survive in the longer term.

16.5.5 Receivers of support

When promoting CBT, as mentioned above, the focus is mainly on highlighting the positive aspects. The challenges CBT organizations face rarely come to the surface on such occasions, which is one reason why they do not receive the support they need. Drawing on work by a number of scholars (e.g., Armstrong, 2012; Dodds et al., 2018; Kontogeorgopoulus et al., 2014), it is clear that not only collaboration but hands-on support is essential for the survival of CBT organizations. The support could be financial, but can also be in the form of providing entrepreneurial skills through education and training, or any other competencies stakeholders may have. In the Swedish example, it is hard to charge prices that truly cover the cost of the activities, which makes them dependent on external support. The organization needs to constantly search for external funding, which takes a lot of time. In the Kenyan case, the reports provided through students’ and researchers’ studies made it possible for the CBT organization to receive funding for other projects. The reports legitimized the projects, but the documents also helped in reducing the time the organization had to spend on applications. Longitudinal action-oriented research provided the researchers embedded engagement in the context, thereby enabling them to understand the situations of these organizations.
16.5.6 Owners and co-creators of the place/destination brand

Place attraction is dependent on the people who live there, since they are part of the place brand “through their characteristics and behaviour” (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013, p. 18). Therefore, CBT organizations have important roles as representatives and ambassadors of the community, being responsible for the images and stories they communicate, for instance, through their activities, on their websites and in social media. In the Gothenburg case, the CBT organization has the aim of raising awareness of the attractiveness of suburbs and natural environments that are not part of conventional tourist routes. They emphasize the variety of cultures and the knowledge of the people living there, thereby changing the image of the area from outdated stereotypes to lively and interesting neighbourhoods. In the Kenyan case, the stories told on the guided tours point to the beauty of the natural environment but also to the impediments that the community faces, which educates visitors and (hopefully) encourages them to take action. The guide group also work to improve facilities, such as waste management and signage, which adds to the attractiveness and the development of the place. They also identify deficiencies with regard to issues such as safety standards and take action in collaboration with local organizations such as the BMU.

16.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the roles of CBT initiatives in socio-economic development, through the exploration of opportunities and challenges for CBT organizations in relation to other tourism stakeholders. In the discussion section, six roles were identified and described: co-producers of knowledge in multi-helix constellations; co-producers of knowledge with visitors; facilitators of learning and empowerment; promoters/communicators of CBT; receivers of support; and owners and co-creators of the place/destination brand.

Performing all these roles is a tough endeavour for CBT organizations. The ideal of being committed to social matters is in many ways reflected in the roles. Success factors of CBT management defined in the literature review refer to collaboration and support, which are also clearly reflected in the roles of CBT initiatives. However, scholars also emphasize two other success factors, which need further elaboration.

The first is about the necessity for initiatives to be oriented towards a market to become economically viable. In this chapter, this refers to CBT organizations’ roles as owners and co-creators of the place/destination brand, which is an important but often neglected feature in CBT literature. The emerging concept inclusive place branding emphasizes the democratic and transformative potential of including residents in the development and communication of the place. CBT organizations are important mediators for inclusive place branding, not least in their roles as promoters/communicators of CBT. It means that it is not only about market-orientation, it is about understanding place branding as a process and about acting from the perspective of the community and the market – for instance, by reflecting on who is participating, who is represented and what is communicated.

The second success factor is efficiency and leadership. In this chapter, this refers to transdisciplinary approaches and action research. CBT organizations must take active roles as co-producers of knowledge in multi-helix constellations, and other stakeholders need to recognize small CBT organizations and see beyond the “good example” that they represent. Stakeholders’ obligations include supporting the CBT organizations with their own competencies, regarding, for instance, writing applications, negotiating with authorities or spreading information through their networks. Neither an organization nor a single person
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is capable of doing everything, but seen from a larger perspective with many actors, there are more opportunities. That is also why co-production is central to CBT management and why CBT action research has a dedicated section in the literature review.

The role of CBT organizations as facilitators of learning and empowerment within the community has always been one of the main purposes of CBT. These outcomes are vital for other actors, such as local and regional tourism planners, and provide a reason for them to offer support and become partners in the co-production of knowledge. To be viable, however, CBT initiatives also need to come closer to being the business cases of the future, without losing their importance in socio-economic sustainability. This is a challenge for all actors in the public, private, academic and civil sectors.

References


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