

YORK UNIVERSITY
Faculty of Environmental Studies
Major Project

Title of Major Project: STEWARDS OF PARADISE: TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TO EMPOWER INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

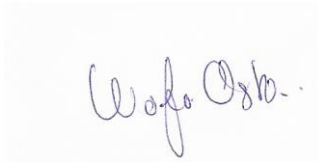
Student: Wafaa El Osta

Supervisor: Felipe Montoya Greenheck

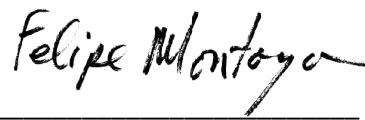
Date of submission; April 10, 2015, edited May 5, 2015

Report of a Major Project submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies, York University Ontario, Canada;

Student Signature _____



Supervisor Signature _____



STEWARDS OF PARADISE: TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TO EMPOWER INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES

This paper lays out findings from participatory field research conducted in July and August 2014, and presents an action-oriented plan, which illustrates the prospective positive impacts of sustainable tourism, beyond economic benefits. It suggests community engagement in a collective initiative, and networking to develop linkages across the tourism industry. The paper proposes an application of the concept of sustainable tourism as a development alternative, in favor of community empowerment.

FOREWORD

This paper arises from a deep interest in the association of sustainable tourism with local development and globalization. It is a reflection of my belief in sustainable tourism as a tool for local development, and ultimately as a means for positive global change. The project proposed in this paper builds on my mission to enhance progressive transnational community relations and connections while reviving and preserving traditional relations between local communities and their lands. This research paper serves as an exploration of ways to initiate a strategy for the Alexander Skutch Biological Corridor in Costa Rica (hereafter referred to as the Corridor), to allow inhabitants to sustainably manage their own resources, using tourism as an option for eco-friendly economic growth.

The community's need for a plan for strategic, action-oriented, collective and inclusive sustainable tourism development was confirmed at the field research phase. It was found to be essential to solicit contributions and assistance from national programs and institutions, as well as seed funding for the actualization of the plan. With the momentum created by the research in the field, fortuitously the project has piqued the interest of a potential partner.

This study fulfills some of the objectives outlined in my Plan of Study (POS) for my Master's degree in Environmental Studies (MES). This research relates to the following specific learning objectives stated in my POS:

- POS objective 1.2: To consider the potential of sustainable tourism within specific environments, with a focus on public/private partnerships, including contemporary debates about tourism and resources management; the specific environment of my research was the Alexander Skutch Biological Corridor (ASBC) with the focus on the public and private partnerships reflected in my field research meetings and in using the supply chain analysis to identify the connections needed for the development of the proposed initiative.
- POS objective 2.1: To study different theories and concepts of international development and examine their practical application, in order to find alternative methods of development and exchange between global south and global north.

Both objectives are directly related to the major components of my POS, respectively: component 1, enabling an environment for linkages between sustainable tourism and development; and component 2, international development, global mobility and cultural exchange.

Table of Content

List of Figures _____	5
List of Tables _____	6
List of Acronyms _____	7
1. Introduction	8
1.1. The drive.....	8
1.2. The structure	10
1.3. The objectives	11
1.4. The focus and the audiences.....	13
2. The Context : the Corridor	15
2.1. The people.....	16
2.2. The strategic location	20
3. Theoretical Framework	24
3.1. Terms and definitions.....	26
3.2. Sustainable tourism vs. global tensions.....	31
3.3. Community empowerment.....	33
3.4. Globalization.....	37
4. Methodology	44
4.1. Field research tools and methods	46
4.2. The participants	49
4.3. The approach	52
4.4. Obstacles and adjustments.....	55
4.5. Previous research data	56
5. Summary of the field research	58
5.1. List of community needs and aspirations	58
5.2. The current and potential products and markets.....	60
5.3. Summary of facts and suggestions	62
5.4. Propositions for action	66
6. Discussion	71

6.1.	Supply chain and linkages.....	71
6.2.	The social entrepreneur and impact investor	74
6.3.	Global positioning	76
6.4.	Local identity and cultural productions	77
6.5.	The rationale of the project	79
7.	The recommendations and conclusion	81
7.1.	Next steps.....	81
7.2.	Lessons learned.....	85
7.3.	The feasibility of the project.....	86
7.4.	Conclusion	89
I.	Bibliography	92
II.	References (cited in text)	94
I.	Appendices.....	96
A.	The project proposal	96
1.	Project summary	96
2.	Project objectives and expected results summary	100
3.	The outcome, major activities and specific results	104
4.	Description of project activities	108
B.	The promotion kit blue print.....	116
1.	Individual offers samples	116
2.	List of tourism offerings and related contacts	120
3.	List of Distribution	123
C.	Potential linkages lists and event plans.....	125
D.	Meetings summary	126
a.	Meetings Summary with ACTUAR-	126
b.	ACEPESA meeting summary	129
c.	Communal meetings at CCT	132
d.	Meeting with travel Agent in San Isidro (draft to be updated)	133
e.	Summary of meetings and interviews with hotels: In San Isidro	134
f.	Observations in San Jose as a tourist.....	135

List of Figures

Figure 1 View of the Corridor from Monte Carlo	15
Figure 2 the corridor communities	17
Figure 3 The simple life of the people of the corridor	18
Figure 4 The corridor produce: Sugar cane (in the field), Cacao (the inside of the fruit), coffee (unripe beans).....	19
Figure 5 Location of the corridor	20
Figure 6 City and beaches close to the corridor	20
Figure 7 Pause by the river in the rain forest.....	22
Figure 8 The local bakery team and I.....	55
Figure 9 Monte Carlo 'Fiesta'	55
Figure 10 Product/market development cycle	65
Figure 11 Tourism initiative plan as a business project	80
Figure 12 Initiative perspectives	87
Figure 13 Initiative time line with key achievements	88
Figure 14 The love seed	90
Figure 15 - Individual offer-page 1 Issidro	116
Figure 16 Individual offer- page2 Issidro	117
Figure 17 Individual offer 2-Romelo-page 1	118
Figure 18 Individual offer 2- Romelo-page2	119

List of Tables

Table 1 Southern Costa Rica major attractions..... 23
Table 2 Field research time line 45
Table 3 Summary of research methods 49
Table 4 Research participants 51
Table 5 Summary of the participatory SWOT analysis..... 66
Table 6 Research findings and recommendations based on Strengths 69
Table 7 Research findings and recommendations-based on Weaknesses 70
Table 8 Potential connections..... 73

List of Acronyms

ASBC: Alexander Skutch Biological Corridor

ASOCUENCA: Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de la Cuenca del Rio Peñas Blancas de Pérez Zeledón (Development Association of the White Rivers of Perez Seledon)

B&B: Bed and Breakfast- accommodation businesses

B2B: Business to Business

B2C: Business to Customer

CCT: Centro Científico Tropical (Tropical Science Center)

GPS: Global Positioning System

ICT: Information Communication Technology

IIX: Impact Investment Exchange

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

MDG: Millennium Development Goals

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PPP: Public/Private Partnerships

PRA: Participatory Rural Assessment

UNED-UK: United Nations Environment and Development UK committee

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WB: World Bank

WEF: World Economic Forum

WWF: World Wildlife Fund

1. Introduction

This section introduces the research project paper, the drive behind it, and how its components are structured including the project which is the main output of this research venture. The paper's main aim is to provide a context for the project and to draw on the theories that inform it. In this section, I list the general objectives of the research and the specific objectives of the project. I also describe the focus and the audiences. This aims at clarifying the rationale behind the structure of the paper and the correlation between its different sections.

1.1. The drive

This research reflects my strong belief in the stewardship capacities of local communities and my commitment to healthier global (re)connections. I believe in the capacities of local communities as human capital and in equitable distribution of opportunities. It also reflects my interest in the importance of connections between the developing and developed worlds. I took on this research as part of my dedication to fostering better transnational understandings and exchanges and my commitment to the equitable distribution of opportunities. While this research is an investment of time and resources for academic advancement, it is also my attempt at opening new doors for a new start in my life. It is taking my life's mission a step further beyond the comfort zone of my homeland community and network.

I am also using my present situation and my background to analyze and develop the perspectives to be found in this research. For more than a decade, my mission has been to empower rural communities. This began in my home country and region (Lebanon and the

Middle East region) before 2011, and while my study took place in Costa Rica, my new home and research base is Canada, both new places to me¹. My role as a local knowledge provider is reversed. I have been challenged to work as an outsider, to uncover local knowledge and induce home-grown solutions, instead of proposing ready-made solutions. With my experience from traveling, living and settling in different cultures, I have developed ways of rooting myself. I know the feeling of being un-rooted and I find myself continuously acquiring a subtle sense of place in new communities and (re)connecting on new ground. All that is reflected in my mission and it informs this paper as a product of my thinking, both directly and indirectly.

When I first graduated from an Arts program, in Interior design in Beirut, I got involved in working with rural communities in Lebanon, in the Middle East. That was an eye opening experience for me to the suffering of the marginalized communities and how they are excluded from the economic opportunities. I realized then the need for expansion of economic opportunities for the wellbeing of all communities: rural and urban. For when rural communities cannot diversify their production they immigrate towards the cities which contribute to centralizing services and growth of urban concentrations. Most of the time those concentrations do not offer an environment that promotes wellness. Therefore I took on the mission to empower local marginalized communities to benefit from sustainable tourism as a means by which they can enjoy, appreciate and take pride in their ways of living while generating additional income. In this paper I present my quest to find the delicate position to hold while understanding the different tensions and the delicate position that traditional and

¹ I have been in Canada for less than five years and have only come to know Costa Rica during the last year

indigenous communities are trying to hold in an era where globalization and standardization are becoming major forces.

1.2. The structure

This paper documents the field research and theoretical quest, in addition to proposing a project, which is meant to be discussed and reviewed by the communities and their potential partners. The structure is developed to appeal to the different readers: members of York University, local stakeholders and the local communities involved.

First, the paper reveals the drive behind this study and my personal viewpoint and lays out the facts about the context. Second, it discusses the theories that informed the research as the currents of thought. Third, it explains the methodology that shaped this research; and fourth, it explains the approach of the field research and the difficulties that arose therein. The fifth section lists the field results and the sixth section expands on this discussion. It ends with proposed recommendations and the conclusion. In the appendices, the project proposal is Appendix A; it is a stand-alone document, which means some information mentioned in the core of the paper is repeated in the project proposal document, especially as regards the context and summary of the field research.

The layout of the project proposal is developed according to a template for a grant proposal (GEF Small Grants Programme, 2014), for immediate use by a potential local partner in Costa Rica. The project proposal's main components are: the project summary, including the context; the key environmental problems and the justification of this proposal (developed in

terms of indicators set by the potential donor agency); the project objectives and expected results; the outcome of the project as a road map; and major activities and specific results.

The proposal is ready to become a part of a larger strategic plan for development to be implemented. It has been reviewed and adopted by a local research institute: the Tropical Science Center (CCT-Centro Científico Tropical). The team managing the centre has received the project and is planning to find ways for funding it. Action items suggested by the project will be embraced by different parties and the linkages proposed by this research (see Appendix xx) will be enhanced in an event that is being planned.

In the results of this research, other documents have been produced as a blueprint, to be reviewed with the community. Appendix B reveals a blueprint of the promotion kit, the first draft of which was developed during the field research. Appendix C lists potential linkages, a main component of this paper, as the whole research is developed with a market-oriented approach that enhances linkages and connections throughout the supply chain. In Appendix D, a selection of the meetings summaries is given for the reader's information.

1.3. The objectives

The major objective of my Masters of Environmental Studies (MES) research has been to identify, in a participatory approach the best strategies for the implementation of a sustainable tourism project. This was done in collaboration with the communities of the Corridor as the project it concerned with their region. This paper identifies challenges facing the local communities and hindering their aspirations. It also put forward the proposed project

(Appendix A) as a road map to address those challenges and to build on opportunities leading to the production of the above-mentioned outcomes.

The following specific objectives are established as the guidelines of the research:

- to serve as a testament to the community needs and aspirations as expressed during the field research, specifically in group discussions;
- to elaborate and discuss the theories that informed this research project paper;
- to propose a road map for actions to be taken following the field research and the results of the research analysis;
- to identify prospective linkages and recruit potential partner(s) and stakeholders.

The following are the specific objectives of the project proposal presented in Appendix A of this paper:

- to serve as a means to empower the communities in the Corridor to articulate their preferences for specific types of tourism, as an alternative development plan for economic growth;
- to propose a preliminary plan of action with potential individual “project ideas owners”;
- to serve as a discussion and working paper for development of a holistic approach to resolving issues of lack of coordination, in order to enhance collaboration between communities.

These objectives are derived from the research question as stated in the original proposal for my research:

“What strategies can be cultivated to motivate local communities to create an innovative tourism product that will benefit them beyond economic development?”

The outcome of my research was “the seed of a proposal for a sustainable tourism project that would help develop income-generating activities”.

1.4. The focus and the audiences

This paper lays out field research findings and discusses the theoretical context that informed the project proposal. The focus of this research is to voice the aspirations of a community (the community of the corridor) including documenting and suggesting potential propositions for maintaining their well-being and addressing issues hindering economic prospects and jeopardizing continuous stability. The research also focuses on connections. This is a result of an insistence, voiced in this paper, for the proposed tourism initiative to be market-oriented more than being purely community-based; it is also the reflection of personal experiences and research based on supply chain analysis (see theoretical framework section3). Therefore, my position is to consider all the realities: the community aspirations, their current capacity, the potential support they can solicit from potential partners of the private and public sectors (government and non-governmental organizations). My position is then to propose an initiative whose goals are not only economic, but social and environmental. It is about finding a balance: a platform to launch the proposed initiative that has social and environmental impacts as well as economic benefits. The main research paper is addressed to fellow researchers at York University and it will serve as a reference context for the project presented as the main outcome of the project.

The outcomes of this research are included in this document as appendices. The project proposal (Appendix A) is addressed to potential partners and donors, in this case CCT and UNDP-SGF² or the foundation ASOCUENCA³ (Sector Agro Alimentario, 2014). Appendix B features the proposed promotion kit that exhibits: individual offers samples, a flyer/map⁴ that lists the individual offerings with highlights on their specific aspects, and presents them as a whole (in draft form pending review by local communities). This is meant for use by the local communities (individual and/or collective) to promote their sustainable tourism offerings in the local market, through specific network; like the hotels we have met with in San Isidro and other potential contacts as listed in the proposed linkages list. The list of potential linkages (see appendix D) is useful for tourism enthusiasts in local communities to engage agencies to adopt the project (CCT). This list can be used to launch the initiative and involve potential partners and/or to develop individual connections. The list of potential linkages In Appendix D, a selection of the field research results and meetings is included as a reference for the general reader.

The project proposal has been shared and reviewed by the Tropical Science Center (CCT-Centro Científico Tropical) who will present it to a donor agency ; either the UNDP-SGF⁵ (the UNDP Small Grants Funds) or another foundation ASOCUENCA⁶ (Sector Agro Alimentario, 2014). The project is also a working paper for an upcoming participatory workshop that is being

² United Nations Development Program, Small Grants Program

³ Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de la Cuenca del Río Peñas Blancas de Pérez Zeledón (Development Association of the White Rivers of Perez Zeledon)

⁴ soft copy available as an independent file

⁵ United Nations Development Program, Small Grants Program

⁶ Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de la Cuenca del Río Peñas Blancas de Pérez Zeledón (Development Association of the White Rivers of Perez Zeledon)

planned between the CCT, York University, the National University (UNA), and Coope Agri, to discuss the way forward with activists in the communities (i.e., a potential connection event that York University is applying for with collaborators from Costa Rica).

2. The Context : the Corridor

The research described in this paper took place in the Biological Corridor of Alexander Skutch (ASBC)⁷ in the Pérez Zeledón region in southern Costa Rica. Costa Rica is an established tourism destination in Central America, well-known as a destination for nature-based tourism, with a well-established ecotourism industry and ecofriendly-enabling policies and infrastructure.



Figure 1 View of the Corridor from Monte Carlo © Wafaa El-Osta August, 2014

As one of 37 biological corridors in Costa Rica (Sistema Nacional de Areas de Conservacion SINAC, 2009), the Alexander Skutch Corridor consists of a 6 km long area that

⁷ Often referred to locally as CoBAS, which is also the name of the regional council of activist groups

connects Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary--managed by the Tropical Science Center (CCT, Centro Científico Tropical)--and the Las Nubes Cloud Forest (Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, 2014), where York University has started a project and is developing an eco-campus⁸.

The Corridor is officially within the region of Pérez Zeledón, a municipality in the Province of San José, and is located in the Valley Del General on the western Pacific-facing slopes of the Talamanca mountain range. It is directly connected to the Chirripó National Park conservation area and La Amistad International Peace Park, which extends into Panama (Palmer & Molina , 2006). This is a strategic connection for the Corridor, as La Amistad is the largest nature reserve in Central America and is part of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. La Amistad is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2014). The Corridor is therefore connected to world-renowned conservation areas, as well as being a biological reserve with condensed, rich biodiversity and a variety of ecosystems, including agricultural lands (Reid, 2010).

Recently, the Corridor area has been described as:
"One of the last pure unspoiled spots on the planet,"
In a promotional message for Altacgracia hotel

2.1. The people

The Corridor is home to seven rural communities⁹ (see Appendix B-5). Its population is estimated at 2,000 people, based on 2004 statistics (GEF Small Grants Program, 2014). Most

⁸to serve as an environment, community and education centre

⁹some references like the CCT website consider them eight communities

residents are farmers and campesinos¹⁰ who own their own farms or agricultural lands (the farms locally called “fincas”).

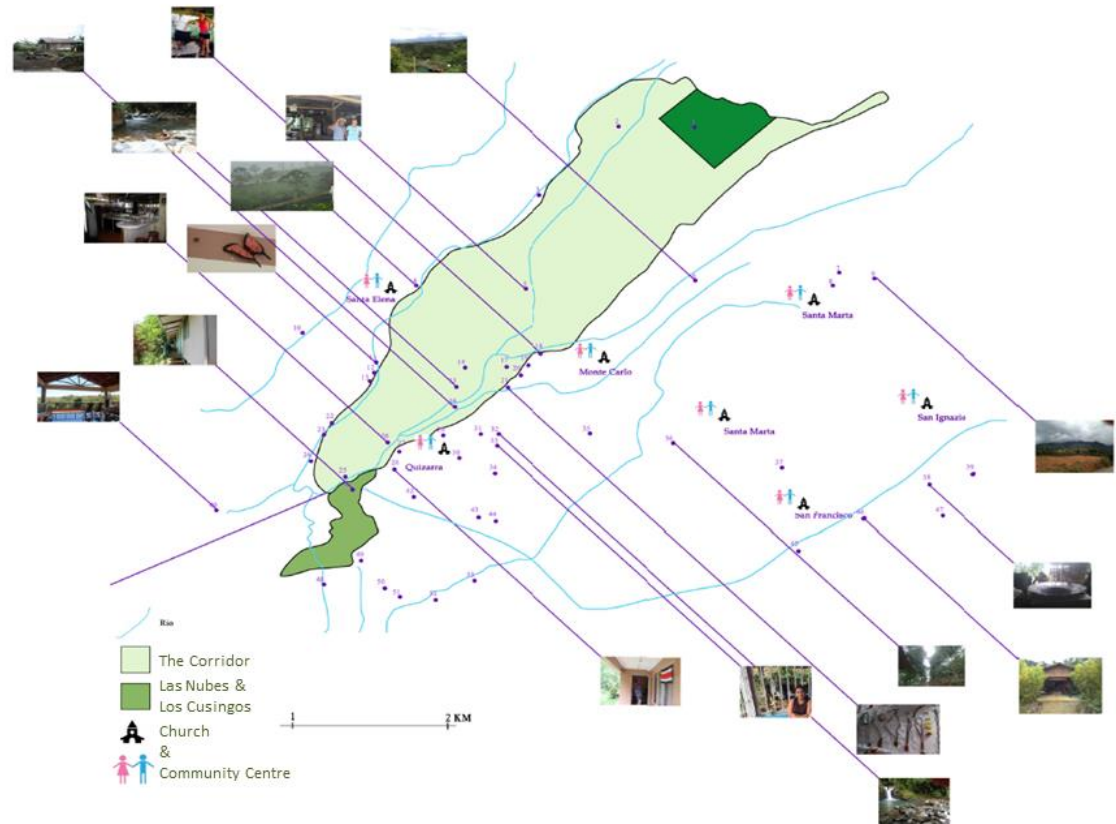


Figure 2 the corridor communities © Wafaa El-Osta August, 2014

From my perspective, as a researcher with extensive travel, I see them as a model of a community who lead simple, traditional lives, in harmony with nature. This model is a reflection of the local “pura vida” living style that is characteristic of Costa Rica (see more on the Pura Vida concept in section 3.3). This distinction is important as it is a reflection of the pure life that is becoming an exception and in my opinion it is a rarity that has escaped effects of

¹⁰ The Spanish word for peasant or small farmer

globalization, so far. Men wishing to start families usually seek jobs outside of their communities, in order to have seed money to establish a household and livelihood. Young men now seek jobs in cities like Cartago, or San Jose. The older generation used to work in the United States, doing construction work around the New Jersey area. They used to spend an average of four years as migrant workers before they could establish a small capital to afford their independent homes and income generating fincas (Montoya, 2013), (Vargas & Rojas, 2015).

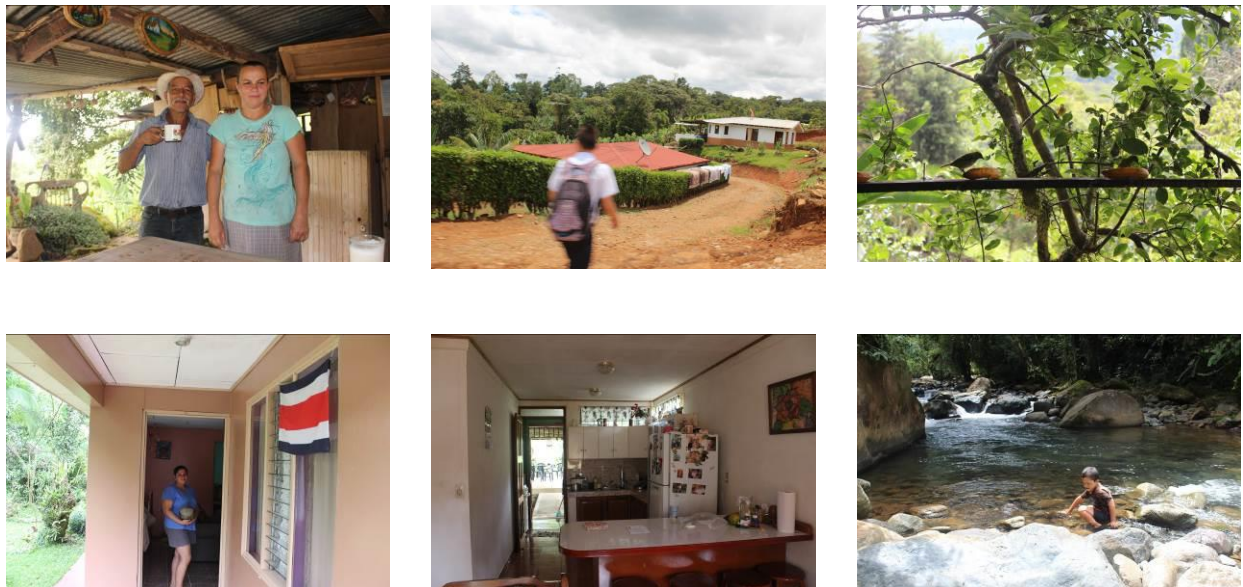


Figure 3 The simple life of the people of the corridor, © Wafaa El-Osta July, August, 2014

The main agricultural products of the Corridor are coffee and sugar cane, in addition to small local dairy farms, fruit trees and backyard gardens of vegetables, medicinal plants and ornamental plants like orchids. The main commercial product is coffee, however due to the geography, it does not have the comparative advantage of the high-altitude or shade-grown coffee desired by coffee buyers. Thus, local farmers are unable to get competitive rates for

their product. They nevertheless have a guaranteed market, as their produce is bought by a local co-op that pays a minimal yet satisfactory price.



Figure 4 The corridor produce: Sugar cane (in the field), Cacao (the inside of the fruit), coffee (unripe beans), © Wafaa El-Osta July, 2014

Most of the Corridor communities are members of one agricultural co-op (COOPEAGRI, 2013) a significant presence in the city of San Isidro. The co-operative offers security and ripe reduced risk, by guaranteeing a market and managing the processing and collection of produce, but without the advantage of competitive prices. It also provides medical and commercial services at reduced rates. The co-operative also provides jobs, as it employs a local workforce to manage and implement these services. In short, it is the largest organization whose activities affect the lives and commerce of the people of the Corridor. Recently, COOPEAGRI founded a tourism department, which manages a coffee shop, strategically located in the main market area in San Isidro. This department offers coffee-tasting tours in the co-op coffee processing plant¹¹, as well as managing a coastal resort on the Hacienda COOPEAGRI¹² in Uvita beach. This is the closest beach to the Corridor, situated between two famous coastal reserves, Manuel Antonio and Marina Ballena. (See Figure 5 and 6)

¹¹ Based on interviews and observations during city visit and coffee tour, part of the field course

¹² <http://www.haciendacoopeagri.cr/>

2.2. The strategic location

To evaluate the potential for sustainable tourism in the Corridor, it is important to understand its geopolitical position. The Corridor is located in the southern region of Costa Rica, a destination less traveled and distinct from the regions of Monte Verde and Guanacaste, major tourism destinations located to the north of the capital, San Jose.



Figure 5 Location of the corridor (source: cobas.joturna.ca) website



5 San Isidro City



6 Marina Ballena



7 Manuel Antonio

Figure 6 City and beaches close to the corridor (sources: www.costa-rica-mountain-rental.com; www.globalwatersolutions.com; <http://ecopreservationsociety.org/>)

The Corridor remains a hidden gem in the southern part of Costa Rica. Its closeness to major attractions and its association with strategic allies can be used in its promotion as a destination. As such, there are many competing development interests in the region. The geographic topography, because of its watersheds, attracts hydroelectric projects and monocrops like the pineapple or palm oil. In addition, retirees and tourists come to the Vista Chirripo and resort-tourism developments like the Alta Gracia hotel on one side of the Corridor and the Alto Monte horseback riding finca on the other side. The local communities are aware of the impacts and risks to the ecosystem of each potential development project, including tourism. Most of the communities are opposed to the hydroelectric project and skeptical about others. This concern is expressed by local farmers and their main institutional partners: the local research center (CCT) and York University. The consensus among these stakeholders is that development that respects conservation is in the interest of all.

The Corridor is socially and commercially connected to the city of San Isidro de El General, 14 km (9 miles) away, (20 minutes by car or public bus). San Isidro de El General is Costa Rica's southern hub for business and commerce. Thus, it is a destination for business tourism (communications with hotel managers, 2014) (see Appendix D). It is also a major stopping point on the Inter-American highway, as it is conveniently located midway between San Jose and the Panama Border.

The city of San Isidro de El General offers government, banking, medical and shopping services, and has several bus stations connecting to other destinations: the cities of Cartago and San Jose in the North; the beaches to the west; and the Southern regions, including the city of

Buenos Aires, leading to the territories of the Boruca and other indigenous peoples (Indigenous territories in Southern Costa Rica: Boruca, Bribri, Cabécar, Téribé and Ngöbe peoples)

San Isidro is one of the major big cities in the country, the biggest in the Southern Costa Rica. It hosts more than 15 hotels in the core city area and is considered a business center and a major connection between the South and other major cities like Cartago and San Jose. The south is still developing as a destination, which gives it a special charm and an authentic edge. This is where the visitor can meet Costa Ricans in their natural, untapped environment.



Figure 7 Pause by the river in the rain forest in Boruca land. © Wafaa El-Osta. May 2014

National Parks

Corcovado National Park-Peninsula de Osa

Isla Del Cano Biological Reserve, Southern Pacific

Marino Ballena National Park

La Amistad National Park

Cerro Chirripo

Beaches/ Coastal Reserves

Bahia De Coronado	Playa Violin
Baru	San Josecito
Boca Brava	Pinula
Cano island Biological Reserve	Quepos
Dominical	Savegre
Hermosa	Tortuga
Manuel Antonio National Park	Uvita
Matapalo	

Cultural Sites

Indigenous territories in Southern Costa Rica: Boruca, Bribri, Cabécar, Téribé and Ngöbe peoples

The statue of Jesus

Museums: the underground museum, the Boruca indigenous community museum (permanent exhibition of the masks)

The stone spheres site

Adventure Activities

Bird watching,	Rafting
Canoeing	Rappel
Fishing, ATV	Scuba diving
Hiking	Snorkeling
Horseback riding	Swim in the river and waterfalls
Kayaking	Windsurfing

Table 1 Southern Costa Rica major attractions

3. Theoretical Framework

In this section I draw upon Martha Honey, Gareth Haysom and Caroline Ashley as well as Alison Johnston and Karen Stocker to provide a foundation for thinking through the challenges facing this sustainable tourism development in a rural, traditional community, as well as my own motivations in proposing changes. It explains the theories, current discourses and schools of thought that informed this paper. The research was based on connections between complex and intertwined lines of thoughts related to the major areas of study: sustainable tourism, globalization, and community empowerment.

Scholars like Martha Honey, Gareth Haysom and Caroline Ashley consider the conventional tourism sector to be resource exploitative (Ashley, 2006, vol. 23); (Mitchell & Ashley, 2012); (Honey, 1999). Judith Ludwic Lett defines tourism as a practical capitalist business that generates economic growth for both destinations and their respective tourism industries (Lett, 1983). Tourism is also one of the world's most rapidly growing industries and one of the largest export industries (World Tourism Organization Network, 2014). Its returns are changing countries' economies, as tourism industries are considered the "main foreign exchange earner for 83 percent of the developing countries" (World Tourism Organization Network, 2014).

In the Americas, a comparison between the agricultural and the tourism sectors is useful to understanding global tensions that affect local traditional communities like those in the

Corridor. Investors use their positions within the private sector, combined with monetary power, to own and develop lands in tourist destinations. There is a tremendous amount of literature about how these ownerships negatively impact the sovereignty of communities (Demarais, 2008); (Palmer & Molina , 2006); (Roberts, 2003); (McMichael, 2008). Sustainable tourism activities, or adopting a sustainable tourism approach in the form of regulations and guidelines certification, are alternatives that would prevent this exploitative relationship and produce positive impacts. It would also alter the imbalanced relationship which currently posits the North as the point of departure for tourism activities and the South, as the destination (Mitchell & Ashley, 2012); and the north as the site of investment capital, with the south as the site of investment. Therefore, this research will look into sustainable tourism as a means for community economic empowerment and community development. In order not to subscribe to conventional definitions of development, this paper will use the term well-being.

This theoretical framework will serve the research by defining the theories that inform the proposition suggested in the research. The tension between scholars who are pro-tourism and those who are against it is taken into consideration here and contributes to the development of the paper's perspective. In this section, I will mention the contingencies between theory and research. These will be included as recommendations in the discussion section of this paper, for their possible relevance to the proposed sustainable tourism project in the Corridor.

3.1. Terms and definitions

This particular section exhibits the definitions of specialized tourism terms. Those particular definitions are chosen because of their relevance to potential tourism branding in the corridor. This is a recommendation that this research suggests (see the recommendations and conclusion-section 7).

Meeting Industry is when individuals or groups of people travel, with the aim of “attending meetings, conferences, congresses, trade fairs and exhibitions” and “other business and professional purposes”, also called MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions)

The term “meetings industry” is preferred by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), Meeting Professionals International (MPI) and Reed Travel over the acronym MICE, “which does not recognize the industrial nature of such activities.”

Responsible Travel (or Responsible Tourism) is the term used by the industry to define guidelines for the practice of tourism. “Responsible tourism is any form of tourism that can be consumed in a more responsible way” (Honey , 1999)(UNWTO/definitions)¹³. In the context of this paper, we will use the term Responsible Travel.

Sustainable Tourism is a model whereby the well-being of the host community and its natural and cultural resources are taken into consideration during the planning and implementation process. It also ensures an experiential aspect for tourist satisfaction (World Tourism Organization, 2004). The significance of this definition is that it highlights both the importance of participatory sustainable planning and the market sides of sustainable tourism development.

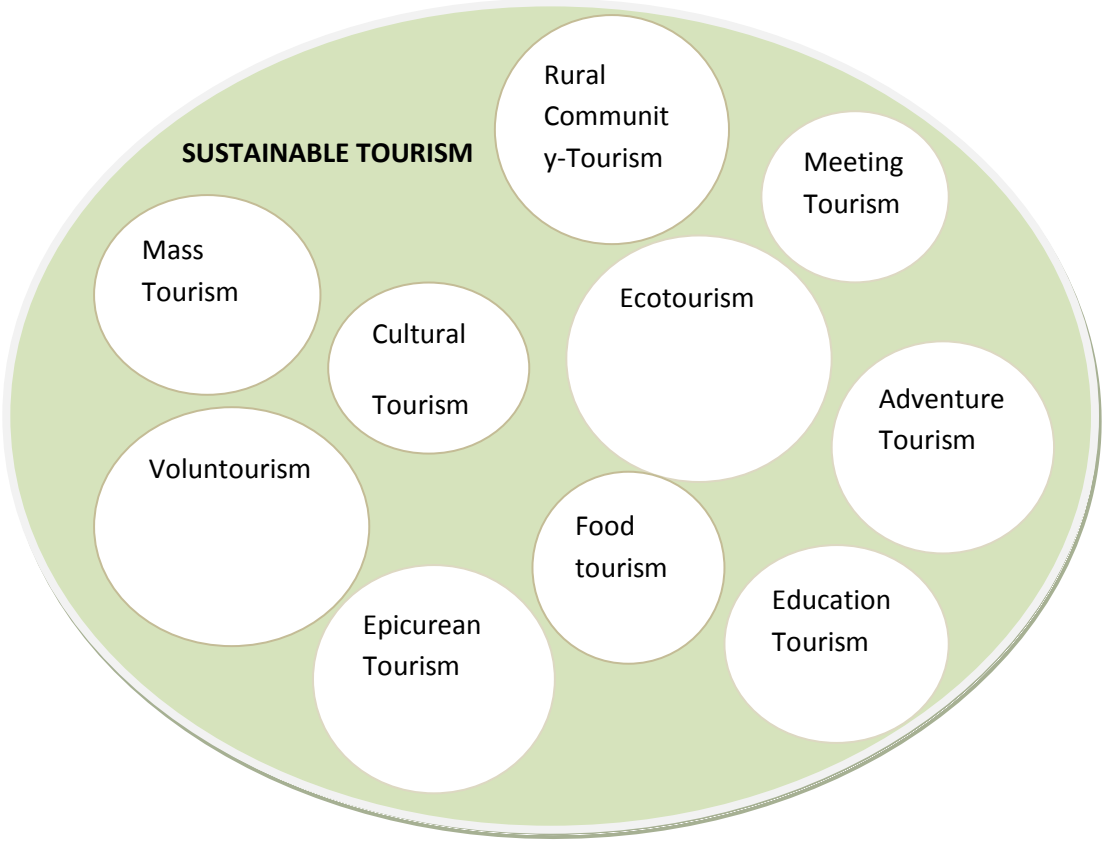
¹³ The term was first used at a conference in Cape Town in South Africa, where it was defined by a set of characteristics that were set according to the context of the country as it is based on input from local stakeholders and communities. In the conference recommendations it is advised that each country develop their own guidelines.

Ecotourism: Although there is no single universal definition for ecotourism (Roberts, 2003), it can be described as a way of deriving economic benefits from nature conservation, especially in tropical regions, as per Theresa Zuniga's statement (Morillo, 1996). Martha Honey often uses the definition of the International Ecotourism Society: "Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Honey, 2009). Honey also refers often to the definition adopted by the IUCN in 1996.

"Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy, study and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features—both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations." (Lascurain, 1996), reviewed from the original definition of Ceballos-Lascurain, 1993 .

Ecotourism respects the limited carrying capacity of a destination and avoids endangering rare species. J. Timmons Roberts and Nikki Demetria Thanos consider it a new development model that allows tourists to pay an indigenous community, government agency or private enterprise in order to "experience nature" (Roberts, 2003, p. 83). For this research we consider ecotourism as an activity that engages tourists in contributing to the conservation of nature of a place when they visit it. This could be through indirect contribution to the communities who are involved in conservation efforts or affected by conservation policies.

Sustainable tourism and ecotourism: “All forms of tourism can become more sustainable but not all forms of tourism can be ecotourism.”¹⁴ Sustainable tourism is an approach that calls for positive impacts, such as ecotourism. However, while ecotourism is related to fauna and flora “discovery and appreciation” in conservation areas, sustainable tourism has a more expanded array of niche tourism offerings that respect hosts and their lands. Both sustainable tourism and ecotourism can be implemented without major infrastructure or developments.



Both ecotourism and sustainable tourism can involve common subcategories like the following:

These subcategories are described below, in order to draw each definition's relation to the research. Each specific tourism niche is chosen for its market appeal. These definitions also serve as a reference for the recommendations and discussion section.

Epicurean Tourism: A type of niche tourism offering high-end, expensive experiences. It engages the tourists in an experience “associated with epicurean consumption” and a full experience of a new destination (Senese & Carmichael, 2012). An example is The Epicurean Masters of the World, a series of gourmet dinners prepared by world-renowned star chefs. One of these events cost more than US \$25,000 per person (Beech, 2007). The goal of this particular event is to promote tourism to Thailand and benefit charities established by the King of Thailand that aim to bolster rural development. This niche tourism is defined here because it is a special philanthropy travel event associated with sustainable tourism (Honey, 1999) (Planeterra Foundation, 2014). A similar event in the Corridor could be held at Alta Gracia¹⁵ hotel, which will boost the promotion of the destination.

Food Tourism is the development and marketing of tourism products based on unique foods and native produce available at a destination. This niche allows destinations to market themselves as truly unique and appealing to, “those travelers who want to feel part of their destination through its flavors” (UNWTO, 2012). A food or gastronomy trail is a potential sustainable tourism product that can be developed in the corridor, with the appeal of highlighting the local biodiversity, especially the relation between the local flora and the birds.

¹⁵ <http://www.altagracia.cr/>

Geotourism is a term developed by the National Geographic Society for naming sites based on their unique aspects. The tourism activity of those sites conforms to the same guidelines as sustainable tourism (*National Geographic*, 2010). The sites are eligible for a variety of supports, mainly for product development and craft exports¹⁶. Geotourism focuses on the sense of place.

Rural Community Tourism (or Community-based Tourism) is a term widely used in Costa Rica. It is defined by ACTUAR as, "owned by local, grassroots conservation and community development organizations that have their own rainforest reserves and build their own lodges and tourism attractions." ¹⁷

Voluntourism is when tourists travel with the aim of assisting local communities in specific projects. For the international traveler, some examples are: conservation facilities like the elephant sanctuary in Thailand, helping the locals in taking care of the elephants; wineries in France, assisting with picking grapes; Palestinian olive groves, helping with the harvest and supporting local communities (Hawkins).

Wellness tourism: SRI International¹⁸ team defines this as, "all travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's personal well-being". It is not medical tourism, but rather an emerging travel category that exists at the intersection of two of the world's largest markets—the US \$2-trillion wellness economy and the US \$3.2-trillion global tourism industry. SRI suggests categorizing a wellness traveler as either a primary or secondary wellness tourist

¹⁶Nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/about_geotourism.html.)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=17&v=NHZCi8_PyX4 (Arabic speaking TV interview in Egypt 2013, inspiring photos of local products)

¹⁷ <http://keytocostarica.com/community/faq/what-is-the-difference-between-community-based-ecotourism-and-regular-ecotourism.html>

¹⁸ SRI International is an international not-for-profit research institution based in Washington DC (www. SRI.org)

and stresses the impact of both domestic and international tourism markets. (SRI International, 2005)

I exhibit those definitions here as a basis to my suggestion for innovative branding of the potential tourism products that would result from the tourism initiative in the corridor. It is to inform the development of the sustainable tourism initiative from its early stages of conception. It is an invitation for the stakeholders, local community and their partners to look for alternatives under the umbrella of sustainable tourism, but also to consider options out-of-the-box of community rural tourism. That is in order to bring-in the discussion a market-oriented vision while proceeding with the initiation of the tourism venture (see recommendations and conclusion section).

3.2. Sustainable tourism vs. global tensions

One pillar of sustainable tourism is to inform the tourist of the destination's social and environmental sustainability issues. According to the WTO, this responsibility falls to tour operators or tour organizers. In practice, it is the people providing the tourism services (as guides and/or hosts) who take a major role in the implementation of the principles of sustainable tourism. At the same time, the policy makers are who have the ability to endorse it and provide an enabling environment for its development (Honey, 2009).

This research considers the sustainable tourism sector a platform with great potential for implementing public/private sector partnerships that engages local communities in a participatory dialogue. "Sustainable tourism is a term used mostly by policy makers" (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005); since it is directly related to resources management and land use plans. The

proposed project is a working paper for discussions within this framework (see next steps section). The dialogues suggested in the project proposal are held within communities and between communities and Public/Private Partnerships leaders. In this paper, sustainable tourism development is considered an alternative solution, intended to counteract the negative effects of conventional tourism, as well as other sectors' development options (i.e., in the case of the Corridor, hydroelectric dams and monocrops).

John Vandermeer and Ivette Perfecto (Vandermeer, 2005) state that, "since the time of the establishment of the United Fruit Company [the famous company that produces and exports fruit from Central and South America to North America and Latin America], the South American nations are not the same" (p.55). The United Fruit Company is an example of global commerce affecting relations between the north and the south. Many such companies practice deforestation, in order to exploit the land for mass agriculture (Vandermeer, 2005) (Forsyth & Miyata, 1984). Conventional tourism and massive agricultural projects leave the land and its people resource-less, causing irreversible natural and demographic changes, such as over-using the soil and making it infertile for years to come (Forsyth & Miyata, 1984).

The comparison between monocrops and conventional resort tourism, on the one hand, and alternative sustainable tourism, on the other, is based on the following research findings: (1) conventional tourism without regulations to protect local cultural and natural heritage can be exploitative; (2) conventional tourism provides jobs to a limited number of people, transforming them into replaceable employees who are subjected to low wages, instead of being the stewards of their own land (Honey, 1999); and (3) conventional tourism privatizes

land that would otherwise have been part of the commons, thereby limiting access and displacing local communities¹⁹ (Roberts, 2003).

The tourism industry is an export economic activity (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005). Its services are paid on site, benefiting the local communities through indirect spending (Ashley, 2006, vol 23) (Mitchell & Ashley, 2012) (Lett, 1983). Studies show that In developing countries each unit of economic activity created by tourism generates 0.6 to 1.2 units of activity for its suppliers (Ashley, 2006, vol. 23, p. 130).

Ashley and Haysom (2008) use supply chain analysis to observe sustainable tourism potentials for alleviating poverty. Supply chain analysis is a methodology that observes the chain of production of a particular industry, to study potentials for improvements (focusing on the inclusion level) and gaps that may be affecting the impact of a specific industry on a specific level (Ashley, 2006, vol. 23). For the proposed project, the supply chain analysis is the basis for the suggested linkages and connections. It is considered a way of thinking rather than a profound, scientific analysis. It is an attitude to be adopted to connect the local tourism providers in the corridor to the potential markets.

3.3. Community empowerment

The synergy between nature conservation and community well-being has been a challenging academic discussion (Ruta et al, 2006, cited in Montoya and Drews 2006) (Chambers, 2007). Robert Chambers considers the fundamentals of livelihood as capability, equity and sustainability. Montoya and Drews expand the idea of livelihood to define

¹⁹ Another comparison between sustainable tourism and alternative solutions is discussed in the conclusion or discussion part of the paper

community capitals or assets, to “what the livelihood activities invest their energies in.”

Community capitals are the total assets of the community that include several capitals including social capital and cultural capital. Social capital is defined by Montoya and Drews as the accumulation of social ties and relationships and cultural capital, as the collective construction of symbolic configurations such as language, knowledge and meanings. In my opinion, the importance of those definitions remains in the fact that they lead to measuring tools to actually assess and determine the impact of particular interventions in a defined community, like in the case of this research, the community of the corridor. The authors go on to project the assessment of local needs into three categories: organic needs, existential needs and transcendental needs. The potentials of this concept for my research are that (1) it offers an alternative to the conventional development initiatives/intervention measurements (2) it allows for development initiatives that go beyond economic growth and (3) I can draw on the concept of social entrepreneur as a manager of the social capital.

I see this idea resonates with Sanjay Reddy’s scholarly research on measuring development. Reddy defies the conventional analysis of measuring community development in terms of employment, earnings and poverty-line measurement concept, and suggests using social sciences to develop indicators based on satisfaction and needs fulfillment (Reddy, 2009).

Livelihood is the combination of activities, assets and capabilities needed in order to make a living (Shuyt 2005 cited in Montoya and Drews 2006). Montoya adds: livelihoods are ways of living and not only ways of making a living (Montoya, 2006). In simple words, I would consider livelihoods as the way to control day-to-day life and the ability to maintain this control

in face of tensions and forces of change. The development of a full-fledged sustainable tourism initiative would bring out the conversations about those needs and foster the authentic methods of addressing them. In my opinion, this statement is not only applicable in the Corridor, for the process of the initiative development and impact assessment, but it can also be developed as an attraction: the cultural discovery of the Pura Vida, at its origin; the national motto of Costa Rica (see the recommendations and conclusion- section 7).

Well-being; According to Sen (1999) cited by Montoya and Drews (2006) well-being is not a state but rather a “dynamic process that incorporates capabilities or possibilities of other forms of being and doing”. Sen is considered a supporter of the “capability approach” (2009). Montoya and Drews (2006) draws on this definition to consider well-being as the “increasing satisfaction of needs”. They differentiate between the types of needs as: organic, existential and transcendental.

Success Stories from Africa: (1) Private sector-led initiatives are Sun City Resort, which partnered with a local farmers group to establish a hydroponics project to supply fresh produce for the resort (Ashley C., 2006, vol 23). (2) An adventure tour company assisted a group of women in the establishment of a catering business supplying food for the guests; the company invested in training women for food handling and other aspects that ensured food safety for their guests (Planeterra Foundation, 2014)

Lessons learned: The authors also examined other initiatives in Mexico and the Caribbean that have failed. They concluded that this occurred because the intervention was on one side of the supply chain at a time. Ashley and Haysom therefore advise that interventions that link local producers to the consumers should happen on both ends and across the supply chain at the same time. This creates demand on the consumer side while supporting innovative products on the supply side. (Ashley, 2006, vol. 23)

Many theories opposing tourism expansion into remote communities are not only concerned about natural conservation. One of the major concerns is the impact of the contact between the local traditional or indigenous communities with the tourists. This impact is a major manifestation of globalization reaching remote, independent and self-sufficient communities. These theories derive from anthropological philosophies.

In his influential text, *Orientalism*, Edward Said encourages mutual respect between peoples. When making contact with civilizations different from one's own, he warns against the production of knowledge of those civilizations by researchers or writers. The "other" or the concept of "otherness" that Said introduces in *Orientalism* is echoed by scholars examining decolonization and culturally extractive colonial acts, especially tourism (Said, 1978). The "othering" act is multiplied with travelers visiting places for their "exotic" appeal (Johnston, 2007) (Smith, 2005). It applies to tourists discovering a new place or watching a folk dance show as part of an entertainment program in a restaurant. A potential result of this situation is that the performers may be miserable and may turn bitter, as they are forced (out of need for cash) to entertain visitors so they can survive (Smith, 2005). These theories need to be considered in the development of a tourism initiative; because if we want to use sustainable tourism as a means for building better global relations and foster potential decolonization effects, it is then important to consider the effect of "othering." That is especially delicate in the product development stage and in the decisions about the target market.

Another prudent theory that highlights the dangers of local identity loss with the development of tourism is gentrification. The people in the Corridor are aware of the changes

around them--Vista Chirripo and the Alta Gracia hotels are probably eco-friendly projects but they will cause gentrification. By gentrification we mean the increase in value of estate in a specific neighborhood/region in a way that its original stewards are alienated and ownership is transferred to the people who can afford new value prices and consequently causing the place's character to change. Examples of gentrified destinations are Manuel Antonio on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, north of the Corridor. This happens often in Central and South America as the land is sought after by individual owner and development project with high purchasing power from North America (Honey , 1999). This is one of the form that defines global relations especially in the North South directions in the Americas.

3.4. Globalization

Most tourists depart from the north and travel to southern destinations (Mitchell & Ashley, 2012). In the first five years of this millennium tourism revenues for amounted to more than the amount transferred by aid agencies (Mitchell & Ashley, 2012). With that fact in mind, we examine the global tensions that affect local communities. These include former and current forms of colonization as well as theories that could inform strategies to reverse the negative effect of globalization and the dangers of loss of identity.

Philip McMichael considers the development project concept as a new form of post WWII colonization; he criticizes the single "blue print development project" as a universal plan to resolve global issues that the so-called development organizations use for planning their interventions in developing countries (McMichael, 2008). The aid and so-called development programs are designed to serve the interests of the countries of the donor agencies, mainly

giving the upper hand to the global north and subjugating the global south in the name of alleviating poverty. The development project was originally designed to implement mass infrastructure projects like transportation and roads, electricity production and distribution, water treatment collection and distribution, among others. Although these are important projects, they may not have been urgently needed. Rather, they served the needs of the colonial powers that wanted to expand into developing countries like Africa and Latin America (McMichael, 2008) (Escobar, 1995). Their implementation created a fertile environment for corrupt public administrations and served the interests of implementing companies. The aid money that was given to the developing countries was mostly given to companies recruited from the developed countries, because they had the know-how (Mc Michael, 2008). This undermined the local knowledge that had survived for centuries (Alteo, 2004) (Watson , the Yolngu Community at Yirrkala, & Chambers, Web Reprint 2008, last accessed 2012); and it also eliminated any chances for home-grown solutions. These projects affected the environment and demographics of nations where they intervened, causing sometimes irreversible changes. In the Corridor, globalization has reached there in the forms of the hydroelectric dams plans and monocrop agricultures, among others.

Sanjay Reddy is one of the scholars who critique the basis of developing interventions. He is particularly critical of the practice of defining poverty using mathematical formulas and points out the multiple effects when huge organizations like the World Bank base global interventions on these equations. His call which is to give more weight to social sciences in the development of the formulas that define frameworks like poverty (Reddy, 2009), is in harmony

with Sen's capability approach. McMichael uses this critique, among others, to accuse international organizations like USAID and the WB of development goals that serve specific national and commercial interests, rather than seeking benefits for the nations and communities in need of aid (Escobar, 1995) (Demarais, 2008). Some scholars consider the expansion of tourism to rural, remote communities similar to the extractive acts of development projects (Ashley, 2006, vol. 23) (Lascurain, 1996) (Stocker, 2013). Even sustainable tourism, especially eco-tourism, takes tourists to otherwise wild areas, protected from globalization tensions. On the level of acknowledging and appreciating local knowledge, some literature acknowledges the local communities intellectual property rights.

Local identity versus global pressure

Karen Stocker and Alison Johnston have studied tourism in indigenous communities. Their theories, discussions and field research findings have been a highly instructive reference for this research as they discuss both pros and cons of indigenous tourism, which applies to traditional communities, too. Their work is based on the assumption that there are noteworthy parallels: the Corridor community is located close to a conservation area and is considered a traditional community with local cultural assets that are typical of the region and friendly to the environment. There are similar circumstances that allow for proposing common projections between the traditional communities and the indigenous communities (Johnston, 2007) (Stocker, 2013), from the perspective of studying the potentials and the impacts of tourism on the people and the place. The cultural production of both the indigenous and the traditional communities reflect their relationship with nature. The question that both researchers ask is

whether the natural and cultural heritage should become a commodity (i.e., be developed into a tourism product). Johnston asks the question, “Is the sacred for sale?”, as she critiques the justification for exposing local heritage in order to preserve it.

In Costa Rica, indigenous people are generally defined as the people living on the land since the pre-Columbian era. After colonization, they strategically withdrew to live in areas they could defend and protect in order to stay autonomous; these territories became defined by the state as reservations (Montoya, 2013) (Stocker, 2013).

The difference is that the people of the Corridor are not indigenous, but traditional campesinos, able to move in and out of the modern world. They have the choice to leave, and value their livelihood and the challenge of survival in this context (Montoya, personal discussions, 2013).

In Costa Rica, in the indigenous Chorotega territories, Karen Stocker examined the potential threats of tourism (Stocker, 2013). Stocker stresses that tourists’ interventions may spur the revival of traditions. She considers that sharing traditional knowledge brings mutual respect, reduces alienation and positively highlights the differences between the different systems in the world. Moreover, Stocker stresses the fact that the youth of the local communities would learn from involvement²⁰ in the production of the traditional experience (e.g., folk dance or craft manufacturing like the making and dyeing of the cotton threads in the Boruca) (field experience). Stocker draws a similarity between the intervention of the anthropologist and that of the tourists; both allow the local communities to develop new

²⁰ whether they are taking part in it or enjoying it as spectators

perceptions of their daily lives. The effect is of not taking their day-to-day knowledge and life for granted.

Consequently, sharing and collectively presenting the information encourages pride in local traditions. At the same time, sharing this knowledge and guaranteeing that it is well received by the tourists gives the local community an upper hand, as they are “teaching” by relaying knowledge about their local systems. This contact with the tourists therefore creates a new element in the fabric of the society that encourages defining and proudly embracing local identity. This approach has profoundly influenced my project proposal in the following ways: I consider the local knowledge, including local arts and crafts, as cultural productions and therefore as elements of cultural exchange. I would rather use the term cultural exchange rather than tourism attraction, in order to foster the showcasing of the highlights of the culture rather than “othering” the people who are performing it.



Figure 9 The Bombacase tree: the origin of the Boruca mask and home for other species of the forest

Taking the opposite view, Alison Johnston is more cautious and critiques the expansion of nature tourism and eco-tourism into remote areas, especially indigenous territory. She believes niche tourism imports globalization's negative impacts into areas that have otherwise been protected. I, therefore advise to consider this perspective when developing any tourism initiative, as it inevitably must meet international standards that may be disruptive to traditional ways of being (e.g., paving the road to allow more access to tourists' buses will also bring unwanted traffic; or introducing air conditioning) (Vargas & Rojas, 2015). Changes made to assure tourists' comfort may result in a drastic shift from the original simple ways of living, which may be the major attraction in the first place (Honey, 2009).

Cultural productions for global connections rather than a commodity

The Pura Vida is not only a brand or a point of entry to the tourism market, it is taking pride and assuring the locals that the campesino life is an independent way of life and an authentic source of well-being. Going “back to the roots” is the message of this research. And taking pride with the tourists is a positive effect of the adoption of this way of life and a means to connect to the outside world--something the new generation of the Corridor is seeking (Montoya, 2013). As discussed previously however, inviting contact with the outside world has its inherent dangers. The host communities need to be ready to propose tourism and investment options that will have positive impacts for them (Lett, 1983). The communities need to have the capacity and the confidence to claim their rights of stewardship.

Sustainable tourism has the potential to provide an enabling environment for the local capacities to flourish. It can transform the locals into social entrepreneurs and stewards, in control of their own land. This is true whether they are part of the supply chain that feeds into resorts doing business according to a sustainable ethos or whether they are connected to the market directly as small businesses.

Local cultural productions can be developed as tourism products, which will make them assets worth conserving. However there are some less tangible local attributes that make the travel experience different and unique and that cannot be packaged as a product. These need to be lived and experienced with respect and reverence, and understood as part of what differentiates a place and people. This understanding is ultimately what can affect global connections positively.

4. Methodology

The research project is based on both theoretical and participatory field investigations. The theoretical framework draws a comprehensive illustration of the context as well as providing critical theories relevant to sustainable tourism. The focus of the field research was not a quantitative survey of the potential products, but rather a participatory assessment of the current tourism offerings and the communities' hopes, aimed at defining how to use sustainable tourism as a local development tool to contribute to positive change. This had to be identified by members of the local community and reflect their concerns and aspirations. Consequently, the field work constitutes a major part of this research.

My field research started in July and extended to August 6th 2015. It was planned following the protocol of the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES) at York University and approved according to the Canadian human research code of ethics. Before the field course of May 2014, I received the approval for my research proposal, but I did not plan my field research in detail at that time. Before the startup of the course, I came in early to San Jose and took one of the most popular tours of Costa Rica. A tour to coffee processing plant managed by the big local brand name: Britt Coffee. The field course was my first-hand experience in Latin American rural areas and during which I visited the Corridor for the first time, where, for one week, I was observing the environment and the social dynamics while I was almost invisible within a group of 30 students. During the course we visited the indigenous territories of the Boruca people, where I could compare the common and difference points between indigenous communities

and traditional communities like the Corridor's. After the course I met with an expert in rural tourism from ACTUAR, a major organization in the field. In July, 2014 I went back to Costa Rica, stayed in San Jose for few days for meetings and then headed to the Corridor where I engaged in participatory research with the local community until August with a couple of visits to San Jose and to San Isidro for meetings with stakeholders.

May 2014	May 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	July 2014	July 2014	July 2014	August 2014	August 2014
San Jose and coffee tour	One week stay in the Corridor	Visit to indigenous territories	San Jose meeting with ACTUAR	San Jose meeting with experts	Stay in the Corridor, meetings with community, tourism providers, CCT, Bernina owners	San Isidro meetings with stakeholders: hotel manager and craft shop owner, travel agent	San Jose second meeting with ACTUAR, city tour	The Corridor communal workshop meetings with the heads of the development committee, focus group	San Jose visit to ICT information centre
Observation	Field Course	Independent research	Approved field research						

Table 2 Field research time line

Most of the field work time was spent in the Corridor, but some important meetings were held in San Isidro and San Jose. Beyond the Corridor, my research work extended to interviews with tourism stakeholders. I also met with San Jose-based experts and organizations specializing in rural tourism development. These meetings were essential to inquire into the promise of linkages development across the tourism industry supply chain.

Between July and August I met with people from the community who have tourism offerings, mostly in Santa Elena and Quizerra, and group leaders like the Women's Association

of the Biological Corridor of Alexander Skutch (AMACOBAS--Association de Mujeres de Corridor Biologico de Alexander Skutch), the Coco-Forest group and local development committees (associations de desarrollo). We also met with institutions that have a local presence, such as CCT Tropical Sciences Centre (CCT--Centro Cientifico Tropical) and The Agriculture Cooperative (COOPEAGRI). In San Isidro we interviewed people who are candidates for the supply chain: hotels, craft shops, the head of COOPEAGRI's tourism department, as well as tour agents. I also had several meetings in San Jose with NGOs working on tourism development (e.g., ACEPESA and ACTUAR). In the end, the field research plan was designed based on the information required, the method of inquiry, specific participatory activity and the information source.

4.1. Field research tools and methods

I easily and quickly got engaged with the local communities. The meetings I had with the experts in San Jose, as well as my first visit, during the field course, gave a background of the rural Costa Rica context and allowed me to start up my time in the Corridor as a locally informed researcher, not only a reader. I started easily and was quickly engaged into the local routine of daily life. While considering the factor of the anthropologist intervention, my approach was to become an insider,

The research used participatory approaches and methods. Inspired by Chambers participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and considering his reviews of the original methods and my own experience using these methods earlier in my career life. I also used the World Café method for the communal meeting where people sat in groups of tables, engaged into their own group conversations and then shared their findings with the whole group. This method

allowed all participants to have a voice and input as it is easier for some introverted people to engage into small conversations than to speak in front of a big group. This method also engages writing and drawing; in sum it is inclusive as it gives a voice to all members and fosters a safe environment for the vulnerable (Brown, 2010).

All the field research was carefully designed with my supervisor professor, Felipe Montoya Greenheck, prior to the field work, and closely followed up with him during the implementation stage. When I found out that I needed to change direction for part of my research²¹, I consulted with my supervisor and we agreed on the approach and the methods. The collective workshop was anticipated before my trip, but the need for it was confirmed in the field. It was co-organized with a group of young high school and university students, and was attended by more than 20 participants. One focus group was conducted to review the workshop findings and first analysis.

My work in the Corridor extended beyond interviews, surveys and meetings. In the communal meeting and the focus group organized with the community the methods of PRA and World Café were applied (Chambers, 2007) (Brown, 2010). In those meetings the people sit in groups, engage into their own group conversations and then share their findings with the whole group. This method allows all participants to have a voice and all inputs will be considered. This method also engages writing and drawing giving room for the introverted to

²¹ from individual interviews to collective workshop

express themselves. In sum we the methods used in collective meetings where inclusive, it gives a voice to all members and fosters a safe environment for the vulnerable²².

I participated in communal meetings and took part in meetings of local development associations as they were happening, where I presented the results of the workshop and the purpose of my research. I also attended a birthday celebration, a local festival (Feria de Monte Carlo) and a mass in the Church of Santa Elena, in addition to afternoons spent in the local coffee shop. My extended presence allowed me to observe the local dynamics and understand the local tensions. The research methods, different activities, and various information sources are summarized as:

Research Component	Method	Activity	Information source
Community well-being and aspirations (Montoya and Drews 2006)	Collective workshop	A1	Local community
	Individual interviews	Questionnaire Semi-regulated interviews	Local tourism providers Local activist group leaders
	PRA--Focus Group and Group discussions	Participatory mapping Discussions	Local community
Sustainable tourism capacities (Lett, 1983) (Honey , 1999)	Individual interviews	Questionnaire	Local community
	Desk research	Paper review and conversation	Galaski's paper
	Interviews with stakeholders	Interviews	Stakeholders
Supply Chain	Collective workshop	Group discussions	Local community

²² <http://www.theworldcafe.com/pdfs/WorldCafe.pdf>

connection (Mitchell & Ashley, 2012)	Individual interviews	and community presentations	Questionnaire	Regional tourism providers
	PRA--Focus Group and group discussions	Participatory mapping discussions and written results	Semi-regulated interviews	Rural Tourism experts
Global Context (Palmer & Molina , 2006),	Literature review	Economic parameters review	Official references and published reports	
	Literature review	Concepts of definition and academic discourse	Specialists and academics	

Table 3 Summary of research methods

4.2. The participants

The people I interviewed and met with, I selected from beyond the Corridor and across disciplines related to the tourism sector (i.e., travel agents, local tourism providers, hotel managers, not-for-profit organizations) and from sub-sectors like craft makers in the Corridor and trader souvenir shop owners in San Isidro. The collective meetings were particularly important. I could observe and register the dynamics between the people and among different groups. It was equally interesting for the locals to carry on a collective conversation and share their different opinions and knowledge²³.

For four weeks during July and August, I lived with a local family In the Corridor. I worked on my interviews in the mornings, and spent lunch and dinner with my host family. In the early morning and late evening I would join them in giving out milk to neighbours who

²³ The people expressed their interest in holding further collective meetings and that they were pleased to share information and be part of a dynamic discussion aimed at strategic decisions with regard to sustainable tourism.

would pick it up from the house. I joined in local activities, including kids' homework time, family gatherings, Sunday church mass, public events and a private birthday party.

The collective sessions were also beneficial, not only because of the information collected, but also to observe the dynamics of the discussions between community members. The two collective sessions that I organized (in collaboration with the local team) were the communal workshop, where members of the community had the chance to discuss tourism potentials; and a focus group held two days after the workshop to wrap up and discuss the results of the workshop and my field research. (see Table 2 for a detailed summary of these methods)

Meetings	Relevance to the research	Number of people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The communal workshop 	Local community members	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two meetings with the local development associations (Monte Carlo and San Stephano) 	Local Leaders	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective meeting with MAG at ICT (participants: 2 MAG, 1 MENAI, 2 CCT, 1 Coco-Forest, 3 AMACOBAS, 2 AMSE, 2 heads of local development associations from San Stephano and San Ignacio, 1 school teacher representing UNEP) 	Local activists and experts	Participants (14) are not directly part of the research input
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meetings with the 10 hotels in San Isidro 	Regional stakeholders	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting with a tour operator in San Isidro 	Regional stakeholder and expert	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting with a crafts shop owner in San Isidro 	Regional stakeholder	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meetings with rural tourism experts in San Jose (4 meetings, 3 organizations) 	National experts and stakeholders	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual meetings with tourism entrepreneurs in the Corridor 	Local community members	26
Total		82 Participants

Table 4 Research participants

4.3. The approach

This study employed a praxis methodology practice (Freire, 2005), using applied participatory methods as explained above. The local community members who provide tourism or who have potentials to provide tourism activities are considered “the entrepreneurs” and were the focus of the research. Just as I was embarking on my field research trip, I received a database and tourism data from a study produced in 2009 into the potential of sustainable tourism in the Corridor. To make my own research a continuation and not a repetition of that study, my plans changed direction.

With the baseline data already collected, I continued my field research plans of working with the communities, moving in a market demand-based direction, and started a holistic approach to collecting data and producing information and promotional materials. The participants in the collective meetings wrote their own drafts of their individual brochures. The visits to individual sites had a minimal official survey time and included questions about ideas and market targets rather than the actual offerings. The entrepreneurs guided the team in taking pictures of the basic and the most impressive aspects of their offerings; in the process we were discussing how to differentiate them. The communal meeting was more of a hands-on discussion, debate and interaction between community members rather than an extractive survey or instructive presentation.

The demand/market-based approach

The vision developed in the literature review with the highlight on the supply chain analysis inspired the approach to the field research. The market-based approach is derived from four sources of inspiration: first, my personal commitment to the enhancement of local identity for better global positioning and in respect of sovereignty (Edwards, 2013); second, a new demand-based approach to sustainable tourism development²⁴, which overrides the community-based approach (Edwards, 2013) (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005); third, the new guidelines for adopting an impact investment approach as a mainstream economic development option (WEF 2015); and fourth, the importance of prioritizing linkages development, on the supply-chain level within and across the tourism industry as well as other industries (Edwards, 2013) (IUCN, SPNL, 2007) (Galaski, 2008).

The reason for taking this approach is to avoid having destinations and local communities develop products that lack market demand (Ashley, 2006, vol. 23). This is an anomaly specific to tourism, based on product development and assessment of local potential, like the community-based approach. While there are lots of success stories that were developed using this approach, it is not guaranteed and there are also many examples where the product should have been better positioned and compatible with the market (Edwards, 2013) (Honey, 2009) (Lett, 1983), as the actual selling of the product involves substantial time and financial commitment from the tourist. While international development programs supported community-based enterprise (CBE) in the millennium's first decade, now there is an

²⁴ on global and national levels and matching measure to the millennium development goals adopted by the United Nations (UN) and other development organizations like the United States Development Agency for International Aid (USAID) and the World Bank (WB) among others.

insistence on sustainability and enabling the environment (UNWTO, 2012). This trend of demand-based, public/private sector partnerships, as well as the call for impact investment and belief in social entrepreneurs, is becoming main stream rather than a novelty in the world of investment and finance.

The research has respectfully included local community knowledge. I tried my best to avoid an extractive approach (Freire, 2005) (Chambers, 2007) and instead adopted an attitude that engaged people and gave them ownership. The information gathered reflects their needs and views and is intended to result in tools and materials that allow them to showcase the local community's tourism offerings. This will not only be a promotional tool, but also a way to determine the position in the market. The promotional kit, the listing in the flyer, the contacts that will be featured, the places to exhibit and distribute this information will all be part of the materials produced as part of this research and are the same materials to discuss in an action plan. In fact, they are very useful working documents on the agenda for any start-up tourism initiative. They will help identify the people who should be invited to participate²⁵. The final content to be distributed and printed is therefore a self-assessment.

This aspect fosters a proposal with home-grown solutions, with general and specific objectives and activities that will make an action plan proposal that will allow its authors to recruit partners and obtain seed funding for a comprehensive tourism initiative in the Corridor. Another aspect of the participatory approach is the fact that all interviews and workshops were co-led with at least one person from the local community. To get contacts and to initiate

²⁵ They include lists of tour guides, local tourism providers, stakeholders, potential partners, group leaders, etc.

conversations easily, I needed a companion with local knowledge. My first local knowledge source was my supervisor, professor Felipe Montoya who in his turn introduced me to a research assistant/ translator/interpreter Puri Linfa, and to the local contact of York University Luis Angel Rojas. The language barrier was a good justification to get the locals to help me, but also limited my opportunities to work with people who spoke both English and Spanish.



Figure 8 The local bakery team and I



Figure 9 Monte Carlo 'Fiesta'

4.4. Obstacles and adjustments

Living within the community and being engaged full-time in the Corridor activities added a special insight to my overall research. I tried not to only take part with a specific group--to whom my host family and Luis Angel²⁶ belonged to-- the coco forest. I insistently visited and invited all other active group members and leaders to engage them in the communal meetings.

The field research confirmed some preconceptions, such as the communities being ready for tourism development, and excluded others, like the notion that the communities are ready to connect to the market and have ready products.

²⁶ Luis Angel Rojas is York University contact in the corridor. He was a great support and he was taking me around voluntarily almost every day of my stay in the corridor.

There were also some personal challenges, especially as this was my first time in a country where I did not fluently speak the language. The questions and conversations were conducted in Spanish through an interpreter. I had four interpreters at different times, all of whom were very helpful but not trained for simultaneous translation. I would have a professional interpreter in a communal meeting next time.

4.5. Previous research data

During my desk research I discovered another FES master's paper done in the Corridor, as mentioned above. The study entitled "Community-based Tourism for Sustainable Development in the Alexandre Skutch Biological Corridor, Southern Costa Rica" (Galaski, 2008) summarizes the tourism offerings in the Corridor. It is an extensive paper that includes data collection, analysis and recommendations. It lists all the major fincas in the Corridor, their owners' names, their sizes in hectares and what they offer, in detail. It reflects the willingness of the people to accept more tourism and their recognition of the needs for capacity-building to reach where they want to be. The paper not only endorses the organization of TURE-COBAS²⁷, but also develops a plan for its establishment as a "local social enterprise" (Galaski, 2008). As stated in her paper, this organization is intended to specialize in tourism development and to carry some destination management capacities, with plans to evolve into a tour operator in the future.

As stated earlier, the discovery of this research paper, as well as conversations with Ms. Galaski, affected my research direction. Specifically, it reinforced my conviction to follow a

²⁷ Turecobas: is the tourism organization for the corridor, it started around 2008 but not active anymore

market-based approach, as well providing information that put my research work many steps away from a first-visit starting point. In fact, her analysis of the potential for sustainable tourism in the Corridor gave me some insights into the local situation. As well, the fact that the data were already collected allowed me to focus on starting up a dialogue and to explore collective visions. I also posed the question for myself of whether tourism development is the preferred option, and what type of tourism is best. It is worth noting that Ms. Galaski now has a different vision than she had at the time she wrote her paper²⁸.

²⁸ I believe she is an amazing resource for any tourism initiative and I believe she would be eager to take part in future tourism development venture if the timing was convenient for her.

5. Summary of the field research

The importance of the field research is that it represents the local community's needs and aspirations that constitute the vision behind the proposed project (Appendix A). The framework of the project is based on direct and indirect findings identified in the field. For example, it was found to be important to recognize and address the local tensions within the community because it fosters a positive impact of the research itself and it helps in addressing those issues during the process of the initiative of developing sustainable tourism to reduce conflicts within the communities rather than fueling them. Of equal importance is the consolidation of a project with short- and long-term goals and including risks, for the community to be engaged, they need to see tangible results in a timely manner. Also to have more effective results, I suggest that we allow time for locally grown solutions to develop. Another aspect to be considered as a result of the research is the consideration of community members as social entrepreneurs, people who are eager to invest their time to make a sustainable change and to contribute to the collective good. The group workshops and meetings were an excellent opportunity to identify and involve these people. The field research also verified the concept of "coopetition" as a valid proposition to construct the project upon.

5.1. List of community needs and aspirations

This list is directly related to the tourism development initiative. It reflects and voices the local communities as they were visualizing it and as they have already thought about it and imagined it.

There is a need for training in the areas of customer service, English language skills and food handling.

- Community awareness of sustainable tourism's benefits is high, and there is consistent willingness to bring tourists to the area.
- Linkages with the market are needed, which community members understand, but they do not know how to tackle this problem. In spite of this, they feel they do not need a "middleman" or a third party to make that connection.
- There is a need for a third party for working on conflict resolution.
- Education tourism market expansion is wanted and needed but people are cautious about it for the following reasons:
 - The community members do not have a clear idea about how to proceed in a common initiative
 - There is skepticism about the quality of the tourism services already offered and the level of tolerance of new groups (there is a long-term relationship with York University and a Quebec high school as customers).
 - They are worried about accepting more tourism as they fear for their own security and safety; they do not want to explore markets they do not know.

The attached tourism initiative proposal includes major and specific objectives and suggests corresponding activities that are related to the challenges identified. This is a working document that still needs to be discussed with the local communities with the party who would be implementing the initiative: the CCT. In the start-up phase of the tourism initiative this study

and the review of the proposal attached will produce a hands-on, action-oriented project plan based on a partnership between the local communities of the Corridor and preferred partner organizations, identified to date as the CCT.

This section takes the summary of the field research and prepares for the recommendations. It justifies the rationale behind the project and the approach of the field research. It also outlines the theoretical research and demonstrates how that connects to the field research.

5.2. The current and potential products and markets

The tourism offerings in the Corridor are abundant, but also simple. They are integrated with the campesino life; therefore on the one hand they are not defined as a distinct tourism product or package, and on the other hand they are genuine and authentic. This section summarizes the research findings and lays out the research analysis.

The people of the Corridor know that there is room for more growth and there are potential markets in the region, but they are reluctant to invest further or to open their region to tourism. Almost every other house can offer a tourism product. But these products are not obvious or accessible to passersby. It is through local contacts and long-term relations that the major tourism activities are established. These activities are based on connections with two Canadian institutions: a Quebec-based youth volunteering organization²⁹ and York University. These activities fall under the umbrella of education tourism.

²⁹ Aire International

The education tourism from Canada is in the form of groups that visit the corridor two times per year. The Quebec group consists of 15- to 19-year-old high school students stay for 10 days, two students per house. They usually spend the day accompanying people in the house and volunteering for chores (e.g., helping the farmer pick up coffee or sugar cane in the field, playing soccer games with the local kids, cooking and collecting wood for fire, assisting in the cooking and household chores)³⁰. The group gets together often but not necessarily every day. The organizers prefer that the students stay in eco-friendly, traditionally-built homes. When the teenagers return home, very few become repeat visitors like the visitors of Eugene Valverde and Ana Mercedes. Some keep connections with their host families though, sending cards, letters, and pictures albums.

The York university students are undergraduates and graduate students of different ages. The students make two types of trips. Few independent visitors visit as independent researchers (Galaski, 2008) (Edwards, 2013). One group visit takes place as part of a field course trip once a year. The groups are divided in groups of two to three students per household. The group gets together every morning for a field trip and comes back in the evening. The gathering of the group happens by bus, the students being collected from the different houses. Part of the tour in the Corridor included meals in a local restaurant, group lunch at a coffee processing plant and coffee time in the local bakery shop, and the participation in the festival of Alexandre Skutch.

³⁰ Interviews with Ana Mercedes and Romelo

5.3. Summary of facts and suggestions

This section summarizes the research findings to make it easier and accessible to discuss with the local communities. While I tried my best for the research to be inclusive, I also acknowledge that there might have been some pitfalls or gaps and for that, I suggest to review the summary with the local community as a start up for a new participatory initiative of developing tourism. As explained earlier in this paper (focus and audiences section: 1.4) it is foreseen that the CCT will start up this initiative.

The current private tourism offerings:

- Home stays for education groups (2 per year); around 20 houses in each community offer this service
- Eco-lodges and cabins (Isidro Cepsedes Bejarano, Angie Hernandez among others)
- Los Cusingos (week-long researchers, and one-day visitors)
- Packages organized for local school visits³¹
- Horseback riding
- Restaurants and kitchen facilities offering Tilapia lunch (e.g., Bajo del Mapache)
- Tilapia pond fishing
- Swimming pools

The current common offerings include:

- Hiking, walking in the forest
- River-swimming and picnicking
- Bird watching
- Cycling

The present tourism markets are:

- Visitors to los Cusingos
- The continuous domestic tourism market, especially on weekends: bird watchers, cyclists, and family weekenders

³¹ Interviews with Jeanette, Raquel and Jemana

- Two Canadian educational institutions
- Local school visits
- Domestic market (one-day and weekend family trips)
- Ecotourism--birding in Los Cusingos and in Las Nubes
- Niche sports--cycling and horseback riding

The potential tourism offerings, as suggested by local community members:

- Water sport activities like tubing or kayaking
- Canope rides

The potential target markets

- Hotels in San Isidro (business tourism)
- More schools from domestic markets
- More education tourism from US and Canada
- Voluntourism
- Camping
- MICE tourism team building day tours (part of package)
- Canadian market, to be explored for:
 - Education sector to being more education tourism
 - Neighbours, expats in the Vista Chirripo
 - Connections to be developed between impact investors and small local entrepreneurs

Facts from research findings:

- The community members are competing to sell their tourism offerings, which are creating conflict within the communities of the Corridor. (weakness)
- A local tourism association, TURECOBAS, was formed around 2009 and produced brochures but did not succeed in fulfilling its mission and ambitious plans. (lesson learned)
- The local activist groups acting under the umbrella of CoBAS are: Coco Forest, and AMACOBAS. The latter includes AMESE, AMUQ, as well as the heads of the development

committees (locally called Association de Desarrollo). CoBAS is one of a type of association made up of community-based groups. (Strength)

- Some attraction sites that are subject to communal tension:
 - the hot water source in Bernina;
 - the petroglyphs in general and in particular a substantial one on the land of an American expat;
 - the access to the river, as in the case of the river next to San Isidro (threat of creating conflicts that might grow with the growth of tourism).

- COOPEAGRI runs a hotel in Uvita beach and is marketing it and managing reservations through Trip Advisor (there is potential to connect to that or to develop a beach/mountain package).

- Hotels (approximately 15) in San Isidro are interested in sending tourists to the Corridor on day trips, provided they would have a quality experience. Hotels in San Isidro and Mount Chirripo have an average occupancy of 80% during the weekdays, with an average of 100 rooms per hotel (approximately 2000 tourists spending an average of two night per week). (Opportunity)

In view of the above-cited facts, it is my belief that a significant point to consider in the development of sustainable tourism resides with the locals as the driving force and as owners of the project. There is a relative readiness in the local community to receive responsible travelers. The current market is not yet fully exploited. Therefore there are potentials to build on the current market and to further develop specific tourism products accordingly.

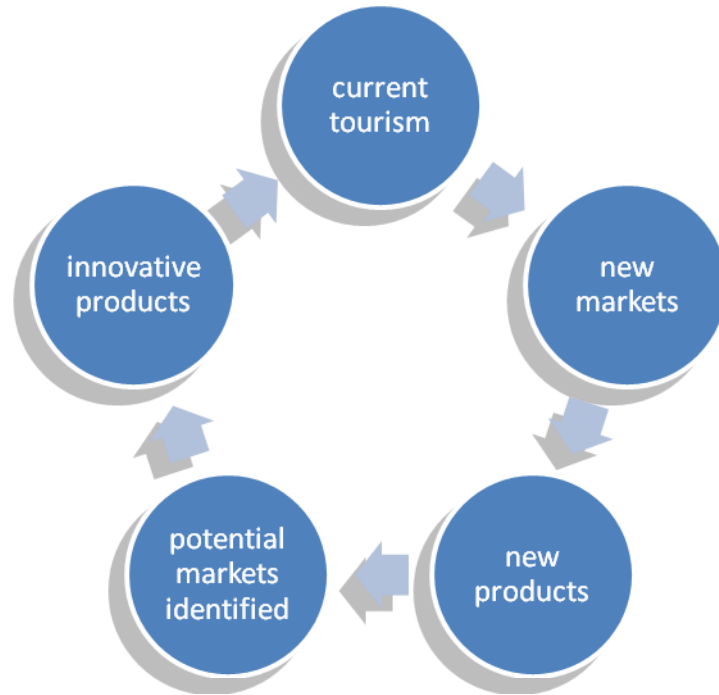


Figure 10 Product/market development cycle

The table below illustrates part of the SWOT analysis that resulted from the workshop. The specific suggestions are made in terms of product development and marketing. These are part of the documents that need to be reviewed with the local communities at the early stages of the implementation of the tourism initiative.

Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
Worldly renown site of Alexander Skutch house	Not equitable tourism and creating conflict	Assured student tourism market	Unbalanced tourism benefits
Concentrated biodiversity attracting research and education tourism	Use of resources and loss of peace of mind	Enthusiastic youth	Dams
Distinctive life style with openness to share	Product not diverse & not clear (no pricing for activities)	National programs for capacity building	Loss of security and safety
Willing communities with time resources	Lack of financial resources	Reviving traditions & preserving them	Lack of community collaboration
Open to build connections	Lack of knowledge of the local potentials	Awareness of the need for developing skills	No written history about the region
Tranquility	Enthusiasm based on local vision	Alliances with strategic partners	

Table 5 Summary of the participatory SWOT analysis

5.4. Propositions for action

The first draft of this section was developed in the field. It is mainly the analysis of the research findings that was also discussed with a local focus group that followed the workshop. These recommendations are action oriented, therefore addressed to many audiences including the local communities and stakeholders. Following is a list of strategic actions that need to be incorporated within a plan for tourism development in the Corridor:

- To develop potential linkages and promotional materials to distribute in San Isidro to hotels, tour agents and NGOs working in tourism;
- To study the tourism initiative proposal with a view to securing funding from donor organizations;
- To report the need for better connections with York University and develop models for community tourism implementation and equity of tourism opportunities distribution;
- The information materials gathered need to remain in the community;
- Investing in sustainable tourism would make a positive impact when it is done in cooperation with the community and in keeping with their plans for development;
- To include an information kit and map of the tourism offerings in the area;
- To look for opportunities for capacity building.

The tables below, depict one option to elaborate and develop a list of actions based on the findings of the research, in specific the SWOT analysis findings. It is preferable though to do this exercise with the community for the four elements of the SWOT analysis. A potential activity in the future workshop is planned for the launch of the tourism initiative.

Research finding	Recommendations for action on two levels	
Strengths	Product development	Market
Concentrated biodiversity attracting research and education tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ use visitors' presence as a working force and a momentum for: engaging local youth in work and building further connections ➤ Create community projects to engage volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Education ➤ Visitors reviews in social media ➤ Volunteering for conservation
Distinctive lifestyle with openness to share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ specify clear products to serve experiential education market ➤ identify daily and seasonal activities as local cultural productions ➤ transform local cultural productions into tourism products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ wellness market ➤ social media marketing ➤ develop branding that is distinctive in the market with themes such as: culinary experiences, Pura Vida lifestyle, happy destination, stewards of paradise
Willing communities with time resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ capacity building for entrepreneurial skills development, product development research, collective initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ attract impact investors and connect with locals as social entrepreneurs ➤ take members of the community to market, end at trade shows to see what they are competing with and how it is marketed
Open to building connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Family connections and exchange program ➤ 1-day trip with lifestyle themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cultural discovery ➤ Culinary tours (golden age, schools, research), connection between

Tranquility		people and nature
	➤ Product must be inclusive ³² and diversified to benefit all	➤ Relate to conservation and wellness; fair trade market

Table 6 Research findings and recommendations based on Strengths

Research finding	Recommendations for action on two levels	
	Product	Market
Not equitable tourism and creating conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ diversify the products, use system of shared profit or rotating businesses, have a committee and/or representatives from each community involved in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ develop new targeted markets
Use of resources and loss of peace of mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ consider impact of products before development and how to measure/control this impact later. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ sustainable, green, responsible target market ➤ communicate impact to lessen severity
Product not diverse & not clear (no pricing for activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ work on innovation in product development ➤ use inspiring materials and build on local capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ connect to travel agents and other tourism experts to advise on product types
Lack of financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ relate products to conservation for donor funding ➤ partner with institutions for funding ➤ partner with investors who can bring the market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ maintain existing markets (very important) ➤ slow market growth ➤ explore use of social media and online resources for promotion
Lack of knowledge of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ call for collective meetings and workshop for product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ connect to local markets like the hotels in San

³²Involvement of all the community in the process with attention to vulnerable groups (women, youth, family housing located out of traffic zone, in

the local potentials	development and make locals take tours and try the products	Isidro and Alta Gracia
Incompatible tourism product as a result of enthusiasm based on local vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ bring in local expert who did similar work with other communities in Costa Rica and internationally ➤ bring to the community examples of local and international products that they can relate to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ organize local community participation and international tradeshows (exhibitors or visitors) ➤ visit other communities who have success stories in developing sustainable tourism

Table 7 Research findings and recommendations-based on Weaknesses

6. Discussion

The key aspects identified in the field point to the need for a strategic plan, funding and endorsement from the local communities. The Corridor is experiencing several interventions happening at present: York University's new Lilian Wright Centre, due to open in November 2015 in Las Nubes; the decision within CCT (the research centre managing Los Cusingos) to strengthen their activities and connection with the communities; the recent opening of the Alta Gracia hotel in January 2015; and the development projects like Vista Chirripo (Faculty of Environmental Studies York University, 2014) (El-Osta, 2014). In addition to these are propositions like the hydroelectric dams and monocrops. This section will recognize the difficulty of this transition, and highlight the potentials for the local communities to decide whether to consider development proposals: either initiating a comprehensive plan to develop tourism, which would require concerted efforts in order to guarantee success; or opting for other proposals that will transform their land, such as hydroelectric dams or monocrops (El-Osta, 2014)

6.1. Supply chain and linkages

The expansion of sustainable tourism and its impact in rural areas was studied by Ashley and Haysom (2008). They consider that sustainable tourism has great potential for alleviating poverty. They followed tourism procurement, using supply chain analysis and case studies. Their research concluded that the one of the most significant benefits to the poor and rural communities generated from the tourism industry occurred from fresh produce--Food &

Beverage (F&B)--procurement. The second benefit to local communities comes from services such as cleaning and laundry. Supporting rural communities to become suppliers to the F&B procurement department in resorts impacted the communities through direct and indirect revenues. Direct revenues were in the form of the transactions between the provider and the tourism resort and indirect revenues were from the expenses that the direct revenues generate in the community. (Ashley, 2006, vol. 23) (Mitchell & Ashley, 2012). These studies were conducted as part of the supply chain analysis to advise private and public sectors about connections that have the potential to lead to the expansion of economic activities in marginalized communities through sustainable tourism.

These studies took place in the context of South Africa, but can also be applied to Costa Rica. This is especially beneficial in growing destinations where local policies encourage certifications for fair trade and eco-friendly businesses. This is the case in Costa Rica where there are two related types of certification--the Green Leafs and Blue Flag certifications.

In the corridor, there is a need for linkages with the market. This can be done within the tourism industry, called Business to Business (B2B), or directly with customers (B2C). Both are called Vertical Linkages, connecting the producer to the end market. There are however other horizontal linkages that may be of equally important: opportunities for linkages across other industries, especially the agribusiness that can relate directly to tourism activities in the area. Suggestions for a wide range of linkages are featured in this table. These connections were identified in the workshop and during the focus group, in the map exercise as well as.

Potential connections and linkages			
Tourism & capacity building	ICT certification system: Blue Flag, Green Leaves	Costa Rica	B2C ³³
	Travel agents and hotels in San Isidro	Regional	B2B and B2C
	Air B&B	International	B2C
	G adventures and Planeterra	International/Canada	B2B
	Geotourism	International/US	B2B
	Trails friendship	International	B2B
	Expotur	Costa Rica and International	B2B
	Turisur or other regional association (s)	Regional	B2B
	Operationsgroundwell.com	Canada	B2B & B2C
	Agro industry	COOPEAGRI	Regional
http://www.birdsandbeans.ca/		Canada	B2B & B2C
Slow food movement (Patricia Sanchez)		Costa Rica	B2B
https://www.coffeecology.com/		Canada	B2B

Table 8 Potential connections

³³ B2B is business to business connection, and B2C is Business to Customer

6.2. The social entrepreneur and impact investor

Motivated by my passion for community empowerment, I became familiar with the concept of the “social entrepreneur”. While economic empowerment is not an end, in my opinion, I also recognize that lack of monetary capital has been an obstacle in the advancement of productive activities in rural, marginalized communities for a long time. In respect of local communities who have priceless capital in their own human capacity and sovereignty, I do not support micro loans with high interests, charity, or philanthropic acts, which I equate to charity. This led me to review of some alternative economic theories, particularly Dureen Shehnaz’s theory of impact investment and social capitalism that gives actual recognition to the human capital within local communities.

Shehnaz considers self-determining entrepreneurs as capital (2013), an idea that resonates with Montoya and Drew’s concept of human capital. As a result, I developed a new point of view looking at economic development through investment as a force that can be directed toward holistic long-term gain, rather than short-term extractive profit (Shehnaz, 2013) (IIX, 2010). In my opinion, these theories, already put in practice, are an exciting alternative to the aid and development projects that are now dominating the connections between the global north and global south.

Shehnaz developed an organization that connects “impact investors” with social entrepreneurs. It is a not-for-profit organization that promotes holistic achievements by promoting investment beyond monetary profit. The social entrepreneurs are in most cases women in rural areas, working in groups toward a common goal. The project needs to make a

profit for both the entrepreneur(s) and the investor(s). The success of the project is measured not solely by monetary profit, but also by the contribution it makes within the local, social and environmental context. This is a simplified picture of a complex system that could be ideal for making global connections between people who have the monetary capital (global citizens) and the people (local citizens) who have the human capital, social entrepreneurs like the inhabitants of the Corridor.

The beauty of this concept, from my perspective, is that its basic unit is the social entrepreneur, like those active and dedicated people we met in rural communities in the Corridor (Montoya, 2009). This approach respects the sovereignty of marginalized people and builds on the reality that their eagerness to achieve is often hindered by the urgent need of seeking resources (in most cases initial funds) (forum, 2015). Shehnaz has transformed the concepts of development aid and charity into impactful connections between dedicated entrepreneurs and committed investors. Both parties have a mutual interest in producing effective and efficient results, unlike the development project that is calling for efficiency but has conflicting interests. In the Corridor, the nature of the stakeholders allows for those values to flourish, creating an enabling environment for both elements--the marginalized but active and eager local community members who can be identified as social entrepreneurs, and the not-for-profit and private sector stakeholders (York U, CCT, Bernina-Vista Chirripo real estates, and Alta Gracia hotel, among others) some of whom can attract or identify as impact investors.

To return to the national level, there are no clear incentives for impact investment on the national level, at least not through the national investment authority (CINDE), however

there are local policies that encourage similar approaches. For example, the Blue Flag and the Green Leaves certifications are systems that would help with the implementation of impact investment values and with measuring the impact. If local entrepreneurs seek capacity building or engage in becoming Blue Flag and Green Leaves certified, they would be well able to monitor the impact of their businesses on natural and social environments. Those certifications, among others, could be part of the guidelines for attracting investors and engaging stakeholders (i.e., recruiting support for the project proposal).

6.3. Global positioning

Both the impact investors and the social entrepreneurs are seeking financial profit, but also want to have a positive social and environmental impact. It is a model of inclusivity, bottom to top growth (Montoya,2013) This approach uses the power of capital to deconstruct capitalism and reinvent relations between global north and global south, away from the development project concept that is criticized by scholars like Escobar, Reddy and McMichael. On the global level, the existence of development programs and their growth depends on the number of people living below the poverty line (Reddy, 2006). On the micro level, the more marginalized communities there are, the more accessible their natural and cultural resources are for exploitation.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, impact investment was making its way to the mainstream investment field (WEF, 2015). While this is a developing trend in Europe (Paris xx conference) it is becoming an established trend in some parts of Asia, and Australia (Shahnaz, 2013) but is still a novelty in the South America. In Costa Rica, while impact investment is not an

established system, it is beneficial to understand its relationship to the social entrepreneur concept and to consider its values while encouraging business-to-business linkages and partnerships within the tourism sector.

6.4. Local identity and cultural productions

On the local level In Costa Rica, in the indigenous Chorotega territories, Karen Stocker has studied the potential threats of tourism in traditional and indigenous communities and concluded that tourists' interventions may spur the revival of traditions (Stocker, 2013). She stresses that the important lessons learned from sharing traditional knowledge brings mutual respect, reduces alienation and highlights the differences between cultural experiences. First, Stocker stresses the fact that the youth of the local communities would learn from involvement with the production of the traditional experience, folk dance or craft manufacturing (e.g., the making and dyeing of the cotton threads in the Boruca). As well as taking pride in learning and presenting, where the production is well received by the tourist, the whole experience would encourage pride in their local identity.

In this way, the youth can become local entrepreneurs. They would become carriers of their traditional culture and there is the chance it could evolve into an artistic form, like the masks of the Boruca, which are considered a national art form (see Appendix xx label of the mask of the Boruca). These traditions becoming cultural productions not only leads to the continuation of local cultural heritage, but also to the conservation of natural heritage through the revival of old traditional methods using natural resources. As in the example of the Boruca forest, the Bombacaceae trees (see figure 4) are essential to the community, as their balsa wood is used by

many local craft shops (Hammel, 1996) for masks and decorative sculpture (see figure 4). In this way, local flora is encouraged to flourish, as the tree is the source of local income.

These cultural productions are different from the agricultural products, as they need to be experienced in their environment, thereby bringing local currency and hard currency (export money) into rural areas otherwise marginalized. Some aspects of local culture cannot be described in books and brochures; they lose their value when captured in global forms of communication, like written expression (ref. singing the land signing he land). As Said argued in *Orientalism*, when one culture is depicted by a visitor from another culture it is always subjected to the writer's point of view and therefore may be misunderstood or not fully translatable. The writer is "othering" the subject of his writing, even if it is done with goodwill. This is why sustainable tourism is important for global relations, because it builds real connections. Those connections take the form of mutual investment and family-like relations, and involve sharing, exchange and mutual respect. It is like the biblical experience of breaking bread.

An example of a form of cultural production that needs to be experienced to be understood is the Wabi Sabi (Koren, 2008), of Japan. One attempt to write about it fails to offer even a definition, instead depicting the controversy that the idea of publishing a book created among people who support the Wabi Sabi. It is alternately described as a way of living, a lifestyle, an event or a school of thought. It is the sum of many things put together within a defined environment at a specific time. One manifestation of the Wabi Sabi is the Shinto Shrine,

a shrine that is disassembled and built with new materials every 20 years, using the same exact methods and form as the first construction.

A similar example in the Corridor is the Pura Vida concept. While this term could be a national brand of Costa Rica, it connotes the simple way of life that the communities of the Corridor live every day. They manifest this concept beautifully, wherein the people create their own happiness from what would seem to us very limited means. The concept of Pura Vida is simply the inexplicable “savoir vivre” of a people.

The many ideas and approaches discussed propose a set of options for the local communities and their partners to take action. That is why the sustainable tourism initiative proposal here informs the project that is proposed. They are mentioned here in the context of the project.

6.5. The rationale of the project

The unusual opportunity that a collective action-oriented project brings to a community is to explore hands-on the meaning of stewardship. It is acknowledged in the findings of the field research that in the Corridor there is lack of coordination and collaboration (El-Osta, 2014). In fact, this sometimes reaches the level of conflict and competition--although this could be considered a threat, I prefer to think of it as competition rather than conflict. It is possible to capitalize on this competitive spirit while discussing actions and organizing collective meetings and workshops. This would happen during the planning of the sustainable tourism initiative, while presenting the project in distinct parts. This way, each group/individual can own a part of the project, depending on their preferences and strengths (see graph below as a blueprint for

identifying owners). With this approach, the project builds on the actual strengths and is intended as a solution to conflict among community groups.

Project parts with committed owners to lead initiatives

	Actions	Owners (Anticipated) TBD in workshop
Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop packages—all regions all seasons Propose incentive for retail sale Build a network of industry suppliers throughout the supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tour guides Hotel receptionists and tour guides TBD
Online presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop website content Launched website Develop booking capacity Establish dynamic elements, news letters, calendar of events, update packages Respond to customer and SME inquiries; provide B2C and B2B connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> York University CAMARA-COOPEAGRI (as an example) INA TURIBUR Selva de Mar
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify target market Media plan (-develop and design messaging- identify target market-outreach through print materials-deliver messaging through media and ambient channels) Build presence on social media Develop image and branding in international trade show Collect and communicate feedback/results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector stakeholders TBD LNSA Youth groups in the community Volunteers TBD
Funding & resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with potential donors/sponsors to recruit and engage target number of sponsors Communicate progress with donors Identify potential in-kind contributors sponsors (year 2- hold a public event) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCT OCT COOPEAGRI CAMARA
Strategic Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and implement functioning structure Quality branding business plan Relation ship with ICT and certification bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD TBD TBD

- Committee is active and activities are well planned for
- Goals are achievable and adopted by key stakeholders
- Actors are leaders
- Tourism committee will be a successful story and a model to pursue

3

Source: researcher analysis

TBD: To Be Determined

Figure 11 Tourism initiative plan as a business project (source: Wafaa El-Osta, January 2015)

7. The recommendations and conclusion

This research was genuinely participatory. The field research was flexible and adapted to the environment. The theoretical research made connections between several theories from a variety of sources, including applied theories like Montoya's human capital and Shehnaz' impact investment. This section depicts the takeaway from the field and the desk research, including input for the communities and analysis from the researcher.

7.1. Next steps

During the development of this research paper, I have found that there is an opportunity to obtain funding for a connection event to be organized by York University to foster the tourism linkages for the corridor communities in support of the CCT initiative. My supervisor, professor Felipe Montoya endorses the idea and we have found a local co-applicant from York University and engaged other collaborators from Costa Rica including CCT. The event engages more than the tourism project and involves researchers from York University the National University and other stakeholders in the regional and national level in Costa Rica. The result of the grant application will be received in July 2015.

The product of this research will be shared with the local communities through different ways: first the promotion kit will be shared with the local community through other York researchers who are visiting the Corridor, like Veronica Diaz and Dana Craig, the documents that they will share are the blue prints of the promotion kit for their comments and their

reviews. It is anticipated that one of the tourism group girls Wendy Valverde would exhibit that in the Alexander Skutch Festival in May 2015.

Later, if the event takes place as planned a summary of the findings of the research, including the proposed tourism initiative project would be discussed depending on the advice of the CCT in regards of potential funding sources.

- To draft promotional materials to distribute in San Isidro to hotels, tour agents and NGOs working in tourism (for immediate linkages development). This will include an information kit about the tourism offerings in the area as well as a map of potential offerings. To report the need for better connections with York University and models for community tourism implementation and equity of tourism opportunities distribution.
- To share with the community information that was gathered, for further strategy and potential investors.
- To recommend that investing in sustainable tourism would make a positive impact when done in cooperation with the community and in coordination with their plans for development.
- The development of one-day tours and cultural events with the aim of marketing them to nearby tourism destinations like hotels in San Isidro and Chirripo National Park
- Develop the York University course trip to have a more positive impact on the communities of the Corridor and reduce conflict. Researcher recommends the following activities as sample of potential activities:

- shadow your host family members throughout one day;
- walk through the village;
- use a public bus to gather the group;
- work with a committee from each community or have the course trip itinerary on the agenda of the CoBAS monthly meetings.

Recommendations for further exploiting the education tourism market to bring more benefits.

- For the community:
 - attract other institutions (like York University and Aire International).
 - have more frequent group stays from the above institutions.
 - create equity of benefit distribution among different communities (e.g., accommodation in Quizarra, lunch with community in Monte Carlo, motel visit in San Francisco). Transportation difficulty could be discussed with the community and group members could use the public bus between villages, or plan the trip so that they do not meet every day.
 - establish a system of quality control through customer reviews and host feedback.
 - include voluntourism as part of the education group trip: work on a project like tree planting or trail cleaning; promotion and social media project (Facebook group, or webpage); assist in the field or with coffee processing, mapping, etc.

- establish a buddy system between visitors and host youth, which may extend beyond the trip (e.g., pen pals)
 - give special offer/incentive for returning visitors when they come with friends or family (e.g., two free nights for a booking of five nights)
 - stay in contact with visitors, and assure a good review or a good 'ambassador' message to be carried out by each guest to induce word of mouth promotion
- For the education group organizers:
 - assist in spreading the word in Canada and in Costa Rica to other organizations that could be potential education groups (like Perez Spanish host families school);
 - recognize local activists' interest for potential research and match with group interest, like Sharqui's project for artists' residency;
 - include voluntourism as part of the group visit, perhaps by calling for proposals from the community prior to the trip (e.g., road opening, coffee pan, backyard seating area or parking space allocation);
 - organize buddy system, with simple activities like walking through the village;
 - include an impact study among the group tasks;
 - connect potential researchers with potential project owners in the corridor, maybe build on the interest from the owner of Bernina in developing a tourism product, especially if it brings an added value to the coffee produced from the corridor; branding the coffee in relation to conservation.

These recommendations reflect my own social entrepreneur spirit and my preference for a “business-like” thinking in developing local initiative. This is to be competitive and to find a balance between the vision of the preference of the local well-being and the competitive global scene of tourism business development.

7.2. Lessons learned

Lessons learned from the field are also deemed useful as recommendations for future researchers. While the questionnaires were simple and well accepted by the participants in the research, the consent forms were not as well received, and the majority of people did not want to keep a copy for their records. The individual interviews were conducted easily and people were tolerant and amused by my lack of Spanish language skills. They loved to show us their places and to have photos taken, but that meant more time per interview, which on average took two hours. Also, we wasted a huge amount of time in the first two days looking for people, as we initially would visit without calling beforehand. We stopped this practice and decided to refer to the data from Galaski’s research (see section 4.5) as well as the names proposed by the locals, participants, and tourism group.

The activity that created momentum and accelerated the research was the community workshop. The enthusiasm of the community for the workshop proved that it was a preferred activity for the research participants--they could discuss issues with each other, write their own brochures, and the subject matter was interesting for them. However the attendance was not up to expectations created by the distribution of the invitations. The communal workshop could not have been done earlier as the invitees needed to know about me and my project. We

needed time for the community to know that I was accepted--at least by a few trusted members of the community--as a researcher. Also, the workshop was originally planned as a two-day event, but early feedback from the community prompted us to make it half a day. This guaranteed more people, but in the end the participants felt they needed more sessions as did we. Also, simultaneous translation of the workshop interviews would have allowed us to make better use of the time.

7.3. The feasibility of the project

In the Corridor, the sustainability of a tourism initiative is essential, in order that it not become an idea rather than a participatory project. The efforts of the local community are the engine that will move the project forward, but the intervention of a third party will ensure the success and the continuity of the project. Thus, planning the project with a view to creating momentum is an indispensable part of the project design. And to guarantee the sustainability of the project it is essential to envision it as a profit-based business. This is in order to calculate the risks, recognize and address issues and develop an ascending road map that phases in activities and reviewing of results.

The project design should include four strategic perspectives: immediate, strategic, long term, and tactical. First, on the immediate level, there are many strengths to be gained and opportunities to be exploited through networking, in particular within the industry supply chain (e.g., linkages with hotels in San Isidro or visiting trade shows in San Jose). Second, on the strategic level, we need to identify the brand that differentiates the destination and identify and package the product accordingly. This requires input from local, established business

owners who know what differentiates a destination and a product and what types of markets to identify accordingly (i.e., owners of businesses such as Alta Gracia and Selva de Mar). Third, tactically, this project is an opportunity to build on local capacities and develop skills. Fourth is the visionary aspect and the long-term project of developing the destination’s stewardship (i.e., market positioning, assurance of sustainability efforts and monitoring of activities’ impact).

**Drawing on entrepreneurial thinking for project management
for greatest impact and success**



Figure 12 Initiative perspectives (source: Wafaa El-Osta, January 2015)

It is important to consider the project as an ascending road map, strategically building on small achievements, allowing for parallel thinking of important issues and managing the initiative like a business project. This will help to maintain a collective vision and make it

possible to adjust the direction of the project during implementation. This is essential to maintain the momentum and ensure success.

While funding can dictate the length of a project, it is customary to develop a three- to five-year plan that is flexible enough to allow changes, and suggests actions to achieve the objectives. This plan also depends on the final actions as a starting point; it would include specific objectives, organized in phases with anticipated dates of completion. The following graph gives a visual representation of this growth, within an average time line and with actions indicated. These would need to be discussed in detail with potential partners and “action owners”.

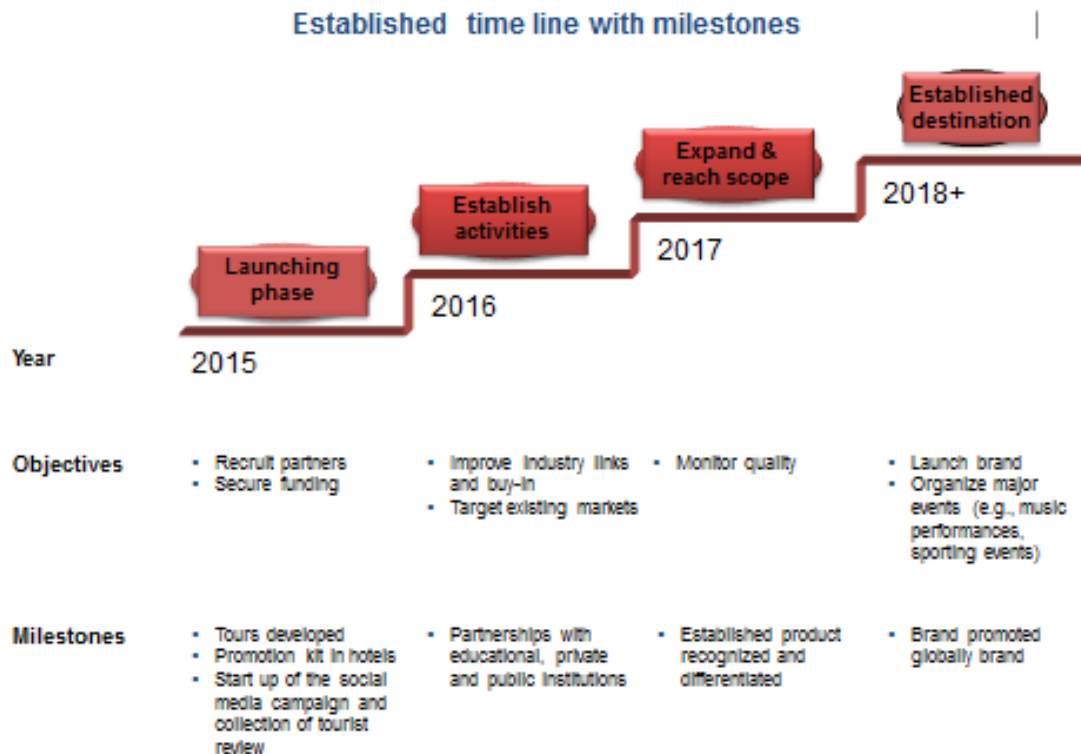


Figure 13 Initiative time line with key achievements

7.4. Conclusion

Costa Rica, as a green destination, spearheaded the global ecotourism movement. Their public policies allowed for open investment and made land ownership and establishment of businesses possible for locals and expats alike. The downside of this environment of open investment is that it can negatively affect the rural communities, whose livelihoods and well-being are vulnerable to rapid growth. In the Corridor, of particular relevance are impending potential development projects: monocrops, the hydroelectric plants, and tourism. Most inhabitants agree that monocrops and the hydroelectric plants are not desirable, but the debate exists. These will remain controversial issues until they arrive at an alternative way of transforming their communities and retaining the youth. If sustainable tourism is presented as an alternative solution, it would be dependent upon to the type of tourism and the target markets. Currently there are two established tourism projects adjacent to the Corridor³⁴.

Sustainable tourism is an apt concept for the Corridor, as it embraces several types of tourism within its frame. We can assume that the best tourism for the Corridor is based on conservation of resources, provided that its unique biodiversity remains its most important feature. For the Corridor connects two conservation areas and a historical birding station that contributed to the world's knowledge about Costa Rica, through the writings of the ornithologist, Alexander Skutch. On the product development side, sustainable tourism supports local communities' initiatives and promotes stewardship and conservation efforts.

³⁴ The Alto Monte, the horseback riding club and the Alta Gracia hotel are both located on different sides of the corridor

And on the marketing side, it appeals to experience-seeking travelers who are looking to leave a positive impact and build better connections between different cultures. So, within this model we can define the products and markets we are seeking.

To attract the right markets and be competitive on local and global levels, we need to define the brand. For that we need find the characteristics of the destination that distinguishes it from others. The search will lead to elements from local, natural, endemic sources. Once these elements are developed into commodities for the tourism industry, they will be produced locally and therefore lead to the regeneration of the local flora and fauna. An example of this in the Corridor is the love seeds that Candy (a local artists) transforms into jewelry and gift items.



Figure 14 The love seed (source: Wafaa El-Osta February 2015)

Another is the production of Boruca masks, produced with large enough quantities of balsa wood to ensure regular re-planting of balsa in the forest. More balsa trees means conservation and flourishing of the fauna that depend on it. These are referred to as “party animals” (Hofmann, 2013). This is a clear and simple example of a tourist product that helps conservation and positively impacts the ecosystem. This is one important aspect of sustainable tourism projects--recognition of their impact and the need to monitor this impact in order to appeal to conservation funders. Sustainable tourism can lead to the recovery of natural, endemic resources, as well as build on human capital in the employment of these resources. It is therefore a means to conserve natural and cultural assets of a local community that can distinguish it in the global context.

I. Bibliography

- Ashley, Caroline and Haysom, Gareth. (2006) *From Philanthropy to a different way of doing business: strategies and challenges in integrating pro-poor approaches into tourism business*. *Development Southern Africa*, vol 23, issue 2, p. 265-280.
- Atleo, E. Richard. (2004) *Tsawalk, A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview*. UBC Press: Vancouver
- Carmichael, B.A. and Senese, D.M. (2012) 'Competitiveness and Sustainability in wine tourism regions: the application of a stage model of destination development to two Canadian wine regions', in P.H. Dougherty (ed.) *The Geography of Wine: Regions, Terroir and Techniques*, New York: Springer
- Ceballos-Lascurain, Hector. (1996) *Tourism, Ecotourism, and Protected Areas: The State of Nature-based Tourism Around the World and Guidelines for its Development*. World Conservation Union & Island Press.
- Chambers, Robert. (2007) *From PRA to PLA and Pluralism: Practice and Theory*. IDS WORKING PAPER, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton UK.
- Desmerais, Annette-Aurelie. (2008) *La Via Campesina, une response a la crise alimentaire*. Les Editions Ecosociete: Montreal.
- Escobar, Arturo. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.
- Forsyth, Adrian & Miyata, Ken. (1984) *Tropical Nature*. Touchstone: New York.
- Friere, Paulo. (2005) *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum: New York City.
- Galaski, K. (2008) *Community-based Tourism for Sustainable Development in the Alexandre Skutch Biological Corridor, Southern Costa Rica* (Major Research Paper submitted for the Faculty of Environmental Studies). York University, Toronto.
- Galaski, K.; Edwards, R.G.; Dodds, R. (2012) Global Partnerships for development: Connecting Communities to the Tourism Supply Chain' in *Sustainable Tourism & The Millenium Development Goals*. (2013) Jones & Barlett Learning, Sudbury, MA.
- Helen Watson with the Yolngu community at Yirrkala and David Wade Chambers. (1989) *Singing the Land, Signing the Land, a portfolio of exhibits*. Deakins University Press.

- Honey, Martha & Gilpin, Raymond. (2009). *Tourism in the Developing World: Promoting Peace and Reducing Poverty*. US Institute of Peace: Washington D.C.
- Honey, Martha. (1998) *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* Island Press: Washington D.C.
- Johnston, Alison. (2007) *Is the Sacred for Sale? Tourism and Indigenous Peoples*. Earthscan: Sterling, VA.
- Lett, James. (1983) *Ludic and Liminoid Aspects of Charter Yacht Tourism in the Caribbean*. *Annals of Tourism Research* 10:35-56.
- McMichael, Philip. (2008) *Development and Social Change. A Global Perspective*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge/Sage, 4th edition
- Mitchell, J & Ashley, C. (2012) *Tourism and Poverty Reduction: Pathways to Prosperity* Earthscan: Sterling, VA; London.
- Montoya F. & Drews C. (2006), *Livelihoods, Community Well-Being, and Species Conservation, A Guide for Understanding, Evaluating and Improving the Links in the Context of Marine Turtle Programs*, WWF - Marine and Species Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, San Jose, Costa Rica
- Montoya-Greenheck, F. (2009) *Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods, An anthropological approach towards community-based custody and valuation of local resources in the context of marine turtle conservation in Costa Rica*. WWF World Wildlife Foundation: San Jose.
- Montoya F. (2013), Personal Discussions
- National Geographic, 2010. Geotourism, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/>
- Roberts, J. Timmons & Thanos, Nikki Demetria. (2003) *Trouble in Paradise: Globalization and Environmental Crises in Latin America*. Routledge: London.
- Said, Edward. (1978) *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books: New York.
- Smith, Andrea. (2005). *Conquest, Sexual Violence American Indian Genocide*. South End Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Stocker, Karen. (2013) *Tourism and cultural change in Costa Rica: Pitfalls and possibilities*. Lexington Books: Lanham
- Palmer, Steven and Molina, Ivan. Ed. *The Costa Rica reader*. (2006) Duke University Press: London
- Vandermeer, John & Perfecto, Ivette. (2005). *Breakfast of biodiversity: The political ecology of rain forest destruction (2nd ed.)*. New York and Oakland, Calif: Food First Books.

II. References (cited in text)

Asia Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)2013 *behind-the-deals – needs clarification*

Beech, Hannah. (February 13, 2007). *A \$29,000 Thai Dinner*. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1588990,00.html>

coopeagri2013*coop credit – needs clarification*

Coopenae 2014 <https://www.coopenae.fi.cr/coopenae/informacion-general/historia>

Definition of Sustainable Tourism. From World Tourism Organization Network website. Retrieved from <http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>

Faculty of Environmental Studies York University *About: Las Nubes*. Retrieved from: <http://www.lasnubes.org/2005/12/creation-of-las-nubes/>

GEF Small Grants Programme *SGP Project Template*. Retrieved from: https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=273&Itemid=188

Impact Investing Potential: A World Changer (2013) Retrieved from: <http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2013/11/impact-investing-potential-world-changer#>

Inoiu, Camelia and Reddy, Sanjay. *Development Aid and Economic Growth: A Positive Long-Run Relation* (2009). IMF Working Paper. Retrieved from: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2009/wp09118.pdf>

Kilani, Hala, Assaad Serhal, Othman Llewlyn. (2007) *Al Hima, A Way of Life*. IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) and SPNL (Society for the Protection of Nature and Life). Amman, Jordan.

Making Tourism More Sustainable- A Guide for Policy Makers (2005) UNEP and UNWTO. Retrieved from: <http://www.unep.fr/shared/publications/pdf/DTIx0592xPA-TourismPolicyEN.pdf>

Personal discussions, 2013. Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Planeterra Foundation *How to give*. Retrieved from: <http://www.planeterra.org/how-to-give-pages-8.php>

Social Impact Investment. Social Stock Exchange. Retrieved from: <http://socialstockexchange.com/the-sector-explained/>

SRI International (2010). *Spas and the Global Wellness Market Synergies and Opportunities*. Retrieved from: <http://www.sri.com/work/projects/spas-and-global-wellness-market-synergies-and-opportunities>

UNESCO. *Talamanca Range-La Amistad Reserves/ La Amistad National Park*. Retrieved from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/205>

UN GEF Small Grants Program. 2014, *Plan Estrategico del Corredor Biologico*, San Jose UNDP SGP. Retrieved from: https://sgp.undp.org/index.php?option=com_sgpprojects&view=projectdetail&id=17786&Itemid=205

I. Appendices

A. The project proposal

1. Project summary

a) *The general context*

This project is about developing an action-oriented, community-based tourism initiative and is based on field research done in the summer 2014. Among the research findings was a request from local community and strategic local partners to develop a not-for-profit collective tourism initiative in the region of Perez Zeledon, southern Costa Rica, in the Biological Corridor of Alexander Skutch (CoBAS), referred to as the Corridor. The biological corridor connects two conservation areas: Los Cusingos bird refuge and Las Nubes rain forest. It is also connected to the largest national park in Latin America, La Amistad, through the Mount Chirripo area, the highest mountain on the Pacific coast side, about 30 minutes from the Corridor's western end.

The Corridor is located in a mountainous area with a topographical landscape formed by a series of watersheds, which has shaped the lives and the livelihoods of the inhabitants of seven communities situated there. It is closely connected to San Isidro de El General (14 km). The city is on the Inter-American highway, midway between the Corridor and the Pacific coast. The tourism product can be connected to the Terraba indigenous territories and to the Pacific coast. The conservation areas are managed by strategic partners: Los Cusingos area is managed by the Centro Cientifico Tropical (CCT), a national research centre; and Las Nubes Forest, where York University is developing an eco-campus to serve as an environment, community and

education centre. The Corridor is home to seven rural communities, most of whose inhabitants are beneficiaries of Coope Agri, an agricultural coop that provides a market for local products and services. Other strategic stakeholders in the area are the owners of Quintas Bernina and Alta Gracia Boutique Hotel and a newly established tourism development: Alta Gracia Hacienda (see appendix C for stakeholders and potential linkages list).

b) *The key environmental problems and the project approach*

The three major environmental problems that this project tackles are: (1) the local biodiversity loss, an impending threat from development projects that would change the landscape; (2) the transformation of communities; and (3) the intrinsic threat of socio-economic vulnerability of small-scale agriculture.

The approach of the efforts together project is therefore to propose a hands-on tourism project that will combine individual into a holistic strategy. It will develop the image of the product, address internal problems and engage beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders in an initiative to develop a participatory, innovative, sustainable tourism project. The project idea is based on the recovery of traditional connections between the local communities and their natural environment. When those traditions are re-framed as attractive tourism products they will be sustained through revenues and self-identification.

c) *The target communities*

The direct beneficiaries are the tourism providers in the communities of the Corridor; the indirect beneficiaries are the inhabitants of the Corridor. As a service sector, tourism revenues are multiplied with indirect revenues in the communities of the direct beneficiaries (Cater,

1993); (Edwards, 2013). As the project has a marketing and promotion component, it will also impact tourism providers and communities in south Costa Rica (among the indirect beneficiaries are the indigenous peoples of southern Costa Rica, the Boruca and the Terraba peoples). This will lead to empowerment of local communities, who will be better able to manage their resources and build sustainable connections, and ultimately lead to the preservation of local biodiversity and the continuity of traditions. The project is designed to be an ideal model of a community-based initiative supported by strategic partners. To reach its goals the project activities will entail: organizing workshops in the corridor, developing tours and itineraries as well packaging other tourism services, producing promotional materials, and taking part in marketing and networking activities such as tradeshow, conferences, and so forth. The readiness of the community and the need for tourism product development was confirmed in participatory field research conducted between July and August, 2014. Individuals are developing eco-lodges, picnic areas, pools, fishing ponds and similar tourist attractions, based primarily on bird watching and river access. Some agro tourism activities are based on sugar cane and coffee agriculture and processing. In addition, the community has been receiving an average of 30 students per year, from Canadian high schools and universities. These visits happen two times per year, in May and November, and take the form of home stay local tours and volunteering. The proposal suggests to multiply those visits and to engage the visitors in further activities during and after their stay in the Corridor. It suggests transforming the experiential visits into a connection with the locals, making the visitors more of champions or companions to local champions rather than consumers.

d) The justification

The current tourism activities mostly consist of family hosting, pools and tilapia ponds. These activities bring income to the locals but are a subject of controversy, as there is too much supply and not enough demand. Also, the new Alta Gracia hotel, due to open in 2015, may be an opportunity or a threat to local enterprises. Therefore, the challenge for this proposed not-for-profit sustainable tourism initiative is to help resolve internal conflicts and nurture collective efforts by addressing the demand and supply discrepancy. While the sustainable tourism initiative aims to reach a sustainable balance of demand and supply, it will also propose equitable distribution of the resulting revenues.

At the same time, there are propositions of “development” projects: a hydroelectric energy project that would require 90% of the water, and mass monocrop ventures that would be developed at the expense of the bird-friendly forest, as well as polluting the air and water with pesticides. Therefore the second rationale behind the tourism project is the need to expand alternative economic opportunities beyond agricultural production while conserving local natural and cultural resources. When compared with the inevitable migration and irreversible damage that would be done by the proposed hydroelectric energy and monocrop agricultural projects, sustainable tourism presents an ideal option.

In conclusion, this project is presented at a sensitive time, when a community is facing global pressures of resources management. The challenge is to generate enough income but also not too much traffic. To achieve this balance, experts will be enlisted to resolve conflicts and coordinate individual initiatives. The collective sustainable tourism project will not only

implement agro-forestry and best practices for conservation, but will also create an incentive for all locals--women, youth, elderly, and activists--to engage in dialogue. The project will sustainably expand tourism opportunities to benefit the local communities in the Corridor and will empower them through collective action.

2. Project objectives and expected results summary

a) Primary and specific objectives

The project's primary objectives are: to empower local communities in the Corridor to ensure continuity of the sustainable management of natural resources from one generation to the next. This is done through the practice of agro-forestry and using tourism not only as a source of income but also as a way to construct a unique local identity and a source of local pride.

The project's specific objectives are: to use sustainable tourism as a tool for sustainable local development and develop a model of connection between the tourist market and host communities.

b) The rationale – the detailed problems and how the project would address them

This section is based on the current indicators set by the UNDP Small Grant Program. It is to be reviewed according to the upcoming new indicators expected in June 2015. However, if those indicators maybe are different, they might have similar goals.

Indicator 1: Conservation of biodiversity and natural resources

The impending development projects are: the hydroelectric energy project that would hold 90% of the rivers and streams, and mass monocrop productions that would destroy the

bird-friendly forest. These projects are being initiated by the International private sector with the justification that they are bringing development. While these projects may be economically viable for their owners, they generate serve short-term, profit-oriented benefits³⁵. These developments do not serve long-term goals that benefit the local inhabitants. In fact, such developments bring neo-liberal, profit-making businesses to the doorstep of La Amistad and to the conservation areas of Las Nubes and Los Cusingos. The projects are designed from a global perspective that is not concerned with the well-being of the local communities. The proposed sustainable tourism project presents an alternative approach to development that will result in more jobs for more people and continuity of the eco-friendly lifestyle. It will empower the locals to choose a means of slow growth with the option of sustainable resource management. The alterations to the natural landscape that would result from the so-called development projects (hydroelectric dams and monocrops) would do irreversible damage to the ecological and social life of the region.

The internal dynamics of the Corridor societies are being shaken by the proposals of the hydroelectric energy and the mono-crop agriculture. The communities are torn between accepting and refusing the proposed projects. Some are interested in the jobs that are being offered by the companies while others understand the threats, appreciate their way of life and want to keep it. Therefore, the proposed sustainable tourism project comes at a timely moment.

Sustainable tourism is an export sector. Besides being eco-friendly and based on better management of natural and cultural heritage, recent tourism development projects are considering linkages establishment throughout the supply chain essential for the success sustainability of tourism development initiatives. This project approach recognizes this vision and is therefore designed to foster equity in the expansion of tourism activity. Tourism is an export industry with local consumption; it is also a service industry that enhances collaboration among the communities and the activist groups. The proposed tourism project will create long-term, sustainable jobs in the area, therefore suggesting diversity in income generation and therefore addressing the vulnerability of agricultural communities. The tourism providers will buy most of their products and services locally, from construction services to food and beverage. The project will be an income-generation alternative for the Corridor communities.

The people believe in the benefits of sustainable tourism, according to field research I have done between July and August 2014 as per document attached. With minimal effort it would be possible to convince the majority that entrepreneurial jobs are a better alternative to the immediate jobs offered by the so-called development projects. The resulting problem of this would be the displacement of the communities on the long term.

Indicator 2: Community transformation and social impact

The younger generation is leaving, looking for opportunities outside of the Corridor and looking for ways to develop their capacities beyond agriculture. The schools are an indispensable part of the Corridor and pursuing university studies is the norm. After high school, the young people pursue college in the Institute National de Aprendizaje (INA), the

Universidad Latina UL in San Isidro de El General or in colleges or universities in San Jose. It is also worth mentioning that some are taking the option of online, distance education (Universidad Estatal a Distancia) to pursue their studies and remain at home. Based on the field research, we found that the average age of marriage is in the early 20s. In the past, it has been common for young couples to build their houses close to the wife's family, for assistance with chores and for safety if the husband has to leave town for work. This house is, then, the property of the new family. Recently, the tendency has been for the couple to move to the city to earn their living and live in a rental apartment.

This problem will be mitigated by the proposed sustainable tourism project, as it is designed to involve the youth in the development of the tourism projects. They will become the tour organizers, service providers and producers of consumables. They will also have the opportunity to market the Corridor and to share in decisions like the development of a destination brand. A large number of the youth consider sustainable tourism as their salvation; they hope it will allow them to generate income locally, settle in the area and continue their way of life³⁶. In each community we have identified in the field research, at least one household with a young person studying tourism.

The community is concerned about a new tourism development in the area. A high end resort has already emerged and is due to open in early 2015: the Alta Gracia Hacienda. The community is mixed up as people are inquiring about how this project would affect them. Our proposed sustainable tourism project would enhance the community pride in their local

identity and their sense of independence; it fosters mutual respect between them and the incoming tourists. It will allow the locals to develop income generating activities and maybe acquire new job opportunities based on flattering cultural productions (like dancing or cooking presentations and hosting celebratory culinary activities) rather than minimum wages skills (like transportation, cleaning and laundry). The suggested sustainable tourism project as an initiative led by CCT, a not-for-profit third party would direct the relationship between the high end tourism business and local entrepreneurs. It would make this connection as an opportunity for small businesses to engage in a cooperative approach to compete as a whole destination, rather than falling into local conflicts, competition or struggle. The new hotel could be the other end of the supply chain that is bringing an amazing high end market to the door step of the local providers. The local traditional ways could be amazing green practices for the hotel to be certified sustainable within the Costa Rican leaves system.

3. The outcome, major activities and specific results

The outcome of this sustainable tourism initiative will be specific, innovative sustainable tourism product/s in the corridor, besides the formation of coalitions and the development of linkages and connections. The tourism product will take the form of the creation of a thematic trail, or a series of itineraries like: birds and beans tours, meet the stewards of paradise, etc. (see recommendations–and conclusion section). The project will also produce supporting materials like: a touristic map (draft of print format can be produced and attached PDF for digital format and a promotion kit (list of content included). The local participants will be play a

more assertive role in their society as social entrepreneurs equipped with knowledge, tools and the materials produced to sustainably maintain the project objectives beyond its life time.

To reach that outcome, the project activities will entail: organizing workshops in the corridor, developing tours and itineraries as well packaging other tourism services, producing promotional materials, and taking part in marketing and networking activities such as tradeshows, conferences, and so forth.

These activities would lead to: the creation of a network of local entrepreneurs tourism providers, including: building their capacity; connecting them to the supply chain of the tourism industry; connecting them to support systems in the government organizations; connecting them to target markets through involving the stakeholders from the product development phase to the promotion and marketing phase; developing the destination image, promoting the place and marketing products; and recruiting technical support from local and national partners and stakeholders (see below table for a detailed listing of the project activities).

Going back to the potential donor indicators, and projecting those on the project objectives and activities as stated above, the project results can be defined as follows:

- Hectars of conserved areas affected by the area the project:
 - Preliminary estimation of baseline= 6012.60 ha
 - The project implementing organization may want to add: the connection area, approximately : 15000 HA
- Hectares of protected areas influenced:

- The corridor= 6 km long + Los Cusingos +Las Nubes
 - Those results may also reflect the fact that the corridor is connected to the largest conservation area in Latin America: La Amistad
 - Hectares of ecosystems improved their conservation status
 - Hectares of production mountains applying sustainable use practices
- The corridor is until now home to hundreds of birds (414) mammals (133) and butterflies (251), among other living forms, consisting of an average of 50% of the country's biodiversity who enjoy a sustained and improved conservation status (source: CCT website)
- The biodiversity products and services produced are valued at xxx (US dollar equivalent)
 - Number of new technologies developed /applied (like:
 - The use of the digital system implemented by York university (GIS)
 - The use of social networking as a means for marketing, promotion and connections (number entrepreneurs are developing xx online promotion for their business (like Facebook page, twitter account, connecting with booking agency, blog, collecting tourist reviews, etc.)
 - Marketing skills acquired by xx persons in xx actual situation (ex. trade shows)
 - Number of local or regional policies influenced
(level of influence 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5)
 - Examples may vary between education, craft production, etc.

In conclusion, an intervention in the corridor area is becoming urgent. This proposed innovative sustainable tourism project is directly related to the needs of the local communities. It presents a solution to many of the local problems: it will enhance partnerships and will propose an alternative income generating activity that respects and enhances the local identity and traditional ways of living relatively close to nature. Most importantly, the process of undertaking a participatory tourism initiative will produce immediate effect that will gather stakeholders of different levels, especially within the tourism industry supply chain as well as researchers and scientists. It addresses the vulnerability of the local ecology as well as the local society including women and youth. The project brings in multilevel perspectives: (1) immediate, as it builds on existing value chain and readiness of the community as well as developing markets; (2) strategic, as it is based on initiating a destination brand, in order to position the destination; (3) tactical, as it propose to invest in the local capacities; (4) long term intended, with components based on the advancement of sustainability efforts and destination stewardship.

4. Description of project activities

In relation to primary objectives, specific objectives and outcomes- to be reviewed also with CCT, to agree on what will be done, who will do it, and when

Primary Objectives	Specific Objectives	Activities	Outcomes – indicators for success
Challenges	Tourism supply is higher than tourism demand and Lack of equity in the distribution of tourism income within the community		
PO1.To enhance the tourism product development and marketing with active wide, and powerful participation of the corridor communities	SO1.1. To empower the community in developing sustainable tourism products	1.1. Identify local tourism entrepreneurs and maybe categorize them into groups depending on their roles in the project (ex. annex)	Local entrepreneurs network list
	SO1.2. To build a network and identify potential partners	1.1.2. Define the participatory approach get the locals' consent on the project concept and further input on the project components and - etc.	Project partners and beneficiaries identified, participatory approach defined, and process agreed upon
	SO1.3. To guarantee the sustainability of the project and local ownership	1.1.3. Recruit partners and stakeholders from (wider circle of project input beyond beneficiaries to include stakeholders)	Review and finalize the project component with defined roles of actors/sponsors/owners for each component
Challenge	Inefficiency of individual initiatives and lack of coordination		
PO2. To enhance the sense of	SO2.1.To give interested	2.1.1 Organize an event/workshop	Entrepreneurs working collectively (participants)

<p>stewardship within the local communities and work with “coopetition” spirit. (entrepreneurs, women, youth)</p>	<p>stakeholders ownership of the tourism project, and responsibility towards making it a success; to engage them at an early stage of the sustainable tourism project development</p>	<p>where local tourism providers can work together (tour guides, hosts, F&B, marketing...etc.)</p>	<p>Project components have owners</p>
		<p>2.1.2 Invite local tour guides to develop and label their own tours (based on the findings of the July workshop) share and develop further in the PD workshop</p>	<p>Tourism products created: tours = nbr of beneficiaries (tours prices and expected turn out)</p>
		<p>2.1.3 Introduce the market-oriented concept of the project that would give the potential entrepreneurs incentive to develop innovative products</p>	<p>The innovation aspect of the project is well integrated in the development of the project and the products to become competitive</p> <p>-review of tourism products which are successful and more feasible</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>Migration of the youth; endangering the sustainability of the community</p>		
	<p>Lack of outreach to the market</p>		
<p>PO3: To engage the youth through social media and build their capacities for innovation</p>	<p>SO3.1. To identify the local youth capacities and build their skills towards income-generating activities that they can do in the corridor</p>	<p>3.1.1 Develop a social media campaign to be led by the youth (posting photos)</p>	<p>Outreach to new markets or increase target in actual market (expected business transactions)</p>
		<p>3.1.2 Build strategies to maintain channels of connections between the local youth and the visiting</p>	<p>People are using technology for connections and have easy access to technical devices (computers, I pads,</p>

		students (now York U and French School and other future groups potentially)	application on mobile phones...etc.)
	SO3.2. To build the capacity of the youth for market outreach and product development based on market trends and target markets needs	3.2.1 Organize workshops to browse and search information in many languages and identify key information online and through other connections, e.g.: geotourism and world ecotourism organization, community tourism...etc	Youth engaged in marketing and (number of participants- actual jobs created)
	SO3.3 To build on connections with strategic partners like York University and local universities through the Las Nubes Student Association of York University and the volunteer researchers who visit and stay in CCT-los Cusingos	3.3.3. Identify best channels of connections and potential activities to enhance connection with tourists for reviews, word of mouth marketing, and product development and to strengthen connections between the communities of the corridor and the world. ³⁷ (see linkages)	Online or other types of channels created: blogs, discussions, online meetings, actual distribution of printed materials (nbr)
Challenge	Inefficiency of individual initiatives and lack of coordination (repeated above)		

	The need for a forest cover that would enhance the natural characteristic of the corridor and connects the different ecological pockets together		
	The loss of traditional ways of consumption that are forest friendly ³⁸ ;		
PO4. To engage the women in the product development based on market demand and conservation principles	SO4.1. To sustain local traditions and relate it to local biodiversity. <i>Ex: Birds, trees, beans, agroforestry and bird friendly backyard gardening</i>	4.1.1. Recover and reinvent the local menus and record recipes as cultural production	To develop products that enhance the local identity (nbr of local products)
		4.1.2. Search for and identify local crafts related to local traditions and crops (ex.: the love seed key chain); list and collect samples for marketing purposes	Potential opportunities in developing products to be sold in areas with concentration of tourism traffic, like Manuel Antonio, Uvita and /or Dominical (actual connections made, sales...etc.)
		4.1.3. Identify with the local communities the best ways to market those products; ex.: develop a catalogue and a plan to market those products in tourist traffic places or online	Number of outlets exposing the products (and expected sales)
	The lack of a strong local identity		
PO5.To enhance the local identity among the whole community and	SO5.1.To build the capacity of the local entrepreneurs to	5.1.1.Review the tourism offer according to the indigenous	Tourism products created

create a supporting network for tourism providers	identify some tourism products that would enable them to differentiate their offer according to the typical and traditional production	biodiversity (variety of crops that makes the ingredients of the special menus or landscape involving tourism activities: ex. Palms, coffee, birds's trees)	
	SO5.2.To identify indigenous crops and products representative of agroforestry		Number of local products related to indigenous crops
Challenges	The lack of competitive characteristic of the coffee production		
	The lack of a strong local identity		
	Destination is not well positioned (or not compatible) within the Costa Rican or international market		
PO6. To create a destination brand, and enhance the local products branding	SO6.1.To enhance innovation and creativity among entrepreneurs and youth; to come up with thematic products beyond generic rural-sustainable green...etc.	6.1.1. Identify potential specific thematic tourism offers; example: gastronomy, cultural.	Tourism brand created
	SO6.2.To develop a local identity worth of international recognition and branding as a unique offer of worthy position in global marketing	6.2.1.Study the potentials for international branding and certification of "bird friendly beans," geotourism, green...etc. (ex. better branded coffee for	Identified potentials for international branding

		better price)	
Challenges	Tourism supply is higher than tourism demand and Lack of equity in the distribution of tourism income within the community		
	The risk of tourist not coming to the area or delay in the responsiveness of the target market		
	Destination is not well positioned (or not compatible) within the Costa Rican or international market		
PO7. To connect the local community entrepreneurs to the tourism supply chain ³⁹ .	SO7.1. To build the capacity of the local entrepreneurs to identify some tourism products that would enable them to differentiate their offer, according to the market demand	7.1.1. Develop and review the tourism offer while matching specific market demand and local offer to be unique and competitive (based on conservation of birds as a marketing edge)	Linkages induced by the project: ex. connecting local crafts maker to outlet in San Issidro de El General. 3 tours developed and marketing activities implemented, tours tested (intl't market could be targeted for the next 2 years)
		7.1.2. Connect tourism providers to local providers of consumable items for sustainable community connections	Number of local providers who are tracing their supplies and circulating the number of beneficiaries
	Destination is not well positioned (or not compatible) within the Costa Rican or international market		
PO8. To encourage the local entrepreneurs who have ready products to work	SO8.1. To actually market their tourism products jointly; to plan and live a "coopetition"	8.1.1. Collectively develop one promotion kit that includes all tourism offers in the corridor,	Number of beneficiaries of the tourism promotion kit (direct and indirect)

collectively in a cooperative and competitive way	experience	individual and collective		
		8.1.2. Organize or participate in regional tourism meetings or forums	Number of meetings where the project is introduced	
		8.1.3. Participate in local tourism trade shows; ex. annual expotur –June.	Number of trade shows attended, number of professional contacts, number of potential deals	
		8.1.4. Disseminate a tourism promotion kit-through distribution of hard and soft copies	Number of outlets where the toruism promotion kit is exhibited or viral distribution online	
	The lack of competitive characteristic of the coffee production			
	The lack of a strong local identity			
	Destination is not well positioned (or not compatible) within the Costa Rican or international market			
PO 9 to encourage conservation efforts and sustainable re-forestation	SO9.1 To create incentive for agroforestry; in particular coffee as a bird friendly crop and market it accordingly, for export market and	9.1.1. Combine bird friendly trees and coffee farming	Number of farmers engaged in the transformation and land area transformed. Maybe also number of trees planted for this purpose	
			9.1.2. Identify the precise crops, by expert/s and farmers together	Number of participants
			7.1.1. Develop and review the tourism offer while matching specific market	Number of local community members who participated in the workshop and developed

		demand and local offer to be unique and competitive (based on conservation of birds as a marketing edge)	the products. Expected/projected income increase...etc.
--	--	--	--

B. The promotion kit blue print

1. Individual offers samples

CORREDOR BIOLÓGICO OF ALEXANDRE SCUTCH-COBAS- PEREZ ZELEDON- COSTA RICA DEL SUR

Isidro's family site

Special offer: pool, open restaurant, mountain view, archeological findings including a petroglyph on site.

Isidro's and Flor's family has a tilapia pond and a couple of pools for different ages and a cabin of two bedrooms with basic amenities and an amazing light & sound effect.



The restaurant menu is simple and basic, however we had an amazing local Guanavana drink prepared fresh.

Offers	Price CL
Piscine	
Restaurant	From to
Accomodation/ B&B	
Walk in the forest	
Swim in the river	
Coffee picking or planting, depending on the season	
Bird watching	



They offer a warm welcome and an amazing view, with birds singing in the background and falcons roaming the sky. Isidro would love to show the visitors the petroglyph at the front yard of his house, and his modest archeological findings of ceramic pots and masks.



Contact information

Figure 15 - Individual offer-page 1 Issidro

CORREDOR BIOLOGICO OF ALEXANDRE SCUTCH-COBAS- PEREZ ZELEDON- COSTA RICA DEL SUR



*Ask for
Guanabana fresh,
home made drink*



Located on the side of pena blanca river,
17 KM from San Isidro

Figure 16 Individual offer- page2 Issidro

Rómulo's family site

Special offer: short and easy access walking trails in the forest. Romulo's flora guidance with his grandchildren. Swim in the Peñas Blancas river mini lagoons, with picnic area near water access.

The green walk to the river in the company of Romulo is a discovery tour, as he points out the different species of flora and birds and butterflies on the way.

Rómulo's family has the experience of offering full accommodation for students. The visitors can help Romulo



Ofertas	Precio CL
Accommodation / 3 meals included	7000 es per day
Walking in the forest,	Free
Swimming in the river, with picnic area	Free
Coffee picking or planting (depending on the season)	Free

in his work in the coffee fields and have the experience of picking or planting it, depending on the season (picking: September to December, planting : April to June). They also have sugar cane plantation and you can taste the juice direct from the plant.



Romulo and Gretel , offer a warm welcome and local meals prepared in their open kitchen, typical of the architecture of the area.



Contact information:

Romulo's cell:: 27382219

Figure 17 Individual offer 2-Romelo-page 1











Ask Romula for his special sugar tasting in the field or for forest berries or his small treasures found on site



Located on the side of Penas Blancas river; in plaga verde area; 15 km from San Isidro

Figure 18 Individual offer 2- Romelo-page2

2. List of tourism offerings and related contacts

 <p>YORK UNIVERSITY www.yorku.ca/office www.alexskutch.org</p>		<p>Alexandre Skutch Biological Corridor Los Cusings- Las Nubes Locality known as: COBAS (Corridor Biológico De Alexandre Skutch)</p> 
<p>Direction and Location of Cobas From San Jose you can reach the corridor through one of the two scenic roads</p> <p>The corridor is located 14 km to the South East of San Isidro El General city, in South Costa Rica. From the city, you take the Inter-American Highway direction South, and exit to the left. Accessible by cost (passing by Manuel Antonio's coastal reserve, hosting the or through the mountain (passing-by the wind mills that are visible from the capital city)</p> <p>Transportation from San Jose To San Isidro By taxi: 100,000 CL (US\$ 200) By rent a car: 30,000 (US\$ 60) By public bus: 3.200 CL (US\$ 6.5)</p> <p>Direct buses take the Inter-American highway, a 3 hours trip through the mountains, passing by Cerro De La Muerte, with a break stop on top of the hill. The buses to San Isidro leave San Jose from the MUSOC bus station. You can reach the station by taxi, (e.g., from central square in San Jose to MUSOC CL 3,000 (US\$ 6). Bus trips leave every hour, starting from 6:30am until 6:30pm. It is advisable to buy your tickets at least one hour in advance (the tickets office opens from 6 am, to 5 pm).</p> <p>Transportation from San Isidro to the corridor (Quizarra) By taxi: 15,000 CL (US\$ 30) By Public bus less than 1,000 CL (<US\$ 2)</p> <p>Direct buses leave San Isidro from the Empresa Cafesio Station, located near the Cathedral Plaza. The buses stop on demand, so you need to know where you are going, the first town in the corridor is Santa Elena, it is advisable better to tell the driver</p>	<p>about your exact destination, (e.g. the bus passes by the schools of Santa Elena and Quizarra). To take the bus from the corridor to the cSan Isidro, you need to stand on the road side and wait for the bus at the time it passes, the local would know, usually it is around 6:30, 8:00, 11:00 am, and 4:00 pm. To know about the exact time of the bus from San Isidro it is better to call the station, and it is most probably that they will only speak Spanish, (506)771-1523</p>   <p>Bus Station San Isidro San Isidro to Quizarra</p>  <p>ICA 2012 STICCA Mapa del Interamericano -Bosque Nublado</p> <p>maps from: http://www.mapbox.info</p> <p>The corridor hosts a series of water sheds and is home to a condensed tropical biodiversity, of cloud forest mountain and valley and a bird refuge. The story of corridor remains in its name, Alexandre Skutch, a famous ornithologist of the last century, took the corridor as his home, because he knew the importance of the corridor for birds. Accompanied by his wife, he stayed there all his life, spending his time between birdwatching and writing. His writings contributed to the acknowledgement of the importance of the corridor. He dedicated his land to become a bird refuge: Los Cusings. The corridor is until now home to hundreds of birds mammals and amphibians, among other living forms. In the Los Cusings reserve, there are groups of capuchin-face monkeys, and many archeological artifacts petroglyphs and cemeteries. The local biodiversity is an integrated part of the local community life. The corridor is home to seven agricultural communities. They are very welcoming and are used to visitors and to hosting students and researchers who consider the corridor as a destination for different types of studies ranging from natural to social disciplines.</p> <p>Contacts for family stay organization: Santa Elena: Ana Arias (506) 2738 2344 Quizarra: Luis Angel Rojas, (506) 8817 2991 y Ana Mercedes (506) 2738 1552 Monte Carlo: Raquel Mora (506) 8334 1903 San Francisco: Adriana Urena Dias 85868644</p> <p>Local guides: Diandra Arias (506) 8029 9193 Quizarra Merliana Valverde (506) 6903 9886 Quizarra Raquel Mora (506) 8334 1903 Monte Carlo Wendy Valverd Aguero (506) 8481 3779 Santa Elena Local chef: Elzer Ciciliano, chef 84909437 Monte Carlo</p>	<p>A diversity of choices reflecting the richness of the local biodiversity</p>     <p>Local festivals August 2nd the Virgin Mary celebrations August 6th horse racing, August 15 religious mountain walk to The VIRGIN OF MONTE CARLO site</p>    

LEGEND							
	1-Las Nubes York University Research Centre Prof. Felipe Montoya: (416) 736-2100 ext. 22226, fmontoya@yorku.ca, http://www.lasnubes.org, Las Nubes		6-Miguel Molina Coffee plantation with integrated farm, special view, hiking, and local food, (506) 8864-8442, Monte Carlo		13-Jesus Bonilla Sustainable coffee farm and cacao, Tel: (506)2738 2159, Santa Elena		20-Guillermo Cisneros & Julia Vargas Tourism offer, Crafts workshop, (506) 8744 2923, Monte Carlo
	2-Esteban of the Mountain Reforestation and wetland restoration site, private property, Stebanmssh48@aol.com, Las Nubes		7-Doris & Nidia Villegas Butterfly farm, local spa, (506) 8301 3257, San Ignacio		14-Eco-Finca Nacaome-Luis Monge Petroglyphs and coffee farm, (506)89214621,quizarra@gmail.com, Santa Elena		21-Maria Cecilia (Candy) Craft art with natural and recycled materials-painted love seeds, (506) 6093 9986 Monte Carlo
	3-Vista De Chirripo (Chiprot) Real Estate Development Project, (506) 8879 7542, http://www.vistasdechirripo.com/between Santa Elena and Las Nubes		8-Santa Solano Tiapia, mountain trail, (506) 8864-8421, San Ignacio		15-Romulo Fonseca Sugar cane and coffee farm, easy access to the river with picnic area, (506) 2738 2236, Santa Elena		22-Miguel and Giselle Arias Culinary activities, Trapichi, Sugar Cane processing, (506) 2738 2162, Santa Elena
	4-Alto Monte Horse Back Riding, breed horses, riding rings and trails, (506) 2289-2190, Santa Elena		9-Hotel Altigracia Luxurious resort, with high end bungalows and hotel services, (506) 2253-8133, (506) 2224-4062 discover@altigracia.or, http://www.altigracia.or/		16-Angie Hernandez Cabin- Eco Lodge style, (506) 8467 6642 Quizarra		23-Ana Arias Barbosa Orchids and family stays organization,(506) 8790 2275, Santa Elena
	5-Camino del Rio-Isidro Céspedes Bejarano Restaurant overlooking the valley, pool, tiapia ponds, swimming in the river, petroglyph and archeological artifacts found locally, (506) 8355 4304, Santa Elena		10-Para Mino Romano Contacts missing to date, need to look it up		17-Juan Cruz Reforestation site, hiking, Monte Carlo		24-Coffee Pan Local bakery and coffee shop, breakfast, snacks and beverages, catering, Vivian Nunez: (506)86194145, Santa Elena
			11-Lorena Amador Recycled-materials art (Mariposas) and the Hermosa's River, (506) 2738 2228-(506) 2738 2141, Santa Elena		18-Raquel Mora Brenes Cik house, home style coffee processing, maize bread, dancing, yoga, (506) 8334 1903, Monte Carlo		25-Valle del sol- Ruth Marlen Calderon Jimenez Sustainable integrated farm, fruit trees,(506)8547 2234 Quizarra
			12-Marvin Arias Coffee farm, (506) 2738 1842.Santa Elena		19-Shirley Viquez Molina Crafts and painting, (506) 8744 2162-(506) 2738 1903, Monte Carlo		26-Sidley & Eugene Valverde Mountain view close to Los Cusungos,(506)8664 4002, Barrio la Paz, Santa Elena
	27-Mirella Carlin Lodge, tour in the farm, Quizarra		34-Roberto Clark Coffee plantation, agro tourism, volcano-touring,(506) 8935 0186, (718) 588 9267,randibob@gmail.com, Quizarra		42-Maria Cecilia (Candy) Artisanats, natural and recycled materials; painted love seeds and shells and recycled bags, (506) 6093 9986 Quizarra		49-Wendy Valverde Agüero Medicinal herbs and exotic plants and fruits in house garden, Sensorial tour, (506) 854 9679 (506)848 1377, Isabe@8481@hotmail.com Santa Elena
	28-Ana Mercedes , Recycled-materials crafts: vases from papers and mobiles from bottles, (506)2738 1552, Quizarra		35-Jorge Arias Fonesca Vaca, Leche, Queso, (506) 8479 6857,(506) 2738 1542		43-Rocio Cabins, (506) 6093 9986 Quizarra		43-Vida Paz Two cabins trails, view of Los Cusungos, Penas Blancas River, (506) 8817 2991, Quizarra
	29-Alexandre Skutch Festival y Salon Comunal de Quizarra		36-Juan Miguel Picado Coffee micro processing, (506)8910 2139, San Francisco		44-Granadilla Silvestre Coffee farm and bird watching, (506) 8603 9636, Quizarra		50-La Escondida-Posa del Rio Caliente Coffee farm, archeological artifact, mountain view, access to the river, Luis Angel Rojas,(506) 8817 2991 Quizarra
	30-Zoraida Vargas Rios Painting and crafts, (506) 6093 9986 Quizarra		37-Rodolfo Mena Pool and touristic centre, (506) 6093 9986, San Ignacio		45-Miguel et Giselle Arias Trapiche & sugar cane juice traditional food, coffee farm and homemade corn (506) 2738 2162 Santa Elena		51-Nido El Tucan-Isabella Birds watching, especially Toucan,(506) 8817 2991 Quizarra
	31-Finca La Trocha-Charqui-Eduardo Cabin, butterfly farm, Mountain trail,(506) 87642557, (506) 2738 1907,Quizarra		38-Don Rogelio and Nery Delgado : Trapichi (sugar cane processing), Santa Marta (506) 8622 9716		46-Bajo el Mapache Touristic centre, soccer field, river, restaurant, Jimena Mora Brenes, (506) 8699 4323, Santa Marta		
	32-Bernina- Hans Humbergur Development project, trapichi, hot water source, walk in the forest,(506) 83997515, Montecarlo		40-Valle La Luna- Jeannette Montero Touristic centre, ceramics, aquarium, herb oil extraction, ponds, cabins, (506) 8301 2060, Santa Elena		47-Carlos Bonilla Sustainable farming, dairy products processing, animal		
	33-Ana Mercedes Sewing and crafts, (506) 2738 1552, Quizarra		41-Los Cusungos-Alexandre Skutch Museum Birds refuge reserve, and				
						LEGEND COLOR CODE Monte Carlo Quizarra San Francisco San Ignacio Santa Elena Santa Marta	

Flyer details list the following examples, as a close-up of the :

The seven communities of the corridor are defined by their own schools, churches salon communal and local convenience shop:

San Fransisco, Quizarra, Monte Carlo, Santa Elena, San Ignacio, Santa Marta, Santa Maria

list of individual tourism providers per village example:

In San Francisco:

Rorleny Bonilla: : pets and birds, daughter studies tourism 8955 2269, 8694 1462

Adriana Urena Dias: Tourism student 8586 8644

In Quizarra:

Rossi Valverde: Integrated farm, Petroglyphs 2738 1876:

Eduardo Quiros: painting furniture tel: 8664 1609, 8740 8026

3. List of Distribution

The field research included a part that would investigate the potentials for linkages development. The need for linkages and for connection with tourism stakeholders surfaced early during the first phase of the research. For that the researcher headed outside the corridor to investigate potential linkages. A summary of this investigation is:

<i>Hotel</i>	<i>Tel. Number</i>	<i>Direction/addresses</i>	<i>Link</i>
Thunderbird	2770 6230	Barrio San Luis Gasotica, Pérez Zeledón, Costa Rica. Supér San Luis N°1	http://www.tbrcr.com/hotelcostarica/es/contactenos.php http://www.booking.com/hotel/cr/thunderbird-resorts.es.html
Hotel del Sur	2771 3033 2771 3280	5 kms hacia el sur del centro de San Isidro de El General, sobre carretera Interamericana Sur, diagonal a Bomba Shell	http://www.hoteldelsur.net/contacto/
Hotel Los Crestones	2770 1500	diagonal al costado Oeste del Estadio Municipal.	http://www.hotelloscrestones.com/es/index.php
Hotel los Pinos	2772 4480 2772 4475	3 Km del Centro de San Isidro de Pérez Zeledón	http://www.hotellospinospz.com/
Hotel Montecitos	2772 5656 2772 6363	Brasilia de Pérez Zeledón, a menos de dos minutos del centro de San Isidro de El General,	http://www.hotelmontecito.net/
Los Angelus	2772 3630 2772 3631	Dominical - San Isidro PZ, San Isidro de El General	info@hotelesangelus.com
San Isidro	2770 3444	Contiguo al INA, Villa Ligia, Pérez Zeledón	http://www.hotelsanisidro.com/contacto/
Hotel Chirripo	2771 0529		http://www.camaradecomerciopz.com/esp/detalles.php?c=237
Rancho la botija (lodge)	2770 2146 2770 2147	a 6km. de San Isidro P.Z.(10 min) carretera a Rivas , frente a la piedra del indio	http://www.rancholabotija.com/
Villa Bekui	2770 4849	150 mts norte del Liceo de Asunción	

El Palmazul	2772 3939		
La Arboleda Lorimar	2771 2444		

Contacts in Dominical and Uvita

Contact	Number	email	Link
Uvita: Hacienda Coope Agri	2743 8081 2743 8400	hacienda@coopeagric o.cr	www.haciendacoopeagri.cr
Uvita Tourist Information Center	8843 7142 2743 8072 2743 8889	mail@uvita.info	http://www.uvita.info/
Dominical Tourist Information Center	2787 0454 8651 9090 US: 323 2858832	info@dominicalinfor mation.com	www.dominicalinformation.c om
Boruca, indigenous tours and crafts : Marina Lazaro	8780 8648	artesanosnaturales@ gmail.com	

C. Potential linkages lists and event plans

This section is develop for the local community and the community partner (CCT) to recruit supporters and sponsors for the project. It is Startup list below is part of the planning for an upcoming connection event that is under planning (list to be verified with CCT and local community).

Name & contact info	Affiliation
Zuniga Roger rzuniga@coopeagri.co.cr cel. 506 8371 4305 506 2785 0278	CoopeAgri
Bunch Martin fmontoya@yorku.ca	York University
Gómez Meléndez Agustín AGUSTIN.GOMEZ@ucr.ac.cr	Costa Rica Universtity (UCR- Unversdade de Costa Rica)
Montoya Felipe fmontoya@yorku.ca	York University
El-Osta Wafaamar	York University
Galaski Kelly kgalaski@gmail.com	G Adventures Tour Operator, Planeterra Foundation, and York University Alumnae
Cole Jorge jorgecole@actuarcostarica.com (506) 8335 3322	ACTUAR (Asociación Costaricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario)
Gomez Ramirez rgomez@cct.or.cr cel 506 8840 1267 506 2253 3267	CCT (Centre Cientifico Tropical)
Mr. Eduardo Mata (506) 2961544, ext. 2137 (506) 2961545 eduardo.mata@undp.org ; eduardom@unops.org	UNDP
Monge Luis Cel: 506 8921 4621 lama@systec.co.cr	Indepdant consultant and Local Activist in Santa Elena
Odop Victory Walter, (506) 2771 4582 info@selvamar.com	Selva De Mar (Tour agent)
Fontana Yorleny	ACEPESA

D. Meetings summary

a. Meetings Summary with ACTUAR-

1st meeting- Asociación Costaricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario (ACTUAR) 1.June 4th, 2014

Participants: Jorge Cole Villalobos, Priscilla Alvarado, Wafaa El-Osta

General Impression:

Wafaa: enthusiastic, potential for collaboration for sustainability of tourism project – need more income from marketing and fund rising- I am interested in helping towards best exposure and use of WTM participation

Aide Memoire:

Potential collaboration areas:

Connecting communities in the Alexandre Skutch Corridor to ACTUAR's activities

Highlighting and image building of indigenous products

Coordinate for developing a portfolio for impact investment, to help fund raising activities

Next steps/action:	Who	When	Notes
1-To share info about June workshop in Buenos Aires	J C	TBA	
2-To share further links of similar projects in other parts of the world	WO	Week of June 16	
3- May have some specific questions	WO	June-July	As plans for research get more clear
4- At an earlier research stage WO would check with ACTUAR to see if there are any need for specific products and	WO	Last week of June	to discuss research proposal and survey plans
5-Announce work start with Bribri and Cerro Chirripo park	J C	June-July	
6-Meet with marketing & product development team	WO & J	July-Aug	to present potential product development & marketing/ potentials for WTM

2nd meeting- Asociación Costaricense de Turismo Rural Comunitario (ACTUAR)-

July 22nd, 2014

Participants: Jorge and Andrea, Waffa El-osta, Priscilla Alvarado
Main contact information Andrea xxx
Location: Coronado, San José
Date: Thursday July 22nd, 2014

General Impression:
There are potentials in collaborating with ACTUAR, they are prudent on how to recruit members and prefer to be connected with active hard working groups.

Aide Memoire:

Potential collaboration areas:

WO will mention ACTUAR in the meeting of Saturday 2nd August.

We invited ACTUAR representatives to the meeting and we took their materials to make sure that the local community would have a clear idea about their work.

There is a need to connect of the the Canadian market; WO suggested to make the connection between LNSA and ACTUAR and proposed a visit to the universities who offer field courses in the universities fairs in Canada

The WTM is a target market for ACTUAR

Next steps/action:	Who	When	Notes
Wafaa will send links about the Canadian universioties conenctions	WO	Aug 7	
WO will share research results	WO	Nov	
ACTUAR repretatives would try to attend the meeting maybe in the person of the chair and somebody from the parketing and/or development department	J &A	Aug 2	
ACTUAR will send an email to FUDEBIOL to attend the meeting	J &A	This week	

Agenda: (Ideas discussed)	Presenter
1- ACTUAR new criteria to recruit partners	J V

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
2- The worksop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	WO
3- York U plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The bird guide ▪ The research center- Lilianne Right ▪ Field course ▪ Individual researchers 	WO

b. ACEPESA meeting summary

Participants: Yorleny Fontana Wafaa El-Osta –Researcher Priscilla Alvarado- Research asistant
Main contact information Coordinator of sostenible tourism in ACEPESA Costa Rica
Location: Zapote, San José
Date: 15 July, 2014

General Impression: ACEPESA could be a good cooperator in the assistance and capacitation, especially if the communities decide to develop a tourism project/product that will position your area as a destination. But they don't do promotion.
--

Aide Memoire:

Next steps/action:	Who	When	Notes
Wafaa will send by email information about a possible Canadian donor to Yorleny	Wafaa	15/July	
Yorleny will send to Priscilla an email with contacts in two diferent areas of the country, laws of tourism (Ley de proyecto rural comunitario)	Yorleny		DONE
Priscilla will contact with zone north project or Palmichal de Acosta	Priscilla	During work field in the area	During field work in Pérez Zeledón

Agenda: (Ideas discussed)	Presenter
1- What ACEPESA does <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work in sustainable tourism (rural community tourism), linked to this they introduce ambient issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building local capacity: this is about giving instrument to develop by their own, it includes: -assisting community projects in: a) organizational management, for example with leadership training or need to partner and make connections, b) elaboration of a tourist product and marketing training. –Technical training – Ambient and gender issues 	YF

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Political incidence: construction of public policy, like the Ley de Proyecto Rural Comunitario) looking for benefits to communities' organization. ○ Local links ▪ Projects and consulting in solid waste ▪ Projects and consulting in wastewater management ▪ They have been in Costa Rica 20 years ago ▪ They work in rural and urban areas ▪ The nature of their work depends on the community project and the international cooperation donors. ▪ For example, they have work with communities in the north zone of the country during 4 years, with 13 communities and 54 families. Also in Liberia, Guanacaste with women groups strengthening personal skills ▪ They also to regional work in Central América, for example there is a project that includes Nicaragua, Guatemala and Costa Rica, working with fishers, indigenous and farmers communities 	
<p>2- Project and potential collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Areas included: communities around COBAS and possible links with other attractions of the South, like Cerro Chirripó, the cost beach and indigeus region Boruca ▪ What is needed to work with ACEPESA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify communities potentials ○ Feasibility sustainable study ○ Identify competitive advantage of the area ○ Organizational capacity of the community ○ do community really want it? Are they ready? ▪ What defines when a community is ready: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diagnosis of the community with field work and meetings ○ Inventory of offers ○ Feasibility sustainable study ○ People's available and disposal ○ This is about a process, sometimes help is need because there is potential and development possibilities ▪ Two ways to get a feasibility sustainable study with ACEPESA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Projects: people present the project, and money comes from donors which are normally organizations from other nations ○ Consulting: this is pay to them ▪ Posibility of collaboration like a joint project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ACEPSA as the organization with technical and local experience and York u as the interest partner present the project to a donor organization 	<p>WO</p> <p>YF</p>
<p>3- Potential communities to visit to have an experience exchange from ACEPESA's work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Zone, Rural Tourisim operator, contact Yeudi ▪ Palmichal de Acosta, Nacientes Palmichal, ambient, local art 	<p>YF</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With both communities they work organization and economic sustainability 	
<p>4- Other organization Wafaa may contact for the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ACTUAR ▪ COOPRENA ▪ CANTURURAL (Camara Nacional de Turismo Comunitario) 	YF

c. Communal meetings at CCT

Participants: members of: Coco-Forest, York U, CCT, MAG, SINAC, Development Association of San Francisco, AMACOBAS, AMESE, UNED, ASOCUENCA
Main contact information There were members of different active groups
Location: Los Cusingos
Date: 29 th july, 2014

General Impression:
We went to this meeting just to observe and present a general idea of the project

Aide Memoire:

Agenda: (Ideas discussed)	Presenter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Last meeting agreements ▪ Visitor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation of the project ○ 3 main ideas- tourism options: a) To develop a tourism project/product that will position your area as a destination, b) To develop tourism related products that could be sold to tourists in tourist traffic areas, c) To build on the products that are already offered and maximize the collective benefit from strengthening those connections ○ workshop planned for 2th august, from 1 to 5 pm in Quizara’s communal salon ▪ Received correspondence: a) order of trees for school and b) festival of school ▪ Each group update for the month: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AMACOBAS: organization of feria “nuestra historia”, trainings about different subjects, touristic trail map with gps (includes petroglyphs), co work with Hotel Altagracia to attract tourism ○ Development association of San Francisco: cocoa project in Upala, field work cooperatives and milk production ○ AMESE: the dumpsters will be in front of the Panadería, and this year will be the first open assembly on de association ○ ASOCUENCA: new project with the Development Associations which includes knowing how many habitants are in Cobas, museum, etc. ○ Cocoforest: work field in areas where otters lives ○ MAG: Closing process with AMUQ, cacao course, ambient festival of Cobas in August ▪ Other issues: denunciation, festival, etc. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact: Elizabeth Hidalgo Rojas. Science Teacher, UNED. eli.hidalgo.r@hotmail.com 89907754 	

d. Meeting with travel Agent in San Isidro (draft to be updated)

Researcher went to travel agent and talked to the manager Mr. Walter Odop Victory . The travel agency is Selva De Mar, the manager have a long experience in and dedication to market the Sur area. He is a member of Turi Sur association. The association is not active since few years ago. But at the time of the research Mr. Vistory in his position as the head of the association was invited to a meeting organized by the ICT. Therefore, He still represents the organization in official meetings. In his perspective, the most important need to develop tourism in the southern areas, we need to offer the destination in an innovative way. There is a need for tour guides who have an entrepreneurial spirit and can be creative in creating and managing the tour in an innovative way. There is also a need for higher decision about the promotion of the destination. When investors in northern Costa Rica had influence on policy makers, big budgets were spent on the promotion of the regions including several destinations.

e. Summary of meetings and interviews with hotels: In San Isidro

Researcher visited seven out of the thirteen hotels, listed below in San Isidro.

Most of the people we met are the hotel receptionists.

The most repetitive information that they all considered urgent are:

- There is a need for information about the area (especially in the mountains)
- The receptionists are not confident about recommending a place for tourists or groups because:
- There is a need for road signs or organized/ accompanied tours*
- Most of the visitors are executives and stay in San Isidro for business, mainly covering Sur area.
- There is one major tour agent and one major souvenir shop that the receptionists recommend for tourists Selva Del Mar.
- The tourists come mainly for Mount Chirripo reserve and for Boruca
- Tourists are mostly backpackers who heard about the place via internet (trip advisor and the yellow pages of Costa Rica)- Hotel Chirripo
- Most locals arrive by their own cars or rent a car
- One receptionist repeated a statement by a tourist: “give me something not so well known and touristy to do, if I want to spend a day on the beach I would have gone to a hotel on the beach, I am looking for something different, a local experience that can show me the life of the people in southern Costa Rica.”
- Receptionists and hotel management like to offer areas where there are no other hotels so they won't lose their customers to hotels with better offer.

Researcher proposed two suggestion questions for better connections and future linkages for the hotel receptionist:

- 1- Would you like to post tour guides' business cards on the receptionist's counter?
- 2- Would you like to have a catalogue/ album of the different offer tourism offer with contact information, to offer for hotel clients?

The answer was positive for both questions. However, to the second question there was some reaction from the receptionist: they like to offer a nice guaranteed experience for the tourists and not to have them get lost on the way or come back with the feeling they have wasted their time on an experience that was not pleasant. The receptionist would prefer to have the tour guide come and pick up tourists from the reception so they can come back happy and say that they had a good day, like what happens in

San Jose and other touristy areas. For now, they prefer to suggest for clients to consult local travel agent.

f. Observations in San Jose as a tourist

In San Jose, I spent some time taking tours and meeting with local NGOs. The meeting summaries are in appendix xxx. Below are the findings that resulted from observation and from my personal experience as a tourist. These observations took place in May, and June before and after the field course trip, and in July and August before and after my field research trip in COBAS.

- In San Jose, tours are marketed in the hotels and tour agencies located in touristy areas. Hotel receptionist or special tour information desk (like in the case of Gran hotel Costa Rica). It promotes and sells the tours; Some actually makes the transaction if tourists need to pay by credit or debit cards. If tourist is ready to pay cash the tour guide can receive the cash and issue a receipt. The tour involves a driver and a trained tour guide who speaks Spanish and English. For tours in other languages, like French, this is considered a special request to be made upon reservation.
- In the case of Britt coffee tour, the pick up at the hotel is not by an official guide or a trained personnel, he is simply a trained driver who knows where he is going. He actually picks up the people who booked the coffee tour from different hotels and then drops them at the site of the tour where a local receptionist greets tourists and makes the payment if not already done, then the group will wait for other people to arrive and then one or two local guide/s provide/s the tour of the site and end it with the boutique visit.
- Special offer to encourage more buying: at the boutique of Britt Coffee site, if a tourist buy stuff for more than 40-50 dollars the shop offers a free shipment to the US and Canada destinations.
- The tours are offered with one unified price, including site visit fees and lunch; in the city tour, at the museum entrance, no transaction is made, the receptionists takes count of the visitors coming with the tour guide and register it in a special book. The lunch includes a set menu, people who want extra items or alcohol will pay independently. The lunch meals are offered in relatively big portions with a variety of carbohydrate, protein, salad and fresh juice.

Last page- back cover