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Sustainable Community Development through Volunteer Tourism and the Role of NGOs in Nepal

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2014 Kerava

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Hauta-aho, Taru
Degree Programme in Tourism
Bachelor's Thesis
September, 2014

Laurea University of Applied Sciences   Abstract
Laurea Kerava
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Year   2014   Pages   xx

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the potential ways of volunteer tourism and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to contribute to sustainable community development in Nepal. Sustainability has been a topic in global discussion for decades and it comprises of environmental, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Sustainable development aims to be economically viable while preserving the natural and built environment as well as social and cultural traditions.

Volunteer tourism is a form of alternative tourism often categorized under the headline of sustainable tourism and it is to promote positive change in communities by for example alleviating poverty, conserving the environment or researching society. Volunteer tourism is a rapidly growing industry with many-sided impacts on host communities. NGOs implementing volunteer projects have an essential role in determining the direction of development. Regardless of the massive amount of NGOs operating in Nepal in various fields lack of regulations, law and supervision prevails making the environment unstable and vulnerable to corruption and exploitation of resources. Nepal is a naturally and culturally rich developing country in Asia. Some major threats to the nation's development are increasing population, lack of education and unequal concentration of development. Tourism plays an important role in the national income and the government sets emphasis on it as a potential industry to stabilize economy and create employment. Volunteer tourists are often utilized in sustainable community development projects which aim to increase the host community's economic welfare, conserve the surrounding environment and strengthen cultural identity while being socially equal.

This thesis studies the varied perceptions of stakeholders who are engaged in volunteer projects through different positions. The primary data was collected according to qualitative action research method using half-structured interviews in Nepal in 2014. Action research was a suitable methodology because the researcher was participating in the process of study by being a volunteer and a member of the community. Fifteen interviews were conducted with several stakeholders to explore perspectives from volunteers', NGOs' coordinators' and managers', volunteer project employees' and home-stay providers' points of view. The primary data includes varied views on volunteers' and NGOs' contribution to sustainable community development and community's involvement. Volunteer tourists' motives and expectations and home-stays as components of sustainable community development were explored. Both in the primary and secondary data NGOs' transparency is valued but they contradict concerning community's involvement in community development projects. Although income from foreign sources is a major economic factor in Nepal, the government sets barriers to foreigners' and foreign NGOs' voluntary development efforts. Volunteer tourism's potential contribution to sustainable community development is neglected by the government and thus no official information has been collected about it.

Especially economic and socio-cultural contributions of volunteer tourism are noted in primary and secondary data but the overall interaction of economic, environmental and socio-cultural sustainability is apparent. Although tourism is often seen as an employment generat-

ing industry, a contradictory issue of creating employment opportunities through volunteer tourism is revealed.

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Kestävä yhteisön kehittäminen vapaaehtoismatkailun ja kansalaisjärjestöjen avulla Nepalissa

Vuosi   2014   Sivumäärä   xx

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on tutkia vapaaehtoismatkailun ja kansalaisjärjestöjen potentiaalisia vaikutuksia kestävään yhteisön kehittämiseen Nepalissa. Kestävyys on ollut puheenaiheena globaalissa keskustelussa vuosikausia ja se koostuu ympäristöllisestä, taloudellisesta ja sosiokulttuurisesta ulottuvuudesta. Kestävä kehitys pyrkii olemaan taloudellisesti elinkelpoista suojellen samalla luontoa ja rakennettua ympäristöä sekä sosiaalisia ja kulttuurillisia perinteitä.

Vapaaehtoismatkailu on vaihtoehtoinen matkailun muoto, joka luokitellaan usein kestävään matkailuun kuuluvaksi ja sen tarkoitus on edistää positiivista muutosta yhteisöissä esimerkiksi vähentämällä köyhyyttä, suojelemalla ympäristöä tai tutkimalla yhteiskuntaa. Vapaaehtoismatkailu on nopeasti kasvava ala, jolla on monitahoisia vaikutuksia isäntäyhteisöihin. Kansalaisjärjestöt, jotka toteuttavat vapaaehtoisprojekteja, määräävät paljolti kehityksen suunnan. Nepalissa lukuisilla aloilla toimivien kansalaisjärjestöjen suuresta määrästä huolimatta säädösten, lakien ja valvonnan puute tekee toimintaympäristöstä epävakaan ja alttiin korruptiolle ja resurssien hyväksikäytölle. Nepal on luonnoltaan monimuotoinen ja kulttuurillisesti rikas kehitysmaa Aasiassa. Kasvava väestö, puutteellinen koulutus ja kehityksen epätasainen keskittyminen ovat suuria uhkia maan kehitykselle. Matkailuelinkeinolla on tärkeä rooli Nepalin kansantaloudessa ja hallitus painottaa sen potentiaalia talouden vakauttamisessa ja työllisyyden lisäämisessä. Vapaaehtoismatkailijoita hyödynnetään usein kehitysprojekteissa, jotka tähtäävät parantamaan yhteisön taloudellista hyvinvointia, suojelemaan ympäristöä ja vahvistamaan kulttuurillista identiteettiä ollen samalla sosiaalisesti tasa-arvoisia.

Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii vapaaehtoisprojekteissa eri asemissa olevien sidosryhmien ja tekijöiden näkemyksiä. Primäärinen aineisto kerättiin kvalitatiivisen toimintatutkimusmetodin mukaisesti käyttäen puolistrukturoituja haastatteluja Nepalissa 2014. Toimintatutkimus oli sopiva metodologia, koska tutkija osallistui yhteisön jäsenenä ja vapaaehtoismatkailijana tutkimaansa prosessiin. Eri sidosryhmille tehtiin yhteensä viisitoista teemahaastattelua, jotta saataisiin selville vapaaehtoisten, kansalaisjärjestöjen koordinaattorien ja toiminnanjohtajien, vapaaehtoisprojektien työntekijöiden ja kotimajoituksen tarjoajien näkökulmia. Primääriaineistossa esiintyi monenlaisia kantoja vapaaehtoisten ja kansalaisjärjestöjen panoksesta kestävään yhteisön kehittämiseen ja yhteisön osallistumisesta. Vapaahtoismatkailijoiden motiiveja ja odotuksia sekä kotimajoitusta tutkittiin kestävän yhteisön kehittämisen komponentteina. Toiminnan läpinäkyvyyttä arvostettiin sekä primääri- että sekondääriaineistossa, mutta ne eriävät yhteisön osallistumisesta yhteisönkehittämisprojekteihin. Vaikka tulot ulkomaisista lähteistä ovat tärkeä taloudellinen tekijä Nepalissa, hallitus asettaa rajoituksia ulkomaalaisten henkilöiden ja kansalaisjärjestöjen vapaaehtoiskehitysyrityksille. Hallitus laiminlyö vapaaehtoismatkailun potentiaalisen panoksen kestävässä yhteisön kehittämisessä, eikä siitä ole kerätty virallista tietoa.

Eritoten vapaaehtoismatkailun taloudellinen ja sosiokulttuurinen panos on huomattu primääri- ja sekondääriaineistossa, mutta taloudellisen, ympäristöllisen ja sosiokulttuurisen kestävyyden vuorovaikutus on selkeä. Vaikka matkailuelinkeinoa pidetään usein työllisyyttä

parantavana alana, esiin astuu vapaaehtoismatkailun ristiriitainen vaikutus työpaikkojen lisäämiseen.

Avainsanat: kestävyys, yhteisön kehittäminen, vapaaehtoismatkailu, kansalaisjärjestöt

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1   Introduction

This thesis examines the potential of volunteer tourism to contribute to sustainable community development in Nepal and the factors influencing it. Volunteer tourism is commonly regarded as a responsible form of tourism with varied impacts on host communities. In an industry like tourism which has many stakeholders which have impacts on one another the definitions of development vary as well as the motivations, professional and personal ethics and resources of the stakeholders.

Additionally the laws and regulations set by governments, and their compliancy, play an important role as they set up the operational frame for organizations, businesses and individuals. Governments can encourage environmental, socio-cultural and economic responsibility and create a safe and functioning environment for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to operate. In a country like Nepal where the government fails to provide basic necessities like food, shelter, education and health care for every citizen, NGOs have a massive hole to fill in.

The thesis studies also the environment in which international and national NGOs in Nepal are to operate and the limits set by the government. Due to the decade-lasting civil war which ended in 2006 the political settings including drafting a new constitution are still uncompleted. Both NGOs and the government have negative attitudes towards each other which poses difficulties in effective cooperation. The resources the government provides to NGOs are narrow. No funding or other financial incentives are offered and lack of law and order is criticized by the third sector.

Along with collecting already existing secondary data the research method used was action research in which the researcher practically engages in the subject of the research. The researcher was volunteering in Nepal to conduct the research and used half-structured interviews to collect primary data. To find out personal perspectives on volunteer tourism's impacts on sustainable community development interviews were conducted with people in different positions with first-hand experiences about volunteer tourism. Volunteers, home-stay providers, project employees and coordinators of a volunteer organization and a manager of another NGO gave their insights for this research.

2   Sustainable development & tourism

One of the major milestones for sustainability in general to become a topic in global discussion has been Our Common Future Report by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. It defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" and it is so far probably the most commonly acknowledged definition. The report proposes long-term strategies for achieving sustainable development by the year 2000 and beyond, ways to deepen cooperation between countries on different stages of development and ways to handle environmental concerns internationally. (UN. 1987)

Sustainable development is commonly divided into environmental, economic and social, and sometimes also cultural, dimensions. Environmental sustainability refers to such kind of development which is in harmony with ecology, diversity of nature and conserving and maintaining natural resources. Ecologically sustainable development is economically efficient and the results of the development are distributed equally within and between generations. Social sustainability requires that development strengthens people's own control of their lives and communal forms of activity. Culturally sustainable development is in harmony with people's conceptions of culture. (Ojala, K. 2000:10-11)

The idea of sustainable development is based on the thought that economic growth is beneficial but its fruit should be directed to such areas where people's basic needs are not yet satisfied. Economic growth should be held within limits set by the nature. Nature should be protected and conserved so that sustainable, long-lasting economic growth is possible. (Ojala, K. 2000:10)

Sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism aims to recognize the negative impacts of tourism and indicate how to decrease the known negative impacts. The environmental impacts create various other consequences which can have social and economic impacts. Some negative environmental impacts include erosion and distinction of flora, which then can be seen in changes in fauna. Extinction of a key species in a particular food chain can cause drastic changes in the ecosystem as a whole. Regionally and locally the impacts of tourism are focused on water, forests, mountains, landscapes, cultural and archeological sites and old cities and buildings. Additionally tourism can cause problems with waste and sewage management and lack of drinking water. (Hemmi, J. 2005:41-42)

Tourism can also have positive environmental impacts such as increased interest in environmental and landscape conservation and conservation of animals and cultural monuments. In developing countries tourism income can be used to secure the livelihood of local communi-

ties and directed into conservation activities. Additionally tourism can reinforce construction of more environmentally friendly infrastructure and create new beneficial uses for unproductive agricultural land. (Hemmi, J. 2005:42)

Natural diversity can be seen as one indicator of environmental sustainability. Indicators for social sustainability are for example sufficiency of food, poverty, infant fatality, mass population and terrorism. Indicators for cultural sustainability are more difficult to find but due to tourism ethical principles to reinforce conservation of local cultures have been created and adapted. (Hemmi, J. 2005:78)

2.1   Volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism is a form of alternative tourism which is implemented in an organized manner to help for example by alleviating poverty, conserving environment or researching society. The aim of volunteer tourism is usually to make positive changes in the communities of developing countries. The role of understanding the impacts of volunteer tourism on the local community is constantly growing but still there are no proper means of researching them. (Lupoli, C. 2014)

Volunteer tourism often falls under the category of sustainable tourism and it is seen as a responsible way of tourism. Many advantages of volunteer tourism has been recognized as studies have shown volunteers' motives including for example giving back to the host community, taking part in community development, social and cultural exchange and altruism. (Andereck, K. 2011 :3) Volunteer tourism has grown in recent years. For example the Euromonitor International is stating it to be one of the fastest growing forms of tourism at the moment. Although it can bring lots of positive impacts it can also bring problems for example in the form of volunteers taking employment opportunities from locals. (Kalmari, H. 2009:163-164)

Due to the prevailing neoliberal ideology in the tourism market the focus of the industry has usually been on mere profit making and it is being growingly commodified. Serious economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts may occur due to lack of consideration of host communities and their environments which can easily become exploited. It can be argued that commodification is becoming reality also concerning alternative forms of tourism such as volunteer tourism because of increasing marketing. In order to decommodify volunteer tourism the profits gained from volunteer projects need to go to the host community and both the host community and volunteers have to experience an authentic exchange. Large tour operators are also causing commodification of volunteer tourism. (Lupoli, C. 2014)

Many studies recognize the convenience of using indicators to measure the impacts of tourism on the host community. Indicators should not focus on mere economic impacts but also on social and environmental issues. It has become clear as the interaction between environmental conservation, poverty and economic welfare has been acknowledged. When implemented strategically to monitor conditions from many perspectives indicators can be useful tools in sustainable community development. (Lupoli, C. 2014)

Volunteers' motives, volunteer organizations' priorities and the needs of the host community are tightly interconnected. Abundant research on volunteer tourists' motivations have a great impact on the organizations' decisions on where and how to implement their projects. Volunteer organizations' role is to both cater for volunteers' desires and meet the needs of the host community while making positive changes. (Lupoli, C. 2014)

Sometimes volunteer projects can be unbeneficial or badly organized or the organizations managing the projects can be untrustworthy. Volunteers should make sure that their project is implemented in cooperation with the local community as they are the experts of their own habitat. Another thing to be aware of is the allocation of the fees volunteers may have to pay for arrangements. Ideal situation is that most of the money goes to the project and concrete helping and not to bureaucracy and administration. (Kalmari, H. 2009:169-170)

3   Nepal

Nepal is rich in customs, cultures, peoples, languages and landscapes. The area of the country is approximately 52.828 sq miles (Visit Nepal 2012. General information). The nature varies from subtropical jungles and rhododendron forests to high-altitude deserts and frozen peaks including the highest one in the world, Mount Everest. Rural villages and agriculture are still very common in Nepal; they are everyday life for more than 80% of the population. Hinduism and Buddhism are the biggest religious groups in this country of more than 50 different groups who posses their own languages and cultures. Most of the people in the capital city Kathmandu are indigenous habitants called the Newars. (Insight guides. 2008:15)

The Nepalese have always become adapted to their natural surroundings and it has left a mark on the landscape. The altitude which Nepalese inhabit has a direct affect on their everyday lives. Commonly they have been living in harmony with nature but the modern age with its new technology and environmental destruction is disrupting their traditions. (Insight guides. 2008:24) Geographical locations by altitude determine the division of the biggest cultural groups in Nepal. The altitude influences other factors, like land, climate and the availability of resources. See the cultural diversity by altitude in the figure below. (Figure 1. Nepal Cultural Diversity by Altitude)
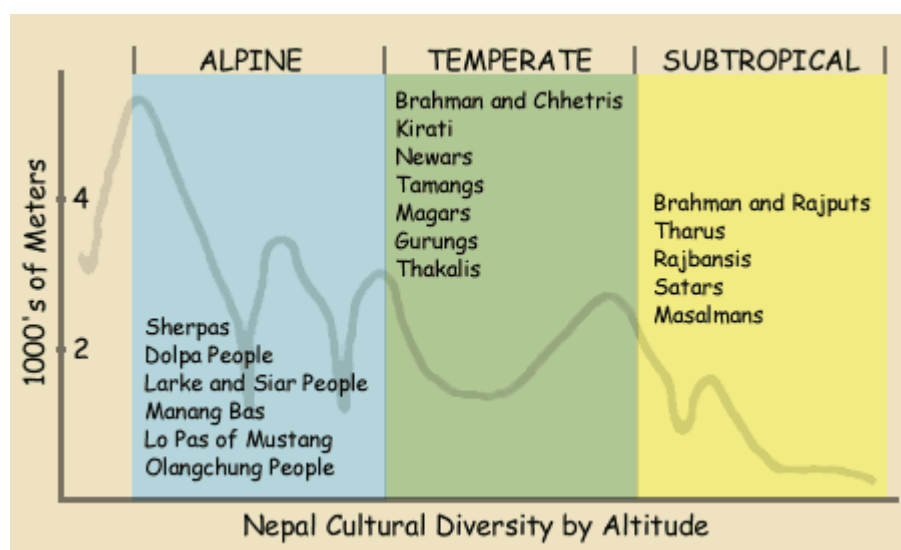
Figure 1. Nepal Cultural Diversity by Altitude. (Visit Nepal 2012)

Nepal became a democratic republic in 2008, when the Maoists won the elections with their promises of a new constitution. (Insight guides. 2008:39) After the government has repeatedly missed their deadline to draft a new constitution, it still remains undone (ICNL 2014). The country has a colorful and violent political history. It was only in 2006 when the decade-lasting civil war, "Peoples War" ended costing the lives of 13,000 people as well as damage to the economy and infrastructure. (Insight guides. 2008:39) The war was ended by signing the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) in 2006. The Interim Constitution came into force in 2007 and the United Nations Mission in Nepal was established. (UN 2011) International conflicts and other scary global problems have direct influence on tourism. The consequences are most visibly seen in a drastic decrease of air traffic. Additionally problems like earthquakes, floods and storms take down the number of tourist arrivals. (Hemmi, J. 2005:20)

The Interim Constitution of Nepal announces basic individual civil rights and political rights, like the right to life and dignity and the right to association and expression and exchange of ideas. Regardless, assemblies concerning sensitive political topics are strictly prohibited and can be violently broken up. The guaranteed economic rights include right to proper employment and freedom of hunger, for example, and the social rights the right to education and medical facilities. (ICNL 2014)

The life expectancy rate for males in Nepal is 67.3 years and for females 69.1 years. 75.1% of males and 57.4% of females can read. In 2011 the GDP per capita was $742. In 2013 Nepal was ranked 157th in the UN Human Development Index (HDI) out of 184 surveyed countries with number one being the best (ICNL 2014). HDI is an indicator of development which is calculated by combining life expectancy, school attainment and income (UNDP 2013). Same year Ne-

pal got the ranking of 116 in International Transparency, which measures the level of corruption, out of 180 countries. In 2012 in the World Bank Rule of Law Index Nepal got the position 14 and in World Bank Voice & Accountability Index 28 out of 100 countries with zero being the worst condition. In the Foreign Policy's Fragile States Index Nepal was ranked 31st with number one being the worst possible. (ICNL 2014)

3.1 Threats to development

According to the United Nation's Universal Periodic Review 2011 the population of Nepal was over 23 million and it is estimated to grow 2.25% annually. Citizens over the age of 60 account for approximately 6.5% of the population, children below the age of 16 for 40.93% and women for 51%. 37.2% of the population are indigenous people. (UN 2011) The growing population brings pressure upon the management of health, nutrition and education. Thousands of infants and hundreds of adults die of contaminated water every year in Nepal and in the district of Humla 4 out of 10 children live till the age of five. (Insight guides. 2008:113)

The amount of people living under the poverty line in Nepal was a bit over 25% in 2011. (Ulkoasiainministeriö 2011) The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was $656 in 2012. GDP per capita measures the overall production of goods and services divided by the population. (Globalis 2014) GDP does not take into account the unequal division of wealth which happens practically in every country. (Nokelainen, P.(1) 2012) Studies indicate that the bigger the income difference is initially the less economic growth alleviates poverty. States can decrease inequality for example with social-, regional- and labor market politics. Development aid should be directed towards marginalized groups like discriminated ethnic groups or rural areas that have been left undeveloped. (Nokelainen, P.(2) 2012) According to the World Bank the growth of GDP through agriculture alleviates poverty twice as much as through other sectors. (Paavola, J. 2013)

The mean annual household income for a Nepali family in 2010-2011 was 202,374 Nr which is approximately 2,071 US dollars and the median 127,281 Nr which is 1,302 US dollars. Out of 5,868 households included in the survey the average household size is 4.9. In the same period of time the consumption per capita was 34,829 Nr which is $356. It shows a drastic increase from the year 1995-1996 when the consumption rate was 6,802 Nr which is $69. That year the richest 20% of the population accounted for 45% of the total consumption and the poorest only for 8% and concerning that there has not been much change in 15 years. (Government of Nepal 2011)

According to the United Nation's Human Development Indicators the mean years of schooling in Nepal is only 3.24. The amount of people over 25 years with at least some secondary edu-

cation is 28.3%. The enrollment rate to primary school is 82% while the dropout rate is 38.31%. There are at average 28 pupils per one teacher. (UNDP 2012)

The enrollment rate to all school levels has increased according to the Government of Nepal once it started developing a free education system for all until 10th grade. Still, a UNESCO study reveals that Nepal has one of the poorest student-teacher ratios in the world and also there has not been much improvement in the number of dropouts. The reason why providing education for all has failed is the extra costs like uniforms and pencils which the families have to provide for. Especially in the rural areas families either cannot afford the hidden cost or they see their children's input more valuable in home choirs than elsewhere getting poor education. Additionally almost all schools charge admission fees illegally by calling them repair or exam costs, for example. (Aryal, N. 2012)

The total cost of full tuition for an undergraduate student in the non-governmental Kathmandu University costs US$400,000-505,000 with possible extra charges depending on the field of study (Kathmandu University 2014). The non-governmental Lincoln school in Kathmandu provides tuition with annual fees of $6,040 for pre-school, $17,095 for elementary school, $18,860 for middle school and $20,775 for high school excluding other additional fees. (Appendix 1: Lincoln School 2013)

Only four out of 14 medical schools in Nepal are locally owned. In the medical schools of Nepal students are provided with 10% of seats with scholarship in the locally owned schools and 20% in foreign owned ones. The Ministry of Education decides upon the student selection. Tuition fees for self-financing Nepalese medical students range from 32,000-40,000 US dollars. (Shankar, P. 2011)

In relation to the income level of the population the prices of tuition fees are unaffordable to average Nepali families. Lack of proper education is an obstacle to the nation's development. Lack of law and order complicates supervision of privately owned educational institutions and possible exploitation of their status.

The employment status of the population was 78% in 2009-2010 which is 11% more than in 1995-1996 while the unemployment rate decreased from 3% to 2%. 3.6% of 15-24 year-olds were unemployed while concerning 10-14 year-olds employment has decreased. The occurrence of child labor was 28% in 2010-2011. The role of agriculture as an employment provider has decreased and employment through other sectors has grown in 15 years. 35% of the population earned their wage through the agriculture sector compared to 65% 15 years earlier and 65% through other sectors. Wages in all sectors have increased 3-4-fold but the increase is higher for males than for females. (Government of Nepal 2011)

Within 30 days prior to research 8% of households reported that they were not able to eat normally once or more and that they cover shortages by borrowing food or money. The number of households experiencing insufficiency in food, housing, school, health care, clothing and total income decreased while the ones describing the amount of those "just adequate" increased from 1995-1996 to 2010-2011. 42% of respondents were dissatisfied with the electricity facility and 25% with drinking water. The amount of underweight children under 5 years old was 31% and the percentage of stunted children 42%. (Government of Nepal 2011)

As seen in the table below (Table 2. Adequacy of government facilities) in the urban areas 13.3% reported the adequacy of government's health facilities as bad and in the rural areas 17.7%. The percentage of bad government's education facilities was 10.7% in urban and 11.1% in rural areas. The adequacy of drinking water facilities was reported bad by 38% of urban respondents and 20.5% by rural. Regarding electricity facilities bad adequacy was reported by 55.3% in urban and 36.4% in rural areas. The adequacy of road facilities was considered bad by 22.4% of the urban population and by 36.3% of the rural population. (Government of Nepal 2011)

Adequacy of government facilities	Good	Fair	Bad
Health Facilities			
Urban	14.0	72.8	13.3
Rural	11.8	70.5	17.7
Education facilities			
Urban	17.5	71.8	10.7
Rural	15.5.	73.4.	11.1
Drinking water facilities			
Urban	15.6	46.3	38.0
Rural	21.8.	57.7	20.5
Electricity facilities			
Urban	6.8	37.9	55.3
Rural	14.9	48.7	36.4
Road facilities			
Urban	17.0	60.6	22.4
Rural	10.2	53.3	36.3

Table 1. Adequacy of government facilities. (Government of Nepal 2011)

The need for vocational education is massive in Nepal where 300,000 young people enter the labor market annually. In 2011 82% of people at the age of 5-19 were literate and 94,5% of

the generation including girls enrolled to school. (Ulkoasiainministeriö 2011). Within the next fifteen years 600 million new jobs are needed globally and the need is urgent especially in developing nations. According to the World Bank one solution to revive and promote employment is to increase agricultural productivity. (Pörsti, J. 2012)

3.2   Tourism in Nepal

The massive development of tourism in a global scale especially since the 1970s has been explained by the increased amount of income and leisure time and development of airplanes and cheap price of oil. The recent growth of tourism is also due to development of international distribution systems, online reservation systems and information technology like the Internet. Still this does not explain why benefits of tourism are concentrated only on few countries or a small population of the world. The ten countries that get most of the tourism income get half of all the tourism income in the world. Regardless of the distribution of tourism income, tourism can still be the most important export trade to a country which gets only a small amount of income through tourism. (Hemmi, J. 2005, 20)

Nepal possesses as many as eight national parks, four wildlife reserves and one hunting reserve. The first ecotourism area in the country was established in the Annapurna Conservation Area. The overall area of these protected national parks and reserves is 17,000sq. km. which is 12% of the total land area. (Insight guides. 2008:106) Due to rich natural landscapes and terrain Nepal attracts especially adventure tourists and offers activities from mountain climbing and trekking to rafting and paragliding. (Government of Nepal 2012)

The Government of Nepal declared the year 1998 as the "Visit Nepal Year" and also engagement in sustainable tourism development was declared upon (Insight guides. 2008, 116). Another Visit Nepal year was in 2011. (Government of Nepal 2013, 4) The government sees tourism as a potential way to promote economic development. It can be a means to alleviate poverty and create employment in both urban and rural areas. (Government of Nepal 2013, 4)

In 2012 the average length of stay of international tourists was 12.1 days which indicates 7.3% decrease from the previous year. The top five countries visitors came from were India, People's Republic of China, Sri Lanka, USA and UK. 379,627 tourists visited Nepal for holiday purposes, 24,785 for business and 17,988 for study, research or employment. 30,552 specified their purpose as other, excluding holidays, pilgrimage, trekking and mountaineering, official, business, study, research and employment and conferences. (Government of Nepal 2013, 10) Volunteer tourism has most likely fallen under the category of other purposes.

The total revenue from tourism in 2012 was $356,725,000 which is 3.3% less than in the previous year. The average income per visitor per day was $35.6 which shows a decrease of 6.8% compared to 2011. Only approximately 120,000 of 860,000 Nepali going abroad were female. Incoming nationals amounted to almost 737,000 which shows a loss of over 120,000 people through outbound tourism in 2012. A year earlier the difference between incoming and outgoing Nepali was only approximately 70,000. (Government of Nepal 2013, 14)

Tourism income in Nepal exceeds millions of dollars annually. The earnings also cause economic segregation between the ones who can benefit from tourism to the ones who cannot. (Insight guides. 2008, 115-116) While tourism has become an important source of income in Nepal it has also caused economic instability to some because the industry is so easily affected by political conflicts. (Globalis 2014) Environmentally the biggest cost of tourism is laid upon the mountain tourist destinations like the Himalayas and the Annapurna due to tens of thousands of trekkers annually. (Insight guides. 2008, 115-116) Areas of high tourist concentration attract locals from other districts to work in the tourism industry and the capacity of such towns or villages cannot carry the whole population anymore. (Insight guides. 2008, 117)

According to the Foreign Investment Division of the Department of Industry in Nepal the amount of foreign direct investment projects was 905 in July 2004 which amounts up to 1.65 billion US dollars. 208 of the investment projects were done in the tourism sector. Employment has been generated to 95,000 people in Nepal through foreign investments in various industries including tourism. (Visit Nepal 2006. Nepal – Foreign Investment)

In 2009 the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation published a document Tourism Vision 2020 which outlines the direction of tourism development for peace, people and prosperity until 2020. According to the document the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) and Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) were established in 1999 although tourism started taking place already in the early 1950s. International and internal crises in the early 21st century affected decreasingly to visitor arrivals but after achieving peace tourist arrivals reached a new record of 526,705 in 2007. The government is aiming to reach one million annual arrivals by 2020 while committing to alleviating global environmental, economic and energy problems. (Government of Nepal 2009)

In Tourism Vision 2020 tourism in Nepal is assessed through SWOT analysis. The strengths pointed out include rich nature and culture and vast supply of adventure activities. The physical weaknesses are insufficient infrastructure and limited air connectivity, lack of resources and geographic concentration of tourism. Limits are set also by insufficient investment in tourism and poor partnership between public and private sector. High priority on tourism set by the government and benefiting from neighboring countries' tourism are listed as opportu-

nities. Additionally the increasing popularity of adventure tourism and sustainable development of nature and cultural heritage through tourism economic development are mentioned as positive prospects. Threats are posed by global challenges like terrorism, economic downturn and climate change along with national issues like the political environment as well as unflattering travel information and competing destinations. (Government of Nepal 2009)

Besides gaining one million annual tourist arrivals by 2020, another aim of the government is to increase employment through tourism to one million. The objectives are somewhat aligned with sustainable tourism development. The government aims to augment employment especially in rural areas and enhancing livelihoods country-wide and those of women and other exploited communities. Tourism is to be integrated into the country's socio-economic development with the reinforcement of enabling institutional environment. The concentration of tourism products and services will be spread to new areas by increasing communities' involvement in tourism activities. Promoting the image of Nepal, enhancing potential for aviation and attracting investments are other objectives of the government to develop tourism. (Government of Nepal 2009)

Increasing local communities' involvement will be done by implementing awareness campaigns for the prosperity of marginalized groups and involving them through training and skill development programs. The tourism markets are divided into four categories; aerial, terrestrial, aquatic and niche. The last one includes various forms of sustainable tourism such as eco-tourism, village tourism and community-based tourism. Engaging local communities in acquiring benefits from tourism will be promoted by increasing tourism awareness. Sustainable tourism principles will be applied by minimizing environmental impacts and maximizing local ownership, employment, community initiatives and economic benefits. In expanding tourism to remote and rural areas of Nepal the government is counting on the private sector entrepreneurs' investments attracted by incentives. The long-term activities related to sustainable tourism that the government is committed to execute include development and promotion of home-stay and other community-based tourism activities and implementing initiatives to decrease the impacts of climate change. (Government of Nepal 2009)

4   Sustainable community development

Sustainable tourism inevitably includes taking into consideration the community which is involved in or affected by the tourism industry. The difficult part about community development is defining the ever changing concept of community.

The primary and secondary resources of tourism are both human communities; the travelling community or tourists, and the host community. A community can be defined on four differ-

ent levels; firstly it refers to a geographical area, secondly to a particular environment, third-ly to a feeling of mutuality and then to an ideology. All these components are essential for successful tourism development. In order to practice fully sustainable tourism the communi-ties need to be involved in the development process. (Richards, G. & Hall, D. 2000:1-2)

Although globalization and mobilization of societies have threatened the place-based defini-tion of community it can be argued that the geographical notion has reemerged. In many cas-es different communities and societies are what tourists find so appealing that they want to experience them themselves but it also goes the other way around; news and stories about local communities may lead to unwillingness to travel to particular places. (Richards, G. & Hall, D. 2000:2-3)

In this thesis research the word community refers mainly to the geographical area the inhab-itants of which are by default due to same shared environment leading similar lifestyles. In this context the word environment refers not only to the natural and built environment but also to the economic and social environment.

Three major characteristics for a sustainable community are environmentally sound, econom-ically productive and socially just. It means that decisions are made taking natural resources and the environment into account, not letting income escape the community and that all benefits created by the community are equally available for all. Additionally any kind of de-velopment is conducted in a manner which does not harm the welfare of future generations. Nevertheless, every community is unique and one single development plan does not suit all. Thus, every community development project needs to be planned and implemented according to local needs. (Swisher, M. & Monaghan, K. 2014)

Sustainable community development aims to develop inhabitants' livelihoods, services and the functionality of communities, promote sustainable use of renewable resources and strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of a particular area. It is to meet the eco-nomic, social and environmental expectations that different demographic and stakeholder groups, communities and businesses and public governance have. (Hemmi, J. 2005:188)

Community development is a process which through community's active participation aims to create social and economic progress equally to all members of the community. Sustainable development also protects and conserves the environment while sustaining development and meeting the needs of the inhabitants. Developing communities sustainably can create em-ployment opportunities and social services and promote the local economy and thus the community's economic welfare. There are many sides that need to be included in a sustaina-ble tourism program; it should conserve non-renewable resources and the biodiversity that

maintains community's health, interpret learning experiences, promote small businesses, ensure participation of local community and create business opportunities. Additionally the tourists need to engage in acting responsibly during their stay. (Nor, S. 2012, 477)

Development should be focused especially in small and rural areas which are unable to reach self-sufficiency due to lack of resources and which are thus defined weak and dependent. Such communities which do not recognize the benefits from tourism development are not motivated to take part in it. (Nor, S. 2012, 478) Development can be done through developing infrastructure, developing and renovating villages, alternative sources of income like tourism and handicraft, local products, refreshment use of areas, and environmental conservation. (Hemmi, J. 2005:190) The employment and thus the overall economic development of rural areas will be growingly dependent on the opportunities that tourism development provides. (Hemmi, J. 2005, 191)

4.1   Actors influencing sustainable community development

Sustainable development has a strong institutional frame which is formed by global organizations between countries, other international organizations, states, regional and local governments and regional and local organizations and businesses. (Hemmi, J. 2005:79) Sustainable development is influenced by many actors that are stakeholders in tourism processes. As seen in the figure below (Figure 1. Stakeholders of Sustainable Tourism), the main stakeholders of sustainable tourism are the destinations, tourists, investors, governments and local actors such as communities and organizations and public and private sector. (Hemmi, J. 2005:81)

STAKEHOLDERS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Destinations
Tour operators, hotels, traffic
companies, other producers
Environmental enegagement

Tourists
Who are they?
What are their motives?
Environmental
conciousness

Civil groups
Local communities
NGOs

Area

Private sector

Public sector

Investors
Usage contradictions
Ecological vulnerability
Development options

Governance
Ministries
Tourism development officials
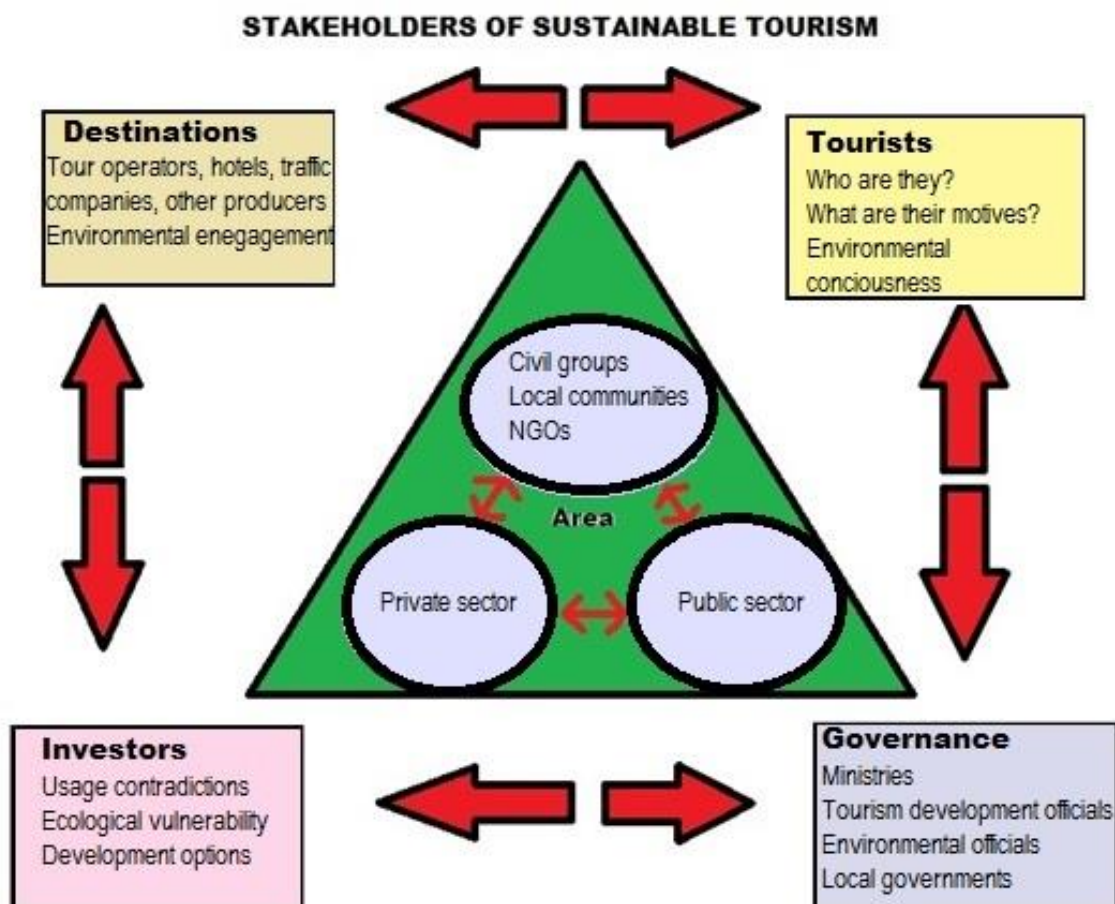Environmental officials
Local governments

Figure 2. Stakeholders of Sustainable Tourism. (Hemmi, J. 2005:81)

Nowadays sustainable development strategies, programs, plans and research are conducted to meet global, regional and local needs. Some examples of regional programs are Sustainable Tourism Agenda 21 in the Mediterranean and Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Sahara and an example of such local programs is the Sustainable Tourism Program in the Balearic Islands. (Hemmi, J. 2005:81)

4.2   Globalization

Globalization of tourism can be seen as a threat or an opportunity in developing countries. Some threats include extinction of locality and it being replaced by western travelling culture, investments and western workforce. Travelling to developing countries has also been seen as a manifestation of Neocolonialism. (Hemmi, J. 2005:22) From the perspective of tourism globalization is close to the concept of acculturation which means that cultures are becoming more homogenous. In this process the local culture is usually the one that becomes more like the tourist culture and becomes westernized. Additionally social problems like sex tourism and sexual abuse of children have increased in many tourist destinations. Thus, tour-

ism should be developed altruistically from the perspective of the host culture. (Hemmi, J. 2005:37)

Globalization has also brought new opportunities in developing countries. Liberalization of market economy has enabled making tourism related investments in third world countries. Such creates new jobs, income, production and infrastructure, which benefit also the local communities. Tourism development has also stabilized the economies of such countries which are dependent on few primary products as their source of foreign trade. In many developing countries tourism has been seen as the only opportunity to diversify local economy and attract foreign currency. Tourism income can be used to decrease national debt, finance import and implement educational and health care services. (Hemmi, J. 2005:23)

The liberalization of market economy also poses threats. It enables big trans-national and national travel corporations, such as Hilton Hotels and American Airlines, to possess lots of power over the economic impacts of tourism as they decide upon major investments, income for shareholders and orders. It has been estimated that 55-77% of gross tourism earnings in developing countries in the 1990s were spent on import and not in the host country. Thus, the local economy may not benefit much even from a flourishing tourism industry. (Fuad-Luke, A. 2008:14)

According to Global Financial Integrity the amount of illegal account transfers from developing countries was US$347 billion in 2011 which was over 14% more than the previous year. Developing countries lose most capital due to illegal tax evasion committed by big corporations. In 2002-2011 Nepal was ranked 66th in number of illegal account transfers. (Koski, K. 2014)

4.3 Role of Governments & NGOs

Means to promote sustainable tourism development by governmental bodies include legislation, deciding upon funding and its conditions, planning of land use, restricting number of visitors, tourism taxes and use charges, engagement to follow international agreements and cooperation with international communities such as WWF and UNESCO and local organizations. (Hemmi, J. 2005:96)

Especially in developing countries politics, laws and regulations are needed to promote national ownership of land and resources, enable entry to local markets and punish exploiting companies. The World Bank and the Asian Development bank have increased funding to sustainable tourism and improving relevant infrastructure. (Hemmi, J. 2005:97)

Since a more favorable environment was set by the government of Nepal for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil service organizations (CSOs) in 1990 the number of those has been increasing but there are suspicions that the government is still trying to limit organizations' operational framework (ICNL 2014). The government has recognized approximately 6,000 non-governmental organizations and the number is constantly growing. The estimated number of NGOs actually working in Nepal is over 15,000. (Visit Nepal 2012)

The national socioeconomic structure of Nepal is highly dependent on the role of NGOs. Local communities have established some NGOs but most of them are aided by foreigners and there are many international organizations working in the country as well. The NGOs are scattered in various sectors such as poverty alleviation and children's and women's rights. (Visit Nepal 2012) Foreign aid is the biggest contributor to national economy in Nepal. (Visit Nepal 2012. Nepal's NGOs)

In February 2014, there were 189 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) affiliated with the Social Welfare Council where INGOs are obligated to register in Nepal. (SWC 2014) In 2010 the total number of NGOs listed was 30,284. Out of those 88 works in the sector of AIDS and abuse control, 951 in child welfare, 18,625 in community and rural development, 492 in educational development, 1,318 in environmental development, 597 for handicapped and disabled, 703 in health services, 876 in moral development, 2,305 in women services and 4,321 in youth services. (SWC 2010)

Despite the fast growth of civil service organizations (CSOs) the operational environment makes the third sector very vulnerable to corruption and exploitation and in some cases the losses exceed the gains. Recent political situations and lack of transparency, security and compliance with law create an unstable environment. Democratic development and governments' commitment to their responsibility of human rights essentially require the involvement of CSOs and sustainable development cannot be reached without a firm civil society. (Act Alliance 2013)

According to a survey conducted by the Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) with Dan-ChurchAid in 2013 92.3% of CSO managers regarded the government's strategy regarding CSOs supportive. Main concern for CSOs in some parts of Nepal was lack of law and order which enables crime to happen without legal consequences. 72% of CSOs think they have improved their activities and effectiveness by 50% during the past five years. As many as 73% of the respondents do not feel safe working with their CSOs and that is especially with human rights activists. (Act Alliance 2013)

4.3.1 Registering an NGO in Nepal

In order to register an organization in Nepal seven or more citizens are needed to form the management committee. The committee's members' names along with the organization's name, address, objective and source of funding need to be handed to the Chief District Officer (CDO) of any of the 75 districts of Nepal. Registration requires annual renewal. Another option to send the documents to is the Social Welfare Council (SWC) which was set up to work under the government to facilitate organizational operations. For tax and other facilities required by the government registration in the SWC is needed. (Visit Nepal 2012)

For foreign CSOs in Nepal the registration body is SWC, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for associations the Ministry of Home Affairs and its district offices, CDOs. Foreign CSOs can form partnerships only with such Nepali CSOs which are registered in the SWC. Other barriers to foreign organizations are that they can implement projects only through local organizations or government agencies and they cannot use domestic sources for fundraising. Any kind of CSOs need to apply for a permission from the government to receive international volunteers, material or funding from abroad. The government restricts assemblies of over 25 people from everyone else besides citizens. (ICNL 2014)

Forming an association without registering it is against the Association Registration Act and all the committee members are punishable with a fine. Not submitting registration renewal annually is also subject to a fine. A foreigner cannot be a founding member of a Nepalese based organization or a member with the right to vote. Foreigners, and everyone else who does not possess a citizenship certificate, can only be honorary members of organizations. Foreign CSOs can only operate by implementing local CSOs' projects by entering project-specific agreements, which need to be approved by seven different ministries. (ICNL 2014)

The reasons for dissolution of an association are not clarified by the government of Nepal but it has free hands to decide upon it and it may lead to discrimination. Whether an association is dissolved forcibly or voluntarily, all the assets will be transferred to the government (ICNL 2014). On the contrary in Finland the association itself can decide to whom its funds and assets are transferred upon dissolution. (PRH 2011)
..

4.3.2 Sustainable community development in the Annapurna Conservation Area

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) is a non-governmental project set up in 1986, which includes environmental protection, education, health and increasing the level of living. The approximate amount of 80,000 trekkers annually creates pressure on the richest biodiversity in high altitudes in Nepal, and a population of 120,000 people. There is a trekking fee for every visitor to help maintaining forest management, schools, health clinics and other basic services in cooperation with local communities. (Insight guides. 2008:119)

The efforts of ACAP have revived oak and rhododendron forests and wildlife among other environmental successes. Promotion of poultry and vegetable farming has almost doubled the amount of money trekkers spend in the local economy compared to the percentage of 20 in 1987. Recently other actors such as the World Wide Fund for Nature have shown interest towards ACAP's formula of conservation. (Insight guides. 2008:119)

4.3.3 Sustainable community development in the district of Mugu, Nepal

A Finnish missionary Kirsti Kirjavainen worked in the villages of Mugu, Nepal during the years 1999-2006 (Perkiö, P. 2010:5). She worked there with 20 Nepali employees and 200 volunteers and in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Education and a local hospital. Through the government it is possible to affect on the functionality of maternity clinics, children's vaccinations, teachers' level of education, mapping the disabled and other similar work. Solely the government's input is not enough but also the work of non-governmental organizations is required. (Perkiö, P. 2010:12)

Education is the basis of sustainable development but it is important to take into account the local culture, skills and wisdom and not always bring them from somewhere outside. You should not for example bring selectively bred cattle into the villages of Mugu, because they will not survive in the hills, nor new grain breeds because they require new kind of fertilizer and regular watering. The type of knowledge the villagers and visitors have can be very different so exchange of knowledge is important. (Perkiö, P. 2010:15)

Sustainable development cannot be reached solely with money, skills and knowledge brought from outside. The local community needs to take part in the development from initial planning until final evaluation. In some villages they may have built new water pipes three times for free within 10 years. They have continuously broken due to poor and fast construction and lack of instructions and equipment to fix them. (Perkiö, P. 2010:16)

The development started from different things in different villages in Mugu. Somewhere it was a mill, somewhere a bridge or a literacy class, midwife education or vaccinations. Women prioritized giving birth because keeping their children alive is more important to them than being literate. (Perkiö, P. 2010:19) In five years they educated over 100 village midwives in cooperation with the state hospital and non-governmental organizations. (Perkiö, P. 2010:20)

5   Qualitative research

Quantitative research aims to be generalized, predictable and based on causal explanations while qualitative research aims to interpretation and understanding the subjects' perspectives. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006:22) Qualitative and quantitative methods of research are often considered as opposite methodologies although using the other one does not exclude the possibility to utilize the other method as well. Quantitative research is usually assimilated to so called form research in which the research data is structured into a particular pattern to enable statistical analysis. Qualitative research on the other hand is not tied to norms of empirical statistical research but it can utilize methodological conclusions derived from form research. (Alasuutari, P. 1999:32-33)

In quantitative research argumentation is done with the help of numbers and their systematic, statistical connections and it is put in a form of a table. The subjects of research are given certain numbers or other symbols and the analysis itself is searching for statistical connections between them. Form research is often similar to the research settings in the field of natural sciences. Because statistical analysis is based on explaining differences between the subjects of research the subjects need to be able to be differentiated. (Alasuutari, P. 1999:34-35)

In qualitative analysis the data is often thought as an entity and the research is to enlighten the structure of a singular logical wholeness. Even when the data is comprised of separate factors such as individual interviews the argumentation cannot be based on individual differences but rather it requires certain absoluteness. All perceptions that come up with the research must be explained so that they are not in contradiction with the conclusions, unlike in quantitative research where exceptions are allowed. Statistical approximations are not used in qualitative research and often it is restricted also by the number of subjects of research. Qualitative research is not done because resources are not sufficient to conduct quantitative analysis. A large number of subjects of research or statistical argumentation are not needed or possible in qualitative research. (Alasuutari, P. 1999: 38-39) Qualitative research should be used when the subject of research is about the meaning of behavior or patterns and its con-

text. The closer you get to the individual and situated activity, the more reason there is to use qualitative research methods. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006:27)

Qualitative research comprises of two phases; simplifying observations and solving a mystery. The separation can be only done analytically, though, because in practice these two phases are always interconnected. In simplifying observations the data is first of all researched from a particular theoretic-methodoligal perspective which is relevant to the research question but the data can still be researched from different points of view. Second part of simplifying observations is connecting similar observations into one group of observations. Connecting observations is based on the thought that the data includes examples of the same phenomenon. The individuals and their actions that are being the subject of research are perceived as variables of a particular form of action defined on a more general level. (Alasuutari, P. 1999:40-41)

The posing of research questions in qualitative research may change because exceptions are not allowed unlike in quantitative research. Differences between individuals and observations are important because they give clues about why something happens or what makes it understandable. Differentiations should be done in a careful manner; if there are plenty of differences and categories it is difficult to form a rule which explains them all. Thus it is important to assimilate observations into narrow groups of observations. (Alasuutari, P. 1999:42-43)

The second phase of qualitative research, solving a mystery, means interpretation of results. On the basis of produced clues and other available hints an interpretation is done about the phenomenon being researched. The reasons for exceptions in the research material do not need to be acknowledged by the research subject, for example an individual interviewee. When the simplified observations are used as clues, reference is made to other research and literature. Statistical analysis can also be a part of qualitative research to support the results derived from non-quantified material. Although simplified observations are the basis of analyzing the results the non-simplified raw data is also utilized to find clues to help form conclusions. (Alasuutari, P. 1999:46-47)

In ideographic research, for example researching a particular series of events, simplifying observations is not necessarily needed. Although sources can be somewhat similar and refer to same acts or events, sources provide different information, the trustworthiness and relevance of which vary. Also in ethnographic research the subjects are not perceived as each other's variables because different things are asked from different informants. The interviewees are not examined as similar individuals but representatives of different perspectives. Many versions can be conducted from the same research. Generalization reached through analyzing

similar subjects of research is not done by searching averages or typicalities but by changing the abstraction level. (Alasuutari, P. 1999:48-50)

Qualitative research acknowledges the interaction between the researcher and the subject of research. Thus all interviews for example are the result of cooperation. In quantitative research the researcher places himself in an etic position as an outsider and qualitative researcher in a participating, emic position. It is characteristic to qualitative research that the researcher is personally involved in the phenomenon being researched and tries to empathetically understand the situation. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006:23-24)

The theoretical framework can determine what kind of material should be collected or what kind of method of analysis should be used. In qualitative research it can also go the other way around so that the nature of the data sets limits to what kind theoretical frameworks and methods can be used. It is characteristic to qualitative research that phenomena are researched from different perspectives and seemingly clear points of view are problematized. The material should enable examination from different perspectives and not only through one methodology. (Alasuutari, P. 1999:83-84)

Qualitative research is based on an inductive process: it proceeds from individual observations into general ideas. It is interested in many simultaneously occurring actors which affect the results and it changes during research. It is tied to context as theories and patterns are developed in the hope of deeper understanding, and accuracy and credibility are reached through verification. Qualitative research acknowledges that the factors in research are complex, interconnected and difficult to measure. It initiates from very basic concepts which alter during research. Qualitative research examines developing emergences which it describes and the researcher himself is an instrument. Quantitative research studies parts, components and looks for a norm, while qualitative research looks for patterns and diversity. There is no essential connection between the method, the logic of the research, the type of conclusions and the sample procedure. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006:25-26)

5.1 Action research

Action research is a form of qualitative research which takes an in-depth look into development and changing situations. Its aim is to recognize ways to promote positive change, for example how to provide education for a whole community, and to detect barriers to development. Action research promotes the interaction of research from a distance and research on location as it goes beyond theoretical analysis but rather encourages the researcher to be a practitioner of the subject of his research. Evaluating change and how much we can affect

it is important especially when something new is tried to be implemented to bring about positive development. (Somekh 2006, 12)

Action research is a mix of research and action; researching change while being a part of it. It goes on flexibly and adapting to development and it goes even beyond the initiation and ending of the actual research. Action research is conducted through close interaction of researchers and participants. When researchers take part in their subject, they gain knowledge and understanding that cannot be reached from outside. Action researchers engage in their research with aims of social justice through moral acts. They hope to affect the change positively they are part-taking. Being a part of the process being researched brings added value in a form of increased reflectivity and sensitivity. The researcher's identity correlates with the personal and professional relationships established through the research. (Somekh 2006, 17-18)

Action research includes taking use of and testing all ready existing secondary data. Action research encourages a rational amount of skepticism through piloting pre-set assumptions of the field in question before taking them as facts. Using existing knowledge and comparing it and refining it with what is experienced in the current situation makes secondary data an integral part of the research analysis. Research combined with reflectivity gained through working in practice promotes deep learning and self-understanding as the researcher himself is a tool for research. Thus also personal values and attitudes need to be carefully assessed. Action research includes consideration of a broad context of political, historical and ideological issues. It is acknowledged that economic factors and international issues like globalization have their impact on human activity. (Somekh 2006, 19)

5.2   Primary data

The primary data consists of interviews conducted in Nepal between February 4th and April 28th. The researcher was working as a volunteer in a so called environment project which was a garden established to produce vegetables to an orphanage nearby and seedlings to the community. The volunteer period was arranged by an organization which was running both the gardening project and the nearby orphanage and the operations of which are highly dependent on coordinating volunteers. Face-to-face interviews with open questions seemed like the best way to get perceptions of first-hand experiences. The questions were intentionally posed in a quite general level to enable individuals' own ideas come through as much as possible.

To get a comprehensive view of how the local communities may benefit from volunteer tourism different stakeholders were interviewed. The interviewees include three people in mana-

gerial positions in non-governmental non-profit organizations in Nepal; a manager of an orphanage not coordinating volunteers and a country coordinator and a local project coordinator of a volunteer organization. Three employees in volunteer projects, including one teacher, one in charge of the practical duties in the orphanage and one in charge of the practicalities in the gardening project, were interviewed. Additionally two members of different host families providing food and accommodation to volunteers along with seven international volunteers were inquired.

The type of the interviews was half-structured which allowed the interviewees to answer in their own words. It is characteristic to half-structured methods that some aspects of the interview have been decided on but not all of them. The half-structured method is based on the focused interview method. Its characteristics are that the interviewees have experienced a certain situation and the researcher has already conducted preliminary research about the phenomenon which has determined some pre-assumptions. Then the structure of the interview is created and directed to subjective experiences. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006:47)

Some themes were embedded in the interview questions, such as volunteers' motives and expectations, community's involvement and volunteers' and NGOs' input. Themes which emerged in the answers were organizations' transparency, generation of employment and the significance of socio-cultural exchange. Similarly to half-structured methods all the questions were not tied to particular themes but were intentionally left open for personal insights to emerge. (Appendix 2: Interview Guide)

The sample was discretionary because instead of producing statistical generalizations qualitative research aims to deepen the understanding of a particular occurrence, gain information about a local phenomenon or to search new theoretic perspectives to occasions and phenomena. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006:59) The interviews were done on different hierarchic levels that emerged in this particular case of volunteer tourism to find out different perceptions about the possible development in the community. From one particular organization which the researcher also was affiliated with as a volunteer tourist one national level coordinator, one local level coordinator, three employees in different projects, two members of host families and seven volunteers were interviewed. Both the host families and the volunteers are "employed" by the volunteer organization running the projects although some volunteers came through other organizations.

Additionally one manager of another organization maintaining an orphanage and receiving volunteers but not coordinating them was interviewed. He was the only one not involved with any of the other interviewees. All the rest were somehow in contact with each other through their projects or positions. The only way the particular organization is affiliated with volun-

teer tourists is by being a receiving party and not by arranging their stay or being dependent on them.

All the volunteers originated from Western developed countries. Two came from Canada, one from the USA, one from Germany, one from New Zealand, one from Ireland and one from Denmark. In their home countries four of them were students, one was working as a tree planter, one as a teacher and one as an engineer of agricultural science. The primary projects of the three latter ones were related to their fields of expertise. Their ages varied from 18 to 53 and four of them were male and three female. All the rest, the employees, coordinators and managers and representatives of host families were Nepali and their ages were between 24 and 49 and five were males and two females.

The volunteers were affiliated with three different organizations that coordinate volunteers; two with the one running the projects the volunteers were taking part of, two with another one and three with another. All volunteers were taking part either primarily or secondarily in the so called environment conservation project which was a fruit and vegetable garden established to produce seedlings to villagers and vegetables to the nearby orphanage in which three volunteers were primarily working. One volunteer's primary work was as a teacher in a local school and three volunteers were working solely in the garden.

The interviewees can be divided into groups also by what or who they represent, as seen in the table below. (Table 2. Interviewees' positions) The volunteers and the host families can be seen to represent themselves individually, totaling to nine interviews, and the manager, the coordinators and the employees represent organizations, totaling to six interviews. This categorization is to point out the recognition of possible bias in the responses of the latter group.

Individuals	Number of interviews
Members of host families	2
Tourists volunteering through the case volunteer NGO	2
Tourists volunteering through other NGOs	5
Representatives of NGOs	
Coordinators	2
Managers	1
Project employees	3

Table 2. Interviewees' positions.

5.2.1   Volunteers' motives and expectations

Enhancing experiences by investigating tourists' expectations and perceptions of a successful tourism product is tourism research's primary aim. Thus to improve a certain tourism experience to match with pre-assumed positive expectations research should be done on the expectations. Understanding expectations is essential because the assessment of experience is framed within tourists' preconceptions. According to the expectancy theory such experiences which exceed or meet tourists' expectations are recollected positively. (Andereck, K. 2011)

Besides being guidelines for NGOs to make their projects attractive to volunteers the motives to become a volunteer also determine the manner how the work is carried out. As responsible actions on the tourist's part are a vital component of a successful sustainable tourism development program the motives behind those actions influence the potential of volunteer tourism to contribute to sustainable community development.

The seven volunteers' expectations about their volunteer period were mainly related to practicalities, like the physical environment and the contents of their work. One volunteer was expecting the place to be less developed and in need of acute help and another one expected to be working solely in the orphanage and not in the garden. Volunteers in the orphanage were placed in the garden project during daytime when the children were at school.

Two of the volunteers did not feel that they had particular expectations and thus could not analyze whether their expectations were met. Two respondents felt that the period had so far exceeded their expectations. One expected to experience a different culture and way of living and be of help in the host community and she felt that her practical input is making a small difference. The other had different expectations about the contents of her work but considered the manner things were practiced a good solution in the end and felt her expectations had been exceeded. Two respondents who felt their expectations were met were expecting to simply come and help. The other one added that on the part of the host family his expectations were exceeded. Only one volunteer did not feel her expectations were fully met. She was expecting their time would be used effectively and that their personal expertise would be utilized but instead she felt that professionalism was going to waste. She also pointed out that proper utilization of each volunteer's personal expertise might be difficult to execute unless the project is tailor-made.

Four volunteers mentioned travel as their motive to volunteer. All seven volunteers were motivated by altruistic reasons described in various ways; helping, being productive or giving something back. Three volunteers mentioned experiencing something different or adventure as their motivator. Three others pointed out personal reasons like working for future career

prospects or spending a gap year. One collecting a donation beforehand in his country to be spent in the projects in Nepal wanted to make sure where the money was going. One volunteer was motivated by the project itself as the concept of the gardening project he was taking part in was of his interest and personal field of expertise.

5.2.2   Community's involvement

When the volunteers were asked do they feel that the local community is involved enough in the project planning, implementation and development they gave varied answers but all seemed to recognize the community's practical involvement only through home-stays and/or being employed in the projects. Four of the volunteers were certain that the involvement of the community is sufficient even through housing and working in the garden and the orphanage. One expressed her worry about late notice given to host families about volunteers' arrival and length of stay and one was doubtful whether taking part in home-stay makes them actually involved in the project. Only one volunteer's response was clearly leaning towards a negative answer and she described the locals seeing the project very separate from them. She told there had been no contact with the community besides with the respective host family. Similarly to studies conducted on the topic she was worried that volunteers are taking work away from locals and pointed out that the whole volunteering situation should create a feeling of partnership with the community.

A local employee who was in charge of the garden felt that the community is involved enough in the project in the manner things are done; people from the community can get plants and seedlings and they do not have to work or give anything else in exchange. Additionally information is given to community in free training sessions. Nothing referable to exchange of ideas was pointed out. Also another local employee, the manager of the orphanage related to the gardening project, saw the involvement in giving seedlings and plants to the community. Besides that and the community supporting the orphans socially by teaching how to speak politely no other way of involvement was mentioned. Another local employee who taught Nepali to volunteers described the involvement by telling about the employment brought to locals through the organization's projects in various fields, for example to farmers at the gardening project site, and also through accommodating volunteers.

The country coordinator told that the involvement of the community is in the level of implementing projects. The board of the organization plans the projects and proceeds to implementation after discussing with the community. The communities where projects are implemented are chosen basically according to volunteers' safety, which is the priority. Locations also depend on the need of people, he told. According to the local coordinator the community does not take part in planning, implementing and developing the projects but their ideas are

always welcome. Although also the implementation phase was neglected by the latter respondent it is clear that some local people are employed in the projects.

The country coordinator told that the measure they use to assess the communities' level of satisfaction is by being together. They help each other financially and emotionally, he stated. Feedback is collected after every project from each participant, meaning volunteers. According to him it is taken very seriously and utilized to develop their projects and methods of work. The local communities' satisfaction concerning the projects is not evaluated for example through feedback or group discussion, he told. The local coordinator on the other hand described that they sometimes organize group meetings with the target group from the community and discuss the benefits brought to the community by the organization's projects.

5.2.3 Volunteers' contribution

Five out of seven volunteers felt that they have contributed to the local community's development. Two of them told that their contribution is mostly financial and three mentioned also improving villagers' English as a form of their contribution. One felt that she is helping a little also through the practical work at the projects. One volunteer pointed out cultural exchange as a way of contributing; sharing for example how things work in her county without corruption.

Two of the volunteers had also given a donation to the organization which they had collected in their country and one told that if she was not there seeing where the money is going there would not have been a donation at all. The other volunteer who took part in the beforehand-raised donation explained that there is no long-term contribution, only short-term impacts through the goods that were bought with the donation. The donation was implemented so that both volunteers participating in raising funds were told to raise 500 pounds each. The organization set up a website which was distributed among friends who could voluntarily donate their preferred amount of money. They raised double the amount first intended totaling to 2000 pounds. 100 pounds was held as administrative costs in Kathmandu and the rest was spent according to the volunteers' preference. The donation was invested in 80 jumpers, 160 copy books, approximately 100 pencils for a school, a wheelbarrow, tools and fertilizers for the garden and gas cookers, windows, doors, pots and tuition fees for three months for 20 children in a private school for the orphanage.

Two of the volunteers did not feel that they have contributed to the community's development. One felt that his contribution does not affect the community but only his host family. They get short-time help when the volunteer aids financially for example with groceries. The

other explained that he does not see that any development is happening through his input but he is only giving a helping hand.

When the volunteers were asked what they think is their most valuable input concerning the community five of them mentioned money which they give out in the form of the project fee and through shopping in local stores. Two of them mentioned learning English as another valuable form of contribution and one added also the practical work he is carrying out. Three volunteers mentioned social and cultural aspects; social and cultural exchange, respecting the local culture and traditions, positive representation of the West and just getting involved and expressing interest and will to learn the local community's way of life. One who mentioned money as the most valuable input explained that there is simply not enough time to provide a proper input besides financial aid. Making a real change would require a lot of time if it would be possible even then, he told.

When the volunteers were asked do they feel that they have made a difference by volunteering all of them gave some idea of at least a little bit of positive change. Two were clearly more negative than others; one who was also taking part in raising funds did not feel he had made a difference besides maybe a little bit in the form of the donation but carried out no actions with long-lasting difference. Another volunteer felt that he as an individual has not made a difference but the organization implementing the projects certainly has. Still he mentioned that he has maybe reinforced change by spending money in local shops in the village and to help his host family. He felt that he is just a part of a constant flow of volunteers and as an individual he could not give anything that anyone else could not.

Five volunteers were more certain about their contribution to positive change and two of them clearly most optimistic. One believed that every volunteer makes a small difference and that the development in the village is thanks to many volunteers coming. Concerning the orphanage she feels she has made a difference by bonding with and teaching the children. Additionally she mentions the practical work and that at least a little more work gets done with her being there. Another volunteer certain about having made a difference also pointed out that being there as another pair of helping hands contributes to change.

Also the other volunteer who took part in collecting the donation felt that she has made a difference partly in the form of the donation. Additionally she mentioned positive attitudes among locals towards volunteers' home countries if they are friendly and well-behaved. Still she felt that her stay there did not make as much difference as she hoped. Another volunteer said doubtingly that she has made a little bit of difference. Not so much in the orphanage which was her primary project as the children were so used to volunteers but she felt it was nice to see where the money from her project fee was going.

One volunteer told the way he was making a difference was different from what he initially thought. He was expecting less development and thus being maybe able to contribute more in practice but rather he felt he had made more difference regarding his host family and other people he had acquainted. He also mentioned cultural exchange as in sharing how things are in his country and just by being a friend he felt like contributing most. But nothing would change and things would go normally whether he was there or not, he told. He believed that to a certain extent the money that goes to the project makes a difference but as a pair of hands he does not bring about any long-lasting impression.

According to the country coordinator the volunteers' most valuable input concerning the local communities is their skills and expertise. Their helping hand and the experiences they share helps bringing a small change in the communities. In the local coordinator's opinion their most valuable input is cross-cultural exchange, economic benefit, developing friendships and sharing their knowledge about the environment and community development, for example how to separate and recycle waste.

In the opinion of the local employee in charge of the garden the volunteers support the community in many ways. Their host families get money and their practical work growing vegetables is also a valuable input, he explained. If volunteers would not come there would be no source to pay for salaries. He mentioned that if volunteers would not come maybe local people would get jobs but that is not an important thing according to him.

The volunteers' most valuable input according to the teacher is the knowledge they share with the communities. Rural and urban areas are very different; in the rural side it is naturally rich but people do not know how to farm and they need lots of education, he described. When volunteers come, they can teach about business and farming and make a change. People are enthusiastic to do things but they lack the skills and by establishing relations and giving ideas volunteers contribute to change and development. Additionally people in Nepal are not well equipped technically so volunteers can share valuable knowledge on computers, for example.

The volunteers help the children to survive, the local employee in charge of the volunteer organization's orphanage told. They provide them with healthy food and education, they help in the kitchen and teach the children. Volunteers are important there in her opinion also regarding cultural exchange. According to the manager of the other orphanage the volunteers' most valuable input concerning the orphanage is that they teach the children how to do daily basic things, how the society is and how they can survive. The children get the opportunity to interact with different people and with a different world. The organization does not receive

funds even from volunteers. It is funded from the managers' personal sources. The volunteers provide basic things such as clothes and things they are lacking but not money and neither does the government or the municipality, he told.

5.2.4   The role of NGOs

One potential way of contributing to the community's development is through the project fee collected from volunteers by their respective organizations. The amount of actual contribution depends on the allocation of the fee. After expenses like accommodation and staff salaries are deducted, it is up to the organization's decision how much of the remaining amount is used for development projects or hidden as administrative costs. Especially in a country like Nepal where both organizations and volunteers criticize the facility of abusing funds meant for altruistic purposes it is difficult to detect trustworthy organizations. Additionally some of the government bodies regard NGOs exploitative towards the prevailing social conditions, which is why 61.5% of CSO leaders feel they have sometimes been publically defamed by the government. (Act Alliance 2014)

As according to location-tied action research the questionnaire for volunteers was revised once due to a change in the atmosphere towards doubtfulness of ethical allocation of volunteers' project fees. None of the five volunteers that were interviewed about the fees had experienced any concrete abuse but only one of them knew how the project fee is allocated. Out of the four volunteers who were not clear about how the money is spent two believed that the information would be available but difficult to acquire. Three volunteers, who were happy with the transparency of their organization, were involved with the same volunteer organization and two who hoped for more transparency with how their money is spent were involved with another one. The latter two also doubted easy availability of information about the project fee allocation.

When the country coordinator of the volunteer organization was inquired on how does the organization contribute to sustainable community development he told through volunteers. The organization does not get any funding so its operations are solely based on volunteers' donations. Another important contribution they make are annual construction projects which they are committed to implement and they have already completed building nine schools and two orphanages. Additionally they give financial aid in case of for example natural disasters and implement health awareness camps to local communities which are attended also by volunteers studying medicine.

The local coordinator assisting the volunteer program and supervising he orphanage in the same place where the interviewed volunteers were working described that their contribution

to sustainable community development comes about in the environmental sector and the development of child rights. Concerning the environment their focus is to raise awareness about sustainable environmental protection in the communities. Concerning children they want to make helpless ones self-sufficient.

When asked how they assess the success of the organization's contribution to sustainable community development the country coordinator told that in the annual meeting the board of the organization gets together and sees what they have done and what is the future plan for the next year. He mentioned that in the meetings they also see what level of benefit the communities have gained from their projects. The local coordinator tells that the assessment is done by monitoring changes in the community through the project periods. According to him monitoring is done through observation and sometimes through group discussion.

The country coordinator told that the annual construction projects are the organization's most valuable input. They mainly construct schools so they give the children in the communities a place to get educated. Additionally they make a valuable contribution by placing volunteers in different projects. Volunteers' time and money are a big contribution to the communities and they are the main factor in making a difference in the society, he told. When the local coordinator was asked about the organization's most valuable input he stated that the volunteer program has direct influence on the community. Through the program the community gets the opportunity to learn about foreign cultures and share information about their own. He also mentioned that the community benefits economically from the volunteer program and it brings employment opportunities to local people.

The local employee in charge of the garden feels that the organization contributes to sustainable community development. Directly it happens through distributing tree and vegetable seedlings to the community because they cannot grow them themselves but then they can plant and harvest them. According to him they distribute 15,000-20,000 tree seedlings and 300 vegetable seedlings to 300 people annually. The seedlings are for free and anyone from the community can come and get them. He suggested that it would be better to give training to the community on how to produce special products like mushrooms and honey. Sometimes they give training on for example how to make a compost and grow vegetables.

The manager of the NGO running an orphanage and receiving but not coordinating volunteers described his organization's contribution to sustainable community development so that if other people know about his organization, they may get inspired to help others as well and again maybe ten more children could be saved. In his opinion their most valuable input is giving the chance to life to abandoned children. The local employee in charge of the orphanage run by the volunteer organization does not feel that the orphanage project exactly works in

the community. They bring such children there who do not get food, shelter, education or medication and try to help them and develop their education. The most valuable input is teaching the children how to survive and providing them with education to improve their lives, she described.

The local employee working as a language teacher told the organization's contribution occurs through social programs, education, orphanages, farming and health care. When it was established in the same place the projects referred to in this thesis took place it was ruled by people in the community and its aim was to promote development. The village used to be very poor and underdeveloped but thanks to the organization now there is a school, education, conservation and volunteers working in the garden and teaching monks. He pointed out the importance of teaching English and concerning the orphanage he felt that volunteers contribute when they give love and make friends with the children. He told the organization gives the communities an opportunity to develop. There are many organizations like theirs working in various sectors, some for social causes and some for profit but no one could do anything to promote positive change without volunteers, he believed.

5.2.5   Home-stays

In this particular case home-stays are an integral part in arranging the volunteer periods as they are the only means of providing accommodation to volunteers through the organization. All the volunteers interviewed for the thesis were living with local families. Home-stay has value in itself as it enables visitors to see and adapt to an authentic way of living like locals and thus brings about more profound involvement in the culture and understanding.

Home-stay as a form of tourism falls under the category of community-based tourism. In the concept of home-stay visitors usually engage in daily activities of the host family. They learn how life is like in the host culture and similarly the visitors can bring new knowledge from their own cultures and social and cultural exchange and learning happens. There are many sides to the interaction happening between the receiving and the visiting party in an experience-based exchange. (Musa, G. 2010, 26)

Two members of different host families who were given the opportunity to take part in home-stay by the same NGO implementing volunteer projects in their rural village were interviewed. The other respondent had been providing home-stay accommodation for twelve years in a house inhabited by five members including parents and three children and the other one for seven years in a house of ten people including family members from three generations. Both of the respondents were farmers by occupation and the one having take part longer was

also in charge of the gardening project. The host families get financial compensation from the NGO for accommodating and feeding volunteers.

When they were asked about the benefits they get by offering home-stay to volunteers both pointed out learning English as the only practical benefit. The respondent with twelve years of experience stated that he did not speak English at all before taking part in the program. Economically it is better than nothing, he told. If the family needs to buy all ingredients for cooking it is not profitable but if they grow food themselves it may turn in a profit. The other one denied economic profitability and said that volunteers contribute in other ways, like buying something for the house if something is broken.

Regardless of the amount of economic value both respondents appreciate the aspect of learning. The other respondent told he is happy to have volunteers because it enables both parties, the family and the volunteer, to learn about culture and language from each other. Both of them are happy with the NGO through which they are participating in home-stay and they do not feel that anything should be done differently. The other one was unable to reply how he feels about his involvement in planning, implementing and developing home-stay. The other one saw the involvement in being informed 1-2 days before volunteers arrive, which she felt is sufficient.

The host family members gave opposite answers when asked do they feel that the projects, meaning the orphanage and the gardening project, contribute to the local community's development. Understandably they have different perceptions about it as the other one had been employed in the gardening project for thirteen years and the other one's relation to the project is through their shared environment. The one being employed both through the project and the home-stay program felt that the projects contribute to the community's development. He told that the benefits for the community cannot be seen in a short time but in long-term they are visible. He repeated that having the projects there is better than nothing. Without the organization they would not have the orphanage, the garden, a school or medication there. The other respondent felt that nothing is done in the community by the projects. The community members get small things, like a football, from the project site when they go there to play. The family gets weeds from the garden to feed their cows and buffalos but they give milk in exchange.

The home-stay opportunity is available to all families who wish to take part in it. The other member of a host family described the process so that the family who expresses willingness to take volunteers is given guidance about what volunteers need, for example boiled water and toilet. There are about 15 host families in the village and volunteers go to the house which is empty first and the families take turns in accommodating them.

6   Conclusions & suggestions

Although all the volunteers are in very similar situations and carrying out work in same pro-
jects and having similar experiences in the community they are temporarily habiting and shar-
ing their perceptions vary considerably. Their practical contribution to the community's de-
velopment is approximately the same but they have very different feelings about it. When
assessing volunteer tourism's potential to reinforce positive development it should be consid-
ered that who and on what arguments defines development. The local community being the
object of change definitely knows best what is needed in its own area but whether their opin-
ions and ideas are heard is a different issue.

Besides mentioning that the situation should be like in a partnership no one expressed any
expectations for either the local community or the organization implementing the projects to
deepen the involvement although research shows that sustainable community development
requires community's involvement in the whole process of planning, implementing and devel-
oping projects. The sufficiency of involvement was questioned only by one volunteer and not
by anyone from the local community. Although the involvement seemed to comprise of mere
practical participation in the projects and not of conversational assessment and exchange of
ideas all stakeholders seemed satisfied with the situation. Neglecting community's active in-
volvement is in contradiction with research about sustainable community development. It
raises a question of whether the community is unaware of the importance of their participa-
tion in community development projects or skeptical about the positive outcome of their par-
ticipation or unbelieving about their ability to take part. Nevertheless the responsibility of
involving the local community is upon NGOs and it can be reinforced by government bodies
through incentives, acts and regulations.

According to the primary data the volunteers appreciate transparency, not only concerning
financial issues but also providing other practical information. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
in Nepal has had meetings with government bodies on how to make foreign funding of inter-
national CSOs more transparent and many regulatory initiatives are currently pending. Since
2012 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) have been obligated to register in
the Aid Management Platform at the Ministry of Finance. (ICNL 2014)

Volunteer tourism has lots of potential to contribute to sustainable community development.
As seen in the primary data, some NGOs are solely dependent on volunteers' financial contri-
bution and in this sense volunteers are vital especially in a country like Nepal where govern-
ment bodies do not give financial support to NGOs' activities. Without volunteers many NGOs
would be unable to run their community development projects. The quantity and quality of

the contribution depends on many aspects; the relevance of the project to the community, the actual need for helping hands and financial contribution and all tangible and intangible things volunteers provide to the respective community.

Important forms of contribution on behalf of volunteer tourists indicated in the primary and secondary data are mainly economic and socio-cultural. Inevitably economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues interact and for example environmental sustainability can be reinforced through exchange of knowledge. Besides NGOs other factors influencing volunteers' economic contribution are the selection of goods and services available and personal choices. If goods and services in the respective area are produced by locals volunteers' money will circulate in the local economy reinforcing economic sustainability. If the selection is vast and the volunteers have the choice to purchase imported or externally owned products personal consideration becomes a key factor.

Social and cultural exchange and sharing knowledge are vital components in volunteer tourism's contribution to sustainable community development. In the primary data socio-cultural contribution was appreciated by all stakeholders even if volunteering would be economically unbeneficial and even if the practical work carried out would not make a difference in the community. Teaching English and sharing knowledge about recycling, for example, are important intangible contributions that are vital to development in a modern world but difficult to measure. Already mere showing of respect towards other culture and way of living can promote cultural self-esteem and conserve traditions and other intangible heritage.

Creating employment opportunities is very important currently both globally and in Nepal. The government of Nepal has made it an important objective and they believe that tourism as a labor-intensive industry can promote employment. The benefits of volunteer tourism in this regard are unclear. As noted in both secondary and primary data, volunteer tourism can take jobs from locals, but it can also be a means of creating them. The situation can be very complicated like in the example of the gardening project. The project employs local people and it would not exist without volunteers' financial contribution. Without volunteers more local people could possibly be employed, but the project employing locals could not be implemented and maintained without volunteers.

Additionally to the results obtained when collecting the primary data there are several issues which are important to be considered concerning volunteer tourism in Nepal. The apparent need for development calls for foreign aid but the government makes it complicated to receive help from international volunteer tourists and foreign NGOs. The environment for locally run NGOs is more favorable for egoistic business than altruistic development efforts.

NGOs in Nepal do not get any funding from the municipalities and governments and there is no proper body monitoring the source and use of their funding. Organizational operations are very vulnerable to corruption and misuse of assets. The assessment of organizations' authenticity is brought upon individuals. Proper assessment from a distance is difficult to execute and possible abuse is likely to be identified only when being on location if even then. Transparency should be encouraged by the government for example by establishing an official body to monitor income flows and allocation. Laws and regulations or even guidelines should be set up to direct NGOs' funds into intended purposes and to prevent exploitation of funders', including volunteers', donations. Enhanced trustworthiness and transparency would have increasing impact on the amount of international volunteers and donations and investments coming from foreign sources.

Although foreign investments play an important role in the development of Nepal's national economy the government is prioritizing only business investments while it is making it difficult for foreign NGOs to work in Nepal. The Association Act poses many barriers to foreign charity and other organizations by limiting the freedom of association, collection of funds and independent implementation of projects. In a developing country like Nepal NGOs play an important role in development so the way the government complicates receiving aid from foreign NGOs is very contradictory. It is likely that the limitations are set to prevent exploitation of prevailing social conditions but rather than restricting NGOs to work at all it would be better to focus efforts on promoting transparency of both national and foreign NGOs.

The government also complicates the reception of international volunteers. According to an immigration officer at the Embassy of Finland in Kathmandu officials of Nepal prohibit working, including volunteering, on tourist visa but getting a volunteer visa is difficult or nearly impossible. Organizations know this fact and thus advice their international volunteers to apply for tourist visa. The representative office is not aware about cases when people volunteering on tourist visa would have got into trouble but still it is not allowed by officials in Nepal. This means that every foreign person volunteering in Nepal is obligated to break the national law.

The amount of volunteers is not known as the government does not collect statistics about volunteering. If volunteering was made simpler the government could collect information about volunteers for example through volunteer visa applications and utilize the data in assessing the impacts of volunteer tourism and the operational and geographical scope of volunteer organizations. The government has put emphasis on development of community-based tourism so researching the impacts of volunteer tourism would be beneficial in planning efficient means for sustainable development.

At the moment when there is no official body monitoring organizations' operations and finance the responsibility of assessing volunteer organizations' authenticity and legitimacy falls upon the volunteers. Guidelines to spot fake or untrustworthy NGOs are available but it is very difficult especially without previous experience about international volunteering. Volunteering through an irresponsible organization can cause more damage than gain. The need for NGOs in coordinating volunteer stays can be questioned although it facilitates arrangements and gives a certain sense of security and support. Some may argue that paying to volunteer in the first place fights against the fundamental notion of volunteering and it should not be encouraged.

Major obstacles for the nation's overall development seem to be the unequal concentration of current development, unequal division of income and insufficient public governance regarding compliance with law and general ethics. Lack of education to the increasing population limits the potential of communities' self-sufficiency and independency to implement favorable development. Volunteer tourism can contribute to solving these problems but fundamentally the solution lies in political decisions.

Regarding everything else besides drinking water and electricity it seems that development concerning government's facilities is more needed in the rural areas of Nepal. As suggested by researchers it would be beneficial to focus development efforts in rural underdeveloped areas according to community's needs. The government has made plans to equalize development geographically by attracting investments into rural and remote areas. That is the only concrete means they lined out which gives an impression of leaving the responsibility of comprehensive development to the private sector. Division of income can be equalized for example through taxation. Progressive taxation according to income levels alleviates economic segregation when the richest percentage gives more to common welfare than the poorest who are struggling to maintain even their own livelihoods.

Efforts of private sector are unlikely to be sufficient so public governance should be included in developing rural and remote areas. Cooperation in developing remote communities could also be a means to improve the partnership between the private and public sector, which the government has outlined as a weakness. Sustainable community development projects that utilize volunteers usually take place in undeveloped rural areas where the need for development is apparent so volunteer tourism can be a useful tool in equalizing the benefits of development. NGOs decide upon the locations of projects which are much influenced by volunteers' expectations and motivations which are not necessarily aligned with communities' needs. Besides offering incentives to private sector entrepreneurs to work in remote and rural areas the government could do the same with the third sector for example by engaging in funding projects that take place in the least developed areas.

In the end a lot of the amount of volunteer tourism's potential contribution depends on individuals' personal choices and motives whether they represent organizations, businesses or only themselves as volunteer tourists. To get the most out of a successful volunteer project the location should be carefully considered and the local community should be involved and able to benefit from it, which also promotes engagement. The pros and cons of a project should be realistically weighed and it should be made sure that the gains exceed losses. The government is an important factor influencing the potential of volunteer tourism. It sets up the frame for NGOs to operate and can direct the mode of development through legislation and incentives.

7   Reliability, validity & assessment

Reliability means that the measurement and the research results are consistent and repeatable. The same results need to be obtained if the research is repeated for it to be reliable. Validity means that has the research succeeded to answer the preset questions or that it is truthful. The terms apply better to quantitative than qualitative research as they are connected to natural sciences. (Kananen, J. 2011, 66)

Consistent interpretation augments the reliability of a research. The same data should be able to be interpreted from several points of view. Themes and coding may be different but results ought to be the same by different researchers. (Kananen, J. 2011, 67) Reliability and validity in qualitative research can be defined as trustworthiness. It can be confirmed with credibility, fittingness, auditability and confirmability. (Morse, J. 2002, 5)

The concepts of reliability and validity are based on the thought that the researcher is able to reach an objective reality and an objective truth. It can be argued that the results cannot be the same in repeated research situations because they are derived from different conditions. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006, 185) Internal validity refers to the truthfulness of the research results and external validity means ability to generalize the results into different situations. (Hirsjärvi, S. 2006, 188)

The sample used in the primary data is merely a scratch on the surface of the insights and viewpoints of different stakeholders on volunteer tourism and sustainable community development. The intended idea of acquiring a vast array of perceptions by interviewing a small number of people in many different positions turned out to be difficult to analyze. Different questions posed to different stakeholders complicated narrowing the results into coherent groups. On the other hand this enabled the interviewees' own perceptions to come out more and thus increase the objectivity of the research.

Not focusing on any specific component of sustainable community development, for example home-stays, also brought upon complications in the analysis. Posing general open questions gives lots of room to the respondents' own ideas but makes it difficult to assimilate the responses. It can be found fruitful as well as it directs the research authentically into ideas that stakeholders consider relevant without preset assumptions. Although connections were found both within the primary data and with secondary data the results should be considered as examples of individual experiences. The research emphasizes consideration of differences in communities, organizations and volunteers in order to successfully implement a sustainable community development project. Projects should be specifically designed to their particular socio-cultural, economic and natural environments and adjusted to the resources available.

It is possible that the part of the sample which represented organizations as managers, coordinators and employees have not responded giving their own ideas but something they are supposed to say regarding their positions. Biased responses are quite likely when considering the partly contradictory answers the coordinators gave. Additionally the position of the researcher as a volunteer may have had influence on the responses given by the respective volunteer organization.

The thesis research has been very challenging and instead of going according to plans it has taught valuable lessons. The scope of the topic changed many times adapting to changes and new emerging ideas in the lived environment. A carefully specified topic and a more carefully considered research plan would have facilitated the thesis process but letting it live in the moment enabled concrete examples of some contradictions and problems concerning volunteer tourism in Nepal to emerge.

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Figures

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Tables

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Table 2. Interviewees' positions.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Lincoln School. 2013. Payment of Tuition and Fees 2013-2014.

Lincoln School

Payment of Tuition and Fees
2013-2014

Lincoln School is a non-profit organization, funded primarily through tuition. Supplies and staff are committed one year in advance, thus tuition and fees are expected to be paid in advance for the full year.

Tuition and Fees:

Annual Tuition

Pre-School	$ 6,040
Elementary School	$ 17,095
Middle School	$ 18,860
High School	$ 20,775

One-time Fees at Enrollment				**Annual Fees**			
Application Fee	PS	$	100	Annual Capital Fee	P1-12	$	800
Application Fee	P1-12	$	450	Transportation Fee	PS-12	$	980
New Student Capital Fee	P1-12	$	6,500	Senior Fee	12	$	120

Payments:

Tuition and fees must be paid for the full year by August 31 or within one week of enrollment unless an installment plan is granted. Capital and application fees are payable in full regardless of enrollment date during the year.

The minimum term of billing for a newly enrolled student should be one semester (two quarters), except for those who enter in the fourth quarter, who will be billed for one quarter only.

Installment Plan:

Based on need, installment payments for tuition may only be granted upon written request to the Business Office with approval by the Director. In order to qualify for a payment plan, the installment fee must be paid with the first installment payment. Application Fee, Capital Fees, Transportation Fee, and Senior Fee are also to be paid in full with the first installment.

Installment plan options:
- 5 months plan, all tuition and fees to be paid by December 15. Installment fee $250.
- 8 months plan, all tuition and fees to be paid by March 15. Installment fee $350.

Important to Note:

If a required payment, i.e. full tuition or approved installment plan payment is delinquent by more than 60 days or 30 days after March 15 the student will not be allowed to attend class before the outstanding payment has been cleared. Student records, including report cards, will not be released until payment is made.

Transportation:

Upon payment of a transportation fee, the School shall make transportation available to families who want their children to ride a school bus to and from School. However, if a location is unreasonable, inconvenient, too distant, or uneconomical, the service may not be feasible. Please inform the Transportation Office for cancellation of bus services.

How to Pay:

Payments to be made in USD
- By check drawn on a US bank account
- Direct wire/deposit to Lincoln School's US bank account (All bank charges to be paid by the parent)
- Nepali nationals have the option of paying in Nepali Rupees by check.

Receipts are issued against payment of all tuition and fees. Checks are to be made payable to: **Lincoln School.**
Please notify the Business Office of all direct bank transfers.

For Direct Wire/Deposits:
Please mention your name and details in the transfer and send a copy of transfer verification to our Business Office.

Incoming Domestic Wires	
(US based account to US based account)	
Beneficiary Name	Lincoln School Association
Beneficiary Address	Kathmandu (LS), Dept of State Washington D.C. 20521-6190
Account Number	427 447 2912
Bank	TD BANK Wilmington, Delaware
ABA#	031101266

Incoming International Wires	
(Non-US based account to US based account)	
Beneficiary Name	Lincoln School Association
Beneficiary Address	Kathmandu (LS), Dept of State Washington D.C. 20521-6190
Account Number	427 447 2912
Bank	TD BANK Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Swift Code	TDOMCATTTOR
For further credit to	TD Bank NA Wilmington, Delaware
Swift Code	NRTHUS33XXX

Any other payment arrangement must be discussed with the Business Office.

Refunds:

Refunds for early withdrawal are voluntary by the School and presuppose normal family transfer. Any large number of withdrawals, for which compensating admissions are not expected, may require the School to suspend all payments for early refunds. In case of a *force majeure* no refunds will be given.

Refunds may be obtained for tuition and transportation fees only. Refunds may be given only for quarters not attended when students depart school permanently.

Refunds will be made by check and only to the person or organization that originally paid the tuition and fees. Interest will be non-refundable.

LINCOLN SCHOOL
P.O. Box 2673 Rabi Bhawan, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4 270 482, 4 270 603   Fax: 977 1 4 272 685
http://www.lsnepal.com

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Questions to coordinators:

- How does the organization contribute to sustainable community development?
- How do you assess the success of the organization's contribution to community development?
- How do you choose the communities where projects are implemented?
- What do you think is the organization's most valuable input concerning the local communities?
- What do you think is the volunteers' most valuable input concerning the local communities?
- Do you feel that the benefits are equally available to all members of the communities?
- How are the local communities involved in the project planning, implementation and development?
- What measures do you use to assess the communities' level of satisfaction?
- What does the volunteers' project fee comprise of?
- How much of the project fee goes directly to the host families and the projects?

Questions to host family members:

- How do you benefit from offering home-stay to volunteers?
- Is it economically profitable to have volunteers at your house?
- Are you happy with your employer organization?
- Do you feel that something should be done differently?
- Do you feel that you are involved enough in planning, implementing and developing home-stay?
- Do you feel that the projects contribute to the local community's development? How?
- Do you feel that the benefits are equally available to all members of the community?

Questions to the orphanage manager:

- What is the basic concept of the organization?
- How does the organization contribute to sustainable community development?
- What do you think is the organization's most valuable input concerning the local community?
- What do you think is the volunteers' most valuable input concerning the orphanage?
- How do you choose the children who are taken into the orphanage? Do all orphans have equal opportunities to be taken into the orphanage? What is the capacity?
- How is the orphanage funded?
- Do volunteers take part in funding the orphanage?
- Does the government or the municipality support the organization in any way?
- What measures do you use to assess the children's and the employees' level of satisfaction?

Questions to project employees:

- How does the project contribute to the local community's development?
- What do you think is the project's most valuable input concerning the local community?
- What do you think is the volunteers' most valuable input concerning the local community?
- How is the project funded?

- Do you feel that something should be done differently?
- Do you feel that the local community is involved enough in the project planning, implementation and development?
- Do you feel that you yourself are involved enough in the project planning, implementation and development?
- Do you feel that the benefits are equally available to all members of the community?

Questions to volunteers:

- What motivated you to become a volunteer?
- What were your expectations about volunteering in this project?
- Has the volunteering period met your expectations?
- Do you feel that you have made a difference by volunteering?
- Are you happy with your volunteer organization?
- Do you feel that something should have been done differently?
- Do you feel that you have contributed to the local community's development? How?
- What do you think is your most valuable input concerning the local community?
- Do you feel that the local community is involved enough in the project planning, implementation and development?

  Additional questions posed only to some volunteers:

- Do you think your organization's operational framework is transparent enough?
- Do you know how your project fee is spent?
  - If yes: Are you comfortable with it or should something be done differently?
  - If no: Would you like to know and do you think the information could be easily acquired?
- Have you received contradictory information about payment methods?