

An Attribute-Based Approach to Classifying Community-Based Tourism Networks

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This conceptual paper proposes the adoption of a collaborative network approach as a prospective means of improving success in implementing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) initiatives. Drawing upon relevant literature the researchers identify the key attributes that characterise a network-based approach. By proposing alternatives for each attribute, the research provides CBT practitioners with options for making informed decisions about how to build collaboration connecting individual CBT initiatives in multiple locations. The researchers discuss the implications of different approaches for power relations between stakeholders. The proposed framework provides a means of classifying existing CBT networks and analyses the types of network and the circumstances which lead to better outcomes for community development. Further empirical research is required to test the validity of the key network attributes and to develop a comprehensive classification system of CBT networks.

Keywords: community development; power relations; community-based tourism; networks

Introduction

The term Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has been widely used to describe alternative forms of tourism development which are aimed at maximising the benefits flowing to local people and which advocate capacity building and empowerment as means of achieving community development objectives. Common CBT attributes that are documented in the literature include benefits to local communities, active participation by the community in tourism planning, enhanced host-guest interactions, communal management of tourism in general and of profits in particular, and preserving cultural and natural heritage (APEC Tourism Working Group and STCRC, 2010; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Johnson, 2010; Moscardo, 2008; Rocharungsat, 2008; Scheyvens, 1991; Stronza, 2008; Trejos and Chiang, 2009; Zapata *et al.*, 2011).

The term *community* has been used in many different ways. Typically the term applies to the idea of a group of people, living in a common territory, possessing shared values and having developed a high level of solidarity ([Brent, 2004](#); Cain and Yuval-Davis, 1990; Gilchrist, 2009; Phillips, 1993; Shaw, 2008; Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006). *Community development* is another highly contested term which is used in the present paper and takes one of two forms: institutional and professional or radical and activist. Institutional community development involves making adaptations to prevailing circumstances, while a radical approach transforms the power relations which have led to exclusion and oppression (Brennan, 2004; Ledwith, 2011; Mayo, 2011; Shaw, 2008; Swane and De Beer, 2006; Taylor, 2011). Some community development practitioners occupy the ground somewhere between adopting to formal ‘top-down’ structures and policies and aspiring to ‘bottom-up’ empowerment, equality and a just society ([Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006](#); [Shaw, 2008](#)).

CBT owes a strong legacy to the idea that community participation and stakeholder cooperation should be commonplace practices in the tourism development process (Dodds, 2007; Ioannides, 1995; Moscardo, 2008; Murphy, 1985; Murphy and Murphy, 2004; Reed, 1997; Timothy, 1998; Timothy, 1999). It should be acknowledged that participatory tourism development, including its manifestation as CBT, has been widely debated. Matters of contention have included the pursuit of genuine understanding of tourism amongst communities, power relations between stakeholders and the capacity of tourism to achieve community development objectives (Blackstock, 2005; Butcher, 2010; Mair and Reid, 2007; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Reed, 1997; Tosun, 2000; Van Der Duim and Caalders, 2008; Zapata *et al.*, 2011).

In adherence to Schumacher's (1973) 'small is beautiful' philosophy, CBT is typically synonymous with small-scale development. Schumacher argued that 'smallness' involves people-centred development that is easy to manage, efficient, empowering, benefits the wider population and provides a sense of ownership. It is these principles, rather than the scale of the enterprise that are most important for CBT. However it has been argued that small is not always 'beautiful' and that there is no guarantee that restricting all developments to being small-scale will lead to positive social and economic outcomes ([Butler, 2011; Harrison, 2011; Weaver, 2011](#)). Scheyvens and Russell (2012) have, on the other hand, demonstrated that larger, foreign-owned tourism enterprises have the effect of restricting local participation in tourism planning and development.

CBT may be also defined within the concept of social economy ([Johnson, 2010](#)). The term social economy is used to describe public-sector not-for-profit, market-based social organizations, and civil-society organizations, including cooperatives and worker associations. The social economy is people-centred and aims to strengthen social

cohesion, promote civic participation and provide employment and financial opportunities for the most disadvantaged within the labour market and for the public sector, thus challenging the prevailing neoliberal approach to industrial relations ([Lukkarinen, 2005; Vidal, 2010](#)). A more radical approach to the social economy advocates broader social change for the oppressed ([Azzellini, 2009; Lechat, 2009; Satgar, 2011](#)).

CBT aims to support community development and to improve the livelihoods of local residents. Similar to other community development initiatives, tourism initiatives in community settings are sometimes undertaken “top-down” and in others “bottom-up”. It is important to distinguish “institutional community development”, which is commonly developed by development agencies “top down” and accepts the status quo, and the radical, activist, bottom-up community development that pursues genuine social change ([Brennan, 2004; Ledwith, 2011; Mayo, 2011; Shaw, 2008; Swane and De Beer, 2006; Taylor, 2011](#)). It is the authors’ view that adoption of the earlier CBT definition precludes top-down approaches to tourism development from being considered as CBT. Top-down approaches impose tourism on communities and inhibit resident empowerment. As is evident from the literature on community development and the social economy, “top down” approaches are unlikely to bring about social change. Furthermore, they inhibit community participation in the decision-making that is supposed to be a dominant characteristic of CBT. Optimal CBT is bottom-up and based on solidarity principles of development, which are closely aligned with more radical approaches to community development.

In practice, CBT successes have been modest and few in number. The following challenges have impeded the success of CBT initiatives:

- insufficient profit generation and inappropriate resourcing to sustain the operation (Lapeyre, 2011; Gibson *et al.*, 2005; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Mitchell and Muckosy, 2008);
- insufficient market demand ([Van Der Duim and Caalders, 2008](#));
- limited capacity on the part of community residents to participate in tourism development (Moscardo, 2008; Rocharungsat, 2008; Stronza, 2008);
- heterogeneity of a community and complex power relations within the community and with external actors ([Blackstock, 2005](#); [Butcher, 2010](#)); and
- over-reliance and long-term dependency on external actors, such as various levels of government and international non-government organisations (NGOs), that hinders the empowerment agenda of CBT (Butcher, 2010; Gibson *et al.*, 2005; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Johnson, 2010; King and Pearlman, 2009; Moscardo, 2008; Rocharungsat, 2008; Zapata *et al.*, 2011).

As evident from the above list of challenges, power relations between stakeholders in tourism development have rarely favoured host communities. Therefore, the present paper embraces an ontology of hopeful tourism, in particular noting its emancipatory aims ([Pritchard *et al.*, 2011](#)). The paper examines the prospects of adopting a collaborative network-based approach, which has previously been proposed as a means of delivering community development goals through fostering best practice, knowledge dissemination, capacity building, information exchange and disseminating promotional messages (APEC Tourism Working Group and STCRC, 2010; Gilchrist, 2009; Robertson *et al.* 2012; Stronza, 2008; Taylor, 2011). The lack of collaboration between stakeholders and of linkages between initiatives may explain the failure of many tourism developments (Beaumont and Dredge, 2010; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Timothy, 1998; Timothy, 1999; Van Der Duim and Caalders, 2008).

The paper focuses on networks which bring together multiple CBT initiatives. These may occur at the local, regional, national or international levels. The approaches adopted by such networks have generally involved associations, forums, tour routes and/or village accommodation chains (e.g. Bursztyn *et al.*, 2003; Community-Based Tourism Institute, 2011; Garrett, 2008; Lao Sustainable Tourism Network, 2011; Mendonça, 2004; REDTURS, 2011; Schärer, 2003; Stronza, 2008; Trejos and Chiang, 2009; Van Der [Duim and Caalders, 2008](#); Wearing *et al.*, 2010). The paper reviews the principles and attributes that are integral to CBT networks. It also examines the alternative approaches to establishing a collaborative network. These have arisen from a review of the theoretical literature and from existing examples of community-based tourism networks. The relevant desktop research has not attempted to provide comprehensive coverage of all existing CBT networks, but a representative variety. To merit inclusion networks should have an internet presence, identify themselves as community-based tourism networks/associations/forums and outline how the network has developed and currently operates. To ensure their complementarity the examples were reconciled with the relevant literature. The categories used to analyse the web-based information about networks were established through a literature review. The content analysis of network examples was used to identify whether all attributes have been described in the literature. Since some of the literature is not CBT-specific, the network examples confirm the applicability of theoretical concepts to CBT drawing from other areas of knowledge. The analysis of existing networks was especially useful for establishing alternative network structures and functions. The inclusion of Tables 1-6 is intended to inform practitioners about the existing options for CBT network development. The paper also discusses the network constructs that offer the best prospects of delivering positive economic and community development outcomes,

based on applicable attributes. The framework of CBT network principles and attributes that has been proposed may be used to analyse established and more recently established CBT networks.

Collaborative Networks: The Missing Link for Effective Community-Based Tourism?

The terms *network*, *networking* and *clusters* have been used widely to describe socially constructed intangible linkages and collaboration between different entities, including individuals, NGOs and businesses (Jarillo, 1988; Michael, 2006; Lynch and Morrison, 2007; Scott *et al.*, 2008a; Svensson *et al.*, 2005; Todeva, 2006). The objects or events within the network are “actors” or “nodes” and the various relationships between nodes are described as “links” or “ties” ([Mitchell, 1969; Scott *et al.*, 2008a](#)). Researchers from a variety of disciplines have identified increasing interest in networks and the practice of networking has recently expanded, partly due to advanced information and telecommunications technologies. Giarchi (2001) notes that the term *networks* has become widespread and almost synonymous with the term *community*. For the purposes of the present investigation a *network* describes formal relationships between several actors that have been adopted consciously and purposefully. In some circumstances, the existence of prior informal relationships may prompt the formation of a more formal network.

Networks develop horizontal linkages between communities and also vertical linkages between different institutions including NGOs, governments at different levels and international organisations ([Berkes, 2004](#)). Community-based initiatives can benefit from networking through the sharing of information and knowledge, training, capacity building and enhanced advocacy (Bradshaw, 1993; Gilchrist, 2009; Venter and Breen, 1998). A more fundamental argument for inter-community networking is that individual

community-based initiatives are generally too small to be capable of changing social structures; instead they remain embedded within existing structures (Taylor, 2011). Using Schumacher's (1973) language, this suggests that small is beautiful if networked. While not undermining the sense of ownership and participation, well-networked community-based initiatives have a greater chance of changing the status quo.

The study of networks is an emerging area within the tourism literature ([Beaumont and Dredge, 2010](#)). The importance of networking for small and medium tourism enterprises (SMTes) has been widely recognised (Costa *et al.*, 2008; Dredge, 2006; Novelli *et al.*, 2006). Other research approaches to tourism networking have included policy development ([Dredge, 2006; Kokkranikal and Morrison, 2011](#)), the development of tourism routes and achieving cohesive destination brand management ([Croes, 2006; Meyer, 2004; Scott et al., 2008b](#)).

CBT networks may involve three layers of collaboration. The first level of networking occurs within a community. However it is important to acknowledge the heterogeneity of many communities. The various groups within an individual community may experience complex power relations ([Blackstock, 2005](#)). Where a community is cohesive, a CBT structure may have the capacity to embrace all local residents (Bursztyn *et al.*, 2003; Mendonça, 2004; Shärer, 2003). To avoid complexity and to mitigate any intra-community tensions, it may be preferable to work with institutions and organisations that already have a stake in community initiatives rather than attempt to hear the voices of everyone within the wider social group (Belsky, 1999; Berkes, 2004; Simpson, 2008). Power inequalities and the politics that can occur within communities may also lead to patchy distribution of the benefits of development (Mansuri and Rao, 2004). Tensions may arise between neighbouring communities, where one receives assistance from government or an international organisation to

establish tourism enterprises, whereas 'neighbours' do not and are unable to launch such enterprises ([Belsky, 1999; Simpson, 2008](#)).

The second level of networking occurs between the community and other associated stakeholders. A community must negotiate its way through various stakeholders to reap the desired benefits of CBT. As identified by Gibson *et al.* (2005) private, public and voluntary organisations operate in separate worlds and have different worldviews and priorities. As an activity, CBT combines commercial operations and community development and is reflective of the inherent tension between these two domains. This tension is exacerbated by involvement of the public, private and voluntary sectors. In cases where CBT is imposed by external stakeholders as a strategy to improve community livelihoods, it may be desirable to abandon the development entirely. Over various levels, governments represent a key stakeholder for the purposes of CBT development. Policies and decisions at all levels of government are driven by political, ideological or personal agendas. These may lead to the exercise of unwelcome power over communities ([Reed, 1997; Timothy, 1999](#)). Local governments may be of particular importance since they possess resources and are connected to other local stakeholders. Local authorities also exercise control over land development and will have self-interest in retaining power ([Reed, 1997; Timur and Getz, 2008](#)). By way of contrast local government lacks the authority in certain settings and may rely on central governments (Butcher 2010; Mowforth and Munt, 2008). As providers of funding for CBTs, the government along with international non-government organisations, have control over power (Butcher, 2010; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Weaver *et al.*, 2010). International NGOs may attempt to implement projects according to their preferred practice, rather than adhering to community desires. Considering that effective marketing will be required to attract a steady flow of tourists, tour operators and other

private sector play a major role in determining the success of CBT initiatives (Van Der Duim and Caalders, 2008). Another challenge to empowering the powerless within the community is that the private sector is profit-driven and hence less preoccupied by prospective community benefits. [Tosun \(2000\)](#) has noted that the exercise of local control over tourism development is progressively eroded as an institutionalised industry structure emerges in the destination.

There is a third level of networking between the various CBT initiatives. Any network representing multiple CBTs in different locations will need to be developed in a structured way and take account of any established relationships. The various CBT initiatives within such networks may be based on differing organisational models and differing participant views about CBTs. Depending on the circumstances, certain forms of network may be more beneficial. Beaumont and Dredge (2010) and Dredge (2006) have argued that network characteristics should be understood in the context of tourism policy development and planning, rather than being left to evolve naturally. The form, functions and structure of a network, should relate to its guiding principles such as increasing visitation, training and capacity and advocating on behalf of community needs to government and other stakeholders. Various contributors to the community development literature who have analysed network developments have recommended conscious and purposeful actions to increase the effectiveness of networks (Milward and Provan, 2006; Provan *et al.*, 2005; Robertson *et al.*, 2012). In order to understand the various types of CBT network, and provide insights into how such networks can best be developed, a conceptualisation of key attributes and alternative approaches is proposed.

A Conceptualisation of Key CBT Network Attributes

The following section proposes guiding principles and attributes that are applicable to CBT networks through a literature review that has considered the fields of community development, tourism planning and CBT. CBT network attributes are summarised, drawing on information from the academic literature about alternative network principles and structures as well as from information about existing CBT networks that is available on websites and in relevant publications. A content analysis was undertaken of publications arising from existing CBT networks. Several alternative options have been identified for each attribute. Some have been proposed in the literature and others describe existing CBT networks. The present paper synthesises interdisciplinary knowledge with a view to providing a comprehensive listing of network attributes that are applicable to CBT for both practitioners and academics. Whilst some attributes are network specific, various organisational attributes have been included, recognising that structure determines power relations and distribution, as well as network outcomes. It is unrealistic to attribute power relations within the network and its outcomes to a single principle. CBT practitioners should however be in a position to make informed decisions about what form the network should take by selecting the most suitable alternative for each network attribute. All principles and attributes relevant to CBT networks can be divided into the following:

- guiding principles;
- network governance;
- network management;
- functions of the network;
- external relationships; and
- network morphology.

When viewed as a set of guiding principles, a network can take a variety of forms in terms of organisation, governance, management structure, functions and morphology. Networks may be described and classified using the following guiding principles: interdependence, level of integration and centralisation. Bonetti *et al.* (2006) have proposed a model of tourism networks that is based around two factors, namely interdependence and centralisation. Interdependence is defined as the strength of linkages between members of the network (Bonetti *et al.*, 2006; Gilchrist, 2009; Keast *et al.*, 2004; Kokkranikal and Morrison, 2011). Low interdependence results in independent decision-making, whereas high interdependence involves the setting of common objectives, establishing trust and a willingness to cooperate. In cases where some participants are better resourced, the network structure has to ensure an absence of manipulation and equal representation for all parties (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Robertson *et al.*, 2012; Taylor, 2011). While interdependence focuses on the relationship between actors within the network, integration relates to the overall network structure. As such, network policies may be defined on the basis of the level of integration (eg resource sharing). Leutz (1999) classifies the level of integration as ranging from weak at one end to strong at the other: these may be considered under the headings linkage, cooperation and fully integrated network.

Centralisation implies the existence of an overall governing body for members of the network. A collaborative network may involve an element of both vertical hierarchy and horizontal cooperation between participants. The absence of a governing body leads to a flat network structure (Bonetti *et al.*, 2006; Bingham and O'Leary, 2006; Kokkranikal and Morrison, 2011; Todeva, 2006). The extent to which centralised systems are efficient is the subject of considerable debate. Flat networks are an appealing model for radical community development, since they appear to be more

democratic and empowering. However an absence of structure does not necessarily produce equality of participation. It may simply mean that the most active network participants achieve their desired outcomes. In the absence of a clear structure, accountability remains an issue ([Ife, 2001; Gilchrist, 2009; Miller, 2004](#)). While autonomy and bottom-up decision-making are desirable for tackling specific local issues, each community forms part of a larger system and will need to be regulated if prospective negative impacts on others are to be avoided. Some guiding principles to govern CBT networks and alternative approaches are presented in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 here]

In addition to interdependence and the level of integration and centralisation, other organisational attributes can be defined in modelling a collaborative network. A network can be organised into a single entity under a centralised management structure. A federated approach is less formal. The strategy and objectives are aligned formally, but the central network agency does not intervene in the day-to-day management of its members. Forums represent a further approach to the organisation of a network that are less formal and provide platforms for the sharing of experiences. The allocation of roles amongst participants, especially in the case of leadership and facilitation, can also feature significantly in the achievement of network objectives and in managing power relations between the various actors within a network (Keast *et al.*, 2007). The factors which are likely to influence the success of a network include effective communication, appropriate leadership, clear purpose and structure, enthusiasm, inclusivity and availability of resources (Gibson and Lynch, 2007). These are also relevant to individual CBT initiatives (Murphy and Murphy, 2004). Network flexibility can be impeded when restrictions are imposed on which organisations can join and which cannot. A summary of governance attributes and alternative approaches is presented in Table 2.

[Insert Table 2 here]

CBT network structures may be affected by pragmatic issues such as resource requirements, adherence to the prevailing legal framework and ease of implementation. Power relations between the various actors are largely a reflection of financial and human resources. This issue has been discussed extensively in the literature. Where communities lack knowledge and access to capital, expertise and funding may be required from external donors. This approach brings with it the danger of “donor dependency” in terms of finances, coordination, promotion and training (Butcher, 2010; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009; Zapata *et al.*, 2011). Various options for the management of CBT networks are presented in Table 3.

[Insert Table 3 here]

The functions that are assumed by a CBT network will vary on the basis of financial and human resources. These functions may be considered under the broad headings of tourism specific, community development specific and general functions. The needs of the members should determine the prioritisation of the tourism and community development functions. General functions relate to the way in which a network operates and will depend on the guiding principles of the network. The summary of the functions that a CBT network may perform is provided in Table 4.

[Insert Table 4 here]

Recognition and understanding of the network on the part of external stakeholders is equally as important as is the case for internal stakeholders (Murphy and Murphy, 2004). Relationships with NGOs, as well as with and other sectors of tourism, are important because of the need to build bridges between community development objectives and tourism as a business. A number of options are outlined in Table 5. Close ties with the relevant NGO or with other tourism businesses in the region may be

impractical because the values and/or objectives of the organisation are incompatible with CBT.

[Insert Table 5 here]

More technical and descriptive attributes are summarised under the heading “network morphology”. This includes the applicable timeframe for network development and whether or not the network is intended to be permanent (Bingham and O’Leary, 2006). The concepts of density and “reachability” are often used in network analysis to describe the strength of ties between network members. Unequal strength in the relationship between network members may require the provision of additional actions to ensure the accessibility of information all members (Bodin *et al.*, 2006; Robertson *et al.*, 2012). As was discussed previously CBT networks can may arise at different levels, ranging from local to national. Such variety is indicative of alternative geographical spread for the network. Table 6 summarises the various attributes which define the morphology of the network.

[Insert Table 6 here]

It is noted that alternative choices in one of the attributes may affect other attributes and ultimately shape the future of the network. It is notable that attributes such as the alternatives of building relationships with external actors are more independent. The following section discusses how the choices of provider principles and attributes may affect the outcomes of a CBT network.

Discussion

Tables 1 to 6 summarised the guiding principles, attributes and alternatives for CBT networks. These labels provide ways of classifying governance, management and organisational structures and functions. The following discussion analyses the capacity

of CBT networks to give effect to social and environmental justice and to consider national and international perspectives as a way of extending justice beyond the realms of individual communities (Ledwith, 2011).

The most appropriate structure for a CBT network takes account of the local context and circumstances (Zapata *et al.*, 2011). Depending on such circumstances, the adoption of an alternative approach for each attribute may have greater relevance than others, as outlined in Tables 1 and 2. The appropriate network model has to be based on previous experiences of collaboration, on existing practices, cultural preferences and the prevailing legal system (Ansell and Gash, 2008; APEC Tourism Working Group and STCRC, 2010; Gilchrist, 2009; Murphy and Murphy, 2004).

It should nevertheless be acknowledged that certain considerations increase the prospect of achieving community development objectives through CBT networks. It may be difficult to determine the level of centralisation and integration which is appropriate for a CBT network, given that the merits of centralisation have previously been subject to considerable debate (Bingham and O'Leary, 2006; Ife, 2001; Murphy and Murphy, 2004). Yang and Wall (2008) suggest that the dominance of a certain actor within a network may lead to biased and inefficient decisions. Centralisation and full-integration may risk disempowering members of a network and adversely affect their motivation to participate. For example, the exercise of power in tourism, including CBT initiatives, often lies with an overseas tour operator rather than with the local communities that are experiencing the brunt of the impact of development (Butcher, 2010; Dale, 2010; Hall, 2010; Van Der Duim and Caalders, 2008; Wearing *et al.*, 2010). It has often been noted that a person or a group taking responsibility and charge of tourism development is needed to achieve better outcomes (Ashley and Haysom, 2006;

King and Pearlman, 2009). Reliance on development 'champions' is risky, since their actions may be attributable to personal gain.

There is an inherent tension between flexible and stable approaches to network governance. A more interdependent and integrated network may be appropriate in circumstances where economic outcomes dominate and where inclusiveness and flexibility may hinder network efficiency (Beaumont and Dredge, 2010; Provan and Kenis, 2007). However, inclusiveness may be an objective in its own right (Ledwith, 2011; Swanepoel and De Beer, 2006). A hierarchical approach to a network may help to keep it active and cohesive. Butcher (2010) has suggested that a focus on local development may undermine national objectives. A decentralised, loosely integrated network may undermine the capability to engage in joint marketing and resource-sharing, thus resulting in an incoherent tourism product, incapable of projecting a distinctive destination image that can attract more tourists (Beaumont and Dredge, 2010; Scott *et al.*, 2008). Loose networks may be ineffective, superficial, elitist and unsustainable. They may lead to the formation of links which are convenient, but do not necessarily provide widespread participation and equal benefits (Gilchrist, 2009). A certain level of centralisation may help communities advocate their needs through a single strong voice. A medium-level of integration for example, with some central structure, offering some flexibility, has a sense of shared ownership and allows for informal interactions which may be beneficial for achieving both tourism and community development goals. This type of structure may ease accountability, be inclusive, flexible, cohesive and not impede creativity.

Power relations may also affect the governance of a CBT network, whether government, NGO- or participant-managed (Provan and Kenis, 2008; Beaumont and Dredge, 2010). Community development practice suggests that stakeholder and NGO-

led developments benefit the currently dominant classes, rather than the oppressed (Lewis and Kanji, 2009; Srinivas, 2009; Taylor, 2011). External funding will play a significant role in determining the exercise of power over a network (Butcher, 2010; Goodwin and Santilli, 2009). Therefore, the terms of funding for a CBT initiative may require detailed negotiation. Direct management of a network by community representatives may be problematic due to their endemically poor understanding of tourism, which may impede the achievement of economic outcomes. By contrast, it can demonstrate beneficial outcomes for social justice, as increased control by communities over their lands will enhance their contribution as stakeholders (Bursztyn *et al.*, 2003; Mendonça, 2004; Shärer, 2003). External involvement in the establishment of CBT networks should vary according to local circumstances. There has been evidence that a basis of goodwill and trust on the part of community-based organisations and individuals can be more important for the success of networks than for externally managed projects (Gilchrist, 2009). Where a CBT network has been initiated and/or funded by external stakeholders who then exercise control over the development process, this exemplifies a top-down and institutional approach to community development. Even where economic benefits are successfully generated for the community, it is unlikely that social change will occur. A bottom-up approach, where communities initiate CBT network development themselves and subsequently require funding or technical support from other stakeholders is more likely to achieve community development objectives.

The various network functions will depend on the availability of resources (Ansell and Gash, 2008). Whether the tourism or community development function dominates will depend on the objectives of the network and local circumstances. Given that CBT aims at attracting visitors and generating income for communities, the

achievement of service standards and steady visitation should arise from the various tourism functions outlined in Table 4. It may be beneficial to first focus on tourism functions and then implement community development functions. Nevertheless, prior to welcoming tourists, community infrastructure must be in place, and residents should understand hygiene and be able to communicate with visitors (proficiency in a foreign language may be beneficial). This exacerbates the tension between the commercial and community development components of CBT. Unmet visitor expectations may jeopardise the success of a CBT network. Therefore, infrastructure and product developments that ensure tourist expectations are met should arguably be a CBT priority. As a result of such developments, the broader community may also benefit from the relevant infrastructure. Other community development functions however are more likely to be addressed at later stages when tourist arrivals have stabilised. In terms of power relations, economic independence achieved through successful tourism operations may be more empowering than formal community development programmes which involve ongoing dependence on external assistance.

The natural evolution of the network will strongly affect its morphology (Baggio *et al.*, 2010). Since networks are based on interactions and on a sense of trust and the co-operation of various stakeholders, considerable time may be needed for the establishment of a CBT network. The outcomes will become evident over the longer term (Gilchrist, 2009). Many communities have inflated expectations about the prospects for tourism development and become disillusioned when their livelihoods do not improve rapidly (Ashley and Haysom, 2006). There may be a role for external agencies, such as government, academics or NGOs to explain outcomes that may arise in the short, medium and long terms.

Conclusions and Opportunities for Further Research

As is the case with community development, CBT networks may provide a genuine instrument to empower the oppressed, to challenge the social order and to benefit the powerless (Bursztyn *et al.*, 2003; Mendonça, 2004; Shärer, 2003). It can also be used to progress a self-help approach to development, where the community mediates between the state and the market. In the latter case it is likely that the poor will receive some improvement in their livelihoods. However power relations are likely to remain unchallenged (Butcher, 2010). The outcomes of a CBT network may be affected by its structure. It is argued that network members should enjoy sufficient integration to allow them develop a common set of goals. At the same time the prospect of intense integration may lead the network to be restrictive and disempowering (Gilchrist, 2009; Yang and Wall, 2008). A network should occur as a natural process based on trust, rather than as an imposition by an external agency. An external agency may play a funding and capacity building role, especially concerning the set-up and day-to-day management of CBT initiatives (Van der Duim and Caalders, 2008). Though the community role should have primacy in CBT networks, expectations should be realistic. Tourism cannot be a panacea for all of the problems that are encountered in community settings. Other network attributes, and particularly those associated with functions and morphology, will vary according to the availability of resources, prevalence of local circumstances and current level of cohesion and communication within a particular locality (Murphy and Murphy, 2004).

The conduct of further research into alternative collaborative networking models aiming to maximise community benefits would assist the conceptualisation of a CBT network approach. Further empirical research is needed to test the key attributes and alternative approaches that have been described in this paper and to analyse the optimal

forms of networks that may be applicable in different contexts. The framework of principles and attributes that has been proposed may be used to assess critical success factors, organisational structures and contextual influences which determine successful CBT network development. Ultimately it may bring greater community development outcomes to members. Advancing existing knowledge about the benefits of CBT networks and collaboration should help to produce stronger regional and national CBT tourism products and experiences for the benefit of the wider population.

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Table 1. Guiding principles of CBT networks and their alternative approaches

| Attributes | Alternative approaches | Source |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Integration (strength of collaboration) | a. Fully integrated b. Cooperation c. Linkage | Gilchrist 2009; Keast <i>et al.</i> 2007; Leutz 1999 |
| 2. Interdependence (dependence on other members of the network, including mutual trust) | a. High b. Low | Bonetti <i>et al.</i> 2006; Gilchrist 2009; Kokkranikal and Morrison, 2011 Powell 1990; Robertson <i>et al.</i> 2012; Taylor 2011 |
| 3. Centralisation (existence of a central governing body) | a. Centralised, has a single central power b. Decentralised, each member is independent | Bonetti <i>et al.</i> 2006; Bingham and O'Leary 2006; Gilchrist 2009; Ife 2001; Kokkranikal and Morrison, 2011 Murphy and Murphy 2004; Todeva 2006 |

Table 2. The governance attributes of CBT networks

| Attributes | Alternative approaches | Source |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Network organisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Single entity tour operator, accommodation, food and beverage and other services provider. b. Federation, which oversees the overall strategy and advises network members on certain actions, however does not have decision-making power on behalf of individual members. c. Forum, which strengthens the CBT by organising seminars and conferences. It provides knowledge, information and training for members. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Asociacion Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario 2011; Multilateral Investment Fund 2006; b. Trejos and Chiang 2009; REDTURS 2011; c. Lao Sustainable Tourism Network 2011 |
| 2. Type of tourism related business involved (vertical/horizontal integration) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tour operator b. Accommodation provider c. Events / attractions / tourism activities organiser d. Food and beverage provider e. Crafts and souvenirs supplier f. Farming g. All of the above h. Any type of organisation, which can prove value for tourism i. Other combination of the above. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asociacion Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario 2011; Multilateral Investment Fund 2006; Trejos and Chiang 2009; Todeva 2006 |
| 3. Board of directors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No board of directors is needed b. Government department acts as a board of directors c. Representatives of the participating communities form board of directors d. An NGO takes on the role of director e. Private investors form board of directors f. A combination of the above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaumont and Dredge 2010; Simpson 2008; b. Sustainable Tourism Network, Nepal 2011; c. Asociacion Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario 2011; Bursztyn <i>et al.</i> 2003; JED 2011; Mendonça 2004; Shärer 2003; |

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| | | d. Multilateral Investment Fund 2006; Trejos and Chiang 2009; Tucum 2011 |
| 4. Organisational structure, central management | a. An NGO manages the network b. While the network is owned by participating communities, it is managed by a team of tourism professionals c. Representatives of each community take on the managing role in turn for a specific period d. Network is managed by government officials | Beaumont and Dredge 2010; Keast <i>et al.</i> 2007; a. Tucum 2011; b. Asociacion Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario 2011; c. Stronza 2008; d. Sustainable Tourism Network, Nepal 2011 |

Table 3. The management attributes of CBT networks

| Attributes | Alternative approaches | Source |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Training and education | a. Done on sight by managing body b. Outsourced to NGOs c. Outsourced to registered education providers | APEC Tourism Working Group and STCRC 2010; Moscardo 2008; Swanepoel and De Beer 2006 |
| 2. Resource Management | a. All resources are pulled together b. Finances are kept separately and decided upon by individual members, financial assistance to one member can be provided by other members if necessary c. All resources are kept separately | Ansell and Gash 2008; APEC Tourism Working Group and STCRC 2010; Dredge 2006; Gilchrist 2009; Provan and Milward 2001; Saxena 2005 |
| 3. Marketing and Promotion | a. All marketing research and promotion is undertaken through the network (e.g. sales forecasts, web-site, and publicity). | Novelli <i>et al.</i> 2006; Saxena 2005; a. Asociacion Costarricense de Turismo Rural |

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|---|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The network has its own website with information about members and publishes brochures; however other marketing and promotion activities have to be undertaken by members. c. All marketing and promotion activities have to be undertaken by individual members. | <p>Comunitario 2011; Trejos and Chiang 2009;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. REDTURS 2011; c. Sustainable Tourism Network, Nepal 2011 |
| 4. Sources of funding and other network-specific resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. External AID agency b. International NGO c. Government funding d. Network members (possibly loan) e. Local NGO f. Managing company | <p>Butcher 2010; Dale 2010; Goodwin and Santilli 2009; JED 2011; Multilateral Investment Fund 2006; Simpson 2008; Tucum 2011; Zapata <i>et al.</i> 2011</p> |

Table 4. Possible functions of CBT networks

| Attributes | Alternative approaches | Source |
|---|---|--|
| 1. General functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management of the network members (similar to a headquarters-branch management relationship in a corporation) b. Providing strategic vision and goals c. Advising members for decision-making d. Imposing decision-making e. | <p>APEC Tourism Working Group and STCRC 2010; Asociacion Costarricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario 2011; Bursztyn <i>et al.</i> 2003; COOPRENA Tours 2011; Community-Based Tourism Institute 2011; Gilchrist 2009; JED 2011; La Ruta Moskitia 2011; Lao Sustainable Tourism Network 2011; Mendonça 2004; Multilateral Investment Fund 2006; North Andaman Community Tourism Network 2011;</p> |
| 2. Tourism industry specific functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reservations and booking b. Sales c. Marketing, analysis of market trends d. Promotion e. Collection and dissemination of information on CBT initiatives | |

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|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Dissemination of information to tourists g. Capacity building and training for tourism h. Encouragement of links between individual members and other tourism businesses i. Playing a role of a major stakeholder in the tourism industry j. Participating on behalf of CBT network in international CBT and ecotourism events k. Assisting in infrastructure development l. Lobbying government on interests of CBT m. Lobbying government on interests of network member communities | <p>REDTURS 2011; Shärer 2003; Sustainable Tourism Network, Nepal 2011; Trejos and Chiang 2009; Tucum 2011</p> |
| 3. Community development specific functions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Environmental education in communities b. Promotion of sanitation and health practices c. Other adult and informal education d. Encouragement of links between individual members and other development initiatives e. Playing a role of an important development organisation f. Monitoring fair distribution of profits g. Monitoring sustainable environmental practices in communities h. Monitoring achievement of Millennium Development Goals in communities i. Assisting in infrastructure development j. Lobbying government on interests of network member communities | |

Table 5. External recognition of the network

| Attributes | Alternative approaches | Source |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Relationship with other community development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Unrelated b. May participate in other initiatives on a local level | <p>Blackstock 2005; Murphy and Murphy 2004</p> |

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| initiatives | c. The network aligns its work with national development goals and priorities | |
| 2. Relationship with other tourism businesses | a. Unrelated b. Individual network members decide whether to establish links with other tourism businesses c. Only through government (e.g. Department of Tourism) d. Close ties with other tourism businesses | Murphy and Murphy 2004; Multilateral Investment Fund 2006; Trejos and Chiang 2009; Van Der Duim and Caalders 2008; Zapata <i>et al.</i> 2011 |

Table 6. Attributes that constitute network morphology.

| Attributes | Alternative approaches | Source |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Timeframe | a. Temporary b. Permanent c. Permanent with temporary collaborative relations encouraged between several members to achieve specific goals, if necessary. | Bingham and O’Leary 2006; McGuire 2006 |
| 2. Minimum membership for the establishment of the network (size) | a. 2 b. 3 c. 5 d. 10 e. Other | Todeva 2006; Wellman and Berkowitz 1988 |
| 3. Time to establish the network | a. 6 months b. 1 year c. 2 years d. Other | Multilateral Investment Fund 2006; Van Der Duim and Caalders 2008 |
| 4. Density (number and strength of dyadic ties) | a. High b. Medium c. Low | Bodin <i>et al.</i> 2006; John 2011; Lynch and Morrison 2007; Todeva 2006 |
| 5. Reachability (ease of contacting/reaching one | a. High b. Medium | Bodin <i>et al.</i> 2006; Granovetter 1973; |

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| member of the network by another member) | c. Low | Robertson <i>et al.</i> 2012; Todeva 2006 Valente and Foreman 1998 |
| 6. Geographical distribution | a. Local b. Regional c. National d. International | Ledwith 2011; Lynch and Morrison 2007 |